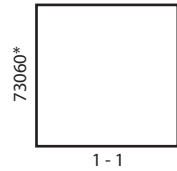


THE TRAINRIDER
 Box 4869, Downtown Station
 Portland, Maine 04112

(207) TRY-RAIL (879-7245)



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TRAINRIDER

THE NEWSLETTER OF TRAINRIDERS/NORTHEAST



TrainRiders: Vision and Reality

In 1989, three people came together to discuss what it would take to have Amtrak extend passenger rail service from Boston to Portland. An initial gathering of 21 interested citizens grew to about 300 which grew to 1,300 before leveling off. *Please check page 5 or our website <trainridersne.org> for a more detailed history.*

That group took the name TrainRiders/Northeast and collected about 25,000 signatures to assess public opinion, followed by more than 90,000 signatures of registered Maine voters on petitions requesting passage of our Passenger Rail Service Act. Those actions led Maine legislators, on July 14, 1991, for the first time in Maine history, to adopt a citizen initiated bill as their own. The people had spoken and our elected officials listened!

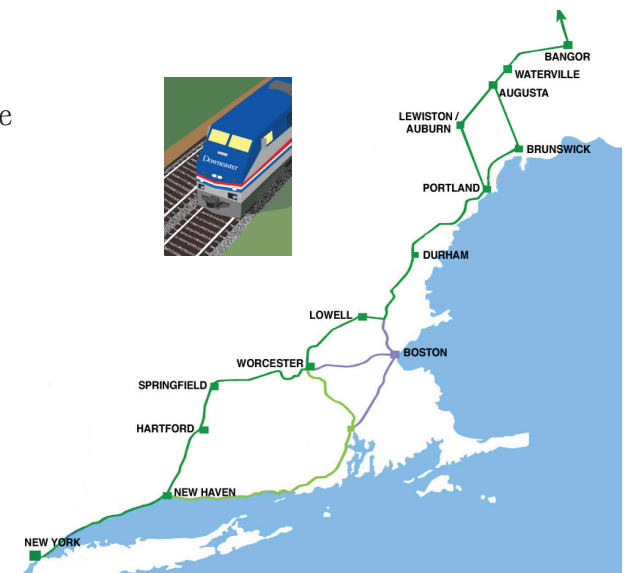
During the early 90's TNE sponsored rail awareness conferences, special trains, and events, while continuing to promote bipartisan state and federal support for our vision, resulting in \$38.6 million in federal funding, along with additional state funds, being made available for our proposed service. We also organized the drive for the formation of the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA) to manage the proposed service.

On December 14, 2001, we held the inaugural gala for our newly named Downeaster. From the very first day, the Downeaster has proven overwhelmingly popular with the traveling public and by the third year of service it was being called America's Favorite Train, garnering passenger satisfaction ratings that have continued to be among the highest in the Amtrak system.

Our Downeaster thrives due to the excellent oversight and management of NNEPRA, the efficient and pleasant Amtrak crews, the quality and presentation of the food service by Epicurean Feast café attendants, and the helpful and knowledgeable goodwill ambassadors from TNE's Train Host and Station Host programs.

State officials promised that the Downeaster would be extended to Brunswick within two years of its arrival in Portland. By 2004, however, Portland remained the end of the line. This led to TNE to organize and invite Brunswick and Freeport business and community leaders to attend an initial meeting/workshop to assess the desire for such an extension. A second meeting included not only

stakeholders, but legislative leaders as well. We submitted our findings to NNEPRA, which expanded upon our initiative by opening negotiations with Maine's Governor, legislative leaders, Amtrak, and PanAm Railways. This led to dramatic successes for the planned extension, and when the new administration in Washington announced the rollout of a national rail plan with Federal grants for rail projects that were "shovel ready", a grant of \$38M allowed our Downeaster to start serving Freeport and Brunswick on November 1, 2012. Once again, TNE was the driving force behind restoring passenger rail service in the Northeast, a force that continues to work today for tomorrow. ■



Membership

You can join TrainRiders/Northeast or renew your membership by filling out this form and mailing it to TrainRiders/Northeast, Box 4869, Portland, ME 04112-4869, or you may use our website at www.trainridersne.org

- Renew my membership at this time.
 - I'd like to become a new member.
- Please check category:
- \$40.00 Individual Member
 - \$60.00 Family Member
 - \$100.00 Sponsoring Member
 - \$250.00 Supporting Member
 - \$500.00 Endorsing Member
 - \$1000.00 Sustaining Member
 - Other \$ _____
 - Enclosed is \$ _____ for _____ membership(s).

