

TRAINRIDER

The Newsletter of TrainRiders/Northeast



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Submitted by Wayne Davis

As we go to press, there's still no word from the Surface Transportation Board about the status of our Boston-Dover-Portland project. We received a letter recently from Michael Murray, Executive Director of the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority, that speaks of our hearing from the STB "within the next two weeks." Let's hope.

What's to be done? Speak out one more time to your local, state and federal representatives. Write a letter to the editor of your local paper, call into radio and television programs when appropriate. Let people hear that you want the train and you want it now! The money and equipment are there—but vocal opponents are still among us.

It is not too late to tell members of Congress that you want a favorable outcome from the current Amtrak session. You want the Amtrak political games on both sides of the aisle to stop. President Clinton could stand to hear your opinion. Amtrak should be given the \$2.3 billion currently approved for equipment replacement. Stay with us on this.

Thanks to those of you who have expressed your wishes to Washington.

Well, finally we have a presence on the Internet. Check out our handsome Web page. And as always, your calls, letters and the newspaper clippings from your region are welcome. —WD

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www.cybertours.com/~trainriders

OUR E-MAIL ADDRESS IS

trainriders@cybertours.com

REGIONAL RAIL NEWS

Massachusetts Completes Major Railroad Project

The Boston-Plymouth/Kingston and Boston-Middleborough/Lakeville portions of the MBTA Old Colony Restoration Project commenced weekday peak-hour commuter service on September 29, 1997. The initial service has four round trips on weekdays from each of the end points to and from Boston. Weekend and off-peak services are to begin in December, with up to 24 round trips per day.

The dedication ceremonies on September 26, 1997, saw community leaders from the "South Shore" boarding special trains for a ride to Boston, where they were met by Acting Governor Paul Cellucci and a large crowd at South Station. Among those in evidence at the station were both opponents and supporters of the third Old Colony line, that to Greenbush, which has been stalled by local opposition. Supporters of the North-South Rail Link were there, presenting the Link as the natural extension of the Old Colony service which would join the two halves of the MBTA commuter rail network, which now has eleven lines radiating from Boston. The Link will also enable passengers to and from Maine to pass through Boston without changing stations or trains.

The Old Colony service has many similarities with the proposed service to Maine. It is operated, under contract with the MBTA, by Amtrak, using MBTA locomotives and cars. The initial schedule, four round trips per day, is the proposed starting level of service on the Portland-Boston run, coordinated with three round trips by bus to give more choices of travel time. Speeds on the Old Colony are somewhat slower than those proposed for the Maine service, in part due to the close spacing of the commuter stations. With a 60 mph top speed, trip times on the lines to Plymouth and Middleborough are estimated to be about 65 minutes, for an overall speed of about 32 miles per hour. This, however, represents a significant time savings compared with the Southeast Expressway, the inner end of which is under construction as a result of Boston's "Big Dig", the placing underground of I-93 and construction of the Rail Link. The third harbor highway tunnel is already in operation. The Maine service is proposed to have top speeds, where track conditions permit, of 79 miles per hour and a trip time close to two hours for the 114 mile distance.

The cost of the Old Colony reconstruction has been \$537 million to date,

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with an additional \$215 million estimated for the Greenbush line. However, that price includes continuous welded rail on new ties and roadbed, many highway overpasses and underpasses, gated crossing protection at all grade crossings, new signalling systems for the trains, and 13 entirely new stations. All stations have high-level platforms and are fully handicapped-accessible. Stations at Braintree and Quincy Center, served by the MBTA's "Red Line" subway, were reconstructed to accommodate the commuter rail line. All stations beyond Braintree except Brockton, in the heart of this older industrial city, feature large parking lots — some with capacity for over 1,000 vehicles.

