

TRAINRIDER

The Newsletter of TrainRiders/Northeast



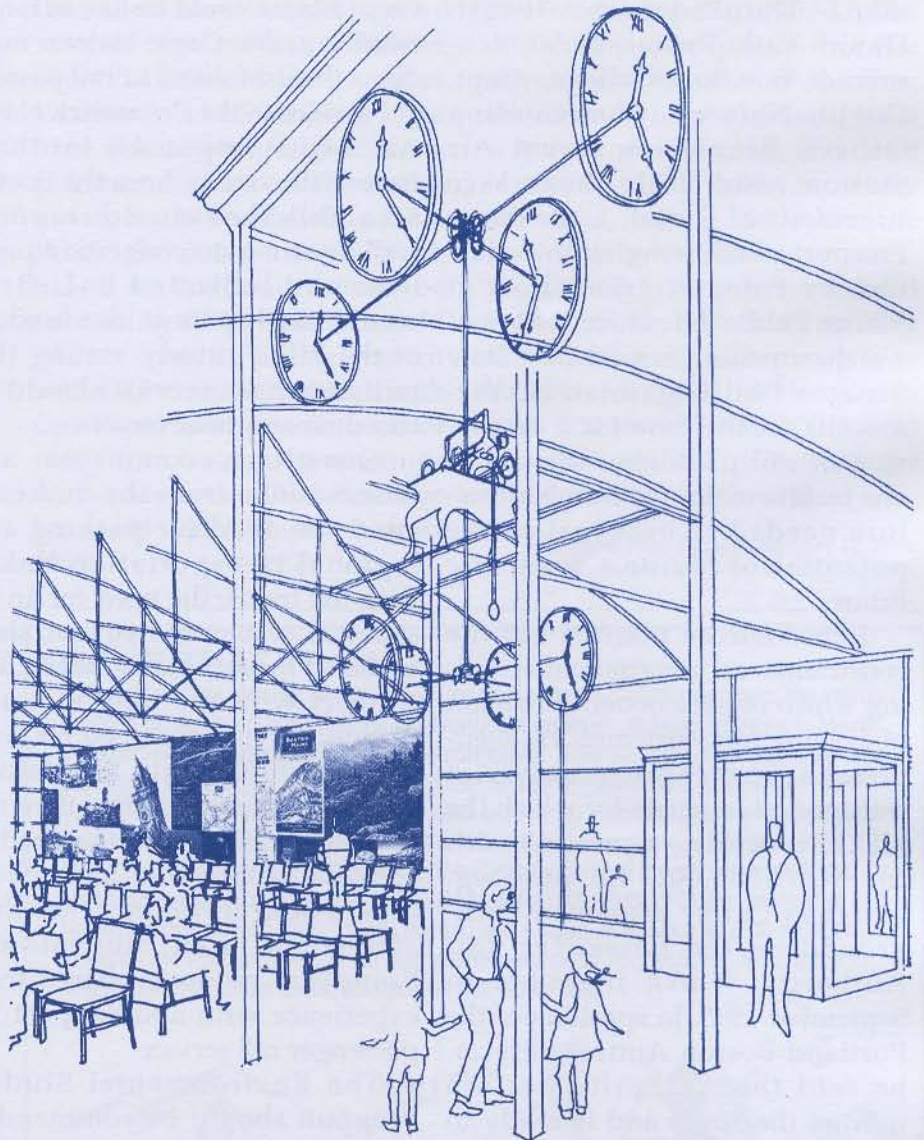
Clock Tower May Grace Portland Train Station

If the Portland City Council approves and a fund-raising effort succeeds, future users of Portland's train station will have a tower clock to tell them whether or not they have time to make the next train. Preliminary designs have been prepared, at no cost, by Van Dam & Renner Architects, designers of the Portland station. The clock, to include faces on the tower and within the waiting room, will be a donation of the Balzer Family of Freeport, dedicated to the Maine Workforce. The Balzers are the last builders of tower clocks in the United States.

