

# TRAINRIDER

*The Newsletter of TrainRiders/Northeast*



**A**ll the pieces are in place, at last, to resume passenger rail service between Boston and Portland and north. Or are they? Many yeses and one resounding "No!" answer this critical question. To get beyond the remaining "No!" is the challenge each of us who are members of TrainRiders/Northeast and, indeed, who live in Northern New England, must meet.

Yes, the Surface Transportation Board (STB) has issued its long-awaited ruling giving Amtrak the right to run its trains over Guilford track. Yes, nearly \$40,000,000 sits ready to be spent on upgrading the right-of-way. Yes, Amtrak has already paid half the \$23,000,000 available for additional improvements, as promised by Congress to Maine, one of the few remaining states not already served by Amtrak. Yes, the Maine Department of Transportation has negotiated an agreement with Guilford to improve the railroad to serve passenger trains effectively. Yes, new rails and ties are on their way. Yes, Amtrak is ready to deliver on its commitment to contribute the train sets and other equipment needed to commence service. Yes, the state governments in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine have declared and are implementing their support. Yes, the towns and cities up and down the line are gearing up to provide stations, parking and other track-side facilities needed to shelter and serve the passengers on which our new trains will depend. And

yes, the final outstanding issue, not resolved in the STB ruling, whether trains will be able to travel at 79 miles an hour to provide passengers with a truly competitive alternative to driving, is being addressed in a way that should not delay the start of construction.

**OK, WHERE ARE WE?**

## A CALL TO ARMS!

**SO WHY AREN'T WE THERE YET?**

So what's missing? Why, as of this writing, has construction not even started, much less already long ago, nearly six months after both Amtrak and Guilford signed the agreement implementing the terms of the STB ruling? Time is a-wasting, time we just cannot afford. We have not even seen a start on signaling upgrades or other peripheral improvements not dependent on the delivery of new ties and rails. Already, official publications from the Department of Transportation in one State have conceded that service will not resume until the year 2000. That's totally unacceptable! If service is not operating by October 1999, then we're not trying hard enough. So, what's wrong?

We could describe each scuff mark and rut in the carpets and rights-of-way from the agreement between Amtrak

and Guilford being dragged into the nit-picking and arguing heard on nearly every hand. We could identify the posturing delaying each opportunity to proceed with construction, and we could quantify the energy that has been consumed by creating impediments to bringing the trains back expeditiously. But now is the time, I firmly believe as your Chairman, for us to implement our success, not weep over its frustration.

To implement our success requires one last call to arms, now! More important than ever, **WE NEED YOUR INVOLVEMENT NOW.**

Among all the reasons for the delay in implementation lurks one demon: the lack of commitment to get it done. This lack is more or less acute among all the direct participants, or construction would have started long ago. We are all guilty of feeding this demon, if only because we are tired of the fight, and tasting victory with the wonderful successes of the recent past, we pause to take a well-earned breath while awaiting the first train.

The reality is not as bright, alas. We know how important the resumption of passenger rail service to Northern New England is to our economic vitality and quality of life. Not every one else involved, we also know, is as enlightened. To many, most regrettably for our cause, passenger rail service remains an unessential add-on to a highway-centered future. And those in the position

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# A CALL TO ARMS!

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to implement the agreements do not feel the urgency we believe should drive our success home. If we do not drive our success to a conclusion now, I fear we could see our victory slip away among the vagaries of bureaucracies, politics and entrepreneurial disinterest.

Now more than ever, we need to make clear to all the parties involved how important it is to initiate passenger rail service between Boston and Portland now! The goal is our first among four that underlie the mission of TrainRiders/Northeast. It is our priority, and it will be our success, if we express our political and social will.

This is what I ask each of you to do: contact each of the people listed in the box below, at the very least, each of those in your political arena, and demand the sweeping away of what ever impediments remain to getting passenger rail service operating now. Let's demand that service commence in the fall of 1999, a goal I believe is practical,

even though it is less than a year from now. After all, have we not been told for over 11 years by those who should know that "six months of work..." is all that's needed to begin operating passenger trains? We can do this, we can succeed. But we need to act. Call, write, and ask the question to all: "What's keeping us?" Regardless of the answer, demand commitment, and keep it up. Make a pest of yourself until the service is in place. Also, please keep me informed of each of your actions. Send me a copy of the letters you send, notes of all phone calls, leave me voice mail messages, whatever it takes, so I can continue to speak clearly for all of us among the principal impediments and participants in our success.