The Old Colony service, which ended June 30, 1959, after the Massachusetts legislature refused to renew a subsidy to the New Haven Railroad, had been carrying about 10,000 passengers a day to Boston on three routes

which converged at Braintree. The new service, initially on two routes, is anticipated to carry about the same number of passengers. Timetables in effect at the end of service in 1959 indicated about 35 round trips per day on the three lines, with some trains on the Middleborough line serving points on Cape Cod. Like the proposed Portland-Boston rail service, the New Haven timetables featured bus service between Cape Cod, Boston and New York City as well as steamship service from New Bedford and Woods Hole to Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. Sounds a lot like Maine DOT's "Grand Plan" for integrated rail, bus and ferry services to Maine coastal destinations!

On September 13, 1997, your editor observed children using the ramps to the high-level platforms at Abington for tricycles and skateboards and spoke with a man and his teenage son at Whitman, both of whom had ridden a special MBTA train on the Kingston Line on April 19, 1997, who were thinking about

how the son could commute to college at Franklin on the MBTA. Workers were cleaning up construction debris at the Halifax station and some minor work remained to be done at other stations, but the line had already been in operation for crew training.

The Greenbush Line remains stalled by controversy, the latest being that the Town of Scituate voted against re-using the Greenbush terminal as a storage site for trains, despite an offer by the MBTA to contribute \$3.5 million to cap the town's landfill, which they would purchase for the layover facility.

—*Providence Evening Bulletin*, June 30, 1959;
New Haven Railroad Public Timetables
No. 21,22,23,24, October 27, 1958;
The Boston Globe, September 27, 1997;
Maine Sunday Telegram, September 28, 1997;
MBTA fax, July 29, 1997,
telephone conversations with
MBTA Communications Office,
September 2 and 29, 1997,
Railpace Newsmagazine, Sept 1997.

Sunday River Ski Train Cancelled

Following a fourth season characterized as "a great year", the Sunday River Express between Portland and Bethel, Maine is not expected to operate for the 1997-98 ski season. Representatives of both Sunday River and the Belfast & Moosehead Lake Railroad, which provided the cars and staffed the on-board services last year, announced the decision September 4, 1997. Directional signs to the Portland station along I-95 and I-295 near Portland have been removed.

The lack of connecting passenger trains from Boston reduced ridership to uneconomic levels, as the train served, with few exceptions, only the Greater Portland area. Passenger boarding locations in Yarmouth and

Auburn, near Lewiston Jct. were also served. High-level platforms were constructed at Portland, Auburn and Bethel, providing easier boarding for ski-laden passengers as well as those using wheelchairs. Buses connected with the train at Bethel for the short trip to the ski area in Newry. Users of the train praised its amenities, despite lengthening of schedules to accommodate safety concerns at unsignalled grade crossings along its route between Portland and Bethel. The St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad provided the locomotives and operating crews for the ski train.

Meanwhile, the Ethan Allen Express, a

daily Amtrak train started last winter between New York City and Rutland, Vermont, specifically to serve nearby ski areas, continues to operate year round. The City of Rutland is close to completing a land swap to enable a train station to be constructed behind the downtown shopping plaza. Rutland has about one third the population of Portland. A group in Fair Haven, Vermont, a town near Vermont's western border, is meeting with Amtrak, State officials and the Clarendon & Pittsford Railroad seeking a stop on the Ethan Allen Express in their town.

—*Portland Press Herald*, September 5, 1997;
The 470, August 1997, Vermont Rail
Council meeting, Sept. 18, 1997.

Maine Commissioner of Transportation Addresses NARP Meeting

The Annual Meeting of **Region One of the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP)** was held in Portland on Saturday, March 22, 1997.

The meeting gave TrainRiders members in attendance a chance to hear, direct from NARP representatives, what is going on regarding passenger rail service in the other New England states.