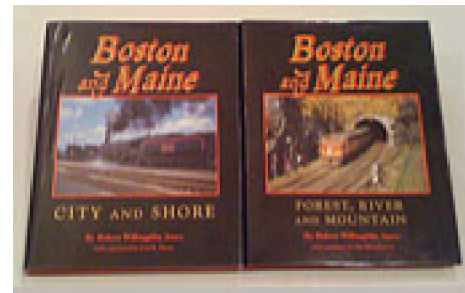
Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Tel. (____) _____

email _____



Remember the B&M?

The **Boston and Maine Railroad** was once a giant of New England commerce. In 1913, the B&M owned 2364 miles of track. It grew to be one of America's great railroads during the second half of the 19th Century, mostly by acquiring competitors that were buying lines into B&M territory. For many decades railroads provided the only transportation faster than a horse could walk. Now read the exciting history of this era in two handsome volumes by renowned historian Robert Willoughby Jones. In each book you'll find authentic full-color and black and white photos that visually record the fascinating story of B&M steam and diesel operations.

**Boston and Maine:
 City and Shore**

192 pages, 218 photographs

**Boston and Maine:
 Forest, River, and Mountain**

224 pages, 285 photographs

***** They make great gifts! *****

For special pricing for members for one or both books, see our website at www.trainridersne.org.

TrainRiders Northeast Board of Directors

Wayne Davis ME (Chair)	Andrew Hyland ME (Vice Chair)	Emily Boochever (Secretary)
Don Briselden (at large)	Robert Hall NH	James Oikle ME
Elizabeth Buckley ME	Valarie Lamont ME	Christopher Parker VT
Mike Duprey (at large)	William Lord ME	Stephen Piper NH
Ellen Fogg ME	Janet Brown CA (at large)	Nicholas Catoggio MA
		Robert Rodman (at large)
		Paula Boyer Rougny (at large)
		Fred Smith MA
		F. Bruce Sleeper (Clerk/Counsel)

The Brunswick Challenge

as seen by TNE Counsel **F. Bruce Sleeper**, Jensen Baird Gardner Henry

Because train sets have to overnight in Portland, they run empty from Portland to Brunswick at the beginning of the day and then run empty back to Portland at the end of the day. Those trips used up two of the contractually limited six one-way trips per day north of Portland leaving only two round trips allowable between Portland and Brunswick. Because of capacity limitations, some train sets had to be kept in Brunswick for several hours at a time. The locomotives of those train sets had to be kept running almost constantly to ensure their proper operation. All of this added close to \$500,000 a year to the cost of operating Brunswick service.

To address these issues, NNEPRA proposed: build an indoor layover facility in Brunswick at which trains could receive overnight service which they were receiving out doors in Portland. This would eliminate the deadhead runs at the beginning and end of the day and permit the locomotives to be turned off for almost all of the time they were being serviced.

After NNEPRA and MDOT examined several sites in the Brunswick area, they concluded that the safest and most cost effective choice was at the location of what had been called "The Rail Yard" since the late 1800's and was currently zoned for industrial and rail use. This choice was later endorsed by the Federal Railroad Administration in a 2014 finding of "No Significant Impact." NNEPRA also obtained a storm water permit from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in November 2013. At that point neighbors of the proposed site sued stating that they had not received sufficient notice of

the permit application and, in July 2014, a Maine court ruled in their favor. This forced NNEPRA to re-file its application. In October 2014, DEP accepted the application as complete for processing. The neighbors then requested a public hearing on the application, which the DEP granted in November.