The tower is proposed to extend fifty feet above the roof of the station. The

**TRAINRIDER
ACTIVITIES** clock will be placed so that the public can observe the weight-driven mechanism from within the waiting room. About \$100,000 in donations will be sought to fund the tower. People's Heritage Bank will open an account to receive donations. The capital campaign for the tower will be conducted by TrainRiders/Northeast.

TrainRiders Board member Cynthia Garfield, a member of the station building committee, reported at the TrainRiders Board meeting on February 15, 1996, that the committee had not met since late November 1995 pending signing of all contracts regarding the train service.



View of the waiting area as seen from the ticket counters at the Portland Station, showing the tower clock and historical photo collage.

Drawing courtesy of Van Dam Renner Woodworth Architecture and Exhibit Design

Vision of Rail Service Welcomed in Brunswick

An informational meeting sponsored by the Bowdoin College Environmental Studies Program was held on March 6, 1996, at Kresge Auditorium. The well-attended meeting featured a panel including John Melrose, MDOT Commissioner; Jonathan Carter, Vice Chairman, Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority; Wayne Davis, Chairman, TrainRiders/Northeast; David Vail, Professor of Economics, Bowdoin College; Capt. David Nelson, Commanding Officer, Brunswick Naval Air Station; and Bill Shea, Vice President of Retail, L. L. Bean, Freeport. Following an introduction by Patsy Wiggins, host of Maine Public Television's *Maine-watch*, opening remarks by State Senator Phil Harriman (R-Yarmouth) set the tone for a discussion of rail passenger service as one feature of the public infrastructure needed to best realize the potential of Maine's economic future.

John Melrose pointed out the constraints on government spending which require better utilization of existing infrastructure. He mentioned a comprehensive analysis of transportation needs for which the MDOT is seeking a private match for its \$100,000 in funding. Jonathan Carter presented background on the Passenger Rail Authority, which first met in September 1995. In speaking of the Portland-Boston Amtrak service, he said the Authority has the money, the spirit and is ready to go. Wayne Davis indicated that service to and through Brunswick to Augusta, Bangor and Rockland has been among the goals of

TrainRiders/Northeast since its founding in 1989. The infrastructure improvements for the Portland-Boston service are to cost about \$500,000 per mile compared to \$5,000,000 per mile for highways. David Vail recounted his personal experience with a fully integrated multi-modal transportation system in Sweden, and shared his vision of what Mid-Coast Maine could be like in ten to twenty years. Capt. Nelson indicated the usefulness of rail passenger service to the Brunswick Naval Air Station, especially for those Reservists coming from the Boston area. Bill Shea cited Freeport's well-known auto congestion problems and indicated L. L. Bean would participate in the funding of the MDOT study, stating that rail passenger service should be based on economic factors.

Questions, comments and observations from the audience cited the need for parking and regional transportation linked with the trains; the need for an in-state rail system of frequent, short trains to meet regional needs and connect with the long-distance Amtrak service; the need for non-automobile mobility for Maine's elderly particularly after they can no longer drive; and the need to educate people who have never experienced travel by other than automobile or air. Students and Brunswick residents shared their experience with and support for passenger rail service.

The Environmental Studies Program should be commended for its support of the meeting. Rail passenger service could do a lot of good for the environment, part of the shared vision that evening. ■

Kennebec River Rail Line —Threat Averted

Despite the September 9, 1995, Kennebec River Discovery Excursion, intended to show the public the value of the Kennebec River "Lower Road" as a rail line for passenger and freight traffic, the City of Augusta had proposed a parking lot on the railroad right of way. The lot, part of a Community Development Block Grant application, was to occupy the land where the now unused track passes through downtown Augusta, parallel to Water Street. The Maine Department of Transportation opposed any development which would have precluded future use of the rail line, which is owned by the State from Brunswick to the east side of Augusta, including the bridge across the Kennebec River. The City, following a public hearing which some TrainRiders members attended and private meetings with MDOT officials, has agreed to retain a clear path for the tracks.

If Augusta needs additional parking, perhaps it could be in the form of a garage over the tracks which could offer shelter to passengers and a covered loading area for buses, vans and taxis which could meet future trains. The design of any garage should include sufficient clearance to allow "double stack" container traffic and/or electrified passenger rail service. ■

—Robert Elder,
Maine Department of Transportation,
February 26, 1996.