Susan Hamilton and Rep. John A. Businger (MA), Chair, Massachusetts Legislative North/South Rail Link Caucus, spoke of the efforts to get continued funding for the North/South Station Rail Link. The project has support outside Massachusetts and is of national importance. As Rep. Businger stated in a recent letter to Jolene M. Molitoris, Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration, "The high speed Northeast Corridor should not dead end at South Station in Boston. Inaction on this Rail Link would be an error of historic proportions — the fate of regional rail in the Northeast depends on extension of what really is a national corridor on the East Coast." The Rail Link would make passenger service to Maine and other northern New England points more attractive and would also reduce or eliminate the need for another airport to replace Boston's Logan International.

Steve Musen from Rhode Island characterized his state as, "The land of sprouting catenary poles", in reference to the Northeast Corridor electrification project which was setting poles in western Rhode Island. He also spoke of upcoming planning for future rail service between Newport and Boston and political factors retarding expansion of current MBTA commuter services to Providence.

Representatives from Connecticut spoke of their state's lack of vision for future passenger rail services despite the ongoing Northeast Corridor electrification and considerable success with commuter rail services east of New Haven.

New Hampshire representatives noted little progress at the state political level, despite a more balanced trans-

portation approach by the NHDOT, while Vermont representatives cited the success of the Ethan Allen Express and the Vermonter and planning for future commuter rail service centered on Burlington.

John G. Melrose, Maine Commissioner of Transportation, spoke at length of his vision for a future in which rail passenger service will play a significant part, a vision fully supported by Governor King. He urged TrainRiders



John G. Melrose

members to request additional federal funds to insure that much of the Portland-Boston route can be upgraded to FRA Class IV and passenger trains can operate at speeds of up to 79 mph.

Proposed rail service within the state includes extending Amtrak service to Brunswick, commuter rail on the Rockland Branch, service to Bar Harbor via Bangor and Hancock Point, service to the Lewiston and Auburn area via the St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad, eventual extensions beyond Bangor to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, and service, "from the Atlantic Ocean to Lake Champlain" via the former Maine Central Mountain Division. High speed ferries would be integrated with rail services at Bath, Rockland and Hancock Point to serve Acadia National Park on Mt. Desert Island. Rail hubs at Portland and Bangor would make car-free vacations possible and attract foreign tourists to Maine.

David Carol, Amtrak Vice-President

for High Speed Rail, gave an overview of progress on the Northeast Corridor Electrification Project. Upon projected completion in the year 2000, 34 trains per day will operate between Boston and New York at speeds of up to 150 miles per hour. Twelve high speed train sets have been ordered, with options for six more. All tracks at South Station (Boston) will be electrified and additional track will be installed between Boston and Route 128 to accommodate the expanded Amtrak service and additional commuter services.

Ross B. Capon, Executive Director of NARP, gave an overview of the fast-changing national picture regarding Amtrak funding and services. He urged support of long-range capital funding for Amtrak and transitional operating funding to allow operations to continue until the new equipment is delivered.

Maine's Governor Keynote Speaker at TrainRiders' Annual Meeting

Our 9th Annual Meeting was held Saturday, April 26, 1997, at the Portland Club. Chairman Wayne Davis opened the meeting with introductions of various persons connected with the effort to re-establish passenger rail service in Northern New England.

Gene Skoropowski gave an update on the progress of the Florida Overland eXpress (FOX) High Speed Rail project. The project, funded with 75% public (from Florida's existing highway fuel taxes) and 25% private money, includes \$230 million in design work, \$5.3 billion in construction and will result in a positive cash flow returning to the State of Florida after ten years of operation. The first trains are to run between Miami and Orlando in 2004.

Rod Rodrigue, former President of

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the Belfast & Moosehead Lake Railroad, was recognized for his operation of last year's Sunday River ski train, using B&ML's Swedish passenger cars, characterized as a "class act".