While TrainRiders had been monitoring the process, it had not taken an active role before the DEP. Once a public hearing was allowed, however, TrainRiders decided to take an active role, both showing support for NNEPRA, and helping to show the weaknesses in the positions taken by the neighbors. We asked for and received formal intervenor status from the DEP in the

day and the public at large being given an opportunity to comment that evening. This process lasted from 9 AM to 9 PM and TrainRiders actively participated, examining and cross examining witnesses. Then we waited nearly 90 days, to June 16, 2015, for the DEP to grant NNEPRA the long sought permit.

Meanwhile, on July 16, 2015, the neighbors appealed the DEP's June 16 ruling to the Board of Environmental Protection (the "BEP"). TrainRiders also participated in this new appeal. In their new appeal, the neighbors attempted to have the BEP consider evidence in addition to that previously presented at the public hearing, but except for one set of pictures, and at the insistence of TrainRiders and NNEPRA, the BEP denied this request. However, the BEP then scheduled a final hearing held on November 19, 2015, and affirmed the DEP decision.

At the time that they appealed, the neighbors also filed a motion with DEP asking for a stay to delay construction, but it was denied. This allowed NNEPRA to move forward with construction of the facility. Ground clearing, foundations, and other activities have continued and NNEPRA is now projecting that unless something unforeseen happens, the facility will be completed sometime this coming fall.

When you fight the good fight, allies abound. Among them are a group of Brunswick residents who created an informal organization, All Aboard Brunswick, to show that the facility construction had strong support in the Brunswick community. Working with TrainRiders, their efforts have



proceedings, which the DEP also granted to the neighborhood association which opposed the facility. This then allowed TrainRiders, as well as the neighbors and their association, to participate as parties in the proceeding, along with NNEPRA.

Then came the real work. Conferences, motions, rulings and orders multiplied as though they were living beings. Finally, the DEP set March 25, 2015, as the day for the public hearing, with the parties proceeding upon the application during the

Just Imagine...

As TrainRiders/Northeast and the citizens of Maine, NH, and the region look to the future of our Downeaster service, TNE's Board of Directors, after several decades of close cooperation with state and federal officials, requested that the following be included in any future plans of NNEPRA and the Maine DOT for improvements or changes to the Downeaster service between Brunswick and Boston.

1. Increased Number of Trips.

In 1989, during the initial planning for today's Downeaster, TNE recommended eight daily round trips between Boston and Portland. Amtrak and State officials recommended three round trips. TrainRiders negotiated four round trips to start the service. Two years later, NNEPRA added a fifth round trip to reduce crowded and sold-out trains. Today, TNE recommends at least seven round trips per day.

2. Increased Number of Tracks.

The original right-of-way between Boston and Portland was double tracked. While the second track no longer exists, the roadbed to reconstruct a second track still exists. TNE recommends that the second track be completely restored to permit higher speeds and to alleviate any congestion

which would result from increasing the daily number of round trips.

3. Increased Speed. Starting in 1989, TNE advocated for 79 mph trains throughout the route. Currently, only certain portions of the track can accommodate that speed. TNE was instrumental in having the Downeaster route designated as one of eleven high-speed corridors in the U.S. That designation permits speeds from 110 mph and higher. TNE recommends that 110 be the goal for future service.

4. Equipment Upgrades.

With increasing ridership, the Downeaster equipment is in need of replacement and upgrade. During initial negotiations with AMTRAK, the then President of Amtrak, W. Graham Claytor, Jr., promised that the best equipment available would be used for Downeaster service. With that in mind, TNE recommends that the newest equipment or the next class of equipment acquired by Amtrak be assigned to the Downeaster. We also suggest that NNEPRA evaluate the advantages of acquiring its own rolling stock, modern self-propelled rail cars (DMU's).