We are strong politically. Let's one more time, now, express our strength aggressively. Passenger rail service to Northern New England depends on our action now.

—Wayne Davis

## A CALL TO ARMS CONTACTS

Governor Angus King  
State House  
Augusta, Maine 04330  
Tel: 207-287-3531

Senator Susan Collins  
172 Russell Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
Tel: 202-224-2523

Representative John Baldacci  
1740 Longworth Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
Tel: 202-225-6306

Commissioner John Melrose  
Maine DOT  
State House Station 16  
Augusta, Maine 04333  
Tel: 207-287-1951

Representative Thomas Allen  
1630 Longworth Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
Tel: 202-225-6116

Jonathan Carter, Chairman  
Northern New England  
Rail Authority  
Box 398  
Wells, Maine 04090  
Tel: 207-646-5113

Governor Jean Shaheen  
State House  
Concord, New Hampshire 03302  
Tel: 603-271-2121

Senator Olympia J. Snowe  
250 Russell Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
Tel: 202-224-5344

Commissioner Leon Kenison  
New Hampshire DOT  
Box 483  
Concord, New Hampshire 03302  
Tel: 603-271-3731

## NATIONAL RAIL NEWS

### Amtrak Traffic Increases

**Additional Equipment Ordered**



Amtrak's Northeast Corridor (NEC) carried 1,036,736 passengers in July 1998—a three year high. It was the 17th consecutive month for NEC passenger increases. Total NEC ridership for the first 10 months of FY 1998 was up eight percent and totalled almost 10 million passengers.

Amtrak exercised its option with Bombardier to order two more high-speed electric train sets, increasing the total to 20. Each set consists of two power cars and six coaches. Major work is being performed at Bombardier's Barre, VT, assembly plant.

—Rail News, November 1998

## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Doug Andrews, Wilmington, DE  
Marybeth Burbank, Brunswick, ME  
Mark Chase, Portland, ME  
William Connell, Wayne, PA  
Anthony Coomber, Epsom, NH  
Joan Giles, Westbrook, ME  
Jackson Gillman, Mount Desert, ME  
Mr. & Mrs. George Grover, Brunswick, ME  
Edvill Howland, Turner, ME  
David Jones, Old Lyme, CT  
Lawrence Joyce, Enola, PA  
Dan Kirchoff, Camden, ME  
Tracy McGrail, Exeter, NH  
Alan Moore, Somerville, MA  
Daniel Moscato, Washington, ME  
Clare Potter, Portland, ME  
Regi Robnett, South Portland, ME  
Joe and June Rubin, Scarborough, ME  
M. Greenberg & S. Schuit, Peaks Island, ME  
Daniel Sosland, Cushing, ME  
Spencer and Linda Struble, Dover, NH  
Susan van Beek, Brooklyn, NY  
Lynn Webster, New Sharon, ME



## The Second Coming of the Trains

**T**rainRiders has been working very hard to assure that the Boston to Maine Amtrak service, ordered by the Surface Transportation Board on May 29, 1998, is implemented. Despite seeming in agreement on most issues by Amtrak, the Northern New England Rail Passenger Authority and Guilford Rail Systems, the entire summer has passed without ground being broken to improve the track between the Massachusetts-New Hampshire line and Brunswick, ME.

However, GRS has recently agreed to allow 79 mph speeds on certain sections of the route and the parties have come to agreement on other issues. Rail weight remains undecided but agreement is anticipated shortly. TrainRiders has continued to push for a service competitive with highway driving times—a necessity if the trains are to serve the public. While we remain both determined to succeed and frustrated, we are not alone. The following is quoted from an "op-ed" piece by David A. Mittell, Jr., a Boston-based political columnist. It originally appeared in the *Providence Journal*, September 23, 1998.

### "The second coming of the trains"

"... I understand that the reintroduction of high-speed trains is not a no-risk, zero-

impact proposition. But I have never understood why fantasies about the train are so out of proportion to its reality, and to the reality of its sister mode of transportation, the asphalt highway. For while 30 trains a day will produce an equal number of deep rumbles lasting at most 60 seconds—and be dead silent for about 23 hours and 30 minutes a day—a major highway produces an unending 24-hour rumble of cars and diesel trucks. Yet highways are accepted as a fact of life, and trains are opposed in this age of computer-enhanced enlightenment...

