

Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society
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NEWSLETTER

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Visit the B&MRRHS on the web at <http://come.to/bmrrhs>

Meeting/Membership Telephone Number (978) 454-3600

January-February 2002

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— B&MRRHS CALENDAR —

- JANUARY 12, 2002** A selection of slides from the collection of Donald Robinson will be presented by Buddy Winiarz.
- FEBRUARY 9, 2002** Gary Webster of the Conway Scenic RR will be giving us a slide show of B&M and other new England subjects from the 1960s and 70s.
- MARCH 9, 2002** Bob Poore will be back for a show on the Maine Central.
- APRIL 13, 2002** Our Annual Joint Meeting with the Mass. Bay Railroad Enthusiasts. We are pleased to host this year at Lowell, where we'll be treated to a slide presentation of the B&M during the 1950s and 60s by Richard Sanborn. Hope to see you there!

WINTER MEETING CANCELLATIONS

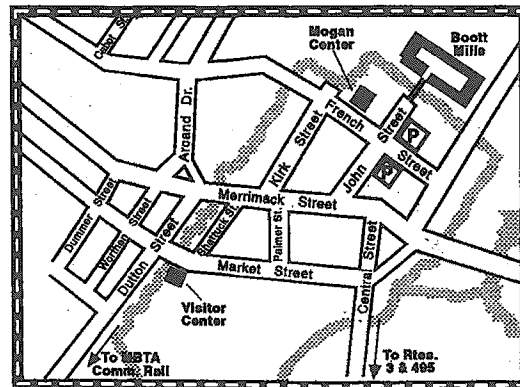
With the winter months upon us again, we remind everyone that if a snowstorm or other serious weather situation warrants such, the B&MRRHS meeting will be cancelled or postponed. To find out whether the meeting has been called due to weather, we ask that you call the society's answering machine after 12:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting.

And as usual, we ask that when in doubt, you should use discretion—if you don't want to drive in it, we probably don't either!

*The Directors, Officers and Staff
of the B&MRRHS wish everyone a Safe, Prosperous
and Happy New year!!*

DIRECTIONS TO THE LOWELL MEETING PLACE—at the traffic light near the Mogan Center, take a right or left depending on which way you come down French St., go past the little guard shack (Parking lot is on right—Boarding House Park is to the left), Walk over the trolley tracks and bridge. Into the courtyard, bear to the right and go to the end. The doorway will be lighted. Also look for signs.

**VISITORS MUST PARK IN THE LOT ON
FRENCH STREET—NO PARKING IS
ALLOWED IN THE COURTYARD.**



MEMBERSHIP INFO

Membership:

Dues payment only should be sent to:
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Business Address:

B&MRRHS
P.O. Box 469
Derry, NH 03038
E-mail: BMRRHS3718@aol.com (*Please note change of e-mail address*)

Which address should you use? For membership payments, use the membership box in Lowell. For any correspondence concerning the Newsletter, use the Newsletter box in Gloucester. Everything else should go to the Derry address. This includes catalog orders and correspondence with the Archives, Historian, Bulletin, and Board of Directors. As always, include a SASE or postage if you want a reply to your correspondence.

Please remember to remit your dues within 90 days...after 90 days you will be removed from the mailing list. Check your Newsletter for the RED DOT...this is the last item you will receive from the Society.

Return payment in the return envelope with your check or money order...DO NOT send cash as the Society will not be held responsible if lost. Make checks payable to: B&MRRHS.

If you change your address please let the Society know by snail mail (USPS) or e-mail. When you do not let us know it costs extra for postage....the first mailing, the return postage due and a second mailing to the correct address. Three mailing payments to one person.

E MAIL

Due to a slight problem with AOL, I am reverting back to the old E-Mail address of: CPC835@JUNO.com

This is for general information of the Society and membership status only. Archival and historical information should be sent to the Archives for now. Please go to the Society's web site for other addresses.

A REMINDER ...

Members are reminded to return any material that they may have borrowed from the Society once they are finished with it. It becomes very easy over time to forget that something that you have is borrowed rather than something that you own - or whom you borrowed it from. This will allow us to maintain the Society's material for the benefit of all members.

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PROGRAM CHAIRPERSON NEEDED

The Society is still in need of a Program Chairperson to plan presentations and arrange guests for the monthly meetings. This is not a particularly difficult job, but is so much better when it's done by one individual rather than by committee. Anyone interested should contact the B&MRRHS at Box 469, Derry, NH 03038 or via e-mail.

SOCIETY NEWS - FROM THE EDITOR

The 2002 BMRRHS calendar must have been a surprise to most of you when it arrived in the mail in mid-November. This was a project proposed and carried out by Buddy Winiarz, and I think it came out well. I especially like the June photo of the East Wind. So thanks to Buddy for this, and we'll see about making this an annual event.

The latest Bulletin was mailed in mid-November; your editor received his copy on 12/4. Thanks to Andrew Wilson and his staff for another well-done Bulletin. The Harry Frye photos are just a small sampling of this one-of-a-kind collection that we purchased. Expect to see more of this in the future.

By coincidence, the latest Newsletter arrived on the same date. We would like the Newsletter to get in your hands a little faster in the future, especially since this arrived after the deadline for submissions. Thanks to all of my contributors.

With the winter season upon us, it's back indoors to train shows. As always, I look forward to seeing many of you at the Springfield show (which is either last week or next week as you receive this). The Marlboro show was a lot of fun, especially with the questions from modelers about how to bring the B&M into the own layout. One gentleman wants to model the line through Peterborough and we tried to find back issues of the Bulletin with material from the line. Another young father models the B&A and wanted ideas on B&M interchange, before his son dragged him off to look at the running trains. Finally, one elderly gentleman relayed his experiences of taking the B&M from Springfield up the line to Holyoke or Chicopee to go canoeing when he was a boy. It is a reminder of how much the railroad hobby touches all generations.

FLETCHER GRANITE HOPING TO REACTIVATE LONG-DORMANT RAIL SPUR

BY SONIA SHARIGIAN
STAFF WRITER

Within the next few years, residents living near Fletcher Granite Company may start hearing something absent from the area for almost 40 years: trains running on the spur between Route 40 and the main Boston & Maine rail at Brookside.

Fletcher Granite Company is interested in reactivating the spur to haul stone from its quarry. Engines, hauling between three and six cars, will travel about 10 miles-per-hour, max, along the spur, once work is finished.

"We sent letters out to all the abutters and plan on meeting with abutters in December or January," said Dave Psaledas, plant engineer and safety director.

The spur was first used in 1895 to connect the granite quarry on the north side of Groton Road to the mill on the south side of Groton Road. The spur fell into disuse in 1965, when trucks were used to ship the granite.

The original track has remained largely intact except for a switch that B&M workers removed. Over the years, debris has accumulated along the tracks and residents have added retaining walls and a landfill within the railroad right-of-way.

Fletcher granite workers have started clearing the brush from the track, trying to gain a better assessment of what shape the old spur is in, according to Psaledas.

In addition, the company will untangle some technical issues.