New Hampshire Members Report

Bill Hunt, of Dover, alerted Governor Merrill that the New Hampshire DOT proposed to require all municipalities constructing stations to be served by the Portland-Boston Amtrak trains to receive funds through the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA), in opposition to the suggestion of Mike Murray of Maine DOT that the funds be secured through the Federal Highway Administration (FHA). Only the FTA requires the "13(c)" agreements in order to receive federal funds. The Governor directed the NHDOT to obtain the money from the FHA, thereby relieving municipalities of the possibility of paying personnel laid off as the result of federal subsidies of Amtrak service.

As is the case with Maine municipalities, Dover and Exeter are awaiting signing of contracts for the Amtrak service before committing local resources to new station facilities. The University of New Hampshire already owns the former passenger station at Durham where weekend Amtrak service has been proposed.

The Conway Scenic Railroad opened their line from Bartlett to Crawford Notch to the public on Labor Day Weekend, 1995. The first operating weekend in 1996 falls on Easter, April 6th and 7th. Operations through the Notch begin on June 22 with departures from North Conway at 11:00 AM Tuesday—Sunday through August 31 and daily from September 1—October 18. Trains also run to Conway and Bartlett and a number of lunch and dinner trains are scheduled.

Call 1-800-232-5251 or 1-603-356-5251 for information and reservations. ■

—Bill Hunt, Conway Scenic Railroad

Mountain Division Transportation Corridor

The efforts of the Mountain Division Alliance were covered in a lengthy article in the *Portland Press Herald*, February 12, 1996. The citizens group that has been meeting continues to urge redevelopment of the rail line to enhance economic development in the corridor through which it passes. Although Guilford Transportation Industries, Inc. (GTI) wants to sell most of the railroad line, they have not yet agreed with the State on the purchase of about 5.4 miles of track west of Westbrook. The State would like to be able to offer freight service to industries beyond Westbrook not currently served by GTI. While the portion from Westbrook to Portland would be retained by GTI, the State would like to come to an agreement with GTI to share the track with commuter and possibly other passenger trains. No meetings on the Mountain Division have been held with GTI since August 1995.

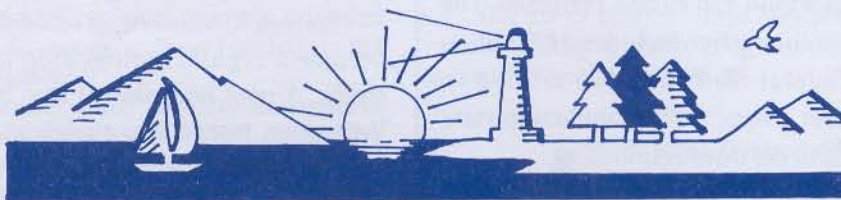
Planning for the corridor continues, with much emphasis on the general economic benefits possible with State acquisition of the rail line. Maietta Construction, with a gravel pit near the railroad in Hiram, would like to move 5,000 to 6,000 truckloads of gravel annually to its headquarters in Scarborough. The Town of Fryeburg, which is trying to develop industrial land adjacent to the railroad and its airport, would also like to see freight service offered. The Alliance is also promoting the recreational benefits of the line, which could offer additional trails within the right of way and improved public access to nearby ski areas, hiking trails and the waters of the Saco River.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 12, 1996, in Gray. The first draft of the Vision map is to be reviewed. All meetings run from 9:30 to 11:00 AM. Call David Willauer at (207) 774-9891 for additional information. ■

—*Portland Press Herald*, February 12, 1996.
Allan Barlett, MDOT, February 28, 1996.

NAME THAT TRAIN

Although Amtrak recently discontinued, for its Northeast Corridor services, the railroad tradition of naming trains, TrainRiders/Northeast believes, at least for trains to Maine, that names make sense and should be continued. After all, rails within the state once supported trains with names such as: *State of Maine*, *Penobscot*, *Kennebec*, *Pine Tree*, *Gull*, *East Wind*, *Bar Harbor Express* and *Flying Yankee*. The average commuter may not care whether the train he or she rides daily has a name or not (the Long Island Rail Road has a train known as the Cannonball) but the person traveling to Maine on vacation might like to anticipate boarding the *State of Maine* instead of just No. 486. What do you think? If you want to see names, in addition to train numbers, for trains on the Portland-Boston service, we welcome your suggestions. Send them to TrainRiders/Northeast at the address on this *TrainRider*.



