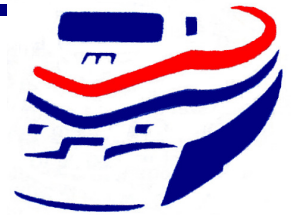


TRAINRIDERS

THE NEWSLETTER OF TRAINRIDERS/NORTHEAST

☆☆☆ 10th Anniversary Edition ☆☆☆



DOWNEASTER STILL ON TOP!!!

Despite traditional and ongoing support by Maine's Congressional Delegation, recent Congressional action continues to threaten Amtrak's Downeaster and other Amtrak service.

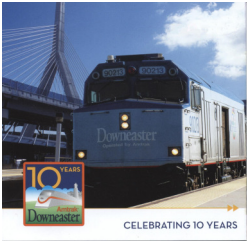
In October of 2011 we were stunned to hear that the U.S. House of Representatives had submitted a suggested Transportation Budget for 2012 that specifically forbade the use of federal funds for State Operated Trains. Such action would have meant cancellation of not only our Downeaster service but similar Amtrak trains in 14 other states. Realizing that a Transportation Budget with such language included could very well "poison" the Senate version as well, later in the process, we created a Downeaster Rail Resolution and submitted it to the municipal governments of each of the eight Downeaster station stops. Communities eagerly presented the resolutions to their City and Town Councils and honored our request that the clearly worded resolutions be sent to their state Governors, members of their respective Legislatures and members of their Congressional Delegation. For the first time, Massachusetts and New Hampshire, federal and state officials received Rail Resolutions and letters which said in effect "...hands off Amtrak in general and our Downeaster in particular...which carries xxx numbers of passengers annually, has brought multiple economic benefits to our community, employs xxx Amtrak employees with a payroll of xxx dollars, and purchases xxx dollars in goods and services locally for the operation of Amtrak's Downeaster service".

When we realized that the communities were all "on board", we approached local Chambers of Commerce and institutions along the Downeaster route who also eagerly agreed to submit the same Rail Resolution as well. At the University of New Hampshire, the Student Senate and the Graduate Student Senate also submitted the resolution, with the town of Durham, representing close to 35 thousand persons.

We all know that recently Congress has pretty much ignored the wishes of the people in matters of passenger rail, and of course there is no guarantee that our simple effort will make any difference at all in the growing movement to kill Amtrak and passenger trains – but at least we're trying to get members of Congress to realize that the American people want more and improved passenger train service, not less. We've also noticed that TrainRiders' efforts have been picked up by other advocacy organizations across the country, who have modeled similar efforts on what TrainRiders has been able to do here.

TrainRiders 2012 Annual Meeting

In a departure from normal practice, the TrainRiders Board of Directors has decided to move the annual meeting to the autumn, prior to the startup of the Freeport/Brunswick service. The date, location, key note speaker and other details will be forthcoming as they materialize.



NNEPRA

Our Downeaster Turned 10 December 15, 2011 was a very big day! It was a true milestone for the Amtrak Downeaster as it completed its first 10 years of service as one of Amtrak's most successful trains. Since the very beginning, our Downeaster has experienced incredible ridership increases, the highest customer satisfaction ratings and dramatic increases in revenue. We've also kept a keen eye to the future by initiating the plan to offer extended service to Freeport and Brunswick in the shortest time possible, anticipated to come to fruition this fall.

We all recognize the significant milestones achieved over the train's 10-year history. As we go to press, the planning process for the construction of an indoor layover facility for Downeaster train sets in Brunswick has begun. Electronic ticketing (E-Ticketing) has been introduced on the Downeaster as a most successful first-in-the-nation pilot program for Amtrak, and track reconstruction work has begun on the Wildcat connector in the Massachusetts section of the route to alleviate congestion and delays. NNEPRA has submitted a grant proposal to replace the wye just south of the Portland station to cut 10 minutes off the trip time to Brunswick, install 4 miles of double track at Yarmouth Jct. to allow Brunswick trains to pass at speed and detailed plans were revealed for a huge \$105 million mixed-use development project at Thompson's Point adjacent to the Portland Transportation Center (see page 3).

Chairman's Update



It seems every time I turn around there's another attack on Amtrak funding. Last year it was the October threat of eliminating federal assistance to state-supported services such as our Downeaster, and now there are those in Congress who feel it necessary to modify language of the proposed new transportation bill that would essentially kill Amtrak nationally.

This is getting old. Every year, Amtrak goes up against the proverbial chopping block and pleads for its life. We thought a while back that things would be secure when Congress began discussing 5-year authorizations and new investments in true High Speed Rail (HSR). As Chairman of TrainRiders/Northeast, I've seen this battle ongoing for decades. The ones who need to see and understand the benefits of passenger rail are the ones who choose not to educate themselves or even care about the issue.

That's why we're here. We're still trying to educate elected officials,

still talking to those who will listen. We still sponsor educational programs and we still go to Washington (by train) to meet face-to-face with our northeast delegations. However, it's up to each and every one of us who advocate for expanding and improving passenger rail service to speak our minds, contact our legislators and business leaders and of course TO VOTE.

