Helping to move rail and port traffic through New England, the Maritimes, & eastern Quebec. A twice-monthly trade newsletter.

Issue 01#8A 14 August 2001

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New York: Deeper dredging right away.
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[No report.]
PEOPLE, POSITIONS, EVENTS
Bert Clifford, Tom Howard.

FROM THE PUBLISHER

A choice
I find the stories are getting longer, but fewer. For example, this issue I worked hard to get details about Fall River (winner of favorite story) and Maine’s IRAP program. I did not update the status of Claremont Concord’s effort to start in West Lebanon, or track laying on the Hoosick Branch.

Readers: would you like more but shorter news, or fewer more detailed pieces?

I would appreciate any feedback.

-Chop Hardenbergh

Next issue: 31 August

REGIONAL ISSUES

BANGOR & AROOSTOOK SYSTEM

31 May, Montréal. THE B&A CLOSED ITS SORTIN YARD, which was opened to handle B&A’s intermodal traffic. President Fred Yocum said beginning on 1 June, intermodal units were delivered to CP’s Lachine Yard. According to Michel Bertrand, B&A vice-president, service design and intermodal, ‘The B&A System is still handling intermodal traffic between Saint John and Montréal/beyond via CP’s inland terminals.’ The traffic moves in mixed trains.

[In June 1998, 300-500 containers a week were moving over the Saint John-Montréal line. See 4 June 1998 issue. At that point, the B&A viewed intermodal as positioning the network for future revenue growth. See 30 July 1998 issue, Regional]

B&A Montréal intermodal traffic past and present
In the past [see 14 May 1998], the B&A used trackage rights west of Saint-Jean to run trains into Montréal; it leased Sortin Yard from CPR beginning 1 June 1997. Until 1998, the trains dropped the intermodal units at Sortin Yard (leased from CP), then proceeded to
NOW AVAILABLE! EXCELLENT CONDITION!

CONTAINER REACH-STACKERS

Location: Bangor & Aroostook’s Sortin Yard, Montreal

TWO 1996 P&H Super-stackers FCH 77s
FOR SALE

Four-high with 2,470 hours

Contact:
Kostolich Associates
Marcus S. Kostolich
5301 No. Federal Hwy Suite 270
Boca Raton, FL 33487-4917
Phone: 561-994-3737
Fax: 561-994-3842
kost@gate.net

OR

Tom Flacke
Logistics Management Systems
PO Box 2609
Bangor, Maine 04402-2609
Phone 207-848-5609
Fax 207-848-0830
tflacke@lms-maine.com

Five-high with 5,600 hours
stage had begun, and has a completion date of December 2001.

Aroostook Railroad, and CV0119 against the Canadian Superior Court in Bangor, CV0118 against the Bangor and

Helm Financial Corporation, one of the unsecured creditors

Discussions with an unsecured creditor

Bank Austria is not running the railroad

“The bank is not running the railroad; that’s lunacy,” Boehme said. He explained the reasoning behind the rumor that the bank is doing so. If a party could convince the bankruptcy judge that a secured creditor had a hand in operating the bankrupt business, and had contributed to the financial problems, that creditor could lose its secured standing. [Thus, unsecured creditors have an incentive to show secured parties had a hand in the business. Editor]

Discussions with an unsecured creditor

Helm Financial Corporation, one of the unsecured creditors [see 31 July issue], still has twin cases pending in Maine Superior Court in Bangor, CV0118 against the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad, and CV0119 against the Canadian American Railroad. A clerk at the court explained the discovery stage had begun, and has a completion date of December 2001.

litigation, the B&A is discussing the matter directly with Helm, in an attempt to resolve the dispute.

Firm negotiations with the Burkhardt consortium

Fred Yocum, B&A president who is handling the discussions with the Burkhardt consortium [see 31 July issue], said the consortium had presented B&A with a detailed offer. Despite the need to determine which assets would be included in the sale, and to decide a final price [see 31 July issue], “this is a substantive offer,” Schmidt confirmed. {ANR&P discussions 6.Aug.2001}
NEW YORK

26 July. **THE PORT AUTHORITY VOTED TO DREDGE TO 50 FEET AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**, bypassing plans for intermediate dredging to 41 and 45 feet. The more aggressive schedule will allow 6,000-TEU ships to begin utilizing NY Harbor by 2009. The Port Authority estimated accelerated dredging would reduce the $3.1 billion price tag for channel deepening by at least $800 million.