Maine Coast Railroad 1996 Activities

Dan Moscato, Passenger Operations Director, indicated the Maine Coast Railroad will resume regular operations on Memorial Day Weekend, May 25-27, 1996, with weekend and holiday operations from Wiscasset to Newcastle through Sunday, June 23rd. Daily operations will commence Monday, June 24th through Labor Day Weekend, Monday, September 2nd. Weekend only operations continue from September 7 through October 19, 1996. Trains depart Wiscasset at 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM.

Special events include excursions for Bath Heritage Days; the Air Show at Brunswick Naval Air Station July 19-21; a Rail-Sail trip to Augusta from Brunswick that same weekend, with boat travel available between Richmond and Augusta; and fall foliage trips. Additional passenger cars may be available by the time operations begin. For information on fares and special trips, call 1-800-795-5404.

Construction financed by the November 7, 1995, \$525,000 bond issue to upgrade three miles of track between

Dragon Cement in Thomaston and Rockland is anticipated to start in early spring. The MDOT will be seeking a private contractor to replace approximately 6,000 ties. Final lining and surfacing of the track will probably be done by the Maine Coast Railroad's maintenance crew. The MDOT would like the work to be done by June 1996. The track is used primarily for Dragon's cement trains to the barge loading facility on Rockland Harbor. ■

—Maine Coast Railroad, February 27, 28, 1996.
Allan Bartlett, MDOT, February 28, 1996.

San Francisco Area Rail Line Saved for Passengers

On February 22, 1996, the California Transportation Commission approved the purchase of track in Marin, Sonoma and Mendocino Counties for future public use. The line, purchased from the Southern Pacific Rail Corp., extends 141 miles from Novato to Willits. The northern part of the route, an additional 148 miles to Eureka, is owned by the North Coast Railroad Authority. The entire line is now operated, for freight only, by the California Northern Railroad. A 26-mile stretch of inactive track which connects at Novato, owned by the Golden Gate Bridge Authority, may be considered for future rail commuter service to a ferry terminal at Larkspur, from which boats would run to San Francisco. The \$42 million price includes \$12 million in Federal loans and \$25 million in Federal grants, with \$5 million in state funds to the three counties. ■

—San Francisco Chronicle, Feb. 23, 1996
via Charles Brown.

Maine Coast Railroad - A Second Look

The issue of a replacement for the aging Carlton Bridge over the Kennebec River between Bath and Woolwich has heated up since the level of Federal funds has decreased. The Maine Department of Transportation is now advocating a fixed, four-lane highway bridge upstream of the Carlton Bridge, which would be repaired and retained for its railroad

track. The highway bridge would only offer 75 foot clearance for vessels on the Kennebec, compared to the 135 feet under the raised lift span of the Carlton Bridge. In place of a lift bridge with 135 foot clearance, the 75 foot high fixed bridge would cost about \$110 million, a savings of about \$100 million.

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Vermont Rail Passenger News

Amtrak's Vermonter began service to Windsor, Vermont, on December 15, 1995. The station, which saw its last passenger service dropped by the Boston & Maine Railroad in the summer of 1966, received a new paved platform. The building still stands, in excellent condition, and serves as a restaurant. The stop makes Mount Ascutney the ski area most closely served by Amtrak in the Northeast.

Randolph, Vermont, is scheduled to become a regular station stop in the spring. A pre-Christmas test stop by the Vermonter turned into a celebration as eight busloads of passengers rode from Randolph to Montpelier Jct. to board the

southbound Vermonter back to Randolph. Santa Claus was reportedly on board.

Meanwhile, back at the State House in Montpelier, a committee of the Vermont Legislature has informally decided to continue the state subsidy of the Vermonter, funding for which expires on March 31, 1996. A level of about \$1.0 million is anticipated, with an additional \$800,000 per year if a service between Whitehall, NY, and Burlington, VT, is initiated. A member of the committee is said to have stated, "Compare the figure with other transportation-related expenses. A million bucks will buy one-tenth of a mile of interstate highway." ■

—The 470 (Feb. 1996),
Railpace Newsmagazine (Feb. 1996).

