

TRAINRIDER

The Newsletter of TrainRiders/Northeast



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

submitted by Wayne Davis

A New Hampshire newspaper reporter recently referred to our favorite project as the engine that will drive the local economy. Music to our ears! When this project began eleven years ago, there was all kinds of public excitement and very positive reactions for the TrainRiders' initiative. Unfortunately, time has taken a toll on that excitement. We've been at this for so long that there are many among us who don't realize that this entire Amtrak project would not be happening were it not for TrainRiders. From the citizen initiated bill that directed the state DOT to bring Amtrak passenger service to Maine, through the acquisition of 60 million Federal dollars for right-of-way improvements and the \$20+ million worth of Amtrak equipment, TrainRiders/Northeast has been at the forefront. Those efforts will bring countless direct and indirect benefits to this region, benefits that will continue to accrue for years to come. All of us on the team have a right to be proud of our accomplishments.

Though many of us are weary of projecting a start-up date for the Portland/Dover/Boston service, it's time to rekindle some excitement. The train is coming and it's coming next year! By the summer of 2000, test trains should be running to work out the bugs and to establish schedules. Good food providers for the café car will be in demand and we should begin to see

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DELIVERY OF AMTRAK ACELA DELAYED

THE CONSORTIUM OF BOMBARDIER AND ALSTOM, MANUFACTURERS of ACELA EXPRESS high-speed trains, has informed Amtrak they will be unable to deliver a thoroughly tested trainset this fall, as planned.

"This delay is unfortunate but not unusual when new technology, although proven, is being introduced in a new environment," said Jacques Laparé, President of Bombardier Transportation of North America. "The trainset needs additional testing to validate the high-speed rail system, which will benefit the whole program in the long term," he added.

Specifically, a problem was detected at the test track in Pueblo, Colorado, in July. At speeds over 130 mph the wheels began shaking from side to side, a condition referred to as "truck hunting." To resolve the problem, the French-designed wheels were reshaped for a better fit to American-made track. Engineers are now addressing a problem of excessive wheel wear. If not corrected, it would mean unacceptably high maintenance costs for Amtrak.

"Nobody wants delays, and we've worked hard to avoid them," said Amtrak President and CEO George Warrington. "We are faced with a choice—cut corners to get the train out, or get it right the first time. I am absolutely committed to making sure the

train is right, and meets our standards of excellence. We will not disappoint our customers. In fact, we plan to take advantage of the other completed improvements to introduce faster service, more seats and refurbished trains in January between New York and Boston as part of our *Acela Regional* service."

The delay will have no impact on Amtrak's long-term goal of operational self-sufficiency by 2003. The original 12-month delivery schedule of twenty trains (November 1999 to November 2000) can

be condensed because construction of the trainsets can proceed while the wheel wear problem is resolved.

The three major components of Amtrak's high-speed rail program include (1) upgrading the Northeast Corridor infrastructure, (2) installing a catenary system to electrify the New York-Boston route and (3) introducing the new high-speed trainsets. The first two components are progressing as planned. Amtrak will announce a new delivery schedule for the high-speed trains in late October or early November.

—Amtrak Press Release; National Association of Rail Passengers Press Release, September 1, 1999



AMTRAK COMMITTEE REACHES OUT TO CUSTOMERS

Lead by Chairman Richard H. Rudolph, PhD., Amtrak's Customer Advisory Committee (ACAC) is reaching out for more input from Amtrak's customers. The 30 customer representatives of ACAC, whose function is to convey customer concerns directly to Amtrak's management, will begin a series of regional meetings to let the public express their ideas and concerns about rail passenger service in the U.S.

The next quarterly ACAC meeting, to be held at the downtown Hilton Hotel in Milwaukee, WI, on October 10-11, 1999, will set aside several hours on the 10th to hear from the public. Information about ACAC and the upcoming meeting can be obtained by writing to Amtrak Customer Advisory Committee, Customer Advocacy Department, 60 Massachusetts Ave. N.E., Washington, DC 20002.