Governor King delivered the keynote address, describing his family's background in railroading and his own skepticism toward the North/South Station Link when running for Governor. He now sees its economic benefits for Maine, which supports the construction of the



Governor Angus King with Cindy Garfield, vice chairman of TrainRiders/Northeast

rail tunnel but is not a direct participant. He then outlined the state's plans for integrated rail and passenger ferry services along the Maine coast. While on a trade mission in Norway, he traveled by bus, train and had meals enroute over a ten hour day—a type of travel that could be duplicated in Maine. He supports the widening of the Maine Turnpike and noted that increased toll revenues could help subsidize train service. He mentioned that a dinner train might be able to operate from Westbrook to Fryeburg over the former Mountain Division.

The Governor thanked TrainRiders Northeast members for their efforts, without whom "this wouldn't even be a dream, we would not be where we are today."

Following the election, in which 115 votes were cast, Jane Holtz Kay wrapped up the meeting with an entertaining slide show featuring illustrations from her recent book, *Asphalt Nation*. The book deals with the evolutionary process by which the United States has systematically destroyed most of its public transportation systems in favor of the automobile, and suggests ways in which the people can regain their mobility with less use of the automobile. ■

Maine Railroad News

Mountain Division Transportation Corridor: The former Maine Central Railroad in New Hampshire, between Conway Scenic's line at Intervale and Glen, has been rehabilitated by contractor R. J. Corman. Conway Scenic crews reinstalled the track switch at Intervale to permit the American Association of Private Car Owners to place their private railroad cars at Redstone in September. However, track conditions on the NH&VT Railroad prevented the train from reaching Conway Scenic Railway rails. The train of private cars originated in Chicago, traveled via Syracuse, NY, and Montreal, Que., and returned to Montreal after a brief visit to Portland over the St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad.

The Maine portion of the Mountain Division, about 40 miles of which were purchased by the Maine Department of Transportation on New Year's Eve, 1996, is unusable at this time. The line east of Route 302 in Windham, ME, remains in Guilford Transportation Industries (GTI) ownership. No agreement has yet been reached with GTI for use of their track east of Windham, some of which has active freight service. The line connects with the former Boston & Maine Western Division near the site of the former, and future, Portland Union Station.

—The 470, June and October, 1997.

TrainRiders' Member Appointed to Amtrak Advisory Board

Richard H. Rudolph (PhD.), a long-time member of TrainRiders/Northeast, has recently been appointed to serve as Vice-Chair of Amtrak's new Customer Advisory Committee. This committee, which is part of the National Railroad Passenger Corporation's ongoing effort to improve its understanding of customers' needs and concerns, is composed of short and long distance customers representing the Northeast and Midwest corridors, Empire and Metroliner service and East and West short and long distance service. The committee's mission includes improving the quality of service "from the customer's point of view", providing management with input concerning customer perception of service and facilitating the inclusion of customer observations into service monitoring and modification. The committee will provide advice on train routes, frequency and modification of service, assist Amtrak with the development

of policy related to Customer Service and advise and cooperate in resolving conflicts and clarifying positions regarding issues of public transportation interest. The committee will offer other advice it deems necessary and appropriate for improving Amtrak service.

Dr. Rudolph's interest in serving on the committee stems from a deep concern about the long term future of Amtrak and the positive role that the committee can play in helping the National Railroad Passenger Corporation meet its long term goals and objectives. While he agrees that there may be a need for additional cost cutting, more emphasis must be placed on accurately assessing potential ridership and attracting new business to protect an important transportation alternative. Curtailing service, he believes, can only lead to a death spiral and the dismemberment of the national rail passenger system in

th United States.

His interest in rail transportation relates to his work. He is a Professor of Community Planning at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, and is a full-time organic farmer residing in Steep Falls, Maine. He envisions a sustainable transportation system which is effective and environmentally safe. New strategies, he says, need to be developed to create a non-polluting, equitable and efficient multimodal transportation system. Careful planning of integrated system and mass transit systems as well as the use of clean technologies such as solar electric vehicles and the electrification of the Northeast Corridor may be the keys to the challenge. Intercity rail as well as long distance rail service also have important roles to play in reducing traffic congestion and providing alternatives to citizens who cannot or do not wish to fly or drive.

