

# TRAIN RIDER

*The Newsletter of TrainRiders/Northeast*



## RAIL AUTHORITY BILL PASSES!

On June 27th, the Maine Senate cleared away the last legislative hurdle standing in the way of resumption of passenger rail service to Maine. L. D. 1255, an Act to create the Northern New England Rail Authority, passed by the necessary two-thirds majority, the Maine House having approved it the week before. Governor Angus King signed the bill on June 29th.

The bill signing was attended by Wayne Davis, Jeri Edgar and John Graback of TrainRiders.

The Rail Authority will, similar to the Maine Turnpike Authority, allow a separate and distinct activity (day to day operation of a rail passenger service) to be performed outside the general functions of the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT). The Board of Directors of the Authority is scheduled to be formed by August first.

Mike Murray, MDOT's rail passenger specialist, has worked tirelessly for this service, helping to keep Amtrak's administration "on track" concerning their extension of the Northeast Corridor to Portland during their recent downsizing in response to Federal budget-cutting moves.

Mike has been working to complete seven legal contracts required to get the trains running. These include two Operating Agreements — one between Amtrak and the MBTA and one between Amtrak and Springfield Terminal; two Construction Agreements — one between Maine and the MBTA and one between Maine and

Springfield Terminal; one Service Agreement [formerly 403 (b)] between Amtrak and Maine to share the costs of the service; a Section 13 (c) Labor Protection Agreement between Maine and the Rail Labor Unions; and, finally, a Funding Agreement between the Federal Transportation Administration and Maine to ensure the flow of Federal funding for the infrastructure improvements and passenger locomotives and cars. None of the contracts will be signed until the Board of Directors of the Rail Authority is in place.

The former Boston & Maine Railroad trackage between Portland and northeastern Massachusetts on the route between Portland and Boston will receive new track, including passing sidings to allow passenger trains to pass freights; signaling; strengthened or replaced bridges; and improved grade crossing protection. The result of these initial improvements will be tracks allowing operation of passenger trains at 79 miles per hour, with incremental increases in passenger train speeds to come later. New or improved stations are anticipated to be construct-

ed at Old Orchard Beach, Saco, and Wells, Maine and at Dover, Durham and Exeter, New Hampshire.

Every member of TrainRiders Northeast can be proud of the job they have done to assist in the passage of the Rail Authority bill, and especially of our Chairman, Wayne Davis, without whose dogged determination there is little doubt the bill would have failed. Special thanks are also due to those many members in Maine who responded to our calls and mailings by contacting their Maine Representatives and Senators to urge their support of the rail bill.

Sincere thanks are also due to Senators Bill Cohen (R) and Olympia Snowe (R) and Representative John Baldacci (D), without whose efforts our Federal funding might well have disappeared in the flurry of budget cutting which has affected Congress.

Support from Les Otten and the staff of the Sunday River Ski Resort was also vital and greatly appreciated. Bombardier, representing one of the consortiums vying for Amtrak's future high-speed rail equipment contracts, supplied the entire Maine Legislature with 183 copies of a promotional brochure for its "American Flyer" train sets, based on the successful TGV ("train de grande vitesse — high-speed train") now in...

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## Rail Authority Bill Passes!

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daily operation over various routes in France at speeds of 186 miles per hour. Bombardier's plant in Barre, Vermont, has manufactured rail and transit cars for Amtrak and various state, regional and municipally operated commuter and rail transit systems in the U.S.

TrainRiders also distributed a fact sheet on L. D. 1255 to the Maine Legislature entitled, "Let's Keep the Dis-

cussion About Passenger Rail Service on Track." Assistance was provided by The Maine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Bridgecorp, Cliff House, Conservation Law Foundation, Key Bank, Natural Resources Council of Maine, Sunday River Ski Resort and V.I.P. Tour & Charter Bus Company.

We couldn't have done it without them! ■

For a record of how Maine Representatives and Senators voted on L.D. 1255, see page 7.