Chairman Rudolph is a longtime member of TrainRiders/Northeast and has attended many Board meetings, where he has both informed us of ACAC's progress and welcomed our thoughts. ACAC's first report, covering the period from February 1997 through May 1998, included the following activities of the Northeast Direct/Metroliner Subcommittee, of which he is a member:

- Changing the *Twilight Shoreliner's*

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AMTRAK BEGINS SERVICE TO OKLAHOMA

Following an inaugural train operated on June 14, revenue service began June 15, 1999, between Fort Worth, Texas, and Oklahoma City, OK. These were the first passenger trains on this route since the Carter Administration Amtrak service cuts in 1979. Like Maine, another state without Amtrak service, Oklahoma received TEA-21 funding. Equipment includes two former Santa Fe Hi-level coaches beautifully refurbished at Amtrak's Beech Grove shops, a Superliner snack coach and an F40 PH locomotive converted to a cab control/baggage "cabbage" car for push-pull operation.

Ridership averaged 260 passengers

daily in the first four weeks, prompting NARP President Jack Martin to request that Amtrak add another car. A fourth coach was added July 15th. Although named the *Heartland Flyer*, the train averages only 46.5 mph over its 214 mile route, a running time of 4 hours and 35 minutes. Service is provided to five intermediate stops. No rail connections are available north of Oklahoma City, nor is Amtrak Thruway bus service offered to Dallas, 30 miles from Fort Worth, a major destination for this market. Amtrak and the states are investigating further connections for this train.

—*News from the National Association of Railroad Passengers, July 1999.*

NORTH CAROLINA FUNDS RAIL EXPANSION

The North Carolina General Assembly recently passed, and Governor James B. Hunt signed, the largest increase ever in North Carolina's transportation funding.

"For mass transit, the General Assembly approved the largest amount ever in the state's history—\$27.6 million—to expand rail and public transportation across the state. The funds will improve service quality and reduce travel time on the state's rail system. In addition to building and refurbishing tracks for industrial development, a portion of the money will begin environmental studies for the Southeast

High-Speed Rail Corridor, which will link North Carolina to the existing Northeast High-Speed Rail Corridor. Public transportation also will be expanded with the purchase of vans for 83 rural and small urban transit systems and assisting with operating expenses for 18 city and regional bus systems."

The state's seven year Transportation Improvement Program includes \$515 million to improve rail service and safety across the state. Stations are to be improved and passenger service will be expanded in western North Carolina.

—*North Carolina Department of Transportation News Releases, July 7, July 26, 1999.*

TRAIN RIDES

It has been some time since we have had a train ride featured in this column. Perhaps a look at Maine's past will show some of the potential available in a state which has an extensive rail network suitable for operation of passenger trains. The following is from the Portland Board of Trade's second tour of Maine—held in 1912:

Portland Board of Trade's 1,000 Mile Tour of Maine

"This year the tour will embrace the coast cities and towns along the Knox and Lincoln and Washington county railroads taking in Bath, Thomaston, Rockland, Waldoboro, Newcastle and Damariscotta, Wiscasset, Belfast,

Ellsworth, Cherryfield, Machias, Eastport, Ayer's Junction, Calais and intermediate points, thence into the province of New Brunswick going as far as St. John and home to Portland by the way of Vanceboro.

THE ITINERARY

"Thursday, May 23—Leave Portland by special train 6:50 a.m. (breakfast served in dining car). Arrive Bath 8 a.m., cross Kennebec River on special ferry steamer taking entire train. Arrive Rockland 10 a.m. City of Rockland on Penobscot Bay, center of Maine's lime industry, county seat of Knox. Population 6,928. Leave Rockland 12 noon. Arrive Thomaston 12:10 p.m. Leave Thomaston 12:30 p.m. (luncheon served in dining car).

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TRAINRIDERS HOLDS ELEVENTH ANNUAL MEETING

Our Annual Meeting was held at Doubletree Hotel in Portland on April 28, 1999. The registration area featured attractive displays of parts for the Balzer's tower clock for the new Portland Intermodal Center, posters of Amtrak's new Acela trainsets and the proposed design for the rebuilt Dover, New Hampshire, station. Members and guests enjoyed a meal and speakers celebrating recent and proposed progress in regional rail transportation.

Following introductory remarks by TrainRiders' chairman, Wayne Davis, Capt. Jeffrey Monroe, Transportation Director, City of Portland, outlined proposed transportation projects in Portland. The Jetport has plans for a 1500 car parking garage to handle its increased business. A terminal for cruise ships, to replace the present facility near Casco Bay Bridge, will be located where the Bath Iron Works' floating drydock is now. It will be served by the tracks of the St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad, offering direct rail connections to Montreal. The new Intermodal Passenger Facility at Thompson's Point will be served by Amtrak, interstate bus lines and Portland's Metro system. It may eventually include light rail to destinations such as the new marine terminal and the Jetport. The station is expected to be ready by the fall of 2000 when Amtrak service is scheduled to begin.