"In the [area between Boston and Middleborough and Kingston, MA] traffic congestion on Routes 93, 3 and 24 had gotten to be such that the only way other than the train to seriously relieve traffic, inconvenience, pollution and inevitable economic stagnation would have been a multibillion-dollar road project creating a 12-lane Southeast Expressway between Braintree and Boston.

"Here we chose a \$400 million revival of rail rights-of-way. Despite fantastic assertions to the contrary, this was an incomparably more modest, less disruptive, less costly choice than major highway widenings. In the case of Kingston/Middleborough, since intolerable

traffic congestion was present, the ridership was all but assured.

"What can be said today is that if the Fall River/New Bedford [MBTA commuter rail extension] project is deemed worth doing, it is worth improving on the Kingston/Middleborough precedent. On those lines the biggest complaint is a lack of express service. If you live near the end of the line the trip takes too long. Upwards of a 1-1/2 hour future train ride from Fall River or New Bedford into Boston won't make it.

"[In 1939] my father could take a New Haven Railroad train from Boston to Kingston in about an hour.

"Almost 60 years later, ... and after a public expenditure of some \$400 million, we can again ride the train to Kingston in about an hour. Yet all over Sweden relatively quiet tilt trains zip along ancient railroad lines at 150 mph. Surely we can all agree that if trains do in the end return to Fall River and New Bedford, the standard should not be the service as it was in 1939."

Here in Maine, TrainRiders/Northeast is working to achieve a truly modern, integrated passenger rail and bus system to serve Maine and New Hampshire. With your support, we'll succeed! ■

## REGIONAL RAIL NEWS

### MBTA Newburyport Extension Opens

**D**edication ceremonies for the MBTA's extension from Ipswich, MA, to Newburyport, MA, were held at Newburyport on Friday, October 23, 1998. The first train left Newburyport for Boston at 5:32 AM, Monday, October 26. The start of service came just two days prior to the 158th anniversary of the first train to cross the Merrimack River from Newburyport to Salisbury on October 28, 1840.

Your editor was there for the 9:09 AM arrival of the 8:05 train from Boston, which carried many families who had ridden the first train to Boston that morning. The parking lots were still being landscaped and the layover facility was expected to be

in operation by the end of the week, replacing the one at Ipswich.

Flashing lights and gates were installed at all grade crossings. In Newbury, a steel span replaced an ancient, fire-damaged boxed wooden overpass to provide access to a peninsula cut off from Route 1-A by the track. Almost the entire line is fenced with 6' high cyclone fencing topped with three strands of barbed wire. Much of it was already in place. Both stations on the extension have full length, high-level platforms.

Unlike Rowley, the other station on the extension, Newburyport is to have a

complete station with an enclosed waiting room, handicapped accessible restroom facilities and space for a coffee shop and information kiosk. The station, which will make use of granite columns and arches salvaged from a demolished YMCA building in the city, will be of red brick. The station building is located adjacent to the western track, with access to the platform via a paved walkway and ramp from the south end of the center-island platform.

The 2,100 square foot building will cost an estimated \$2.1 million. Bids were opened June 30, 1998, and opening of the station building is set for May 1999. The contractor is S. & R. Construction Enterprises of Haverhill, MA, which is also

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**MBTA Newburyport Extension** (continued from the previous page)

building a new station for the MBTA in Haverhill. The Haverhill station, which is on the route of the trains to Maine, will include a high level platform, platform canopies, handicapped access and parking for 160 cars. Completion is scheduled for the summer of 1999.

The Newburyport station building, measuring 98'4" x 34'0", is under construction, with the north, east and west walls of the main part of the building up to their full height. The walls are of concrete block with brick facing inside and out, with metal roofing. Detail work includes rough stone arches over the porch/portico at the south end and polished granite columns where two arches meet on the south end.

The cost of the station, which will serve a city of about 17,000 population, has caused it to be called a "Taj Mahal" by officials with less complete MBTA facilities. Gloucester, Beverly and Salem, all of which depend increasingly on tourism as part of their economic base, are pressuring MBTA officials and their legislators for improvements to their MBTA commuter rail stations.