## TRAINRIDERS ACTIVITIES

### Annual Meeting

In addition to, or despite the sumptuous and well-presented feast the Harraseeket Inn piled upon our wondering selves at the annual meeting, we who attended profited in many ways. The speakers were excellent, the company lively. I came away with the following new thoughts:

**IMAGE:** Civil engineering student Ann Archino Howe spoke of the need for sleek and stylish and good image. She's right. We saw slides of European light rail vehicles that revealed 21st century aerodynamic design at its beautiful best. Looking at them made you want to commute daily via rail, or just plain travel.

As I waited last week at a railroad crossing in Bath, images of European supertrains, complete with Fax and e-mail facilities, flashed through my head. My car was first in line and I got a good look at the passing train, which was headed north. The engine, while 20 years behind the standards of Eurotech, was not bad. Neither was the first car, an oval covered hopper. But the second (and last) car was an empty passenger car that hadn't seen glory since 1930. Boxy and high off the ground, it was rusty, creaking and squeaking. It was a car from the summer excursion train out of Wiscasset.

Unfortunately, when Americans think "train," the above image frequently comes to mind. Or, slightly more realistic but still missing the mark, they see 1950s rolling stock. **THAT'S NOT WHAT TRAINS LOOK LIKE THESE DAYS.**

We in TrainRiders must work hard to promote the smooth good looks of the latest in passenger rail tech. People go for sleek and stylish, and

that image may help them to stop calling TrainRiders members "rail buffs." Rail buffs are people who ride excursion trains and long for the return of lost romance.

**INTERMODAL COOPERATION:** Perhaps the idea that made the most profound impression was Gene Skoropowski's upbeat message about intermodal cooperation.

This concept is one of the most important avenues for members of TrainRiders to pursue in their discussions with elected officials, town managers and other civic-minded persons.

Gene told a wonderful, true story about competitiveness and Yankee ingenuity that led to cooperation between public (MBTA) rail and private bus lines serving the Boston Metropolitan Transportation Authority area. The intermodal sharing that derived from their talking together (no "us against them" business) brought increased ridership and earnings to both modes.

He also said two Maryland Senators have proposed that the Federal Highway System become one with the rail system.

Such intermodal cooperation in America is not what you would call right around the corner. In Maine, many sectors are fighting against cooperation—against better land use, cleaner air, improved highway conditions and a better return on the dollar.

Another speaker noted that when you fly to Germany you get off the plane, board a fast train at the airport for the center city, and your bags arrive at the hotel ahead of you. Now that's a good example of intermodal cooperation! ■

—Paula Boyer Rougny

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

*Submitted by Wayne Davis*

**M**y heartfelt thanks to those of you who took time and energy and resources to respond to our plea to contact members of the Maine State Legislature in our effort to gain the two-thirds vote necessary to create the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority. Together, we *finally* accomplished what we set out to do so long ago.

Some of you told me and our volunteers that you were "tired because we already did this back in 1990 and 1991." Let me say that after six years of ten-hour-days, I'M TIRED TOO! (There, I've finally said it—and having done so, I feel much better!)

Now as we savor victory, let's keep in mind that this was but one of our goals (although, we can hope it turns out to be the most difficult to achieve). TrainRiders set five goals back in 1989, and rail passenger service between Portland and Boston was just the first. Now we must assure that trains will in fact be running by next summer. We need to remain visible and vocal not only on this issue but on the remainder of our agenda as well.

We can use a new burst of energy about now to advocate expansion of passenger rail service beyond the Portland/Boston routing. Stick with us in our efforts to realize service between Boston, Nashua and Concord, New Hampshire, as well as between Portland, Freeport, Brunswick, Lewiston/Auburn, Rockland, Augusta and Bangor, Maine.

If you would like to see overnight sleeping car service between points in Northern New England and New York, Washington and beyond, hang in there with us.

Your membership and personal interest in TrainRiders is vital to our success. If you haven't renewed your membership dues, please do it today. And don't forget that gift memberships for relatives and friends add to our numbers. As our membership grows so does our influence.

I look forward to seeing many of you on the first train next year, hearing from you by phone and mail any time, and seeing you whenever you are in the Portland area. (Call for directions)

—W.D.