John Melrose, Maine DOT Commissioner, after commending the work of TrainRiders, mentioned that major tie replacement on the Guilford Rail System, in preparation for Portland-Boston passenger rail service, would begin May 17th (1999). He then outlined the projects proposed for implementation under the upcoming November bond issue. \$17.7 million is for the Lewiston Lower Branch, which will be connected with the St. Lawrence & Atlantic in Lewiston. This will provide the opportunity for freight and passenger rail service between Montreal and Maine points east of the Androscoggin River. \$6 million is planned for purchase of a portion of the Lewiston Lower Branch from Guilford Rail System. The remainder of the branch is already owned by the State of Maine. \$7.0 million is to assist in the rehabilitation of the Rockland Branch, which will serve the proposed marine terminal in Rockland. Redevelopment of former railroad land along the riverfront in Bangor will provide rail, highway, pedestrian and cruise ship/ferry facilities. The Calais Branch, between Bangor and Calais, is proposed for rebuilding to provide passenger service between Bangor International Airport and Acadia National Park. Freight service to Calais would serve Georgia Pacific in Woodland and, after rail is restored, the recently enlarged deepwater

port at Eastport. A \$10.2 million bond would help Portland develop its waterfront, as outlined by Jeff Monroe. Smaller amounts are being requested of the legislature to assist Bar Harbor, Bath and Rockland in redevelopment of their waterfronts to implement rail-water connections proposed in the statewide plan.

Commissioner Melrose has also met with Canadian officials regarding passenger service from Portland via Bethel to Montreal, which would probably start with a seasonal tourist-oriented train. Trail planning is proceeding on the Calais Branch, Mountain Division and the Eastern Division Trail, the first two sharing rail right of way and the latter on the long-abandoned Eastern Division.

TrainRiders presented three plaques honoring significant contributions to our efforts: to Mark Stimson—An Extraordinary Landlord, for providing office space at well below market rates; to David Schoppee—for continuing assistance with our telecommunications needs; and to Lila and Patrick Amirault—"With gratitude for the qualities that make you both so special...For the letters you've written to political leaders requesting a more balanced transportation system...For your concern for our environment...For the thoughtful letters written to TrainRiders...For your generosity...For the concern and conviction that inspire you..." ■

TRAINRIDERS HOSTS SUCCESSFUL RAIL SUMMIT

Along with the American Ski Company and the Conservation Law Foundation, TrainRiders/Northeast sponsored a followup meeting to last November's "Building Regional Rail" conference held at the University of New Hampshire's New England Center in Durham. The June 10, 1999, meeting, attended by rail policy makers from Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and Massachusetts, continued the process of building a cooperative effort to achieve improved rail passenger and freight service in northern New England.

Participants agreed there needs to be

a cooperative and collaborative effort among northern New England states to improve rail service on a regional basis in order to build on regional synergies and economies of scale.

High quality, reliable rail passenger service with connections to feeder buses and airports was broadly supported where it can be implemented incrementally at affordable costs when compared to other modes of transportation.

The states need to assess regional rail infrastructure and operating requirements, levels of traffic demand, financing, and system-wide costs and benefits

as a first step in creating a regional rail plan and business plan.

Strong leadership is needed from Governors and Transportation Commissioners to create and implement such a regionwide plan.

Senator Jeffords of Vermont intends to work with Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts delegations to obtain federal funding for a regional rail plan.

The Council of Northeast Governors (CONEG) was suggested as a forum for reaching formal agreement among the New England states on a regional rail initiative.

It was recommended that a separate passenger rail group be formed to supplement this more general effort.

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TRAINRIDERS/NORTHEAST SPONSORS BOMBARDIER FACT-FINDING TRIP

On Monday, August 9, TrainRiders Board members and our guests found ourselves on the platform at White River Jct., VT, waiting for Amtrak's northbound *Vermont* to Montpelier where we would rejoin the Mainline charter bus we had taken from Portland.

The Amtrak crew gave us a tour of the train, including its baggage car specially fitted for bicycles, snowboards and skis. A delicious meal at Montpelier's Main Street Grill and Bar, Bombardier's treat, was enlivened by conversations with Jeanine Ipsen of Bombardier and Northern New England Rail Authority Director Mike Murray.