"Some people have encroached on the right-of way," said Psaledas. "We want to resolve those issues before we meet with everybody."

Fearing local officials could stall the project citing wetlands encroachment along the rail, Fletcher Granite officials petitioned the federal Surface Transportation Board (STB) seeking exclusive jurisdiction over the resumption of rail service on the spur.

In the petition, filed last March, Fletcher Granite representatives argued that, if the matter came under review by the Westford Conservation Commission, a permit to operate would either be flat-out denied or have unreasonable conditions attached to it.

In June, Fletcher Granite's request was denied by the STB, who found it premature, because "there is not now, and may never be, a controversy that needs to be terminated."

The STB decision did, however, clarify its jurisdiction over the railway, and how local permitting requirements are preempted because they can interfere with interstate commerce.

"The fact the project is not under town permitting jurisdiction does not mean that we would do anything to harm the environment," wrote Fletcher Granite President Duke Pointer in a letter to abutters.

According to the original petition, the company now requires about 600 truck shipments annually. Once the rail line is operational, it intends to cut back 450 incoming and 30 outbound trucks a year.

Construction on the line is set to begin when the snow melts in late winter 2002.

SALEM MAN FALLS UNDER TRAIN, DIES

By JILL HARMACINSKI
News staff

SALEM - A 68-year-old Salem man was killed after he stepped off and fell under a moving MBTA commuter train at the Salem Depot station yesterday afternoon.

Stanley R. Blenkhorn, of 205 Bridge St., stepped off train No. 126 about 100 feet past the concrete platform where passengers board. The momentum of the train spun Blenkhorn several times and then pulled him underneath the locomotive, witnesses said.

When rescuers arrived at 4:20 p.m., Blenkhorn still had a pulse and spoke briefly. He was pronounced dead at Salem Hospital around 5 p.m.

"Witnesses saw him getting off the train after the train was moving," Salem Detective William Jennings said.

After stepping off the train, which runs from Rockport to Boston, witnesses said Blenkhorn struggled to regain his balance.

Police did not know how fast the train was moving at the time of the accident. The train did not stop when the accident occurred - but later as it moved down the tracks southbound in Saugus.

Witnesses speculated Blenkhorn must have opened the train door himself, because engineers close the doors between stops.

"They never leave them open," McElroy said.

MBTA spokesman Brian Pedro said the commuter rail doors are closed between stops but not locked, "It's sad," Pedro said. "I wish he could have waited to get off at the next stop."

Salem Evening News
November 15, 2001

NEWS FROM ALONG THE LINE...

CANAAN & ADAMS BRANCHES NEWS UPDATE

Some call it the Dustin Era, others the Bankruptcy Years, I call it the Nursing Home Era of the Boston and Maine Railroad 1970-83. Regardless, most agree that the B&M's last hurrah was acquiring various former NYNH&H and NYC trackage and/or operating rights. The B&M began operating into Canaan CT on 01 April 1982 and ceased, I believe, just four years later.

The 1872 Canaan Depot, according to Jack Armstrong, had the distinction of being the oldest station in continuous operation in the United States. On 13 October 2001, according to my source, some drunk who had been refused service decided to destroy the restaurant that had done so. And he/she did... along with the 1872 Canaan Depot is which the restaurant was housed at the east end.

If you read the report in R&R, you might think the damage minor. I inspected the building 23 November and you could use the words destroyed, ruined or severely damaged depending upon your perspective. Rebuilding may occur but the world historical and rail community has suffered a severe loss. See page 34 of your B&M BULLETIN V14#3 for a photograph of what was.

On a more cheery note, the Adams Branch, which the B&M acquired at the same time as the Canaan Branch, continues to flourish just as the Canaan Branch does under the Housatonic Railroad. But in a most different fashion. CSX still operated the south end. GRS operated North Adams to Adams at least three days a week. Lanesboro/Pittsfield to Cheshire is a gorgeous pedestrian/bicycle trail that is extremely popular and the contract to pave Cheshire to Adams north has been awarded to J.H. Maxymillian in the amount of \$2,333,880.00. When completed, and I would guess late in 2002 or early 2003, the Ashwilticook Rail Trail will be 10.8 miles long and one of the finest walks in the Commonwealth.

For the detailed stories on these two branches, see your B&M BULLETINS V13#4, June 1985, and V14#3, April 1986.

Now will somebody tell me the story behind the restoration(?) of the brick building in Adams that I assume is the former B&A freight house?

from member Alden Dreyer

NEW HAMPSHIRE CENTRAL

They used to operate just the former Maine Central Railroad Beecher Falls Branch, but now the NHC of Stratford, NH has taken over operation of the New Hampshire Department of Transportation's (Ex-Boston & Maine) Groveton to Littleton, NH branch. Most of the line has been surfaced. The rail line might lead to good things for Coos Country. According to Ed Jeffrey, owner of the New Hampshire Central, the NH Dept. of Transportation has granted a crossing permit to Commonwealth Lumber Company in Littleton. The company is in the process of being sold, which is why there's been very little activity in the yard at Whitefield, NH. NHC has entered into a ten-year operating agreement with the Dept. of Transportation to operate between Groveton and Littleton. The right-of-way has been surfaced, weed sprayed, and brush cut. There is a plastic pipe manufacturer going in at the Whitefield Industrial Park. Also the Miles Pond Saw Mill has been sold to Timber Resources, who wants, to utilize rail, and is also located within the Industrial Park.

ATLANTIC STATES LIMITED

NEW ENGLAND SOUTHERN

Ciment Quebec will soon expand its transload facility at Bow, NH which opened at the end of May using the 1000-foot siding which runs through the building from south to north. The company in what it calls its phase two will add two silos, bringing the total capacity to 2,000 tons, by the end of November. Ciment Quebec asked NEGS to start work on a second, 400-foot siding off the first, north of the building, and

NEGS will also add a siding south of the building for locomotive storage as Ciment Quebec will acquire its own locomotive to do the switching. Ciment Quebec will hire someone to operate the locomotive.

ATLANTIC NORTHEAST RAILS

GUILFORD BUSINESS - COAL MOVES

The unit trains supplying Northeast Utilities plants in Bow, NH, and Mt. Tom, MA, are a major source of revenue for the railroad. More than 10,000 carloads are delivered to the Bow facility each year in 90-car trains. In addition, some 100,000 tons of offshore coal reach Bow each year which bums about 3,600 tons a day. Cars in Bow are dumped by a rotary dumper, the entire train is unloaded in 8-10 hours. The Mt. Tom plant receives up to 50 trains a year of 85 cars each, or about 4,250 carloads a year. Other coal users include Mead Paper in Rumford which receives coal via Merrill's Terminal and then GRS rail, 10 * cars at a time five days a week. Norton Abrasives in Worcester uses 30-40 carloads a year. Dragon Cement in Thomaston, ME received about 300 carloads last year.