—Panasonic Fax System, August 1, 1997.

St. Lawrence & Atlantic: St. Lawrence & Atlantic's intermodal service, operating via the St. L & A and Canadian National between Auburn, ME, and U.S. and Canadian midwest points on a four days per week basis since September 1994, continues to expand. An October startup date is anticipated for its intermodal facility in Berlin, NH.

—*The 470*, August 1997

Maine Coast Railroad: Maine Coast Railroad's yard at Rockland shows the benefits of the November 1955 \$525,000 bond issue which has resulted in completely rebuilt tracks and removal of tracks no longer needed. Passenger cars awaiting restoration and assorted work equipment occupy those tracks not used by cement trains shuttling between Dragon Cement and the barge loading facility on Rockland Harbor.

Their tourist trains between Wiscasset and Bath have done better than last year. Daily operation ended Labor Day, with weekend operation on a more extended schedule. For information on fares, schedules and special trips, call 1-800-795-5404.

Freight traffic between Brunswick and Augusta is handled two to three times weekly. The State completed preventive maintenance on the substructure of the Nichols River bridge in Newcastle in September.

—Sharon White, Pres., Maine Coast Railroad,
October 1, 1997.

Maine DOT Update on Passenger Rail Activities: "It is a pleasure to have this opportunity to provide an article for the newsletter and to bring the membership of TrainRiders up-to-date on our initiatives. The Office of Passenger Transportation was formed early in the spring of 1996. Since that time, we have been

Maine Railroad News

busy reorganizing, filling vacancies and launching our strategic planning efforts.

"We are deeply involved with the restoration of passenger rail service. However, our charter runs the gamut of passenger transportation. This office is responsible for the coordination of all modes into a seamless passenger transportation system. Under the umbrella of the organization falls the Maine State Ferry Service, airport planning and development, passenger rail planning and development and non-motorized planning and development. Frankly, if it does not directly relate to highways and bridges, there is a good chance we are involved.

"That brings me to passenger rail. We have a number of on-going efforts which should be of interest. We are working closely with Mike Murray in supporting his efforts to bring AMTRAK to Maine. As you know, the Surface Transportation Board is now involved in bringing any items remaining in dispute between AMTRAK and Guilford to resolution. We are hopeful and cautiously optimistic that the Board action will bring finality to the issues and that construction can begin. We expect a decision soon.

"While Mike is steering this process, we are busy planning how to proceed from there. Since last October, we have been working on the development of a Strategic Passenger Transportation Plan "The Grand Plan." The Plan provides a vision and strategy for a strong, seamless transportation system which will provide options for traveling in Maine. We are now reviewing the final drafts and hope

to have a document ready for public review within the next few weeks. For those of you who were fortunate enough to attend the annual meeting, you had an opportunity to hear Governor King provide an overview of key components of the Plan.

"The Plan supports the extension of passenger rail beyond Portland and the development of a marine highway, with connectivity between the two modes. In the first phase, we envision the extension of AMTRAK service to Brunswick, where a transfer would be made to a line providing service to Rockland. Rail passengers would be able to cross-connect to coastal ferries at Portland or Rockland which would continue to Bar Harbor. We want to maximize the potential ridership on both systems by providing seamless inter-connections and making transportation part of the adventure.

"As we look to the future, we see rapid expansion of passenger rail. Opportunities clearly exist for partnering with the St. Lawrence & Atlantic and the Bangor & Aroostook Railroads. We can easily imagine the restoration of passenger rail service to Montreal or an extended rail vacation package which would wind through the Western Mountains or into the Canadian Provinces by going through Aroostook County. All of these things are feasible; we are only limited by our imagination.

"I realize this has only been the briefest of overviews, but I'm sure that we will have many opportunities to discuss initiatives and get your thoughts. I look forward to a continuing strong relationship with Wayne and the membership. Thanks for your continuing efforts to promote passenger rail."