Regional attractions, in addition to the extensively redeveloped downtown riverfront area of Newburyport, include Salisbury State Beach just across the river and a state park. The parking lots have a total of 838 spaces. Only time will tell if there are enough—similar size parking lots on the MBTA's recently opened Old Colony lines serving South Shore commuters have been full to overflowing. An additional 238 spaces are provided at Rowley, off U.S. Route 1-A.

Until we have our Maine service running, Newburyport offers an attractive alternative to driving those last few heavily congested miles of I-95 and U.S. Route One into Boston. The station is about 3.5 miles from I-95, the trip to Boston takes just over an hour and costs \$4.00 one way. Twelve round trips are scheduled for each work day, with five round trips on Saturdays. No Sunday service is operated at present. Call 1-800-392-6100 for schedule information.

—*Railpace Newsmagazine*, July 1998;

*The Daily News*, Newburyport, MA,

August 25, 1998; *Trains*, October 1998;

*MBTA Commuter Schedule*, October 26, 1998.

**Other MBTA Items**

The Massachusetts legislature failed to act on a bond issue which, among other things, would have extended three more MBTA daily round trips out of Boston from Attleboro to Providence. The layover facility, now in Attleboro, would be moved to an industrial area in Pawtucket, RI, presumably avoiding the complaints of nearby neighbors over diesel engines idling throughout the night. This "Pilgrim Partnership" was agreed to by Governor Paul Cellucci of Massachusetts and Governor Lincoln Almond of Rhode Island.

■ Expanded MBTA service to Rhode Island would eventually include service to the new airport station in Warwick and a new station at Wickford Jct. in North Kingstown, RI. Rhode Island will pay for the new layover facility but the MBTA will construct it.

■ The same bond issue would have funded MBTA environmental/design studies on the southern portion of the routes between Stoughton and Myricks,

junction of the routes to New Bedford and Fall River. Work on the northern portion, funded by an earlier bond issue, is already underway.

■ The \$3.2 million rehabilitation of Worcester Union Station is on schedule and on budget. Most of the building exterior is expected to be completed by December 1998. Platforms and track are to be extended about 500 feet from the present MBTA station westward to the old Union Station.

■ A \$3.9 million rehabilitation of the Framingham, MA, station will begin this fall. New platforms, a pedestrian overpass and landscaping are to be included.

■ Wilmington, MA, is to receive a new passenger station with an estimated cost of \$5.2 million. There is local controversy over the design, which is expected to be done by February 1999. Parking lot capacity will exceed 200 vehicles. Construction is scheduled to start in the summer of 1999.

—*The Providence Sunday Journal*,

September 27, 1998;

*Railpace Newsmagazine*, October 1998.

**VERMONT RAIL NEWS**

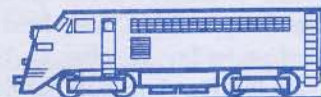
The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VAOT) stated that the *Ethan Allen Express*, operating between New York City and Rutland, VT, broke even this past year. Vermont is negotiating with Guilford Rail Systems to re-route the train through North Bennington and Manchester, VT.

■ Bids to replace the current mobile home style station in Rutland came in over the city's budget of \$470,000. However, city officials are going ahead with construction. As Alderman Kevin Jones aid, "It's not the best message to send for those coming on the train to have a less than adequate facility when it's the first thing they see when getting off the train."

■ On the route of the *Vermont*, the VAOT recently awarded the town of Brattleboro a \$14,520 grant for studies leading to the improvement of its rail-road station. The 1915 building, now housing a museum and art center in addition to the Amtrak station has seen a tripling of passenger use since the *Vermont* began running in 1995. The station at Bellows Falls is to be restored to its 1923 appearance with platform canopies. The tight clearance tunnel is also to be enlarged. Additional urban improvement projects will complement the railroad improvements.

—*Railpace Newsmagazine*, June 1998;

*The 470*, September 1998.

**Train Rides**

Members are invited to submit articles on their train rides, here or abroad, to share their experiences with others. Remember, there are many who have never ridden a train, other than a tourist attraction or dinner train, who have little idea what it is like to travel by train.

Submit by regular mail or by e-mail. Find TrainRider/Northeast addresses on the first page.



# MAINE RAILROAD NEWS

## GUILFORD RAIL SYSTEM

The Thoroughbred, a combined Guilford/Norfolk Southern intermodal service, began operating from GRS' Devens Intermodal terminal in Ayer, MA, to Canadian Pacific's Mohawk Yard, Glenville, NY, on August 17, 1998.