OTHER MOVES

Guilford is giving good service to Blue Seal Feeds in both New Hampshire and Maine, said Bill Whitney, who manages transportation for the company. GRS recently changed service to New Hampshire providing a train from East Deerfield directly to Nashua triweekly. This means that cars do not wait in Lowell or other intermediate points, said Whitney. Since service to the East Augusta customers resumed through Waterville instead of going through Brunswick, Whitney said service has much improved. It's scheduled triweekly. Sometimes they'll call to ask if we need a switch, and if not, they'll go about other business. But if we need it, they will do it." The East Augusta plant does about 10-20 cars a week.

75 YEARS AGO (1926)

from The Democrat & The Citizen

Effective at 12:01 a.m., Sunday, Sept. 26, "for the first time since the Franklin and Tilton railroad was built, 34 years ago, passenger train service was discontinued between Franklin and Tilton. The Cannonball Express, which is the only passenger train that has been operating over this line of recent months, is now running by way of Northfield Depot and Canterbury to Concord. Passenger service between Franklin and Tilton is being taken care of by the Carpenter Bus Line. (LD)

Laconia NH Citizen 9/29/2001

THE INTERCHANGE:

Wanted: Buying collections of B&M MEC, BAR, New Haven, NYC and other rail historical society publications, employee magazines, annual reports, railfan periodicals and books. Paul Gibson, 161 Gilmore Rd, Wrentham, MA 02093.

As a retirement hobby, former B&M RTC Alden Dreyer buys, sells and trades historic Boston & Maine RR paper. Currently in stock: 73 out of the 86 B&M BULLETINS, 126 out of the 284 Employees' Magazines, and about 70 different ETT's. Also nearly complete files of TRAINS, RAILROAD, L&RP, NESL, etc. FREE LIST via USPS or email. Contact Alden Dreyer, 91 Reynolds Road, Shelburne MA 01370-9715, alden@javanet.com, 413-625-6384

ALL ABOARD! CLASSIC FLYING YANKEE RESTORATION IS WELL UNDER WAY AT CLAREMONT

More than 500 view one of the fully restored passenger cars of the 1930s.

By STEPHEN SEITZ
Sunday News Correspondent

CLAREMONT - A momentous milestone in the restoration of the Flying Yankee passenger train has been passed.

One of the passenger cars of the 1930s technological marvel has been fully restored, and was displayed to a crowd of more than 500 yesterday morning.

"We were fortunate to have been chosen," said Lori Barnes, president of the Claremont Concord Railroad Corporation, which is restoring the train. "This is a very big project."

R. Stoning Morrell, chairman of the Flying Yankee Restoration Group and son of project founder Robert S. Morrell, hailed the public's interest.

"Sixty-six and a half years ago, thousands of people gathered throughout New England to get a glimpse of the Flying Yankee," Morrell said. "It was the height of the Great Depression. Twenty percent of the population was out of work, and passenger railroad travel had declined 50 percent since 1929."

Industry responded with the Flying Yankee. It was the first diesel electric train, the transition between steam locomotion and modern rail transportation. A classic example of art deco design, it was one of the first trains to be fully streamlined, and its outline looks like a modern airplane fuselage. The resemblance between the Flying Yankee's outline and that of the Boeing 747 is remarkable.

"We are now past the halfway mark," said Carl Lindblade, executive director of the Flying Yankee Restoration Project. "It's central to our mission, which is to celebrate the then-futuristic technology of the mid-1930s. All we need now is the rest of the money." A total of \$2.7 million is needed for the project; \$1.4 million has been raised thus far.

Originally the creation of the Boston & Maine Railroad, the Flying Yankee's route originally took it from Boston to Portland, Maine, and to Bangor.

John Flanders, 74, took a ride on the Flying Yankee not long after its debut.

"It was a beautiful train," he said. "I don't remember where we went; the only reason we went on it was because it was something new. But if you looked at the old locomotives, the Flying Yankee really shined. When I joined the service in World War II, we took steam locomotives to Galveston, Texas. We rode in cattle cars all the way down."

Project archivist Brad Sears said that one of the big differences between the Flying Yankee and the steam locomotives was eliminating the cattle car experience.

"Up until this time, passengers rode in open cars pulled by a steam engine," he said. "At the end of ten hours, passengers were just as dirty as the engine. If you took a trip on this one, you were clean at the end of your trip."

Restoration has been arduous. The train will run again, to serve purposes of education and economic development. That means it has to meet Amtrak standards. Barnes said this has been done; more difficult is getting the individual parts right.

"A lot of the parts have had to be re-cast," she said. "We've done a lot of reverse engineering. The parts look a lot alike, but when you get closer, they're not at all alike."

There have been some breaks; the fuzzy purple mohair fabric that covers the restored seats was donated by a South Carolina fabric manufacturer.

"This was about \$80,000 worth of fabric," said Sears. "It was his parting shot as the owner of the fabric mill. All he asked in return was that we print the fact that a rebel was helping the Yankees."

Bill Trueheart, who is in charge of planning, said he'd like to see enough money raised to save the nose cowling, which still has enough of the original logo remaining so that it could be fully restored.

"I'd replace the cowling myself, but I just don't have the money," he said. "Unless we get a new cowling, we're going to have to sand it all down, and the design will be gone forever."

In its 22-year career, the Flying Yankee served as the Mountaineer, the Cheshire, the Businessman, and the Minuteman. By the time it was put out of service in 1957, it had traveled 2.7 million miles. It spent the next 36 years sitting outdoors at the Edaville Railroad Museum in Carver, Mass. Robert Morrell bought it in 1993 and set the restoration project in motion. It was not long before the state was brought in as a restoration partner.

"We're supplying financial and technical assistance," aid Transportation Commissioner Carol Murray. "So far, the state has contributed \$750,000 in enhancement funds. We've found technological expertise, but we're also providing emotional support. It's wonderful to preserve this piece of transportation history and symbol of American ingenuity. Particularly after Sept 11, that's something to celebrate."

For more information on the Flying Yankee and the restoration project, visit the Web site at www.flyingyankee.com.

*New Hampshire Sunday News
November 18, 2001*

LEXINGTON BRANCH COLOR POSTCARDS...

Our colleagues at Friends of Bedford Depot Park, Inc. sent along the following announcement of a new piece of B&M merchandise:

"New Color Postcards Showcase Local Railroad History.

"Memories of the old Boston & Maine Railroad come to life in full color with three new postcards from Friends of Bedford Depot Park. The daily arrival of the local freight train from Boston was once a regular sight in Bedford, Lexington, and Arlington. In 1949, John M. Boardman chronicled the "BB Local" as it progressed through these towns. Now, his superb photography is available for all to appreciate.

"The series begins in Lexington center. The local's bright red caboose is seen passing through the station. Then, steam engine #1454 charges beneath Old Concord Road bridge in West Bedford as the BB heads to Concord over the Reformatory Branch. Next, the train is back

at Bedford Depot on the track that leads to North Billerica.

"A set of six postcards, two of each scene, is available for \$3.00. (For mail orders, please include 5% sales tax and \$0.80 postage.) For a limited time, six additional Lexington Branch color postcards will be included for a total of 12. All sales proceeds will be used for historic preservation work.

"These new postcards plus other unique and affordable gifts are available at Bedford Freight House at 120 South Road, the Minuteman Bikeway terminus."