On Tuesday morning, Bombardier officials greeted us at Barre where we were escorted through various phases of

the assembly process. Carbodies, which arrive on railroad flatcars as empty stainless steel shells from the plant in La Pocatiere, Quebec, spend an average of 32 days before emerging as fully assembled cars ready for service. We were treated to a demonstration of the active tilting mechanism on what will become Amtrak car No. 3513, scheduled to be the first Acela car placed in revenue service on the Northeast Corridor. Following lunch in the Bombardier conference room, we re-boarded our charter bus for Portland. Representatives of the Maine and Portland Departments of Transportation and the Exeter, NH, Chamber of Commerce accompanied us on the trip. Kit Morgan, New Hampshire DOT, joined us for the tour at Barre. ■

...CHAIRMAN'S REPORT *(continued from the first page)*

ads about the pending service. Citizens all over the country will be able to plan trips to Maine and New Hampshire from anywhere in the Amtrak national system. Those of us fortunate enough to already be here to begin with will have a new travel option. We can choose something other than our auto, a bus or a plane when we travel. We'll have choic-

es available to us that every state but two presently enjoy. When the time comes for the inaugural train, we have a right to expect fireworks, parades, exhibits and church bells as just a part of all the events we hope will take place. So get ready. If you want to participate, give us a call—the train is coming.—WD

...1,000 Mile Tour of Maine *(Train Rides continued from page 2)*

Arrive Waldoboro 12:35 p.m. Leave Waldoboro 12:55 p.m. Arrive Newcastle-Damariscotta 1:20 p.m. Leave Newcastle-Damariscotta 1:40 p.m. Arrive Wiscasset 1:55 p.m. Leave Wiscasset 2:15 p.m. Cross Kennebec River on special ferry steamer, taking entire train. Arrive Bath 3 p.m. Bath, world-famous shipbuilding city on the Long Reach of the Kennebec, just below the confluence of the Androscoggin and Kennebec rivers in Merrymeeting Bay. County seat of Sagadahoc, population 9,396. Leave Bath 4:15 p.m., pass Brunswick 4:30 p.m., pass Augusta 5:30 p.m.

(Dinner served in dining car). Pass Waterville 6:00 p.m. Pass Burnham Junction 6:25 p.m., and enter on the Belfast branch, 34 miles to Belfast. Arrive Belfast 7:30 p.m. Evening at Belfast." — *To be continued next issue*

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. Send stories to either our mailing or e-mail address; both are shown on the first page.

RHODE ISLAND RAIL PROGRESS

Along with Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Baltimore, MD, Rhode Island lost out in the bidding to become the primary landing point for Maersk Line and Sea-Land's huge container ships running between Europe and the East Coast of North America. The Port Authority of New York/New Jersey, which will be used by Maersk and Sea-Land, lost nearly \$30 million last year on its marine operations. This is common among container ports, which are seen as economic engines that create employment. On July 31, 1999, Quonset Point Partners, the consortium seeking to develop the former Naval Air Station into a megaport, missed a \$150,000 payment to the State of Rhode Island. On August 26th, the State released a final report on the port without Governor Almond's support, probably dooming the proposal.

These setbacks may not rule out all use of Quonset Point/Davisville for a container port, in part because the existence of a rail network on the former military base and its closeness to the Northeast Corridor would permit rapid transportation of containers by rail. The short travel time and distance from the open ocean would be an advantage for ship operators. Increased clearances for double-stack container trains have been designed into the Northeast Corridor between Davisville and Boston Switch, in Pawtucket, RI.

Passenger rail in Rhode Island got a boost on July 6th, when the Federal Highway Administration made a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the proposed intermodal terminal which will connect the Northeast Corridor to the T.F. Green Airport in Warwick. The City has created an Intermodal Zone to accommodate the station, intended to be a magnet for conference facilities and supporting businesses. Preliminary site plans show two through NEC corridor tracks and two

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BOSTON-PORTLAND ROUTE CONSTRUCTION CONTINUES

Maintenance crews of Guilford Rail System continued to increase their productivity as ties are replaced, ballast is cleaned and added, track is lined and surfaced, and 115# continuous welded "ribbon" rail begins to replace the jointed rail which has been used by the former Boston & Maine for many years. Most work is proceeding northward from the Massachusetts State line, though new ties, for both replacements and for new passing tracks, can be seen at various locations between Plaistow, NH, and Portland, ME.