It has been reported in many railroad periodicals that Guilford's clearance project on its Ayer-Troy line, including Hoosac Tunnel, is continuing. Bridges have been raised or the track undercut and the roof of Hoosac Tunnel is being raised to provide clearance for double stack container traffic. This will place the railroad in a better position to compete for traffic with the former Conrail route from Boston to Albany via Worcester and Springfield, MA.

■ The Maine Central Railroad (MEC) filed a notice of exemption with the Surface Transportation Board in early July to abandon the entire Lewiston Industrial Track from Brunswick to Lewiston Lower, 18.97 miles. On July 27, the STB, at the request of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, ordered the MEC to take no steps to alter the historic integrity of the line until completion of an inventory under the National Historic Preservation Act.

[The line has been out of service for years but could again serve industries in the Lewiston area as well as commuters to Bath and Brunswick.—Ed.]

■ The October 1998 issue of *The 470* contained the following: "Train speeds through the Portland 'corridor' between Congress Street and Forest Avenue increased from 10 to 30 mph on October 1, marking the completion of the single tracking project. Speeds have decreased west of Rigby as several minor derailments have damaged the roadbed. A tie crew was spotted working in Scarborough September 30. We understand this has nothing to do with the proposed Boston-Portland passenger project."

—*Railpace Newsmagazine*, September, October 1998; *The 470*, October 1998.

## MAINE COAST RAILROAD

A faulty relay in the mechanism which controls the rails on the Carlton Bridge resulted in slight damage to the rails on August 15, 1998. As a result, tourist trains between Bath and Wiscasset were cancelled for the remainder of the summer. They continued to operate between Wiscasset and Newcastle. Freight trains now have to cross the bridge at 5 mph. Following completion of the new bridge

just upstream, scheduled for 1999, the 70 year old Carlton Bridge will be rebuilt. Once highway traffic is using the new bridge, the Carlton Bridge lift span is expected to remain in the "up" position, except when trains are due, to permit navigation on the Kennebec River.

■ The Bath Iron Works expansion in Bath is expected to result in over 200 rail cars of materials being shipped to Bath. This will add to freight traffic on both the Guilford Rail System's line between Portland and Brunswick and on the Maine Coast Railroad.

■ In Rockland, a recent Maine DOT proposal for an interim terminal for a passenger-only fast catamaran ferry did not include a site directly accessible by rail. Perhaps this indicates the ferry will be running before passenger trains on the Rockland Branch. However, use of a temporary terminal, served only by highway, will require large parking lots if ferries are to adequately serve the public—and parking is at a premium on Rockland's waterfront. Having trains there when service begins would at least reduce the need for parking.

—*The Courier-Gazette*, Rockland, ME, September 8 and October 13, 1998; *The 470*, October 1998.

## NEW HAMPSHIRE NEWS AND COMMENTARY

The Surface Transportation Board decision regarding Boston to Maine Amtrak passenger service has rekindled passenger rail interest in coastal New Hampshire. The Dover Station Committee will be reactivated and the regional planning agency will work closely with the city to assure that a successful intermodal facility is created. Connecting buses are anticipated to serve the station. Stations at Dover and Exeter are to be built by the New Hampshire DOT to locally determined designs.

■ On October 1, 1998, a meeting was held in Portsmouth, NH, to begin exploring the idea of reviving the line between Newburyport, MA, and that city for commuter service. The Rockingham Planning Commission has been asked to revise its 1988

study of the line. The 15-mile "Hampton Branch" now sees occasional freight use by Guilford Rail Systems as far south as the Seabrook Nuclear facility, much of whose construction materials were brought by rail. A big stumbling block remains the movable bridge over the Merrimack River between Newburyport and Salisbury, MA. Estimated costs of rehabilitation or replacement have ranged from \$4 to \$100 million. Bonnie Searle, a Hampton Selectman, said, "I think it would help alleviate some of the congestion we have in town. I think it's a very exciting idea." [We do, too.—Ed.]

—*Portsmouth Herald*, October 2, 1998; Bill Hunt, Bob Hall, *TrainRiders* Board Meeting, September 17, 1998.