—Ron Roy, Director,
Office of Passenger Transportation,
Maine DOT, July 1997.

New Hampshire Rail News and Commentary

The New Hampshire DOT is rebuilding the Route 108 grade crossing in Newmarket as part of a major water and sewer line project. The crossing, which is on the line of the planned Portland-Boston Amtrak service, will be protected when the project is complete. Dover is holding off on crossing work adjacent to its station until word is received on the startup of the Amtrak service.

In early June, track removal began on the former New Hampshire & Vermont Railroad line between Whitefield (Waumbek Jct.) and Gorham. The State owns the line. The railroad bridge over the St. Lawrence & Atlantic at Gorham was removed earlier this year to permit operation of double-stack containers on the St. Lawrence & Atlantic.

Although state ownership assures that

the right of way will not become a series of privately owned land parcels, removal of this track effectively cuts a useful east-west rail route between Portland, ME, and Swanton, VT, near St. Albans. The remaining reasonably direct route is via Crawford Notch, a line with much heavier grades.

—TrainRiders/Northeast Board Meeting,
Sept. 25, 1997; *Railpace Newsmagazine*,
August 1997.

Your Chairman and Editor Guests At Vermont Rail Council Meeting

On September 18, 1997, Wayne Davis and I were invited guests at the Vermont Rail Council meeting in Montpelier. Glenn M. Gershaneck, Secretary, Vermont Agency of Transportation (VAOT), serves as Chairman of the Council. John Vincent, a Train-Riders Board member, is a member of the Council.

The agenda contained a wide variety of issues, both within and outside of Vermont, including relations with Guilford Transportation Industries, Amtrak, freight railroads and other modes of transportation affecting the state's citizens and visitors. Considerable discussion centered on intrastate rail passenger service, including the proposed Burlington-Charlotte commuter service, currently stalled by local objections and the public's perceived lack of support by the Rail Council. The Council also discussed extension of the service through Burlington to Essex Jct., which would serve an important industrial park and allow connections to be made with Amtrak's Vermonter. The success of the Vermonter and the Ethan Allen Express has reduced the payments Vermont is required to make to Amtrak to operate these services.

Perhaps of most interest to Maine was the presentation and discussion of a recently completed report on the future of the Lamoille Valley Railroad. The line, state-owned since December 1973, was once part of the route from Portland, ME, to the Great Lakes via Crawford Notch. It has not seen freight service for eight years and passenger excursions ended in 1996. Abandonment, in whole or in part, seems to be the likely future, with conversion of portions to recreational (trail) use.

Some members of the public expressed reservations over the conclusions of the report, which was prepared

by Carl D. Martland of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The Conservation Law Foundation states, in part, "We think Vermonters deserve something more from this large capital investment (\$22 million to rehabilitate the line in 1978) than a gold-plated bike and snowmobile trail, a scenario that the Martland report suggests as a viable option....In conclusion, and with all due respect, we think the Martland report suffers from a lack of vision regarding the role of rail, especially that of a direct Portland-Montreal link through Vermont, in the region's economic future."

In a long and detailed letter, Bob Yarger, Vermont resident, former Central Vermont Railway employee and Preservation News Editor for *Rail News*, stated:

"When it was proposed that the State of Vermont purchase the moribund Rutland Railway in the 1960s, many thought it crazy, yet today the little Vermont Railway (operating at one-third capacity or less) removes some 70,000 tractor-trailer trips from our roads each year. Likewise for the line now known as the Washington County RR. Considered even more hopeless, it helped land the Bombardier plant, providing many good industrial jobs for the area. Granite is even moving on the hill again, as it always should have been. The pittance that has been invested in these railroads would not go far in making highway improvements. And those highway improvements always generate more roadside eyesores in the form of gas stations, fast food outlets and mini-malls.