Maine Coast Railroad - A Second Look

(continued from previous page)

Selectmen in Boothbay are backing the less expensive highway span, while selectmen in Wiscasset have asked the MDOT to fund a bypass around their town. The Bath City Council is being urged to accept the lower bridge, even though it would not allow large sailing ships to visit downtown Bath. Wiscasset's request for a bypass reflects the fact that the four lane bridge, without a controlled access four lane road east of the Kennebec River, will not answer the region's highway transportation needs.

Although the cost of the new bridge across the Kennebec is only a fraction of the total cost of bridge, bypass and connecting highways, the public has not yet addressed the issue of paying for the highway construction. Regrettably, political leaders at all levels continue to deny that additional revenues (taxes) may be needed to finance our public mobility. Maine's policy of only issuing new bonds totaling 90% of currently retired capital improvement bonds ignores the reality that highways and bridges need replacement at long intervals and that the costs of those replacements are increasing. Ever try to pay only 90% of your old car's purchase price when you buy a new car?

Rail commuter service could be instituted on the Rockland Branch at least between Brunswick and Wiscasset or North Edgcomb before construction starts on the new highway bridge and highways east of Woolwich.

Adequate rail service which would attract local riders would relieve some of the highway congestion which inevitably accompanies construction.

Senator Harriman (R-Yarmouth) has recommended to RTAC 5 that rail passenger service from Boston be extended to Freeport and Brunswick. As soon as passenger service comes to Brunswick, commuter service on the Rockland Branch could offer passengers connections to Portland and beyond. Extension of the Brunswick commuter service from North Edgcomb to Rockland would allow Amtrak passengers to reach Rockland and other intermediate points, thereby somewhat reducing the seasonal tourist traffic which now plagues Route One in Mid-Coast Maine. Feeder buses to locations not on the rail line, such as Boothbay Harbor and Camden, as well as "off-peak" buses paralleling the rail line, could extend the usefulness of rail service to more residents and visitors.

The Maine Coast Railroad would welcome the opportunity to run commuter trains. Let's use rail and highway working together to minimize congestion and maximize mobility and economic advantages for Mid-Coast residents, businesses and tourists. ■

— *Maine Sunday Telegram*, Dec. 24, 1995;
Portland Press Herald, January 30, February 9,
1996; *RTAC News*, December 1995, March 1996;
Sharon White, President, Maine Coast Railroad,
February 28, 1996.

Florida Overland eXpress (FOX) Wins Florida High Speed Rail Franchise

The Florida Department of Transportation announced on February 27, 1996 that Florida Overland eXpress (FOX) was chosen as the high speed rail franchisee. Four other candidates were considered in the application process. The actual award will follow a required three week public notice period. Construction is required to begin within three years of the certification date. Anticipated routes will run from Miami to Orlando and Orlando to Tampa.

FOX, a consortium of Fluor Daniel, Odebrecht Contractors of Florida, Bombardier and GEC Alsthom, will also involve a long list of Florida corporations. The system, which will use the proven French TRV technology, will involve an electrified network of new and existing rights of way which will be State owned. Equipment is to be privately owned and operated. Speeds of about 200 miles per hour will permit a Miami-Orlando trip time of 1:25 beginning in 2004. The Orlando-Tampa service is anticipated to begin operating in 2006.