Money for freight rail

The board also approved the creation of a $50 million fund for new freight rail projects in New York and New Jersey. Each state garners $25 million to be spent on projects to be determined by state transportation and economic development agencies. {Mobilizing the Region 30 July 01}

BANGOR & AROOSTOOK SYSTEM

8 August, Old Town. **DETAILS ON THE SOURCING OF WOODCHIPS** for the Georgia Pacific plant in Old Town [see 31 July issue] were provided by Bruce Brockway, area procurement manager. Up until April 2001, the Great Works plant here received hardwood chips from the Georgia-Pacific (GP) plant in Houlton.

Some history

The Houlton plant, and the Great Works mill, became part of GP when it acquired the Fort James paper company 27 November 2000. Fort James itself resulted from a 1997 combination of Fort Howard and James River paper companies (James River owned Great Works and the chip plant). At the time of the ownership change, however, construction of the E.J.Carrier, Portage chip plant was already in progress.

The Houlton move

Brockway explained that about 70% of the Houlton plant production travelled by rail and truck; the rest moved by all by truck. Until 1992, the B&A brought the chip cars to Northern Maine Junction daily for interchange with GRS; a GRS train in turn moved the cars to Old Town. Brockway said the move, because it involved two railroads, was not reliable, and not cost-efficient.

James River decided to build a transload facility in South Lagrange, and transload the chips to truck for the roughly 20-mile dray to Old Town.

Why not an all-truck move?

As a rule of thumb, rail carriage under 500 miles which involves transload or intermodal is less efficient than all-truck. Since Houlton lies 110 road miles from Old Town, why use rail at all? Brockway said the larger quantities brought by rail enabled seven-day delivery to Old Town. The chip cars in use carry roughly 54 tons while the legal weight limit for trucks is about 32 tons. The Great Works mill, which operates around the clock, has limited truck dumping capacity of only 75 to 100 trucks a day. Delivering chips on the weekend from Lagrange helped relieve pressure on the truck dumps.

The Portage move

Now, 100% of the chips from E.J.Carrier (about 100 cars a week) move by rail to South Lagrange. Brockway ascribed that to the longer distance (about 150 miles from Portage to Old Town) and the lack of relatively good highways along the route. “It’s actually a relatively good system,” Brockway said of the rail/truck move. He pointed out that the extension of I-95 into Aroostook—perhaps funded by the US Congress this year—would not help because of the lower weight limit on interstates.

The Houlton plant has dropped from two shifts a day to one. Its softwood chip production moves by truck to both Old Town and Woodland (the former Georgia-Pacific, as of 7 August Domtar, pulp and paper mills). From time to time, the Houlton plant also produced hemlock chips for Great Northern in Millinocket, and will do so again if needed. {ANR&P discussion 8 Aug 2001}

MAINE DOT

August. **AN UPDATE ON THE INDUSTRIAL RAIL ACCESS PROGRAM** was provided by Allan Bartlett, who spearheads MDOT’s rail planning efforts at the Office of Freight Transportation. Through calendar year 2000, OFT awarded grants for 16 construction/rehabilitation projects on railroads under IRAP. Total project funding under the 50/50 sharing came to $4.4 million; MDOT paid its share from general fund bonds and CMAQ. {6TIP 2001}

This funding program began in 1998, with $1.22 million from a state bond issue passed in June, plus CMAQ funds of $1.08 million. {98#12} In 1999, MDOT funded eight programs with those funds. In 2000, the department funded another eight projects using the balance of the bond fund money plus CMAQ {00#17}.

In 2001, MDOT did not apply for additional funds for the program. The Biennial Transportation Improvement Plan (BTIP), issued in March 2001, stated: ‘Traditionally, MDOT has provided a 50/50 match for rail projects that have both a public and private economic benefit arising from market demands on the three major rail carriers in Maine. MDOT also has included funding for track extension at the Loring Commerce Centre, as well as track and bridge improvements to Lower Road and other state-owned lines. The Industrial Rail Access Program (IRAP) will continue with previously programmed funds.’ {text of BTIP}

[Remaining state funds]

The program received $1.22 million from a 1998 state bond. The 1999 projects spent $487,000 (subtracting those eliminated), and the 2000 projects $464,000. That means $269,000 remains of the bond
Eight selections of 29 August 2000 MDOT had proposals for 27 projects totalling $14 million ($7 million in state funds) [00#11, 00#17, 00#19], with about $2 million available. Project totals came to $2.13 million [see box].