5. Expansion. TNE's original goals included expansion to Bangor, via Freeport, Brunswick, Augusta, and Waterville and via Auburn/Lewiston

and Waterville. Those routes are presently being pursued by several private organizations and real estate interests. With this in mind, TNE's Board of Directors has voted to pursue its final original goal: through service to New York via Worcester, Massachusetts. TNE recommends that NNEPRA explore this service to New York cooperatively with affected state DOTs in the region.

6. Improve Transportation Structure.

Improved transportation structure leads to increased capacity of the entire system. Specific recommendations include improvements to bridges, passing tracks, crossing protection, and weatherproofed signal systems, among other things.

The above recommendations to state and federal officials are reasonable and very achievable. You can do your part to improve our transportation options by re-remaining involved in the decision making process through your elected officials and TNE membership. As TNE has proved, YOU can make things happen for the benefit of all.

TrainRiders is a 501©3 Non-Profit Grassroots Educational Corporation with no means of support other than membership dues and donations. You are critical to our ongoing operations.

(continued on page 4)

Moving Forward . . .

Host Program

TrainRiders will host a training session for our Volunteer Host Program in Boston February, 23, 2016. We are always looking for new volunteers. For an application, please go to www.trainriders.org.

Summer 2015 Exeter Hits Milestone

During the month of August amidst all the construction and slow orders, Exeter, NH, hit a milestone on the Downeaster. Exeter reached the ONE MILLIONTH passenger. Yes, since December 2001 the Downeaster has served the Exeter stop. It is a popular stop especially with commuters. Each morning at 6:30 AM, Monday through Friday, the platform is filled, some days with a hundred commuters waiting to take their trip to the city. Many start the day by getting some work done from their seats thanks to the WiFi connections available on the Downeaster.

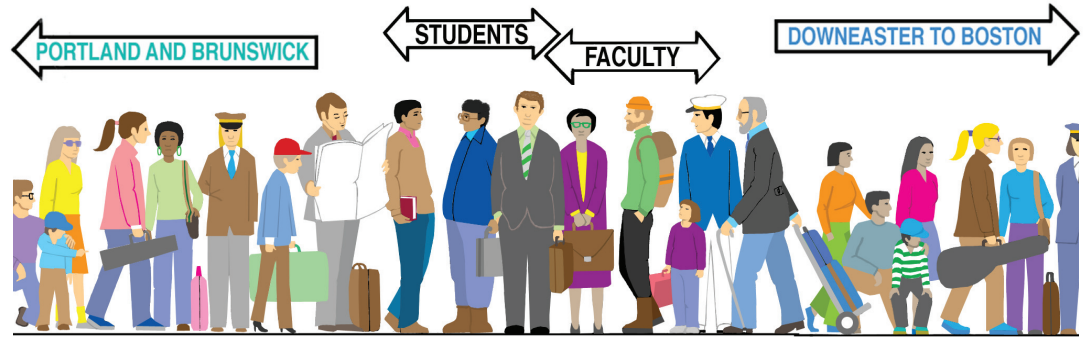
A Future Kennebunk Stop???

Kennebunk has expressed an interest in having a seasonal stop in their town. Platform construction issues are being discussed. No firm date for a start-up has been selected.

Students back Riding the Rails

Fall 2015 saw many students throughout the Northeast return to their college campuses. Last fall saw students commuting daily to Phillips Exeter Academy from Durham and Dover.

Students and faculty commute to UNH in Durham and UNE in Biddeford as well as Bowdoin College in Brunswick. The students enjoy having Downeaster service right on college campuses and using the service to attend cultural, sports, and entertainment events in Boston and Portland.



It's a Fact: After an exhaustive study, it was determined that students who ride the Downeaster on a regular basis are wicked smart.

Passenger Service Won't Return to Brunswick-Rockland Line This Year

Passenger rail service from Brunswick to Rockland will be on hold for at least a year as Central Maine and Quebec Railway takes over freight service on the line through a 10-year lease with the state.

The new operator confirmed to federal officials that it has notified all shippers along the 60-mile track that it would be taking over the service from Maine Eastern Railroad, owned by Morristown & Erie Railway Inc.