## UNRELATED GOOD NEWS ITEMS:

British Travel Digest reports in its Summer 1995 issue that high-speed train service will come to Heathrow Airport tentatively in December of 1997. Expected to cost \$500 million, the project will include four miles of tunnels at the airport linking all terminals, new trains and facilities at both ends of the line. Paddington Station will be the London terminal and the trip will take 15 minutes. Heathrow cooperates with intercity bus lines for many origins and destinations, with covered loading docks at the air terminal. ■ In Maine, our airline and intercity bus systems are unconnected. However, the **Sunday River ski train** has used buses to augment its train on heavy traffic days, pointing the way to future rail-bus cooperation. With TrainRiders' help, trains and buses will form a coordinated network serving many areas of Maine. Not only will our public transit people talk to one another and share the people-moving adventure, they're going to like doing it. Everyone, each travel mode, will profit handsomely. This includes private drivers, Teamsters and everyone else who's on the road being stressed by delays. ■ **Gene Skoropowski** mentioned at least one municipality that has integrated its school bus and elderly van systems into its scheduled bus transit. This, too, represents intermodal cooperation: school buses and vans for the elderly are modes within modes, and the vehicles and drivers can achieve better utilization by serving both market segments.

## RELATED GOOD NEWS ITEM:

**"Amtrak's Plan to Electrify Line Clears Final Hurdle: New Haven-to-Boston Run to be Converted"** read

the headline on a story in the New York Times on May 11, 1995. "Amtrak's plan to convert the line between New Haven and Boston to electric power cleared its final procedural hurdle before the Federal Government on Tuesday, moving a decades-old vision of trains speeding from Boston to New York in under three hours closer to reality. "The Federal Railroad Administration... approved the \$1.7 billion electrification effort, which calls for trains faster than any now in use in the U.S. to be traveling the corridor from Washington to Boston by 1999. Proponents envision a project that would put rail service in the Northeast on a par with the best of Europe and Japan, spawn a new domestic industry in high-speed train building, create thousands of jobs and cut pollution by reducing reliance on cars and airplanes..." ■ **Augusta** now has the power to extend the successful Washington-New York-Boston rail passenger route another 114 miles. Maine can be one of the first states to have the above-mentioned service on a par with the best in Europe and Japan. **Go for it, Augusta. Grab the ball! Be a winner.** ■

## ALONG THE TRACKS

### Portland to Bethel Ski Train Completes Second Season

**T**he Sunday River Silver Bullet Ski Express continued to provide skiers with an alternative to driving to the slopes. On at least one occasion, the load exceeded the train's capacity, and charter buses were used to transport passengers.

Following the end of the ski season, the Massachusetts Bay Railroad Enthusiasts, Inc., sponsored two trips of the Androscoggin Valley Limited

on April 22 and 23 between Bethel, Maine, and Island Pond, Vermont, over the St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad, using ski train cars. Track west of Bethel is currently freight-only, but would be used for passenger service between Bethel and Montreal if the market for Canadian skiers permits.

The Bethel station is essentially complete and now houses the Bethel Area Chamber of Commerce. ■

### Grade Crossing Protection Installed on Maine Coast Railroad

**O**n the weekend of June 3 and 4, grade crossing signals were activated on the Maine Coast Railroad's South End line in Rockland. This makes possible extended hours of operation for cement trains serving the barge loading facility on the shore of Rockland Harbor. On June 10, the first passenger train in

over 50 years went down the South End line with an excursion train from Wiscasset. The City Council recently voted to purchase an existing building, making it possible to vacate the former railroad station which has served as City Hall since shortly after passenger trains stopped running to Rockland ■ — *The Courier-Gazette* (Rockland)

## IN MEMORIAM



*Henry Ferne, II, one of the founding members of TrainRiders/Northeast, died at his home in Edgecomb, ME on February 20, 1995. An active Director of TrainRiders, he was also a member of the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP). He served as a Director from Maine and attended many NARP meetings, usually traveling by train. Born in Philadelphia, PA on March 27, 1909, a longtime resident of Connecticut, he lived in Wiscasset from 1977 to 1992. He was active in town and cultural affairs. He is survived by a son, Benjamin F. Kirkland, of Edgecomb, an aunt, Eve Fernberger of Philadelphia and several cousins. Always generous to TrainRiders/Northeast, with an active mind and keen sense of humor, he is sincerely missed.*



## RHODE ISLAND

(continued from preceding page)

in Exeter, will be eliminated to allow operation of trains at 150 miles per hour in rural areas.