"Because they have already existed for as much as 150 years and do not require property condemnation, etc., public investment in rail is dirt cheap. Upgrading 10 mph track to Amtrak speed costs just over \$100,000 per mile.

The combined subsidies for both the Vermonter and Ethan Allen Express come to about \$2 per Vermont resident per year, but provide daily, reliable (a 90% on-time record), all-weather transportation between our state and a huge population mass. And they are exceeding ridership predictions, despite a forecast of doom and gloom by doubters. Proper marketing is the key, and this is being well done by private and public cooperation.

"The ongoing MIT feasibility study may or may not encourage saving the railroad. If, like many previous biased railroad studies, it says operating the railroad cannot be made 'economically viable,' this must be viewed with a jaundiced eye. **Railroads have long been judged by a double standard: If they do not make money, they are abandoned and torn up, but the highways to which the traffic is driven have never made money and cost the taxpayers dearly. And certainly no public recreation trail ever made a dime!**

"With that in mind, railroads need to be viewed as alternatives to highways, with great potential for benefiting the public. Rebuilding a railroad to haul freight and passengers again cost much less than highway improvements to handle a fraction of the same traffic."

In June, the Vermont legislature passed a bill (H 530) directing the Vermont Agency of Transportation "to work with the national Railroad Transportation Corporation (Amtrak) and other interested parties to investigate the feasibility of resuming Amtrak passenger train service between Vermont and the City of Montreal."

—*Rail Travel News*, July 31, 1997; CLF,
Stephen L. Saltonstall letter, July 29, 1997;
Bob Yarger letter, April 30, 1997.

federal funds (Federal Transit Administration and Congestion Mitigation Air Quality [CMAQ]) for track and signalling improvements for the Portland-Brunswick extension and to further upgrade the Portland-Boston service.

Work on the state-owned Rockland Branch will be funded from \$1,082,000 in general fund bonds matching \$3,578,000 in federal CMAQ funds, for a total of \$4,660,000 to upgrade bridges and track for improved freight and new passenger service between Brunswick and Rockland.

\$1,600,000 for compatible rail and trail development along the Belfast & Moosehead Lake, the Mountain Division and the Calais Branch will be funded from \$600,000 in general fund bonds and \$1.0 million in CMAQ federal money. All these lines are state-owned.

Rehabilitation of the Saco Industrial Park spur, served by Guilford Transportation Industries, will be funded from \$168,000 in general fund bonds matched by \$42,000 in local funding.

To those who question the cost of the proposed rail improvements, an article in the *Maine Sunday Telegram*, September 21, 1997, helps put it in perspective: the three mile long Topsham-Brunswick highway bypass, with its bridge over the Androscoggin River, will open November 8, 1997. Its cost is about \$43 million, not much less than the approximately \$50 million to upgrade track from Haverhill, MA, to Brunswick, ME, a distance of about 107 miles!

The turnpike widening has the backing of the Maine Chamber and Business Alliance, and will address an important safety issue on the present four lane section between Portland and the end of the six lane section in York County. Present breakdown lanes are too narrow for safety and do not permit ready access for emergency vehicles to reach accident sites.

TrainRiders has been active on the Maine Chamber and Business Alliance's steering committee on transportation and will remain on the committee following the November election.

—*Maine Citizens for Jobs and Safety, Fact Sheet, 1997; Maine Sunday Telegram, Sept. 21, 1997; Handy Railroad Atlas of the United States, 1948.*

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

The MBTA tested the IC 3 Flexliners, diesel multiple-units touring the United States and Canada, during July and August, 1997. They were used in service from North Station, Boston on the Fitchburg Line and the Rockport Line. According to Vinay Modhulkar, Deputy Director of Railroad Operations, the units received a good response from MBTA riders and were very fuel efficient.

The Wildcat Branch, part of the route of the Boston-Portland trains, has been improved by the MBTA with 132 pound welded rail replacing 110 pound jointed rail. Grade crossing and track upgrades have allowed track speeds to be increased from 15 to 40 miles per hour, the beginning of increased train speeds to reduce travel times between Boston and Portland.