The mail address is Bedford Freight House, 120 South Road, Bedford, MA 01730. Online, they are at www.BedfordDepot.org.

These are terrific examples of B&M branch line railroad photography. - Editor..

HOUSE PASSES \$3M FOR NASHUA-LOWELL LINK

Saturday, December 01, 2001

The \$22.5 million project to extend commuter rail from Lowell, Mass.-to-Nashua looks certain to get another \$3 million investment from the federal government. The House of Representatives approved a compromised transportation budget bill which also includes \$13.3 million of improvements for the Manchester Airport and a \$200,000 study into a new Route 101 corridor through Amherst, Milford and Wilton.

In previous years, the project has received \$ 3 million in federal funds for engineering and planning. The additional \$ 3 million would help complete final design and construction. The estimated total cost of upgrading the 11 miles of railroad track is \$ 22.5 million. The State Department of Transportation has committed to providing the 20% match with state funds. Additional federal and state transportation funds have been earmarked for the purchase of trains and the construction of a train station in Nashua. The transportation funding

bill, which is expected to pass the Senate and be signed into law by the President, provides a total of \$ 59.6 billion to meet the nation's air and surface transportation priorities.

Public officials in both states hope the project will ease traffic congestion on Route 3 and the F.E. Everett Turnpike, on which 50,000 cars travel daily between New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

Nashua Mayor Bernie Streeter said he remains hopeful the Nashua-Lowell rail link could be in operation two years from now. The project is already in the state's 10-year highway plan and 20 percent of the project's cost is backed by state dollars. Current rail service plans call for six round trips each weekday and three round trips on weekends from Nashua to Lowell.

In late October, state transportation officials proposed a new site for the station, a partially vacant 10-acre site owned by Hampshire Chemical Corp. The site is on East Spit Brook Road, next to the Merrimack River.

From story by KEVIN LANDRIGAN, Telegraph Staff, and other sources

GROUP LOOKING AT OTHER N.H. TRAIN ROUTES

By Associated Press, 11/27/2001

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) With passenger train service about to resume between Maine and Boston, a study group is beginning to look into whether it would be worth trying to restore other former passenger lines in New Hampshire.

A task force will meet Wednesday to study restoring passenger service from Boston to Montreal, with possible stops in Concord and Franklin, N.H. It would involve a line from Nashua to Merrimack and Manchester, and from Concord to Lebanon.

Peter Griffin, a member of the New Hampshire Railroad Revitalization Association, said he thinks the service could be part of a balanced transportation system and help unclog highways.

"I definitely feel it could happen," he said. "I'm promoting this as something that can be part of a balanced transportation system, not something to take the place of what we already have, but to complement the road and air traffic systems."

Christopher Morgan, rail administrator for New Hampshire's Department of Transportation, said rail travel is likely, but he doesn't know when.

"Someday it will happen," he said. "I don't know if it will be 20 years or 50 years, but I think it will happen, preferably in our lifetimes."

Considered too costly, slow and impractical until recently, passenger train service is returning to New Hampshire and Maine as commuters complain about clogged highways and difficulties parking in Boston.

On Dec. 15 daily rail service begins between Boston and Portland, Maine, with three stops in New Hampshire. And by 2004 daily service is expected to be restored between Nashua and Lowell, Mass., which connects to Boston.

"Say you could take 10,000 cars a day off I-93. That would be fabulous," said Nancy Girard, of the Conservation Law Foundation. "Just think of the pressure you'd take off that road, and all the congestion you'd eliminate."

BOSTON-PORTLAND TEST TRAIN MAKES RUN

WELLS - A three-car testing vehicle has completed structural tests on 78 miles of track for the Boston to Portland passenger rail line, and has returned to Pueblo, Col., where the data will be analyzed.

The results of the test should be known later this week or early next week, according to Jonathan Carter, Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority board chairman and Wells town manager.

When asked what would happen if the tests revealed structural defects, NNEPRA Executive Director Michael Murray said he could not speculate.

"I certainly have got to see the report first," he said.

"What these folks on the train will do is take the data accumulated back to Pueblo, go through the recording that have been received, and issue a report. I have not seen that report.

"In addition to pointing out areas that may need additional work, I would hope that they would also include possible remedial actions to remedy whatever deficiencies were found."

Murray said that deficiencies in the substructure are often found in isolated locations, as opposed to the entire substructure below the rails.

The testing vehicle measures the rigidity of the supporting structure below the rails, according to Murray.

The substructure consists of the ties, ballast and subgrade.

"We're looking for a rather rigid substructure," said Murray.

Murray said the testing was done in two separate phases. The first phase is done in a "dynamic mode" where the train travels over the subgrade at roughly 10 mph.

Based on the recordings that are received, specific locations are revisited by the testing vehicle, and static tests are conducted in those areas in phase two.

According to Murray, the testing vehicle consists of a four-car train, with a locomotive, a data collection car, a track loading vehicle and a tank car.

"The track loading vehicle actually applies ... pressure to the rails, and ... laser beams record deflections. The tank car ... can set the rail with a known weight prior to doing the loading," said Murray.

A start-up date for passenger rail service is not known. Murray said he hoped service would begin by the end of November.

Wells will be a stop for the rail line, named the "Downeaster."

Wells will be home to a train platform and an intermodal transportation center, which will be administrated by the Wells Chamber of Commerce, located near Exit 2.

York County Coast Star, 10/3/2001

By John Swinconeck, Star Writer

ATHOL...THEN AND NOW

Telegram & Gazette Staff

ATHOL-- A 1909 postcard of the Athol train station shows an artist's vision of the future, with monorails, large balloons, an airplane and, stopped alongside the building, a trolley bus unloading passengers.

There are no monorails in Athol -- the technology never reached the town -- but Selectman Mary E. Forristall said the town had such good train service that 24 trains a day stopped at the station in 1919.

Since then it has been all downhill. On weekdays the Athol train station bustles with activity as people head to various destinations, but it is not serving the purpose it was originally built for.

The train station now serves bus passengers, not trains. Community Transportation Services bought it in January for regional dial-a-ride services -- and with a hope that someday train service would return to Athol.

"It would be nice to tie the train service into our intermodal center," office manager David Batchelder said.

At present, residents of the North Quabbin area have to drive to Leominster or Fitchburg or farther east if they want to ride the rails into Boston.

For several years, until the service was discontinued in 1985, residents could drive to Gardner and catch the train. Two years after the train stopped going to Gardner, a bus service started ferrying passengers from Gardner to the Fitchburg train station. That too ended in 1992.

The Greater Gardner and North Quabbin area have been without passenger rail service for 16 years, since the train stopped going to Gardner. State Rep. Brian Knuuttila, D-Gardner said he is hoping that isolation will end in the next few years.

At a meeting last week, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's representatives got an earful about the inadequacies of the train service it offers for Fitchburg and Leominster, including the need for at least one express train to speed the commute into Boston.

Mr. Knuuttila also told MBTA officials they should not forget about areas further west that are not served by passenger train service.