As part of the effort to inform the public that higher speed passenger trains are coming, Guilford Rail

Systems has hired additional police. They have been issuing warnings to trespassers on railroad property and have also arrested and fined people in Old Orchard Beach, where numerous grade crossings and infrequent trains have made casual trespassing a normal activity for many residents.

Local officials in New Hampshire and Maine have expressed concern over pedestrian and vehicular safety with the advent of more frequent and faster trains. They have been meeting with railroad and State officials to coordinate efforts to educate the public that the trains are coming.

—Portland Press Herald, May 20; August 6, 1999.

MBTA EXPANDS SUMMER WEEKEND SERVICE

On May 15, 1999, newly expanded MBTA weekend service was inaugurated on both the Haverhill/Reading Line and the Newburyport/Rockport Line. On the line between Ipswich and Newburyport, which began operating in October 1998 with Saturday service but no Sunday service, Saturday round trips to/from Boston increased from five to six and the same schedule began operating on Sundays. Rockport continues to have seven round trips both Saturdays and Sundays.

The Boston Globe, in its "Calendar" supplement on May 27, 1999, featured four trips from Boston suburbs served by various MBTA commuter rail routes. Lists of local attractions included children's museums, antique shops, restaurants and other businesses. Bus shuttles, from the railroad station to tourist attractions, were listed for Lowell, Plymouth, Rockport, Gloucester and Newburyport.

—The Boston Globe, May 27, 1999;
MBTA Commuter Rail Schedules, May 15, 1999

...RAIL SUMMIT

(continued from page 3)

Commissioner Melrose of Maine DOT agreed to speak with other commissioners and governors in northern New England to develop an action plan for an ongoing cooperative effort. Wayne Davis reported at the August 19 Board Meeting that John Melrose had met with regional rail officials in Worcester, MA, and is now inquiring into the feasibility of routing passenger trains from Maine via Worcester, from which they would go via Providence,

RI; via New London, CT; or via Springfield, MA, to New Haven, CT, where they would rejoin the Northeast Corridor. This would provide New Hampshire and Maine with a through route to the NEC until the Rail Link is completed in Boston. Routes via Worcester had been used by overnight trains to Maine and the Maritime Provinces for years.

—Wayne E. Davis, personal communication, June 18; TrainRiders/Northeast Board Meeting, August 1999.

VERMONT RAIL NEWS

The route of a projected commuter rail service to Burlington now has a daily round trip designed as an extension of the popular Amtrak *Ethan Allen Express* which operates between New York City and Rutland, VT. The train leaves Burlington at 10:00 AM, arriving in Rutland at 12:30 PM to connect with the *Ethan Allen Express*. It leaves Rutland at 12:50 PM, arriving at Burlington at 3:20 PM. A passenger leaving New York City at 7:10 AM by connecting train to Albany-Rensselaer, NY, can arrive in Burlington at 3:20 PM, a trip time of 8 hours, ten minutes. A passenger on the *Vermont*, departing NYC at 11:30 AM, arrives at Burlington-Essex Jct. at 8:35 PM, a trip time of 9 hours, 5 minutes. The Burlington-Essex Jct. station is eight miles from Burlington.

The train, equipped with de-motored Budd Rail Diesel Cars from the Virginia Railway Express service, is a demonstration project anticipated to run through October 31, 1999. It covers a route approximately 69 miles long, far longer than the proposed Burlington-Charlotte commuter run of about 12 miles. The train serves the needs of travelers to and from New York City. In conjunction with the *Vermont*, it offers Burlington area residents and visitors two choices of rail travel times to and from NYC without crossing Lake Champlain on the ferry to use the *Adirondack* which operates between NYC and Montreal, Quebec.

The *Vermont*, operating via a back-up move at Palmer, MA, provides a slower ride from NYC to southern Vermont points than the *Ethan Allen Express* and has lost some passengers to the latter train. The Vermont Agency of Transportation is considering a re-routing of the *Vermont* to Boston. However, the route to Boston also involves passing through Palmer, 15 miles east of Springfield, a considerably longer route than long-abandoned rail lines between

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NEW HAMPSHIRE REPORT

The ongoing construction at various locations in New Hampshire along the route of the Portland-Boston Amtrak service has rejuvenated the activities of municipalities preparing station sites. In July, the Dover City Council voted to bond \$175,000 for station improvements, which will be combined with \$120,000 in federal funds from the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality program. Improved parking, a new roof and platform canopies for the station, and a short high-level platform for handicapped accessibility are planned.