## RHODE ISLAND RAIL PROGRESS

In Warwick, rezoning for a station to be located at Hillsgrove, immediately adjacent to the T.F. Green Airport (serving Greater Providence), appeared as a legal notice in the October 6, 1998, *Warwick Beacon*. Warwick plans to create a true civic center around its twin transportation hubs, the railroad station and the airport, where none had existed. The city evolved after World War II from a number of separate villages around textile mills and summer resorts separated by largely agricultural lands, to a modern auto-dominated city with sprawling commercial areas interconnected to the interstate highway system by local roads. The proposed new development will permit higher densities without greatly increased automobile use.

■ Following the re-dedication of Kingston

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## Economic Benefits of Public Transportation

ANDREW M. WEIST, IN HIS COLUMN, "Mainlines," in the *National Railway Bulletin*, Vol. 62, Number 6, 1997, quoted from an article by syndicated columnist Neal Pierce on the success of rail transit systems around the country. The Campaign for Efficient Transportation in Washington, D.C., noted that "69 of America's 90 largest regions already have, or are studying, light rail, commuter rail, subways, HOV-bus lanes or some other form of public transportation. In 50 major metropolitan areas, the per capita count of hours spent in congested traffic has soared 95 percent between 1982 and 1993. It is estimated that traffic delays cost the economy some \$50 billion each year. Remove all transit service from America's urban regions and 27,000 miles of new road would be needed to accommodate the additional five million cars that would be added to traffic."

Mr. Pierce's closing paragraph:

"The bottom line: mass transit, especially new rail lines, may be

expensive. But we face an excruciating price if we fail to make healthy and growing rail transit systems an ever larger part of our urban future."

In the previous issue of the *TrainRider*, it was noted that some South Shore communities served by the new Old Colony MBTA commuter rail service are already experiencing a real estate boom as buyers seek homes in smaller communities with ready rail access to the economic opportunities available in Boston.

The construction of a new station in Rutland, VT, for the Amtrak service between there and New York City and the expanded station facilities now under construction at Newburyport, MA, also reflect the anticipated economic benefits to the regions served by those stations and rail passenger routes. They are not being done for reasons of nostalgia, they are not being done at the least possible cost; they are being done to promote regional economic activity, to ensure the success of recently established and soon to be re-established passenger rail services. ■

## Express Trains

Amtrak's new 60 foot express cars have been approved by the Burlington Northern & Santa Fe for operation at 90 mph over their route between Chicago and Los Angeles. Amtrak has stated that this makes its express service competitive with highway transit times.

In France, the world famous TGV high speed passenger trains have been joined by a high speed express service between Paris and southern France. The parcels trains operate at up to 200 km/h (125 mph). One would guess they would also be competitive with highway trucking!

The extension of Amtrak Northeast Corridor services to Maine, particularly once the Rail Link is constructed through Boston, should make express services available to various points in Maine and New Hampshire. Mail and newspapers used to travel by rail to and from Northern New England, perhaps they will again. Once the service is there, some clever entrepreneurs will certainly find ways to use it to their advantage. The public will be the winners.

—*National Railway Bulletin*, Vol. 63, No.2, 1998

## RHODE ISLAND

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station on May 31, 1998, progress has continued at a rapid pace throughout the summer. The newly placed landscaping has gotten a good start at Kingston and work trains continue to occupy sidings across from the station. Work has begun for the short high platforms for handicapped access.

■ More poles for electrification have been placed and more wire strung. Modification of three more bridges to accommodate the electrification is to be completed this year, two in southern Rhode Island and one in Pawtucket.

■ On a visit to Westerly, RI, October 10, 1998, your editor observed that rehabilitation of the station had made major progress. The station buildings have been painted and repaired, a parking lot had

been re-paved, and the undertrack pedestrian subway had been refurbished and equipped with lifts for handicapped riders. As at Kingston, a former freight yard was occupied by work trains and construction materials associated with the electrification project. Perhaps additional parking will be provided once the engineering work is completed.

—*Warwick Beacon*, October 6, 1998;  
*Rail News*, November 1998



## Tourist Trains

The Seattle-based Great Train Escapes operated two luxury fall foliage trains, part of which operated in Maine. Trips on September 26-27 and October 10-11 ran from East Deering (Portland) to Bethel, ME, and return. While the full eight day tours, with bus connections and lodging, cost from \$2,119 to \$2,774, the general public was able to ride from Portland to Bethel and return for \$89 or \$99.