A member of the House of Representatives transportation subcom-

mittee, Mr. Knuuttila said he has been working to encourage the expansion of train service at least into Gardner and preferably further west. He said there will be a meeting in February with state transportation officials to talk about the need for expanded service. He said the difficulties will be the cost and convincing Guilford Transportation it will not be liable for accidents on its tracks through Gardner.

"Our estimate: It will cost \$50 million," Mr. Knuuttila said, referring to expanded rail service.

The expense will be in upgrading the tracks from freight service to passenger service, and possibly building another set of tracks.

Mr. Knuuttila said he believes the obstacles can be overcome, and thinks Gardner will see the train return in three or four years. "I base that on the return of commuter rail service to Newburyport. That took four years of constant lobbying."

The effort may be difficult, but Mr. Knuuttila said it would be worthwhile. He said a 1999 study showed about 40 people from the Gardner area and towns further west using the Fitchburg and Leominster stations. Now there are 100.

Mrs. Forristall said improving transportation is crucial for the Athol area, which suffers from one of the highest unemployment rates in the state. "If we could get train service, it would go a long way toward developing this area economically."

There is a commuter bus link from Greenfield to Gardner that stops in Athol and Orange. The link is operated by the Montachusett and Franklin Regional Transit Authorities. In Gardner it connects with bus service from Winchendon and buses from Gardner to Fitchburg.

Mrs. Forristall said the bus service is a step forward, but the train would make the trip much easier for people heading to work in Boston. She said both are preferable to driving Route 2 to Boston.

Route 2 in the Athol area is undergoing safety improvements, but Mrs. Forristall said the real problem for commuters is getting through the rotary in Concord.

"It would be nice to get the train service back, even if we only had limited service," she said.

Monday, December 3, 2001

By George Barnes

METHUEN CONSIDERS BUYING STATION

METHUEN -- On Monday, councilors will decide whether to place a \$10,000 non-refundable deposit on the purchase of the old train station, located at 55 Union St. Town officials have until March 31 of next year to decide if they want to purchase the building that was built by Edward Searles in 1908. The old train depot at 55 Union St. in Methuen is for sale for \$199,000. The Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority is considering buying the property but the town will have to put up a \$10,000 non-refundable deposit.

William J. Buckley, community development director, said the

Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority is considering purchasing the building for the town and is looking into the best uses for the site. He did not know if the town would still consider purchasing the property if no grants or programs are available to help with the cost. Buckley said a number of options are being considered for the best use of the building, including possibly turning it into a museum. He said another possibility might be to restore the railroad tracks, which have been abandoned for years. Mayor Sharon M. Pollard has mentioned in the past that she would like a commuter rail train stop in Methuen.

THANKS

Thanks this issue go to: Bob Warren, Roderick Hall, Sandy Shepherd, Michael Lennon, Ellis Walker, Peter Victory, Len Bachelder, Ron LeBlond, Bob Wilner, Scott Whitney.

NEXT ISSUE

The deadline for the March/April Newsletter is February 2, 2002. Please send all items to the Newsletter address or E-mail. News items, especially local items not likely to be reported in Boston, will be greatly appreciated.

BOSTON-PORTLAND SERVICE STARTS!!!

Barring some last minute complication, the "Downeaster" service between Boston and Portland was to have started on 12/15/2001 (after this Newsletter went to production) with a special VIP opening on 12/14/2001. See news stories elsewhere in this issue for more details of the run-up to service startup. We will have full coverage next issue, so please send in any news of the startup.

As a commuter into North Station, your editor has been looking for changes in the station in anticipation of the start of intercity service. So far, the only sign of the new service is an automatic ticket machine that has been installed in the lobby, along with the occasional Amtrak train set parked in the station.

In the Murphy's Law department, your editor leaves for the midwest on the Lake Shore Limited on the 13th, missing the startup by one day!

BIG PARTY PLANNED FOR DEBUT OF AMTRAK

The long-awaited letter arrived in Phillip Hill's mailbox on Friday - an elegantly lettered note inviting him on the inaugural run of the Downeaster, Amtrak's rail service between Boston and Portland. "I'm all set and thrilled to pieces," said Hill, 83, whose father and brother each worked for 50 years as engineers and firemen on the passenger trains that shuttled between Boston and Portland, a service that ended in 1965.

Hill plans to bring a photograph of the men, who are now long dead. "I want to represent them," he said. "They would have been delighted to see this train, no question." Hill will be one of the few ordinary people on the special 12-car train, which leaves Boston on Dec. 14 with a load of 450 VI Ps, mostly business leaders, railroad executives and government officials, including as many as three governors, four congressmen and six senators.

It will be a 114-mile-long party through three states, with a cash bar and free Amtrak food, interrupted by whistle-stop speeches at each of the nine communities that will have Amtrak stations. Church bells will ring in each town as the train approaches, just as they did when the first steam trains arrived in Maine more than 150 years ago.

Officials are still trying to arrange for a brass band to greet the train - as proper railroad etiquette dictates - when it arrives in Portland around 3:30 p.m.

Hill snagged a seat because he had asked for help from U.S. Rep. John Baldacci's office. Hundreds of other less persistent train enthusiasts will have to wait until the following day, when Amtrak service officially begins. Railroad officials say more than 1,000 tickets have been sold for the four regular round trips scheduled on Dec. 15. The trip will take 2 1/2 hours and cost \$21 one way, while a same-day round trip will cost \$35.

Following the inaugural run, the celebration will continue at the Portland Exposition Building, where a two-hour party will feature an edited version of the trip on a giant video screen and a 20-foot-long ice sculpture of the Downeaster. The party, which begins shortly before 4 p.m., is open to the public, at a cost of \$25.

Inaugural trains are part of a long railroad tradition that serves multiple purposes. Railroad officials expect free advertising from the horde of travel writers and media representatives who'll ride in their own car. The train also serves a political role - providing recognition to all the players who worked to bring rail service back to Portland. The coalition will still be needed, as the service faces the new challenges of pleasing riders, generating revenue and winning corporate sponsors. Political support may be needed again someday, if the train can't pay its own way. The inaugural train and events that day will cost \$100,000, much of it subsidized by corporate sponsorship. Among the donors are Peoples Heritage Bank, Prince of Fundy Cruises Ltd. and the Maine Office of Tourism.

For many of the people who will ride, the inaugural train is not about anything practical at all. It's a highly emotional event that signifies the triumphant end of a 13-year quest. "Sometimes, when we were in the

dark days, it seems that was the thing that pulled us along - that inaugural ride," said Jeri Edgar, a member of TrainRiders/ Northeast, the citizens group that lobbied and petitioned for the train.

"God willing, I will be on it," said Herb Connell, one of the founding board members. "I will still be knocking on wood until the train comes and it actually goes. We've had so many false starts." Some of the people who advocated early for the service are now dead, or so old they fear the 4 1/2-hour journey would be too strenuous. Organizers of the event have struggled with all the requests from people who want to be on the inaugural train. Wayne Davis, the head of TrainRiders, said his office has fielded at least a half-dozen requests every day.