On 22 miles of the route, a third track will be laid to accommodate bi-level container traffic between the port at Davisville, RI, and the connection with the Providence & Worcester in Pawtucket.

Stations at Westerly and Kingston, expected to also be served by future commuter trains, will be renovated as part of the NEC improvements.

So why are Rhode Island residents putting up with all this construction?

"The upgrade is expected to be an economic boom for the New England Region.

"Government leaders in Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Connecticut are looking to trains to relieve pressure on the major airports and interstate highways, and to bring new businesses to the region. Retailers are hoping the trains will bring more visitors to the major cities."

Despite the advantages anticipated to flow from these capital investments, considerable opposition has arisen from members of Citizens for a Sound Environment, Inc. (SANE) in Stonington, CT. Steven H. Musen, Chairman of the Rhode Island Association of Railroad Passengers, replied to SANE's op-ed column in the May 7, 1995, *Providence Journal* with a May 11th rebuttal of SANE's prohibitively expensive proposal to re-route Amtrak's Northeast Corridor along I-95 in Connecticut and substitute fuel-hungry turbine powered trains for the more energy-efficient electric locomotives. ■

— *Providence Journal*,  
*Providence Sunday Journal*

### Train Rides

Members are invited to submit stories about their train rides, here or abroad, to share their experiences with others. Remember, there are many people who have never ridden a train and have little idea what it is like to travel by train.

## COMMUTER RAIL

### MBTA Greenbush Branch Remains Doubtful

While track, signal and station improvements proceed on the Plymouth and Middleborough lines of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's (MBTA) "Old Colony" restoration project, local opposition to renewed passenger rail service remains strong in some towns on the former Greenbush Branch. On April 6, Weymouth asked for assurance that rail service would not jeopardize property values or threaten the safety of children, but was otherwise supportive. However, Scituate, the former terminal of the line, voted against its reactivation on May 1. Hingham has been opposed since 1991. Cohasset, just beyond Hingham, favors the project. Massachusetts Governor Weld still intends to propose reviving commuter rail service on all three lines.

Efforts to respond to Hingham's opposition included a re-route around Hingham Square which was rejected in a recently completed Environmental Impact report as too damaging to wetlands, conservation areas and residential neighborhoods. Tunnels, either one or two miles long, are still under consideration through Hingham. ■

— *Railpace Newsmagazine* (July 1995)

### Other Commuter Rail Developments

The Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) has ordered 114 bi-level cars, which will seat 140 persons, from a partnership of Mitsui & Co. (USA) and Kawasaki Rail Car, Inc. Assembly of the cars will be in Yonkers, NY. They will fully comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and will enable the LIRR to increase capacity without increasing train length. The initial contract was worth \$179.5 million, with potential for spare parts over the next 15 years.

— *Railpace Newsmagazine* (May 1995)

When you think of Nashville, do you think of commuter trains? From May 1-19, 1995, Nashville, TN, population 500,000, operated a daily commuter train on one of six routes radiating from the city. This follows two-day demonstration trains operated in 1991, 1992 and 1993. Ridership ranged from 42 to over 100, with the major complaint being that only one round trip was offered. Commuter trains have been suggested to relieve rush hour congestion on the Interstate system routes serving Nashville. ■

— *Passenger Train Journal* (June 1995)

### TrainRiders/Northeast Solicited for Contributions from Commuter Rail Advocate

While he was involved with our struggle to get the Rail Authority bill passed in Maine, Wayne Davis received a request for funds from Massachusetts Representative Hasty Evans of Wayland, a western suburb of Boston. Hasty's fund-raising letter of May 8 contained the following:

"...I remain active in the battle to reopen the Central Massachusetts Railroad. In fact, I successfully amended the House budget to include a provision to study reactivating this rail line from Boston to Route 495.

"And I'll continue to work hard for the North/South Rail Link, which I'm proud to report has been scheduled for its first hearing before the Environmental Protection Agency.

"So many of us out here in the suburbs would find the commute easier if there were

a way to get from North to South Station via the train. And the environment wins when more people ride the train."