"Construction costs, including stations but not the trains themselves and other equipment, are estimated at about \$3.8 billion for a system that will

(continued on page 6)

Rhode Island Rail Funding

The State of Rhode Island adopted its Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for October 1, 1995 — September 30, 1997, on January 11, 1996. The largest item in FY '96 is \$13.9 million in capital funding to expand MBTA service to Providence and continue it for another five years. An additional \$1.5 million for the Kingston station project is spread over FY '96 and '97. Planned for FY '98 are new sidings at Kingston and Westerly to accommodate commuter trains and provide high level platforms. Westerly station would also be rehabilitated in FY '98 for \$2.0 million. Stations are proposed for FY '98 for Warwick, adjacent to the T. F. Green Airport, and for Wickford, at a total cost of \$8.0 mil-

lion, to support a proposed commuter service between Westerly and Providence. (While not in the TIP, the Meshantucket Pequot Indians want a monorail system between Westerly station, now served by Amtrak, and their gambling casino in Ledyard, CT. It would also serve Norwich, CT. One has to wonder why connecting the future Providence-oriented commuter service with Connecticut's "Shoreline East" service, recently extended from Old Saybrook to New London, is not being considered.)

Providence, which was once the center of an extensive trolley network extending through most of Rhode Island and into nearby Massachusetts, will be looked at in a Major Investment Study for possible future light rail transit (the current name for electri-

cally powered trolleys). Also the subject of a study is the possibility of extending MBTA commuter rail service south of Fall River to Newport. Despite Newport's status as one of the premier resort cities in Rhode Island, a previous RIDOT study ignored the potential of tourist ridership. The line's northern sections offer pleasant views of Narragansett and Mount Hope Bays and allow entrance into Newport without adding to traffic congestion on the city's colonial era streets. ■

—Rhode Island Transportation
Improvement Program, January 11, 1996;
corres. Everett Stuart, *RIARP*, Feb. 19, 1996;
B&MRRHS Newsletter,
January/February 1996.

RAILROAD SAFETY

—Public Needs to Realize Trains Are There

Maine Operation Lifesaver has continued its educational efforts to make the public more aware of Railroad Safety. Their recent efforts were detailed in the 1995 Annual Report. In addition to many classroom presentations, displays at public events and publicity materials, Operation Lifesaver train rides were provided for the media on the Maine Coast Railroad on May 17 and on the Bangor & Aroostook on June 30.

Mike Murray of Maine's Department of Transportation recommended public education centered on the soon to be restored passenger service on the Portland-Boston route through southern Maine and New Hampshire. Not only will train frequencies increase above present freight train usage by Springfield Terminal but speeds of passenger trains will be markedly faster than current freight train speeds. During the construction period, additional trains may be operated and times of presently scheduled freights may change.

These present added dangers to trespassers on railroad property and to users of the 78 rail/road grade crossings (36 public and 42 private) between Portland and Plaistow, New Hampshire. While modification of grade crossing warning signals to accommodate increased train

speeds will be part of the upgrading of the railroad, not all crossings can expect to be improved by installation of signals or eliminated by grade separation projects. The public will have to realize that the tracks will be in more frequent use than at present.



Following the tragic grade crossing accident in Fox River Grove, IL, on October 25, 1995, which made the front page of the Portland Press Herald, I had occasion to cross the tracks of the Maine Coast Railroad on the approach ramps from U.S. Route One at Cooks Corner in Brunswick. Here, too, the traffic signals could hold a vehicle on the tracks, but these signals were not connected to track circuits as in Illinois. However, there had been a sign to warn motorists against stopping on the track. It was no longer there! Maine should carefully study its grade crossings and take reasonable measures to warn the driving public of the dangers. By the way, net barriers to prevent any vehicle driving around lowered crossing gates are being installed at railroad grade crossings in some Illinois towns at a cost of about \$1 million, each. ■

—Portland Press Herald, October 26, 1995,
Maine Operation Lifesaver,
Annual Report, 1995,
Rail Travel News, Jan. 18, 1996.

Florida Overland eXpress (continued from page 5)

have the carrying capacity of a 10-lane expressway. In contrast, the current estimate for an expressway of comparable length is more than \$6.6 billion, according to DOT's own statistics. The state DOT's total 25-year transportation infrastructure budget for the years 1995-2020 is about \$107 billion."

Florida will, at the end of the 40 year franchise period, have a fully paid-for, revenue-generating facility. "Full intermodal connections with airports, commuter trains and urban transit systems,

as well as rental cars, vans and taxis are an integral part of the FOX proposal. Intermodal checked baggage, handicapped access and air-conditioned stations and platforms all are part of the FOX plan."