Patricia Douglas, a planner with the Northern New England Rail Authority, said it's difficult telling people they can't be on the train. "Every day," she said, "when you have to disappoint someone, that takes the wind out of my sails for this event."

One man who landed an invitation, railroad historian Robert Willoughby Jones, said he's flying from his home in Los Angeles to ride the train. In the 1960s, he said, passenger rail service between Boston and Portland struggled to compete against the automobile, especially after the Maine Turnpike was built. But Jones said the region's population has grown substantially, and today's crowded highways aren't that pleasant or fast. He said he thinks rail service will succeed. "To me," he said, "it's just wonderful to have it back again."

Staff Writer Tom Bell may be contacted at 791-6369 or at:
tbell@pressherald.com

INAUGURAL DAY SCHEDULE

Station	Celebration	Train arrival	Train departure
Boston	10 - 11 a.m.	NA	10:50 a.m.
Haverhill, Mass.	11 - Noon	11:45 a.m.	Noon
Exeter, N.H.	Noon - 1 p.m.	12:25 p.m.	12:40
Durham, N.H.	12:15 - 1:15	12:52	1:07
Dover, N.H.	12:30 - 1:30	1:14	1:29
Wells	1 - 2	1:49	2:04
Saco	2 - 3	2:23	2:38
Old Orchard Beach	2 - 3	2:45	3:00
Portland	2:30 - 3:30	3:27 p.m.	NA

Saturday, December 1, 2001

Portland Press Herald

By TOM BELL, Portland Press Herald Writer
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AFTER YEARS OF DELAY, PASSENGER TRAINS ARE ABOUT TO ROLL INTO MAINE

PORTLAND, Maine - Getting Amtrak service between Portland and Boston took longer than construction of the transcontinental railroad. More than \$50 million in public money was spent on new track and equipment. For many, seeing the trains roll in two weeks will be the fulfillment of a dream.

But how many riders will climb aboard is anyone's guess.

The Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority estimates 320,000 passengers will ride the "Downeaster" in the first year. Supporters say the number is conservative, while New Hampshire officials say it could be half that.

"It's all speculation," says Wayne Davis of TrainRiders/Northeast, whose 1988 letter to Amtrak's chief executive set in motion Maine's push to restore rail passenger service that was abandoned in 1965.

The Downeaster is scheduled to begin service Dec. 15, with four round trips a day, providing a test of the public's willingness to set aside the automobile in favor of a new transportation option.

The projected 320,000 trips translates to \$3.3 million a year in fares, which is well short of Amtrak's \$5.3 million operating cost. The federal government will spend up to \$2 million annually to subsidize the service for three years.

Rail officials hope strong ridership and revenues from sources ranging from souvenirs to onboard advertising will make up the difference without the need for further subsidies three years from now.

Davis, the No. 1 cheerleader for the new service, is convinced that ridership and revenues will exceed projections.

"We've said all along that if this train can do what it was designed to do go 80 mph and if the equipment is maintained, and the service is courteous, and the food is good and the price is reasonable, we should blow the doors off," he said.

The 114-mile line caps a much-delayed project that began in earnest in 1990. The transcontinental railroad, one of America's foremost engineering achievements, was laid out and built within a decade.

The Amtrak trains, consisting of a diesel locomotive, three coach cars and a cafe car with reserved seats for business class, will accommodate up to 230 passengers and run on track owned by Guilford Rail Systems and the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority.

Top speed will initially be set at 60 mph but is expected to jump to 79 mph after test results confirm that the rail can accommodate the higher speed.

Speed is important. The trains must operate at the higher speeds to make people give up their cars, Davis said.

But state officials in New Hampshire are less confident that motorists will give up the convenience of driving. Transportation Commissioner Carol Murray said the 320,000 trip projection may be too high by half.

Her assessment is backed up by David Fink, Guilford's executive vice president. "We've always thought the ridership projections were impossibly overstated," Fink said.

Tickets to ride the trains between Portland and Boston's North Station will be \$21 one way and \$35 round trip, with discount 10-trip and commuter fares available. It's more expensive than going by bus but cheaper than flying.

The train boasts amenities as one of its selling points. Riders will be able to order wine and cheese, a shrimp cocktail or a portobello mushroom sandwich, read a newspaper or hook up a laptop computer. Plans are in the works to allow the trains to host business conferences.

When all stations are open, the 2-hour ride will include stops in Saco and Wells in Maine; Dover, Durham and Exeter in New Hampshire, and Haverhill, Mass. Trains will add a stop in Old Orchard Beach during the summer.

Commuters make up only 14 percent of the projected ridership and may account for most passengers on the first run that leaves Portland at 6:05 a.m. Business trips account for 21 percent, with the remaining 65 percent made up of riders headed to Boston for reasons as diverse as shopping or going to museums, hospitals or Fenway Park.

Roughly half the passengers would be from Maine, at least 25 percent from New Hampshire and the remainder would board the train at Haverhill, Mass.

Michael Murray, executive director of the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority, is working to ensure that the rail service is self-sufficient after the federal subsidies end.

His agency is trying to generate supplemental revenues through corporate sponsorships, franchising, food service, onboard advertising and sales of souvenirs such as t-shirts, hats and whistles.

"Our goals are to be revenue-adequate by year three," he said. "We can't go into this with a vision that if we have a shortfall, we just go to Augusta."

The federal government has bankrolled most of the \$55.6 million already spent on track upgrades and equipment.

Davis said any additional subsidies needed to keep the trains running would be money well spent because it provides a new transportation option for Maine. For example, it reduce the load on interstates.

"It's the missing piece to the network," Davis said. "(Transportation) is a three-legged stool, and rail is a very important leg, along highways and airports."

One business that stands to lose ridership when the trains start rolling is Concord Trailways, which runs 11 nonstop bus trips a day between Portland and Boston.

"We're faster, we run more frequently and we're a tad less expensive," said Harry Blunt, president of the New Hampshire-based carrier. The bus pulls into South Station, making it a better choice for travelers planning to link up with Amtrak's high-speed Acela, he said.

The buses feature a movie but not the amenities offered by Amtrak: the trains are roomier and more comfortable and allow riders to go to the club car for food or drink. "It's bound to have some impact on us," Blunt said.

Rail supporters note that the attacks by terrorists who flew jetliners into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon have made trains a more attractive alternative, as reflected in Amtrak's increased volume.

Michael Murray foresees a day when airlines will be the choice for trips of 500 miles or more but that travelers will give a harder look at trains when going 300 miles or less.

"The transportation vision of the nation has changed since September 11th," Murray said.

On the Net:

Amtrak Downeaster: <http://www.thedowneaster.com>

TrainRiders/Northeast: <http://www.cybertours.com/~trainriders>

December 3, 2001, Seacoast Online
By Associated Press

COAST TRAIN IDEA ROLLING

KITTERY, Maine - A single railroad line can carry about as many passengers as 16 lanes of highway traffic.

That point was made by William Mosher on Wednesday night at a commuter train symposium. Mosher is the chairman of the New Hampshire Legislative Task Force that is evaluating the proposed rail extension from Newburyport, Mass., to Kittery.