Hasty sounds like our kind of person, but TrainRiders can't contribute to political campaigns. ■

"If Maine is indeed going to grow, it needs to have a more diversified transportation system. If Maine is going to welcome more people and move them efficiently and environmentally safely, then passenger rail service makes perfect sense."

— Senator Philip Harriman,  
Sponsor of the Rail Authority bill



## FOR THE RECORD — VOTES ON L.D. 1255

For TrainRiders members in Maine: here's how your Representative and Senator voted on L. D. 1255 during the First Regular Session of the 117th Legislature. The House vote occurred June 22; the Senate vote on June 27. You may wish to thank those who supported the Bill.

HOUSE						SENATE	
Yes: 106 (101 votes required for Emergency Passage), No: 32, Absent: 13.						Yes: 24, No: 9, Absent: 1	
Y	Adams	Y	Fitzpatrick	N	Look	Y	Rosebush
Y	Ahearn	Y	Gamache	X	Lovett	Y	Rotondi
N	Aikman	Y	Gates	N	Lumbra	Y	Rowe
N	Ault	Y	Gerry	Y	Luther	Y	Samson
Y	Bailey	N	Gieringer	Y	Madore	Y	Savage
Y	Barth	Y	Gooley	N	Marshall	Y	Saxl, J.W.
Y	Benedikt	Y	Gould	Y	Martin	Y	Saxl, M.V.
Y	Berry	Y	Green	N	Marvin	Y	Shiah
N	Bigl	Y	Greenlaw	Y	Mayo	Y	Simoneau
N	Birney	N	Guerrette	Y	McAlevy	Y	Sirois
Y	Bouffard	Y	Hartnett	N	McElroy	Y	Spear
Y	Brennan	Y	Hatch	Y	Meres	N	Stedman
N	Buck	Y	Heeschen	Y	Mitchell, E.H.	Y	Stevens
Y	Bunker	N	Heino	Y	Mitchell, J.E.	N	Stone
Y	Cameron	Y	Hichborn	Y	Morrison	Y	Strout
N	Campbell	Y	Jacques	Y	Murphy	N	Taylor
Y	Carleton	Y	Johnson	X	Nadeau	Y	Thompson
Y	Chartrand	Y	Jones, K.W.	Y	Nass	Y	Townsend
Y	Chase	N	Jones, S.A.	Y	Nickerson	Y	Treat
Y	Chick	Y	Joseph	Y	O'Gara	Y	Tripp
Y	Chizmar	N	Joy	Y	O'Neal	Y	True
Y	Clark	X	Joyce	Y	Ott	Y	Truman
Y	Cloutier	Y	Joyner	Y	Paul	Y	Tufts
Y	Clukey	X	Keane	N	Peavey	Y	Tuttle
Y	Cross	Y	Kerr	Y	Pendleton	Y	Tyler
Y	Daggett	Y	Kilkelly	Y	Perkins	N	Underwood
Y	Damren	X	Kneeland	N	Pinkham	X	Vigue
Y	Davidson	Y	Kontos	X	Plowman	Y	Volenik
Y	Desmond	N	Labrecque	X	Poirer	N	Waterhouse
X	Dexter	Y	LaFountain	Y	Poulin	Y	Watson
Y	DiPietro	N	Lane	Y	Pouliot	X	Wheeler
N	Donnelly	N	Layton	Y	Povich	X	Whitcomb
N	Dore	Y	Lemaire	N	Reed, G.W.	Y	Winglass
Y	Dunn	Y	Lemke	Y	Reed, W.F.	Y	Winn
Y	Etnier	Y	Lemont	Y	Rice	N	Winsor
Y	Farnum	Y	Libby, J.L.	Y	Richardson	X	Yackobitz
Y	Fisher	Y	Libby, J.D.	Y	Ricker	X	Mr. Speaker
		N	Lindahl	N	Robichaud		

(Sen. Hanley excused pursuant to Joint Rule 10.)