The University of New Hampshire, whose campus is bisected by the railroad, continues to move forward with plans to reuse its historic station building for future Amtrak track service.

In Exeter, selectmen intend to acquire land for a temporary station and additional parking, with the eventual aim of restoring the existing station building, currently in commercial use, for railroad purposes.

The Plaistow Area Transit Advisory Committee met recently to explore the expansion of MBTA commuter rail service from Haverhill, MA, to Plaistow as a first step in extending commuter rail to Dover. Plaistow already has a 250 car Park and Ride facility, but would need additional spaces should commuter rail be established. Amtrak trains would not provide service to Plaistow. As committee member Timothy Moore noted regarding the Amtrak service, now scheduled to start in 2000, "That was a service that's been two years away since 1989."

On June 30, the Seacoast Metropolitan Planning Organization approved a feasibility study for commuter rail service on the Hampton Branch. This would extend MBTA commuter rail 20 miles from Newburyport to Portsmouth,

and possibly into Kittery, ME.

The northern portion of the line, which once formed part of a second route between Portland and Boston, is owned by Guilford Rail Systems and remains in use for freight service. The State of New Hampshire, which owns part of the line in Seabrook, is negotiating with Guilford to purchase additional out-of-service track. The MBTA owns the line within Massachusetts.

A number of station sites are examined in the report, with ridership projections based on various operating scenarios. A station in Salisbury, MA, is also proposed. Capital costs, including purchase of equipment, range between \$77 and \$104 million. Improvements to the track and related structures would cost about \$145 million, including about \$8.4 million to replace the movable bridge over the Merrimack River between Newburyport and Salisbury, MA.

It is anticipated that New Hampshire would purchase equipment for the added service, similar to the arrangement between the MBTA and Rhode Island to extend commuter rail service to Providence. Perhaps the added equipment could be used to supplement Amtrak service by providing mid-day trains between Dover and Boston, while operating the morning and evening commuter trains to and from Portsmouth. Any state owned passenger equipment could, of course, also serve in MBTA commuter service to Nashua, now under study, or any further extensions of passenger service to Manchester or Concord.

—*Commuter Rail Service to Coastal New Hampshire: A Feasibility Study for the Hampton Branch*, Rockingham Planning Commission, Exeter, June 30, 1999;
Robert Hall and William Hunt,
Board Meeting, August 19;
The Boston Globe, August 23, 1999.

...RHODE ISLAND

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additional tracks, intended to handle MBTA commuter service between Warwick, Providence and Boston. Land acquisition has not been completed. Following a public information workshop concerning the station plans on August 19th, the *Warwick Beacon* editorialized that the public, those few who actually attended the workshop, dropped the ball. Instead of using the opportunity for addressing their concerns about the station, most used their access to a microphone to speak about issues having nothing to do with the intermodal facility.

On August 18, 27 miles of overhead catenary to supply electricity to electrically powered Amtrak trains was energized from Richmond, RI, to Warwick. The 25,000 volt line has prompted training by Warwick firefighters in the event they have to respond to accidents along the railroad.

—*The Providence Sunday Journal*, June 20, 1999;

The Providence Journal, August 18, 19;

Warwick Beacon, July 20, August 24, 1999.

TRAINRIDERS NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to

Robert Becker—Reading, MA
Bryan Belliveau—Newington, CT
Edward Buchanan—West Roxbury, MA
Norman Carrier—Dover, NH
Bruce Cassidy—Falmouth, ME
Nicholas & Barbara Fowler, So. Portland, ME
Richard Hawkes—Gorham, ME
Sue Jones, Portland, ME
Douglas Kydd—Reading, MA
Charles & Elisa Landrum—Norfolk, VA
Robert Matulis—Ogunquit, ME
Mark McAuliffe—Higganum, CT
Jacob & Bo Meunier—Brookline, MA
Peter Millard, MD—Orono, ME
J.T. & B.C. O'Connor—Rollinsford, NH
Albert & Regina Schmitt—Bath, ME
Michael Spinelli, Jr.—Dover, NH
Raymond Wiggan—Searsport, ME

...VERMONT RAIL NEWS

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Boston and Vermont and, more importantly, longer than competing interstate highways. Perhaps New England states will have to consider additional public

investment in rail routes. Vermont is planning to spend \$35 million to widen about 12 miles of Route 7 between Charlotte and Burlington.