Increasingly, after ten successful years of Downeaster statistics, the facts are on our side. With the monthly increasing ridership and improved running time with some of the highest customer satisfaction ratings in the Amtrak system, the proven economic return and environmental benefits, there are folks on both sides of the aisle who "get it" and they need to know that you do too.

The northward expansion has been a long-time goal of TrainRiders and is finally going to happen this year. This is not only exciting to us, but to those thousands of people who have contacted us inquiring about the potential service since 2003, proving that the support is there. We continue to do our part and hope that you will continue to do

yours by staying current with your dues. Dues are the most important means we have of generating revenue. If your dues are current, please consider a special contribution. Don't forget that dues and contributions may be made by credit card through our PayPal connection on our website and may be tax deductible.

Freeport/Brunswick



NNEPRA Photo



NNEPRA Photo

Thompson Point Development

At a recent NNEPRA Operations meeting in Portland, a representative from the Thompson Point development firm gave a very exciting comprehensive presentation on “The Forefront” at Thompson’s Point – the development of the 30-acre peninsula of formerly industrial land immediately adjacent to the Portland Transportation Center. The first phase is scheduled to be a \$105 Million mixed use development, which will include a 4800 seat arena for the Maine Red Claws (an NBA Development League basketball team), a 29,000 SF concert/trade show/event center, sports medicine, a 125-room hotel, a restaurant, an office building, a walking trail, an outdoor amphitheater, a 718-space parking garage that will be shared with the transportation center and a loop road around the perimeter that will have two stops for the Metro bus. There is also a waterfront access planned at the tip of the point envisioned for small craft and possibly a water shuttle.

The site of the former bustling rail yard of the Portland Terminal Railway, is now home to several old buildings, many stored containers, truck trailers and a gas company. The project will transform the area into a true destination, conveniently accessed by the Downeaster. The Planning Board has given the go-ahead for engineering, and permitting is now underway. An added perk is the city’s favorable vote on creating a \$31 Million, 30-year Tax Increment Finance zone for the area.



Phase 2 will add four additional building sites and it is expected that about \$250,000 will be invested into multi-modal transit that will provide connectivity to the Jetport and downtown. Two ramps from I-295 will be expanded and Thompson’s Point Road will be widened. Ultimately there will be 1450 total parking spaces and buildings will be linked to allow patrons to travel from one end to the other without stepping out into the elements. The developers have targeted a very aggressive build schedule to have Certificates of Occupancy in 18 months.

TrainRiders has a seat on the committee that NNEPRA created to bring all the Thompson Point stakeholders together. We submitted our Doug Richmond Associates conceptual print that appeared on the upper two thirds of the front page in the Portland Press Herald of Saturday, March 28, 1992. That print shows TNE’s idea of an iconic structure (described as an echo of Union Station in Glass, steel, laminated wood and pink granite - complete with a 130 food clock/bell tower) that would house a railroad museum, restaurants and a substantial "great hall" that would be available for rent for public events without disturbing the traveling public. Such arrangements presently exist in cities of all sizes in America. The station itself would become a destination with the clockworks and bell system operating visibly through the glass walls and floors of the tower. Historical items presently in TNE’s possession as well as the extensive railroad collections stored in both the Maine Historical Society and the Portland Museum of Art could be on display. Most of these collections have not been viewed publicly since they were acquired. Such a structure could be erected on the parcel currently occupied by Suburban Propane - adjacent to the tracks opposite the current Transportation Center.

Excerpted from the Portland Press Herald

Kudos to the Maine delegation!

Senators Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins have been working to get Congressional approval to continue Maine’s use of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) money for Downeaster operational costs. Such funding has been in place since the service’s inception ten years ago. This funding mechanism was marked for elimination in a recent draft of the transportation bill. Her effort is backed by Senators Susan Collins, New Hampshire’s Jeanne Shaheen, Rhode Island’s Sheldon Whitehouse and several others. Maine’s Representatives Chellie Pingree and Mike Michaud are also hoping to get a vote on an amendment renewing the Downeaster funding source as part of the House version. The annual \$6M CMAQ component is a crucial part of the service’s annual operating budget of \$15.1M with \$12M paid to Amtrak to operate the trains.

WE CAN SUCCEED WITH YOUR HELP

I want to join TrainRiders/Northeast and help support the success of Maine's great Downeaster service! Individual dues are just \$35.00 per year.

Enclosed is my dues/contribution of \$ _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____
 _____ Date: _____

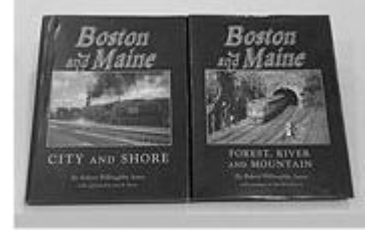
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Please use PayPal on our website *or* make checks payable to:

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TrainRiders/Northeast is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.
 Contributions may be tax deductible. Please consult a tax advisor.

↓↓↓ History for Sale ↓↓↓



Robert Willoughby Jones, author of the historic Boston & Maine railroad books, *City and Shore* and *Forest, River and Mountain*, has made a generous donation to TrainRiders.

We still have copies available for purchase. These books retail for more than \$80 each, but our special member price is just \$30.00 each or both for \$50.00!

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