## Did You Hear What They Said About Passenger Trains?

Senate opponents of passenger rail service sure had plenty to say. The following comments were made on an MPBN news program and a call-in talk show:

Senator Jeffrey H. Butland, President of the Maine Senate: ***For me the Amtrak proposal represents absolutely everything that is wrong and corrupt about politics and government in America today...***

Senator Jill M. Goldthwaite: ***As far as I'm aware, there is not one (rail system) that is succeeding in terms of passenger rail.***

Senator John Hathaway: ***Sometimes as we're talking about this issue, it almost***

***becomes like a Disneyland atmosphere that we're thinking about. Little visions of Sound of Music sometimes, but always we continue the conversation... I would like to point out that it is business that should take those risks and not government.*** ■

## Welcome to New TrainRiders/Northeast Members

**September 1994:** Edward King, Bangor, ME; John Riegel, Bailey's Island, ME. **October:** Robert Emerson, Boston, MA.

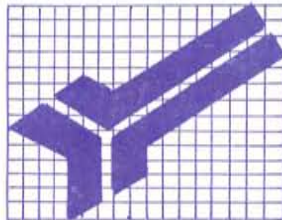
**November:** Neill DePaoli, Portsmouth, NH; David Ewing, Washington, DC; Peter Jolicoeur, Hanover, NH; Charles Kazian, Stratford, CT; James Otto, Minneapolis, MN; Kevin Scullin, Boston, MA; John Stith, Richmond, VA; Michael Sumner, Hamilton, Ontario; Douglas Worthen, Durham, NH; Roy and Roseann Worthen, Durham, NH; Robert Yaeger, Exeter, NH.

**January 1995:** Joseph Cabaniss, Islesboro, ME; James Chenard, Biddeford, ME; Michael Leighton, Mt. Kisco, NY. **March:** Howard and Susan Arnold, Portland, ME. **May:** Maynard Colley, Farmington, ME; Robert and Susanne Ewing, Portland, ME; James McIntyre, North Dartmouth, MA; Sheila Paine, Portland, ME; John Robinson, Portland, ME; J. L. McIntyre/ Scott Monroe, Centerville, MA; Lloyd Wells, Falmouth Foreside, ME.



# Amtrak Financial Picture Brightens

**I**n a May 4, 1995, news release, Amtrak reported that its mid-year (March 31, 1995) financial situation was \$17 million ahead of last December's projections. These improvements were attributed to route and frequency reductions, most of which took place on April 1, 1995; workforce reductions; im-



proved on-time performance; and \$141 million in capital improvements. The retirement of older "Heritage" equipment (so-called since it was "inherited" in 1971 from passenger services formerly operated by private railroads) has been made possible by delivery of new cars

and locomotives. By the end of March, a total of 167 older cars and locomotives had been retired.

Amtrak service reductions and financial uncertainty raised doubts among Maine Legislators that the Maine service would be forthcoming, despite Amtrak's assurances that it would honor previous commitments for equipment and operating assistance. ■ — *Amtrak News*, May 4, 1995

## Rails to Runways

**W**hile still behind our European Union competitors, the U.S. is looking at rail lines to serve airports. Virginia has contracted with Parsons, Brinkerhoff, Quade & Douglas to study a mass transit link to Dulles Airport, currently served only by highway. Bus and light rail will be studied, with a report due out in January 1996.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey in early June vetoed a plan which proposed construction

of a 22 mile rail link to connect Manhattan with both La Guardia and Kennedy International Airports. High cost was cited as the chief reason for dropping the plan. However, the Port Authority is seeking FAA approval for construction of a railroad passenger station along Amtrak's Northeast Corridor to serve Newark International Airport. Passengers would reach the trains via a one mile extension of the airport's monorail, now under construc-

tion. A \$3.00 per passenger charge would be made to finance construction of the extension, portions of which are expected to be operational by fall of 1995. Amtrak passengers arriving or departing Penn Station can, for a fare of \$10 to or from La Guardia or \$13 to or from JFK, ride a Carey Airport Express bus via Grand Central Terminal. ■

— *Railpace Newsmagazine* (April, July 1995),  
*Rail Travel News*,  
*Maine Sunday Telegram* (July 9, 1995)

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Correction Requested**

*TrainRiders/Northeast* is an organization of current and potential train users, interested citizens, associations and businesses who are committed to bringing modern and efficient passenger trains back to Northern New England.