Sprague Energy Track rehab on-site for $247,000, CMAQ. Not yet done. [see 00#24.]
Irving Woodlands Siding at Ashland for $97,000. Not yet done.
Fraser Paper Riverbank stabilization in Madawaska for $298,000 Not yet done.
Lane Construction Siding in Stockton Springs for gravel. $105,000 CMAQ supplement. Scheduled for completion autumn 2001.
E.J. Carrier Siding in Portage for loading of woodchips. $69,000 Completed May 2001. [See 01#08A.]
Champion Siding relocation/lengthening at Passadumkeag. $17,000 Eliminated. Stud mill closed [see 13 February issue].
Saco Industrial Park Track rehab and extension, $141,000 CMAQ. Project scope and location currently under discussion.
Safe Handling Siding in Auburn for Safe Handling. $90,000 CMAQ Project combined with LARR project from first solicitation. Scheduled for completion 2001.

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Eight proposals awarded 9 April 1999
The state accepted 15 proposals [see 26 February issue] seeking $2.5 million in state funds, and selected eight, with the assistance from the Department of Economic and Community Development {99#08}:

McCain Siding in Easton. $62,000, done September 1999. {99#11}
Maine Woods Portage siding, $70,000 not done; customer served via the E.J. Carrier project completed as noted above.
Lane Construction Winterport siding, $54,000 CMAQ supplement. Completed June 2001 (99#19)
Plum Creek Taunton siding improvement, $130,000 Project eliminated....customer no longer needs.
SAPPI Hinckley siding, $274,000 Completed June 2000.
Dry Branch Kaolin South Portland siding. $284,000 CMAQ supplement. Project done. {99#24}
Saco Industrial Park Track rehabilitation. $69,000 CMAQ supplement. Completed 2000.
Safe Handling Auburn track rehab, Lewiston-Auburn Railroad. $81,000 See 2000 Safe Handling project above.

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* Project eliminated. See description.
funds, which when matched means the state could fund additional projects up to $538,000. Editor’s analysis.]

Monitoring the projects
MDOT’s web site states under Office of Freight Transportation: ‘Monitoring in future years will be an integral part of the IRAP program, to assure that results aimed for and defined in project applications are in fact occurring.’

Bartlett explained that “most projects have not been completed long enough to do evaluations yet. The ones completed have been working well, to the best of my knowledge. We will start detailed evaluation later this year.”
{ANR&P discussion 8.Aug.2001}

MAINE PORTS
3 August. MAINE WILL REVISIT ITS THREE-PORT STRATEGY in the next twelve months, according to Brian Nutter, project director for the Maine Port Authority. The topic came up as a result of the news that P.D.Merrill was asking the state to purchase the facilities of his terminal [see below], Nutter said. Devised twenty years ago, the strategy makes three ports in Maine the focus of cargo traffic: Portland, Searsport, and Eastport.

History
The strategy grew out of an economic development plan articulated in the 1980 gubernatorial campaign by Joe Brennan, who won the election. The plan aimed to create export opportunities for paper mills and other manufacturers in Maine’s hinterlands, and secondarily to guide coastal development to a few places that were environmentally appropriate. That followed an era in which developers proposed oil refineries and other heavy industries all along the state’s shoreline [including an oil refinery in Eastport - editor].

[In 1980, only a small amount of dry cargo was handled at the Port of Searsport and none at Eastport and Portland. Today the three ports collectively handle over 1.5 million tons of dry cargo. {Port Authority website}]

Undeveloped and centrally located in Searsport, surrounded by deep water at the head of Penobscot Bay, Sears Island was chosen as the centerpiece of an economic development plan to revitalize Maine’s cargo shipping. New facilities there would be complemented by secondary development in Portland. Later, officials included a small operation at Eastport in the strategy. With a bow to the state’s geography and the need for broad political support, the concept has endured to this day.

The strategy has evolved. After spending 15 years and millions of dollars, the state abandoned Sears Island in 1996, under pressure from federal environmental regulators and conservation groups. Reconstruction of cargo piers at nearby Mack Point, where the overwhelming share of Maine’s dry cargo moved 20 years ago, replaced the Sears Island proposal.