"In Europe, high-speed trains are highly profitable but are part of a national network and help subsidize the regional trains." [Why not here, too? Ed.] ■

—Florida Department of Transportation
News Release, February 27, 1996.
Florida Overland eXpress News Release,
February 27, 1996.

New York Future Bleak Without Public Transit

The New York Times, February 14, 1996, used the sub-head "Huge Transit Programs Are Recommended to Save Economy" for an article on the recent Regional Plan Association's five year study for the New York metropolitan area. The plan looks ahead to the year 2030 and recommends overhauling government bureaucracies; strengthening urban cores throughout the three state, 31 county area; creating better access to jobs (especially through improved education for recent immigrant populations); preserving open spaces; consolidating jobs in urban centers; and creating new links in the region's highways, subways and commuter railroads.

The area's employment grew at the slowest rate of any of the 15 major metropolitan areas in the U. S. between 1982 and 1992. Major infrastructure investment is needed to remain competitive with the globalized world economy to avoid declines in employment and quality of life for the region. A 1995 poll of residents indicated support for an increase in gasoline taxes for specific capital improvements, estimated to cost \$25 billion over the next 25 years.

Rail improvements would have the aim of tying the commuter rail and subway lines together in the fashion of the Paris Metro. Rail service would finally be extended to Kennedy International Airport. In many cases, only short links would need to be constructed—there is even an unused subway tunnel under the East River which would allow Long Island Railroad trains to reach Grand Central Terminal.

While nothing can be constructed cheaply in a high cost area such as New York, failure to make these investments seriously threatens the entire regional economy. ■

—The New York Times, February 14, 1996.

MBTA Developments

A private contractor completed the subgrade work for the second track between Westboro and Worcester in January 1996. Conrail will begin laying track in April, with completion scheduled by December 15, 1996. Also scheduled for completion in December are commuter stations in Millbury and Grafton. However, neighbors have been objecting to the proposals, despite studies showing that property values increase after commuter rail stations are constructed nearby. The second track should substantially reduce operational delays to passenger trains on Conrail's "Boston Line". Redevelopment of the old Union Station in Worcester is proceeding under the Worcester Redevelopment Authority.

The MBTA has a preliminary ridership study underway on a portion of the old Central Massachusetts Branch of the Boston & Maine. The study, expected to be completed in May, will look into commuter ridership between Hudson, which is just inside I-495, and Boston. Hudson lost commuter service in 1965 and all passenger service on the Central Mass. ceased on November 26, 1971, when the last Budd cars departed South Sudbury.

The MBTA recently accepted a bid of about \$36.5 million for construction of the ten mile extension of the Ipswich line to Newburyport. Parking at Newburyport will include 838 spaces in three lots, plus platforms and a four track layover facility replacing that currently at Ipswich. Construction is expected to start this spring with completion in the fall of 1997. Bids to construct the station building, which will include newsstand, restrooms and other services, will be sought this fall. The U. S. Route One highway overpass at the site will be reconstructed under a separate contract at a cost of about \$10.5 million. Also on the Ipswich-Rockport lines of the MBTA, on which

ridership has risen 17%, is Salem, the fourth busiest station on the entire commuter rail system. The MBTA has sought design bids for a 400 space parking deck at Salem. The nearby city of Peabody has instituted a shuttle bus service from Peabody Square to the Salem station.

On November 30, 1995, Governor Weld announced to a breakfast of the South Shore Chamber of Commerce that the still controversial Greenbush Branch will be rebuilt for rail commuter service. Based on a number of studies, including the Supplemental Draft Environmental Statement Report, the recommendation is for commuter rail all the way to Greenbush with use of the existing at-grade line through Hingham Square. Final environmental reports are expected to take six months, with construction to start in 1997 and trains to roll in 1999. Costs to restore the approximately 17 mile line from Braintree to Greenbush are estimated at \$215 million, with an annual operating cost of \$5.6 million, substantially less than the \$7.7 million operating cost of the ferry and improved bus option which would serve fewer passengers. It is anticipated to reduce automobile usage by 8,200 trips per workday. Self propelled diesel railcars may be considered to reduce noise and vibration impacts on properties adjacent to the line, compared with locomotive hauled equipment.