Vermont is expected to award a contract shortly to Vermont Rail Service for work preparatory to routing NYC to

Rutland passenger rail service through the Bennington area. Trains would operate over the Guilford Rail System between Hoosick Jct., NY, and the route of the *Ethan Allen Express* near Albany, NY.

—*On Track*, Vermont Agency of Transportation, April 1999; *The 470*, August 1999;
Union Leader, Manchester, NH, August 18, 1999.

MAINE TRANSPORTATION NEWS

PORTLAND HAS BIG PLANS FOR INTERMODAL PASSENGER FACILITY

THE NEW INTERMODAL PASSENGER FACILITY, which will be owned by the City, will be one of three key links of the City's interconnected transportation service. Expected to handle over 750,000 passengers its first year, it will share in an anticipated 4.3 million passengers passing through the Portland International Jetport and the Portland Waterfront by the year 2001. "Our goal," said Jeffrey Monroe, Portland's Transportation Director, "is to serve the needs of the public by creating a facility that will bring together all transportation entities into one convenient location. That focus will be paramount in any agreement we make. We

want this to be a first-class facility and a gateway to this marvelous city."

The station will have 10,000 square feet, with areas for rail and bus passengers, transportation services and retail space. A high level platform is anticipated to reduce boarding times. At least 600 onsite parking spaces are planned.

The City of Portland is looking for the donation of artifacts associated with the old Union Station for display in the new station. Those interested are asked to call Kevin Sullivan, Portland Department of Transportation, at 756-8035, or TrainRiders/Northeast at 879-7245.

—Kevin Sullivan, Portland DOT, August 25, 1999.

...AMTRAK COMMITTEE

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arrival time in Boston to a more convenient hour and reinstating a stop at Mystic, CT.

■ Improving running time of trains east of New York City, while Northeast Corridor Improvement Program construction east of New Haven was ongoing.

■ Instituting "memory scheduling" for New York State's "Empire Service," so that trains between New York City and Albany operate on a regular two-hour basis (8:15, 10:15, 12:15, etc.)

■ Instituting "Go-Home-on-Amtrak Weekends" for college students, with a 25% discount off coach fares.

■ Marketing Amtrak travel to Foxwoods Resort Casino where over 50,000 people a day pass their turnstiles. (New London and Mystic, CT, and Westerly, RI, are closest Amtrak stations).

TrainRiders is pleased to have yet another member making a difference at the national level.

—The Inaugural Run, February 1997-May 1998, Amtrak Customer Advisory Committee; ACAC Fax, August 11, 1999.

NORTH OF THE BORDER

Although TrainRiders/Northeast has been very busy concentrating on establishing Maine's and New Hampshire's southern connections to Boston and the Northeast Corridor, we have long been interested in re-establishing passenger rail service to Quebec and the Maritime Provinces of Canada. While VIA Rail Canada, the Canadian counterpart of Amtrak, has experienced numerous cutbacks in recent years, the future appears brighter. Canadian Minister of Transport, David Collenette, speaking to the Board of Trade in Montreal on June 3, 1999, was quoted as follows:

"Passenger rail cannot be overlooked as a key strategy to combat the ever-increasing problems we're experiencing with greenhouse gas emissions, smog and urban congestion.

"My goal is to maintain a national passenger rail system that would offer seamless, identifiably Canadian service from coast to coast, with a national timetable, information and reservation system. How this system is delivered and by whom is the subject for discussion. However, I will insist on a better passenger rail service with more and faster frequencies, restoration of routes that have been cut, and new more innovative niche services, including those now serving the tourist market. There must be new equipment, refurbished stations, better marketing, and more jobs."

As with Amtrak, VIA is investigating carrying express freight and mail to improve its bottom line.