But Portland charged ahead. Its initial slug of port development money was diverted to help Bath Iron Works locate in the city in the early 1980s. Despite that, Portland overtook Searsport as the state’s leading cargo port by 1989, due largely to private investment at Merrill’s Marine Terminal.

Eastport, meanwhile, saw its pier completed in 1998 [see 30 July 1998 issue], thanks to more than $16 million in government investment. But it has relied largely on forest products from the former Georgia Pacific paper mill in Woodland. New owner Domtar may divert the Woodland traffic to another port, or do less exporting [see 31 July 2001 issue].

The future
George Campbell, transportation commissioner in 1980 and now a consultant, noted: “Ironically, Portland got the least amount of money [for freight development] but became the busiest port,” when Merrill’s Marine Terminal, which opened in 1982, grew its traffic dramatically [see 15 June issue].

The dominance of Portland and the importance of the Merrill terminal could shape a new outlook for the long-standing three-port strategy. Dana Connors, who served as transportation commissioner from 1984 to 1994, said it’s clearly time to reassess the plan. “The strategy was absolutely right for its time and place,” said Connors, now president of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce. “But the economy has moved and shifted. The question is, does it serve the purpose going forward?”

The study
MDOT will hire a consultant to review the three-port strategy and suggest how to refine it for the next 20 years. “We want a report card on how we've done,” said Brian Nutter, administrator for the Maine Port Authority. Later, he added that the department “is working on a draft scope of work right now, and we could possibly advertise it next month.” {Tux Turkel in Maine Sunday Telegram 5.Aug.01; ANR&P discussion 13.Aug.01}

PORTLAND
31 July. P.D.MERRILL WANTS TO SELL THE LAND UNDER HIS TERMINAL to the state or the city, in order to continue the benefit such a facility provides to the Portland waterfront and to the surrounding region. In a discussion on 14 August, after the story appeared in the Portland Press Herald, Merrill explained his thinking.

Competition with state-owned facilities
Merrill has long noted that he competes with other bulk and break-bulk facilities owned and constructed by government [see 15 June issue]. For example, this year port users in Saint John have stored about 10,000 tons of woodpulp at no cost, because the Saint John Port Authority which owns the storage facilities “is able to massage those costs.”

In a few years, he will face competition at Searsport [see this issue] from a facility 85% funded by state bonds, whose repayment is contingent on generating revenue. “The comparison in cost is staggering.” Portsmouth’s facility is offered “with costs virtually
nil.” In Connecticut, operators are charged primarily a percentage of revenue to use a state-owned facility.

“We have managed through superior service and productivity to build a business,” Merrill said, “but we are recognizing that in the long term, it will become harder and harder to maintain the business.” Merrill himself might stay in business with a more marginal rate of return, but “that policy might not be continued” by whoever succeeds him at the terminal.

The proposed solution

To achieve the goal of keeping the facility operating, and keeping the land as a maritime use, Merrill would like either the state or the city controlling the property long-term. “We raised the issue at this time because of long-range planning on waterfront.”

He offered a deal to the city, but officials found the price tag high for a public policy benefit which lies with the entire state. But government ownership is “the appropriate vehicle, everyone thinks it a fine idea,” Merrill remarked.

The deal has four parts. Merrill is asking $9 million for the improvements already built on the property, and for a new warehouse facility of 100,000 to 120,000SF, location to be determined. Merrill would make a gift of the underlying land to city. His company would then receive a license from the state to operate the terminal.

Why not a lease? That, he pointed out, accords the tenant different–more–property rights than accorded under a license. [NHDOT] used the same legal distinction to ensure that state-owned rail lines were not taxed by every town through which they passed. New Hampshire towns have power to tax property leased out by the state, but not to tax a license to operate. Editor]

Goals

Merrill said, “We’re interested in seeing it continue, and provide the kind of service, it has in the past. The most likely way is if a governmental entity owns the real assets. Waterfront property is facing a constant upward pressure on values, so that likely a different kind of use than the working waterfront might ultimately take over” if the state did not own it.

Brian Nutter of MDOT said: “Merrill’s Terminal is an important part of our marine infrastructure, and we want it to continue to play that role.” The Maine Port Authority board, which is meeting on 14 August, will probably approve beginning negotiations with Merrill. [ANR&P discussions 13.Aug.2001] George Campbell, MDOT commissioner in 1980, is representing Merrill in his negotiations with the state.