Passenger rail service in the Seacoast area was discontinued in 1965. But with the growing population and increasing tourism business in local communities, reintroducing a commuter train system may be a great alternative transportation method, officials said.

"You come to a point where you just can't build any more roads," Mosher said. "They don't call these roads 'the world's largest parking lots' for nothing."

The Kittery Economic Development Commission sponsored the Wednesday event at Town Hall. Several local and state officials, as well as many residents from Maine and New Hampshire, packed into Council Chambers to discuss the proposed line.

Peter Griffen, president of the New Hampshire Road Revitalization Association, said, "I think any rail system in this area would be more successful than you can ever imagine."

Funding is a key element that needs to be addressed, he emphasized. Officials could not come up with an estimated price tag.

Officials advised those who want a commuter train back in this area to contact their local, state and federal representatives for support.

Democratic Maine State Rep. Steve Estes presented a slide show and an overview of rail history in this area. Estes showed pictures of trains from the late 1800s and early 1900s that traveled throughout the New Hampshire and southern Maine area.

He emphasized the importance of passenger rail service to the local population during that era.

Since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, there has been about a 30 percent

increase in people using passenger rail service, Mosher said. The recently extended commuter service to Newburyport has been very successful, said Dennis Dizoglio, director of planning for the MBTA.

"MBTA rail system has taken off significantly," Dizoglio said.

And riding the train has "always been a pleasure," Mosher added. He talked about the convenience of being able to read the paper, drink coffee and perhaps eat a pastry while commuting to work, as opposed to dealing with heavy traffic jams, car accidents and vehicle breakdowns.

But Mosher said there's something else to think about - the positive impact that a commuter train would have on the environment.

"When you consider the number of cars you could take off the highway, the train suddenly becomes very popular because it becomes environmentally friendly," Mosher said.

The proposed Seacoast Line would run from Newburyport to Kittery.

According to an update provided by Griffen, the restoration of the Seacoast Line would reinforce Portsmouth's economic development efforts as well as urban renewal efforts in Salisbury and Amesbury, Mass.

The New Hampshire Legislature created a study committee in 1999, and in 2000 established a task force to further study the line, according to the update. Officials could not say when such a project could begin.

Officials who attended the symposium, including Mosher and Griffen, agreed to form a Tri-State Task Force including Judie Kehl, chairman of the Kittery Economic Development Commission.

The task force would help to advocate the passenger rail service to Kittery, Kehl said.

"There needs to be the involvement from officials in all three states," she said.

Anyone interested in participating on the Tri-State Task Force should contact Kehl at (207) 439-8770.

By Amy Wallace, awallace@seacoastonline.com

November 30, 2001, Seacoast Online

SACO FINALIZES LAND DEAL FOR AMTRAK PARKING LOTS

SACO -- The city closed a deal Tuesday to buy 5 1/2 acres of land for parking around the train platform on Saco Island. The city bought the property from N.F. Brickyard Inc. for \$370,000. The purchase is the latest development in the city's effort to build a passenger train station in Saco.

Construction of a train platform has already begun on leased land next to the tracks. City officials will present plans for a station to the City Council sometime this winter, said Peter Morelli, economic development director.

Besides providing parking for train passengers, the parking lots are part of a larger plan to help revitalize the adjacent mill buildings, some of which are unoccupied.

One of the mill buildings has 230,000 square feet of empty space. Mill building 108, which is also near the train property, is partially occupied.

Morelli said the lack of parking has delayed redevelopment of the buildings. The city hopes redeveloping them will create jobs and increase property tax revenue.

"The hope is that city-provided parking can support job creation and getting the mills back on the tax rolls at a higher value," Morelli said. "We're really hoping it will be the key to the revitalization of the Saco Island Mill District."

Amtrak's Downeaster service, which will run from Portland to Boston, is scheduled to begin on Dec. 15, the day after an inaugural run.

Morelli said it is unknown whether passengers will be able to get on or off the train in Saco by then.

Either way, he said, the train will stop in Saco on Dec. 14 as part of the inaugural celebrations, but passengers will not be able to board in Saco until the platform is done.

Saco is not the only city racing to meet the deadline.

In Wells, Town Manager Jonathan Carter said their platform will be ready by next week. "We'll be on time for the train," he said. Construction on the Wells station will begin in the spring.

Portland's platform on Sewall Street will be ready as well, but the station and walkway connecting the train to the station will not be ready in time.

In Old Orchard Beach, the design for the platform is about to be finalized, said Town Manager Richard Haberman.

The train will also make a symbolic stop in Old Orchard on Dec. 14, he said. But because Old Orchard Beach will be a summer stop, and there will be no station, their schedule is not as pressing.

Haberman said he expects the town's platform to be completed by this spring.

David Willauer, transportation director for the Greater Portland Council of Governments, said the New Hampshire stops are ahead of their Maine counterparts.

Exeter, Durham and Dover are all expected to have completed platforms in time for the inaugural run, he said.

Staff Writer Jen Fish can be contacted at 282-8229 or at: jfish@pressherald.com

Wednesday, December 5, 2001

*By JEN FISH, Portland Press Herald Writer
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N.Y. FIRM MULLS PURCHASE OF BAR

From Thursday's Bangor Daily News:

GREENVILLE — With the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad in bankruptcy and its tracks literally falling apart, it appears highly unlikely that any one company will step forward to buy the system for the \$60 million asking price.

There are an estimated \$123 million in claims against B&A, which reportedly has assets in the \$35 million range.

What seems more likely — and what Maine industries are most afraid of — is that the company and its 800 miles of tracks will be sold off piecemeal to satisfy creditors.

That economically devastating alternative is why municipal leaders and representatives of businesses and industry from around the state have been laying out the red carpet this week for representatives of a New York-based railroad — Genesee and Wyoming Inc. — in hopes that GWI will save the day for Maine's freight rail service.

In a series of meetings in Maine this week, local leaders have been telling GWI officials that their buying the railroad would be a sound investment. Not only would it serve the needs of Maine businesses, but also the purchase would prompt even more business growth and expansion.

Earlier this month, a U.S. Bankruptcy Court judge in Portland placed B&A into Chapter 11 reorganization after three creditors owing more than \$7 million requested it.

After weeks of negotiations, an agreement had been reached between B&A and the creditors that would have kept the railroad out of court-imposed supervision. B&A defaulted on that agreement when it failed to get signed a formal purchase agreement with Rail World Inc. and The Wheeling Corp., a consortium that offered to buy B&A System, the railroad's parent company, for \$62 million. The system consists of seven railroads in Canada and New England.

Concerned that bankruptcy proceedings will lead to the railroad system being broken up and sold in pieces, the Bangor City Council has since passed a resolve calling upon state and federal officials to work diligently to preserve an intact, active rail system.

And at meetings in Bangor and Greenville on Tuesday and Wednesday respectively, representatives of businesses from Greenville to Augusta told GWI President Charles N. Marshall that they would be delighted to switch from trucking fees to rail fees.