John Giles, chief executive officer of Central Maine and Quebec Railway, said in an email that the company has no plans for passenger rail service.

"While we are eager to grow the freight traffic over that (railway), the proof will be in the pudding," Giles said in the email. "We will take over and serve customers seamlessly, are actively engaged with existing and possible shippers and do so with a sense of optimism for growth and commerce."

Nate Moulton, director of the Maine Department of Transportation's Office of Freight and Business Services, said the state would wait to solicit proposals for passenger providers again—for service that would start in 2017.

By that time, he said, the Downeaster also could start running and expanded passenger service and new schedule that would give more options for connections with a potential Rockland-Brunswick route.

"That may give us a better product and better connections that may lead to more interest in running a passenger operation on the Rockland branch," Moulton said.

— *The Bangor Daily News*

Brunswick Challenge...

(continued from page 2)

been prominent at Town Council meetings, DEP and BEP hearings, legislative hearings and behind the scenes, to support construction of a facility that will permit more and better rail service, reduce costs, and minimize noise and emissions.

The All Aboard folks have been able to show that the neighbors opposing the facility location are a small group of NIMBYs who have no truly reasoned basis for their position.

Unfortunately, the fight has been long and hard, costing TNE over \$70,000.00. We continue to work hard on this issue as well as on many other projects and we continue to need your support for all of them. We need warm bodies and funding for all of this and can depend only upon YOU, our members, for this support.



RIDERSHIP FY2015

	Projected	Actual	Variance to Target	
July	34,100	37,349	3,249	10%
August	48,050	46,215	(1,835)	-4%
September	42,000	40,622	(1,378)	-3%
October	37,802	41,868	4,066	11%
November	42,000	39,588	(2,412)	-6%
December	38,689	38,010	(679)	-2%
Total	242,641	243,652	1,011	1%

Complete ridership data for December is not included in figures above.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

We've generated this newsletter to bring you all up-to-date with the goings on of the past two years since the building of a Downeaster Layover Facility was halted by a lawsuit filed by the homeowners who live adjacent to what had been commonly called "The Railyard" since the late 1800's. We had thought that since all regulating agencies—both federal and state—had finally approved the project with appropriate certifications, that the way was clear to completion and operation of the facility and the end of personal attacks on not just the Rail Authority's Director, but on TrainRider/Northeast's board members and Chairman (me).

Never in my life have I been subjected to such insults and embarrassment. And while the project is moving along nicely and we anticipate an autumn opening of the facility and the start of a 3rd roundtrip Downeaster between Brunswick and Boston, we recently discovered that there are other organized anti-train folks in the region who have been writing letters to Maine officials on a regular basis, continuing efforts to not only prevent expansion of the service, but to smear the reputations of the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority's Executive Director and members of its board of directors.

The original vocal nay sayers have continued to press for a detailed audit of the Authority and its management policies by the Maine Legislature's government oversight committee, the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability (OPEGA). To make matters worse, a state Senator, who has a personal vendetta with the Executive Director of the Authority has been heard to say by quite a few folks in state government that "I'm going to take that woman down." He continues to make disparaging remarks about the day-to-day management decisions directing the operations of our Downeaster service made by the NNEPRA Board and its Executive Director.

— WD

Durham-UNH Sets New Records!

The Amtrak Downeaster is celebrating its 15th year of service. Major corridor reconstruction over the past 18 months (now finished) resulted in train cancellations and delays affecting ridership growth. UNH-Durham ridership for FY15 fell to just under 54,000, but that still represents an average annual growth rate of 15%.

Fall 2015 ridership bounced back quickly—October of last year was a record with almost 8,000 (7,941) Downeaster trips to/from Durham-UNH. Since the start of Downeaster service over 655,000 passengers have boarded or disembarked in Durham. UNH station represents approximately 12% of overall Downeaster ridership (over 5.7 million since December 2001). Durham-UNH is now the second largest ridership station in NH (surpassing Dover in recent months ridership trends).

— Stephen Pesci, UNH Campus Planning