Payments in lieu of taxes

Some in Portland wondered how the public benefits if a business that pays about $250,000 a year in taxes suddenly becomes tax-exempt. They also note that another piece of land that had strong tax potential, a 40-acre site just up the Fore River from Merrill's Marine Terminal, [may be] see 15 June issue bought by Mercy Hospital and will be tax-exempt.

“We already have $1 billion worth of property that's non-tax-paying in Portland,” said City Councillor Jay Hibbard. “How much more can we be asked to absorb?”

Mayor Cheryl A. Leeman said she hopes any deal between Merrill and the state will take into consideration the city's loss of revenue, and provide for a payment in lieu of taxes. “If this is just to protect the land and the business without some benefit to the city, we'd have to take a look at that,” Leeman said. {Mark Shanahan in Portland Press Herald 2.Aug.01}
main gas pipeline from New Brunswick to Boston.

The ancient coal unloading system rigged over Sprague Energy’s pier at Mack Point will come down once the new pier (the former BAR pier) is constructed. Sprague’s will handle only petroleum products. {ANR&P discussion 13.Aug.2001}

**MASSACHUSETTS**

**EOTC**

30 July, Boston. **EOTC IS WRAPPING UP LAST YEAR’S RAIL GRANT PROGRAM** and beginning work on this year’s, according to Siobhan Perenick, rail administrator at the agency.

**FY2001: five grants**

In addition to the grants to the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) and Franklin Council of Governments [see 13 March issue], EOTC made FY2001 grants to:

Town of Gardner. The sum of $304,000 ($48,000 in FY2001 and $256,000 in FY2002) will help rebuild the Parker’s Pond Dam, a town-owned berm also serving as a rail bed for a B&M line. The Department of Environmental Protection had condemned the dam. Work should finish by October.

Town of Deerfield. The sum of $271,667 helped pay for the cost of raising a railroad bridge over an access road to the East Deerfield Yard. Trucks were using neighborhood streets because of the low clearance. The work will end in September.

Perenick pointed out that EOTC owned the East Deerfield yard. “It was acquired back in the 1980s and leased long-term to the B&M.”

Guilford is providing some of the required 25% match in its contribution to the actual construction. Only public agencies or municipalities may apply for the grants, but railroads may contribute to the match, she pointed out.

Massport. The sum of $50,000 helped pay for conceptual design of a rail line to the South Pier, which would permit bulk shipments [see Seaport Advisory Council below]. Intermodal will continue to move via Beacon Park Yard [see 20 July issue]. This possible new line will exist in addition to the line which will be relaid at the completion of the Big Dig.

**FY2002 applications**

Perenick said applications were due on 30 June. She has received five applications and two letters of extension.

Gardner. $256,000 for FY2002 [see above] agreed to.

**MWRA.** The agency is seeking funds for another phase of the work and has asked for an extension of time to file its application.

**Massport.** The agency has asked for an extension on its design work; the report is due “this week,” said Perenick. The agency has also asked for an extension on its 2002 application for actual work.

Boston-Montréal High-Speed Rail. This grant will fund the Commonwealth’s contribution to the next phase of the project [see 31 July issue].

Perenick said she would provide details on the other applications later in the process. {ANR&P discussion}

**Franklin Country hazmat training/railyard purchase.** The Franklin Council of Governments (COG) is following up last year’s study and seeking funds to purchase the railyard yard in Shelburne Falls, on the GRS main line in the Town of Buckland, from its private owner. The yard would then host a regional hazmat training facility, said Joe Dunn, natural resources planner for the COG.

Dunn said the facility, with the primary goal of training for rail emergencies, could serve not only the volunteers in Franklin County, but also other volunteers in eastern New York and New England. The yard would continue to host the Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum, which now uses part of the grounds.

Moreover, it could hold a possible transload facility for industries which now transload at Springfield. At least one in Colrain is interested. {ANR&P discussion August 2, 2001} [According to consultant Tony Jewell, a freight/passenger trolley formerly operated between Shelburne Falls and Colrain. {ANR&P discussion 1.Aug.01}]

**CSXT**

25 July, Holliston. **CSXT MOVED TO ABANDON TRACK SOUTH OF FRAMINGHAM,** ‘approximately 4.17 miles of railroad between milepost QBH-2.60 near Sherborn and milepost QBH-6.77 near Holliston.’ The STB notice stated:

New York Central Lines, LLC (NYC) (see note) and CSX Transportation, Inc. (CSX), have filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152 Subpart F—Exempt Abandonments and Discontinuances of Service for NYC to abandon and CSX to discontinue service over approximately 4.17 miles of railroad....