In New York State, the Adirondack Scenic Railroad, following a railfan weekend based in Thendara on June 20-21, 1998, began five day per week operations north out of Utica, NY, on August 8, 1998. This was to operate through September 17, 1998. The service from Utica is the first since 1980. Tourist trains continued to operate north and south a short distance from Thendara through the fall foliage season, with service from Utica on a two days per week schedule. Work is also continuing on trackage in the Lake Placid area, with eventual re-activation of the 90 mile line to Utica the goal. A photo accompanying the article showed canoes being unloaded from the train for trips on the Big Moose River. [This would be possible in Maine with future service on the former Maine Central Mountain Division along the Saco River Valley.—Ed.]

Further east in New York State, a former Delaware & Hudson Railway line from Saratoga Springs to North Creek was to re-open eight miles for limited service this fall foliage season. The Upper Hudson River Railroad, the operator cho-

sen by Warren County, plans to open the 40 mile line to serve ski areas. Approximately 32 miles of the line are owned by the county, the rest by Canadian Pacific Rail.

In the Gaspé, VIA's tri-weekly *Chaleur* was blockaded at Port Daniel, Quebec, on August 24, 1998, for the second time in two weeks by protesters. "One of the organizers of the demonstrations says that VIA Rail's goal is to reduce train service to summer-only operation in the future. The protesters say that year-round passenger train service is essential for communities on the Gaspé peninsula, and vow to continue demonstrations until VIA restores checked baggage service at the five train stations and assures the residents the trains will operate on a year round basis."

—*Railpace*, October 1998, p. 40

On a brighter note, Noranda copper mines will ship about 40,000 metric tons of copper annually from Gaspé to its refineries in Montreal for two years. The use of rail freight will save the company \$500,000 over the two year period.

What lessons are there in these news items for supporters of rail passenger service in Northern New England? One is that people will pay significant sums of money to ride trains in scenic areas, such as northern New York State, New

England and the Province of Quebec. The prerequisites for this include adequate track and at least minimal facilities in place to serve tourists. The carrying of canoes on trains to permit easy downriver trips without spotting vehicles at both ends of a trip illustrates another possibility for trains to serve the public.

The demonstrations in Quebec, in a rural area blessed with beautiful scenery but few significant economic opportunities other than tourism, indicates the importance of providing service useful to both residents and tourists. The added freight traffic beyond Chandler, Quebec, to Gaspé could not have been accommodated had passenger traffic not required the track to be retained and maintained.

Here in Maine, a similar situation on the Belfast & Moosehead Lake occurred where state funding to assist in retaining track for tourist trains permitted re-instatement of freight service to serve local industry. The Maine Department of Transportation's planned passenger service along Maine's coast by both rail and high-speed ferries has been designed primarily for tourist use. Since Maine taxpayers will be paying for a significant share of infrastructure improvements, they should be guaranteed a service useful to their needs, too.

—*The 470*, October 1998;  
*Railpace Newsmagazine*, September,  
October 1998; *Trains*, November 1998



**Return Service  
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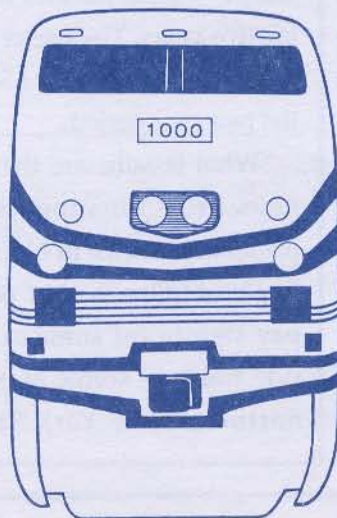
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WE LIKE TO REPORT THE GOOD NEWS.  
SOMETIMES WE HAVE TO REPORT THE BAD.  
OFTEN THERE'S LITTLE TO REPORT.  
SEEMS WE FIGHT, WE WIN—THEN  
WE WAIT. THE WAITING MIGHT BE  
THE HARDEST PART—LIKE NOW.  
BUT WE'RE STILL WORKING FULL TIME TO  
BRING PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE TO  
NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND.

**WITH YOUR HELP!**

IF YOU HAVEN'T RENEWED YOUR  
MEMBERSHIP, PLEASE DO IT NOW.  
WE'RE SO CLOSE TO REACHING OUR FIRST  
GOAL, WE CAN'T GIVE UP NOW.



**TRAINRIDERS/NORTHEAST**  
IS WORKING TO BRING  
PASSENGER TRAIN SERVICE  
TO THE NORTHEAST