A free experimental commuter boat service between Scituate Harbor and Boston started January 24 for a two month trial. The \$153,000 cost is being paid for by the State. Although longer term improvements are to be sought for the ferry service from Hingham, alternative ports at Nantasket and Cohasset were determined not to be cost-effective. The commuter boat, which normally serves as a whale watch boat, has been subject to weather caused cancellations and delays.

The Old Colony Restoration Project is

proceeding on schedule for an anticipated completion date of December 15, 1996. Stations have been essentially completed at Campello (Brockton) and West Bridgewater. Construction has begun on the station at Middleborough. Two bridges remain to be constructed in Brockton. The Conrail freight track between Braintree and Middleborough remains in use during construction.

The MBTA plans to extend Stoughton service about two and one-half miles to North Easton. The extension is expected to cost \$17 million and serve 1,900 daily riders. Boston is reached via Amtrak's Northeast Corridor (NEC) from Canton Jct. Service is tentatively expected to begin in 1998.

Also planned is restored commuter service to Boston between New Bedford and Fall River via Taunton and Attleborough, where a new northward connection to Amtrak's Northeast Corridor (NEC) would be constructed. The NEC through Attleborough already sees frequent MBTA commuter trains between Boston and Providence, RI. Seasonal Amtrak service from New York to Cape Cod runs from Attleborough to Taunton enroute to and from Middleborough and the Cape on a line already upgraded for passenger train operations. Routes between Taunton, Fall River and New Bedford, now owned by Conrail and used for freight, will be reconstructed for 79 mph operation of passenger trains. This is expected to cost \$156 million for trackwork and other infrastructure improvements and \$90 million for new commuter equipment. A late 1997 startup is anticipated for the trains, which are expected to serve about 4,200 daily riders.

—MBTA Construction and Public Affairs Offices, March 7, 1996; B&MRRHS Newsletter, January/February, March/April 1996, The Greenbush Corridor Summary of Findings and Recommendations, December 1995; The Central Mass, B&MRRHS, 1975.

TrainRiders/Northeast Welcomes New Members

George Billmyer, Annandale, VA; Katheryn Boris, Ann Arbor, MI; the Deming family, Pownal, ME; James Dingus, Dingus & Daga, Inc., Shaker Heights, OH; Arthur & Marjorie Dole, Trenton, ME; Joe & Glenys Gardner, Leesburg, VA; Russel M. Ingalls, Jr., Naples, ME; Roger P. Lambert, Vallejo, CA; Maine State Society, Washington, D.C., Falls Church, VA. George & Laney Neavoll, Portland, ME; Anne L. Oehlschlaeger, Laconia, NH; Reverend Richard N. Pease, Kennebunk, ME; Albert Pisani, Provincetown, MA; Richard & Priscilla Rooth, Brunswick, ME; Tracy DeLeon Sergi & Nicholas Sergi, Lee, NH. John I. Simpson, Stillwater, ME; Cliff Sinnott, Exeter, NH; Duncan Wright, Portland, ME.

Corporate Members: Gorham Fence Co, Standish, ME, Time Warner Cable, South Portland, ME.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

It's been seven years since we started on this project. Remember, we were promised passenger rail service for June of 1993? We sat patiently while the startup time advanced to October of that year, and then to June, to October, to June, to October, and then to June of this year. Late last year we began to hear "October of '96." That means we'll miss another summer tourist season—together with the loss of close to \$6 million in tourism revenue. Just this month, we were informed that "October is doable but difficult...." I don't know about you, but I'm weary of the delays. Besides, if service had begun on time, this region would have been able to enjoy about \$24 million in additional tourism revenue. Haven't we waited long enough?

While the State DOT has been doing its utmost to expedite the project, other parties have not been so forthcoming. If those other parties spent half as much time looking for ways to accelerate this project as they spend making excuses for extending delays, trains could have been running long before now.

Please, pick up your phone and call Governor King at (207) 287-3531 or fax your comments to him at (207) 287-1034. Ask him to use the full force of his office to move this project along. Time's a-wasting. If you don't do it, who will? —WD

THE TRAINRIDER

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(207) TRY-RAIL (879-7245)

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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.