NYC and CSX have certified that: (1) no local traffic has moved over the line for at least 2 years; (2) there has been no overhead traffic on the line; (3) no formal complaint filed by a user of rail service on the line (or by a state or local government entity acting on behalf of such user) regarding cessation of service over the line either is pending with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) or with any U.S. District Court or has been
decided in favor of complainant within the 2-year period; and (4) the requirements at 49 CFR 1105.7 (environmental reports), 49 CFR 1105.8 (historic reports), 49 CFR 1105.11 (transmittal letter), 49 CFR 1105.12 (newspaper publication), and 49 CFR 1152.50(d)(1) (notice to governmental agencies) have been met.

The parties have until 2 August 2002 to consummate the abandonment. [STB Docket No. AB-55 (Sub-No. 594X)]

1. Pursuant to Board authorization in 1998, CSX Corporation, CSXT's parent company, and Norfolk Southern Corporation jointly acquired control of Conrail Inc., and its wholly owned subsidiary, Consolidated Rail Corporation (Conrail). As a result of that acquisition, certain assets of Conrail have been assigned to NYC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Conrail, to be exclusively operated by CSXT pursuant to an operating agreement. The line to be abandoned is included among the property being operated by CSXT pursuant to the NYC operating agreement.

Why the abandonment
The ‘Holliston Industrial Track’ extends some 5.62 miles from Framingham. Its mileage formed part of the Milford Branch, built in 1848. Passenger traffic lasted until 1959. Penn Central abandoned the line the final five miles between Metcalfs and Milford in 1972; by 1987 the line was not operated beyond Holliston. {Ronald Dale Karr, Rail Lines of Southern New England 1995}. The line formerly served granite quarries in Milford, which provided the pink granite for Penn Station, New York. {Mike Redden in NERAILS e-mail list 7.Aug.01} The last revenue freight ran to Axtion Cross, a defunct chemical company in Holliston, about 7-8 years ago. {John P. Barlow in NERAILS e-mail list 7.Aug.01}

Future use
According to an official at EOTC, the Office will not move to purchase it unless an agency such as the MBTA or MHD expresses an interest. {e-mail to ANR&P 8.Aug.01} Many in the area want to use the abandoned section as part of an Upper Charles River Trail [http:// www.webss.com/ biketrail/ feasibil.htm] though such a loop would use a trail alongside existing rail for the stub.

Paige Kane of CSXT said a couple of organizations had approached the railroad about trail use. The railroad would oppose joint use of the right-of-way without grade separation, due to safety concerns.

The remaining stub
The abandonment to Holliston leaves approximately 1.45 miles in Framingham. Kane said enough was retained to permit yard operations for the large, very active GM auto unloading facility in Framingham adjacent to the former GM assembly plant. {ANR&P discussion 14.Aug.2001} The assembly plant closed in 1986 {Mickey Baca in Worcester Business Journal 20.Dec.99}.

3 August, Pittsfield. CSXT MOVED TO ABANDON TRACK HERE, most of the remaining stub of the former Boston & Albany line to North Adams. The notice, published on 13 August, stated: ‘New York Central Lines, LLC (NYC) and CSX Transportation, Inc. (CSXT), have filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152 Subpart F--Exempt Abandonments and Discontinuances of Service for NYC to abandon and CSXT to discontinue service over approximately 1.91 miles of railroad between milepost QBY-0.59 and milepost QBY-2.50 in Pittsfield, in Berkshire County, MA.’ CSXT stated that no traffic had travelled over the line for two years. {STB Docket No. AB-55 (Sub-No. 595X)}

GRS
11 August. THE RAILROAD SEEKS TO ABANDON THE MYSTIC WHARF BRANCH. Massport has expressed concern, but the only customer, US Gypsum, accepts it. [More in a future issue.]

SEAPORT ADVISORY COUNCIL
10 August, Fairhaven. THE AGENDA OF MASSACHUSETTS PORTS SHOULD RECEIVE ATTENTION now that Jane Swift has become governor, taking over from Paul Cellucci who became ambassador to Canada. Rick Armstrong, executive director of the Seaport Advisory Council (SAC), noted that Swift when lieutenant governor had chaired the Council. “I look for more attention to doublestack [getting doublestack clearance on the rail lines], attention to the smaller ports, and serious dollars released for terminal construction.