The Worcester Redevelopment Authority began its \$33 million redevelopment of the old Union Station on July 14, 1997. The station, built in 1911, will serve Amtrak and MBTA trains and local and intercity buses. Retail space will be included in the station, expected to serve as the catalyst for a \$1 billion economic redevelopment plan aimed to restore downtown Worcester.

The Trail and Rail Action Committee (TRAC), a project of the Sierra Club, ran rail excursions over the Providence & Worcester Railroad on July 12, 1997, from Worcester to Norwich, CT, using MBTA equipment. Although marred by mechani-

cal difficulties and a grade crossing accident in which a man drove his car into the side of a locomotive, the trains carried almost 2,000 passengers. The main destinations were shopping in Norwich and the nearby Native-American owned casinos. TRAC hopes to encourage tourism in the region without adding to highway congestion through the development of a regional passenger rail system serving a network of biking and hiking trails.

The \$36.5 million, ten mile MBTA Newburyport Extension of the Ipswich line is under construction. Parking at Newburyport will include 838 spaces in three lots, plus platforms and a four track layover facility replacing one at Ipswich. Your editor observed that most of the major portions of the U. S. Route One highway overpass at the site, were completed as of September 13, 1997 and the foundations were in place for the high-level platforms for the passenger station. Some work had also been done on the subgrade for the track near the station site. Bill Hunt and Bob Hall, TrainRiders/ Northeast Board of Directors members from New Hampshire, reported work on highway crossings in Ipswich and track work as far north as Rowley in early September.

—MBTA fax, July 29, 1997, telephone conversation, September 2, 1997, TrainRiders Board Meeting, September 25, 1997

TRAINRIDERS/NORTHEAST WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

Edward Bryan, Portland; William and Sally Bryant, Brunswick; Agnes Cassidy, Winslow; Dan Coffey, Beverly, MA; Richard Day, Moscow, Idaho; Spencer Ervin, Bass Harbor; Susan Hamilton, Boston; Prudence Heard, Yarmouth; William Knowles, Orrs Island; E. Richardson, S. Portland; R. Rodrigue, Morrill; John Smith, Walpole; Robert and Holly Taddia, Sebago; Peter Millard and Emily Wesson, Orono; Richard Whittier, Bristol, CT.

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TrainRiders/Northeast Endorses Transportation Bonds and Turnpike Widening

GO TO THE POLLS
IN NOVEMBER

Maine Citizens for Jobs and
Safety urge you to

**VOTE
YES
ON QUESTIONS
4 & 6**

TrainRiders/Northeast will appear as one of the sponsors of advertisements in favor of widening the Maine Turnpike and supporting the \$56.8 million transportation bond issue on the November 1997 ballot. Approximately \$130 million in federal matching funds is expected if the bond issue passes. The ads are being paid for by Maine Citizens for Jobs and Safety.

One hundred and fourteen state and local bridges are to be replaced or rehabilitated with bond money, matched with \$40 million in federal funds which will be lost if the bond issue fails to pass. Bond money will fund 50% of the Local Road Assistance Program and provide a 100% increase in the Local Bridge Program. This is the only bond issue this year funding rail projects, which will offer a choice of surface transportation modes to Maine's citizens and visitors.

Capital and safety improvements to airports will be funded through \$1.5 million in bonds and nearly \$5 million in federal funds.

\$1.44 million will go toward port improvements, including a new cargo port

**This is the only bond issue
this year funding rail projects...**

— Wayne Davis

at Estes Head in Eastport.

Widening of the southern end of the turnpike will improve the four lane section which has 72% more accidents than the six lane section in York County. Toll money, 55% of which is paid by out of state users, will fund the entire widening.

\$2.5 million in general fund bonds will provide a 20% match for \$10.0 million in

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