—Transport 2000-Atlantic Bulletin, August 1999

ROCKLAND BRANCH DEVELOPMENTS

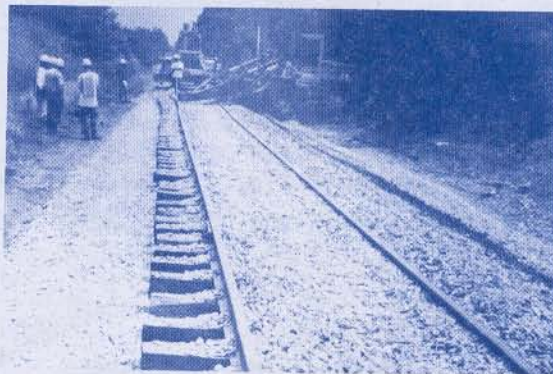
THE CITY OF ROCKLAND RECENTLY FORWARDED to the Maine Department of Transportation the names of twelve citizens to serve on an advisory committee to study the effects of the proposed rail/marine facilities in Rockland.

It is now estimated that the fast ferries connecting Rockland with Bar Harbor and Portland would not begin operating until 2003. This will give time for planning and to upgrade the track between Brunswick and Rockland for passenger train operation.

This year the Maine Coast Railroad's tourist trains from Wiscasset are operating to both Newcastle and Bath. Bath trains are popular as they give excellent close-up view of the progress on the new highway bridge over the Kennebec River between Bath and Woolwich.

—The Courier/Gazette, Rockland, ME, August 10; Maine Coast Railroad 1999 Timetable.

ON THE ROAD TO PORTLAND



You can see progress being made in this photo where workers are installing new ties, rail and ballast near Exeter, NH.

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THE TRAINRIDER
Box 4869, Downtown Station
Portland, Maine 04112
(207) TRY-RAIL (879-7245)

NOVEMBER BOND ISSUE VITAL FOR RAIL TRANSPORTATION IN MAINE

QUESTION #3 on the November ballot in Maine includes \$19.7 million in bonds to match \$22.2 million in federal funds for statewide rail corridor development. Projects that will proceed upon passage of the bond issue include the following:

- ✓ **Lewiston-Auburn-Brunswick interconnection.** Provides for right-of-way acquisition and preliminary engineering. Will service shippers/receivers from Brunswick to Lewiston, Augusta, Portland corridors. \$6,000,000 from bond issue.
- ✓ **Rockland Branch rehab and development** will allow Class II/III train speeds between Brunswick and Rockland. \$7,500,000 in bond funds will be combined with \$8,000,000 in federal funding to help complete a \$33 million project on this State owned rail line.
- ✓ **Rail-Trail Development,** Mountain Division, Downeast, Eastern Trails. \$250,000 to match \$1,000,000 federal funding. Supports trail development along rail corridors. Mountain Division from Windham to Fryeburg, Downeast Trail from Brewer to Calais and Eastern Trail from South Portland to Kittery.
- ✓ **Track rehabilitation,** Brownville to Quebec

border. \$2,000,000 from bond issue. Canadian American Railroad.

- ✓ **Feasibility and preliminary design of three intermodal passenger facilities,** one at Auburn-Lewiston Airport, one at Bangor International Airport, one located near the Hancock County/Bar Harbor Airport in Trenton. \$500,000 from bond issue matches \$2,000,000 federal funding.
- ✓ **Brewer-Calais corridor rehabilitation.** Rehabilitates State owned Calais Branch between Brewer and Ellsworth to support tremendous passenger transportation opportunities for Bangor-Acadia National Park. \$2,800,000 bond issue matches \$11,200,000 federal funding. An additional \$650,000 supports a feasibility study of connecting the Calais Branch to the intermodal facility at Bangor International Airport and the intermodal facility in Trenton.

"The future of passenger and freight rail depends upon the passage of this bond issue. All of these projects will expand the potential for passenger and freight rail service in the state," according to MDOT Commissioner John G. Melrose.

—News item from Maine
Department of Transportation, August 26, 1999.

✓
MAINE VOTERS —
ON NOVEMBER 2nd,
VOTE
YES
ON QUESTION #3

Bond Issue P&S37 (L.D. 2089)
DO YOU FAVOR A \$56,042,031
BOND ISSUE FOR IMPROVEMENTS
TO HIGHWAYS AND BRIDGES;
AIRPORTS AND STATE-OWNED
FERRY FACILITIES; DEVELOPMENT
OF RAIL CORRIDORS AND MARINE
INFRASTRUCTURE; AND
REPLACEMENT OF PUBLIC
TRANSPORTATION FLEETS
STATEWIDE, THAT MAKE
THE STATE ELIGIBLE FOR
UP TO \$112,000,000
IN MATCHING FEDERAL FUNDS?