Marshall was in Maine this week on what he called "a reconnaissance mission." His company, he explained Wednesday, began looking at Maine rail service a year ago. While saying that the business has great potential, Marshall didn't offer business, economic and community leaders a pie in the sky. He said no revival of the rail service could take place without private and public participation.

Federal funds, state money and local cash will all be needed, Marshall said, to restore B&A's crumbling infrastructure and make any purchase of the railroad economically feasible.

"B&A passed through two separate owners who starved the company of capital," said George Betke Jr., president of Transport Economics Inc., a transportation initiative firm based in Newcastle. "They failed to recognize that the railroad industry had gone through a change following deregulation. B&A remained behind the times and did not become a lean, mean, flexible company. What needs to happen is the railroad needs to reinvent itself."

Betke said that at least \$25 million to \$30 million worth of capital investments would be required, beyond the purchase price of the company.

At the statewide gatherings, town managers, corporate heads and industry leaders told Marshall that their individual companies and their economic strategies could vastly benefit from increased and better managed rail service.

At the Bangor and Greenville meetings, Marshall heard some impressive statistics:

Great Northern Paper in Millinocket ships 60 percent of its product by rail. Brian Stetson, the company's environmental manager, said that figure could easily be increased to 90 percent. Stetson said that the company also would prefer to receive raw product by rail, rather than by truck.

So would Greenville's Steam Generation Plant, said manager Scott Hersey, who finds a dozen trucks filled with Canadian wood products lined up at his front gate at 6 a.m. each day.

"We are working with four different companies that supply fuel," said Hersey. "Every one of them has rail requirements."

Greenville Town Manager John Simko said several area businesses would use rail transportation if it were available, including Moosehead Cedar Log homes, which ships its home kits exclusively out of state while shipping in the raw materials from Canada.

The Acadia Railway Co. plans to offer excursions to Greenville twice a week for 14 weeks beginning next June.

"Our entire existence in Greenville is contingent on the railway line," said vice president of operations Walt Watzinger.

David St. Clair of the Moosehead Economic Development Council said a mill project is under way that could use 1,000 rail carloads a year, bringing logs in and sending milled lumber out.

Simko also said that Greenville has established a partnership with the state of Maine and the University of Maine to develop an incubator center in town that will link UM-generated ideas for wood composite products with manufacturing. Simko said there is a possibility the partnership will lead in the near future to construction of a 200,000-square-foot building where 100 people will be employed. Such a facility would need about 600 rail cars a year to transport products, he said. A smaller firm should be up and running next summer that would also require rail service.

"None of these things will happen without the railroad," said Simko.

Marshall stressed that a public and private financing partnership will be the only way to save Maine's rail industry.

State Rep. Sharon Libby-Jones, D-Greenville, said Maine voters approved \$4 million in rail aid with a positive vote on last November's transportation bond. In addition, she said the Maine Department of Transportation has identified another \$1 million left over from a previous rail project.

"We need to improve freight infrastructure and access with state capital leveraging additional private investment," said Libby-Jones. She also said it will be key to open communications with Quebec and New Brunswick to link with their rail systems. "If we don't have the Canadian government on board, all of this won't do any good," she said.

State Sen. Paul Davis, R-Sangerville, said he was hearing that local industries and businesses were very interested in participating in rail transportation. A workable rail freight system, said Davis, is critical for the economic development and viability of northern Maine. "Stating that over the past 28 years, Bath Iron Works has received about \$60 million in state aid, Davis said, "I know that the legislative delegation will be pushing hard in Augusta to remind people that this is a priority."

Marshall and GWI treasurer Thomas P. Loftus Jr. followed up their final meeting this week in Greenville with a tour of some of the area businesses that are promoting rail service.

"We are here by way of introduction," Marshall explained, "to try to work out a plan to put in place if everyone else's plans fall apart." He conceded that "some high rollers" might be interested in parts of the B&A service.

"If that works," said Marshall, "God bless them. But our plan is for the long term." He said a plan and possible costs would likely be developed by early January.

POLICE CHIEFS GET TAKEN FOR A RIDE

As Dec. 15 draws near, New Hampshire communities anxiously await the arrival of the new Amtrak train service from Boston to Portland.

Local police chiefs are concerned about safety issues associated with the high-speed train, and have been raising a number of questions to officials about the Downeaster, which will eventually reach speeds of 79 mph.

As part of a working relationship with Amtrak to ensure the safety of pedestrians and the motoring public, area police chiefs were invited to two recent events.

They traveled from Plaistow to Exeter aboard the Downeaster last week.

This week, many of the same people also attended an informational luncheon.

The Nov. 19 train ride was offered by Amtrak police and safety officials. The police chiefs were afforded the opportunity to ride in each compartment of the train. During the ride, they were updated about safety issues and the precautionary steps taken to avoid a disaster.

Chief Richard Labell from Newton and Chief Stephen Savage from Plaistow rode with the engineers.

"It was very informative," said Labell. "I am impressed with the safety features of the train."

Their ride did not exceed 40 mph, although once service begins, the train will reach 60 mph. Amtrak officials intend to increase the speed to 79 mph in the spring.

"I'm not thrilled about a high-speed train going through my community," said Labell. But he added that they have been doing as much as possible to educate the public about safety.

Officials also noted certain "hot spots" along the train route, such

as a popular swimming hole in East Kingston where kids often jump off the railroad bridge into the water.

Amtrak officials addressed more concerns at a regional luncheon Monday afternoon. A dozen police chiefs from communities affected by the new service converged to gather the latest information.

"They discussed emergency situations and protocol that we as a local police should follow, so it was a very informative meeting," Kingston Police Chief Donald Briggs Jr. said. "They welcomed and asked for our assistance with trespassing issues, such as the use of OHRVs along the tracks, to reduce the number of incidents."

Exeter Police Chief Richard Kane complimented Monday's informative luncheon, and Amtrak in general.

"They have certainly made themselves available to answer our questions," he said.

Amtrak Project Manager Mary Ann Lorimer said that Amtrak is aware of the concern for public safety.

Programs have been launched in other communities to address the fact that 17 people in the U.S. died last year because of trespassing or illegally trying to cross the tracks. Already this year there have been eight fatalities.

Local police said they feel that safety education goes beyond any dealings with Amtrak.

"People should take an active role in educating their children about train safety," said Kane.

Labell expressed the need to keep the education process going once train service begins. His main concern, he said, is that people don't cross the tracks - on foot or by vehicle - to try to beat the trains.

*November 30, 2001, Seacoast Online
By Callie Magrone and Barbara Poletta,
exeternewsletter@seacoastonline.com*

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

- February 3-4, 2002 Big Railroad Hobby Show. Eastern States Exposition Center, West Springfield, MA. 9am-5pm both days. Adults \$6.00, Children (5-11) \$1.00.
- February 10, 2002 RAIL-A-RAMA XXXIII. Ramada Rolling Green, 311 Lowell Street, Andover MA (Exit 43 off I-93). 10am-4pm. Adults \$3, Children (5-12) \$1.
- March 24, 2002 Model Train Show. Marlboro High School, Route 85 Bolton MA. 10am-2pm.