More on the Council
The passage of the Seaport Bond Bill in 1996 created the Seaport Advisory Council to advise the governor about seaport development policy and coordinate all seaport development activities in the Commonwealth. Specifically, it assists in the continuing development of the Ports of Massachusetts (Gloucester, Salem, Boston, New Bedford, and Fall River) and provides the ports with the professional oversight needed to build for the future.

State ownership
The Office of Waterways in the Department of Environmental Management owns all state piers in the Commonwealth. Gloucester, New Bedford, and Fall River each have a different method of management for their piers.

Gloucester has transferred management of its pier to the Land Bank (now known as the Massachusetts Development Finance Agency). In New Bedford the Department of Environmental Management manages the pier directly, though per Armstrong New Bedford would like a role. Only Fall River manages the pier directly [see below].

Port Planning Initiative
The Advisory Council is overseeing the development of a Harbor Plan for the four smaller ports. At the beginning of 1998, it awarded each $200,000 for the cost of the study. Once approved by the
Secretary for Environmental Affairs, the ports may use a streamlined permitting process. Armstrong outlined the status:

**Gloucester** The port chose ICON Architecture as the harbor planning consultant, with subcontractors FXM Associates, New Atlantic Development, Seafood Datasearch, Regina Villa Associates, and Fay/Spofford/Thorndike. ICON has completed the study, and received approval. The port has dedicated its public pier entirely to fishing. However, the port has one private pier owned by Eliot Stevedoring, not now in operation, which could resume handling general cargo.

**Salem** The port selected Cecil & Rizvi (now Cecil Group) as the harbor planning consultant, with team members Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB), Byrne McKinney & Associates, Nucci Vine, Impact Research Associates, Bermello Ajamil & Partners, Inc., Urban Harbors Institute, Harbor Consultancy International, and Management Strategies Limited. As a result of the process, Salem chose to use its public pier entirely for passengers.

**New Bedford** This port hired VHB as harbor planning consultant, with team members VHB, RKG Associates, and Nucci Vine Associates. Fall River decided to expand its study to look at the downtown area as well as the waterfront. The plan remains in draft form.

**Fall River** The city also selected the Cecil Group as the harbor planning consultant, with team members VHB, RKG Associates, and Nucci Vine Associates. Fall River decided to expand its study to look at the downtown area as well as the waterfront. The plan remains in draft form.

**Marketing study for all ports**
In February 2001, the Council commissioned a cargo marketing study from Martin Associates of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, looking at breakbulk, project cargo, and perhaps dry bulk (but not petroleum products) for Gloucester, Boston, Fall River, and New Bedford. Salem elected not to participate because it aims to use its public pier entirely for passengers.

**SAC has awarded a contract to analyze the structural integrity of the State Pier, and design a rebuild of the west face, which has a jog in it, limiting the docking possibilities. Nucci Vine, waterfront consultants with offices in Newburyport, Hingham, and Bourne (coincidentally Nucci Vine did work for Mystic Wharf rail line customers US Gypsum and Blue Circle Cement, per its website www.nuccivine.com—see Guilford), is doing the design, and Armstrong expected bidding later, with the construction to start in spring 2002.**

**FALL RIVER**

**State Pier redevelopment**
The city’s draft harbor plan [see above] proposes giving the pier, operated by the city-controlled Fall River Line Pier Company for cargo only, broader use. Specifically, the proposal would transform the existing one-story 1950s-era warehouse into a two-story structure. The second story of this structure would contain a performing arts theater, restaurant, office space and other uses, while the first story would continue to be used as a marine cargo warehouse and for other commercial marine industrial activities, such as passenger ferry and cruise ship docking.

The Seaport Advisory Council (SAC) has asked for bids to analyze the costs and benefits of the proposal, with responses due on 15 August to the Fairhaven office of the SAC.

**Pier rebuild**
SAC has awarded a contract to analyze the structural integrity of the State Pier, and design a rebuild of the west face, which has a jog in it, limiting the docking possibilities. Nucci Vine, waterfront consultants with offices in Newburyport, Hingham, and Bourne (coincidentally Nucci Vine did work for Mystic Wharf rail line customers US Gypsum and Blue Circle Cement, per its website www.nuccivine.com—see Guilford), is doing the design, and Armstrong expected bidding later, with the construction to start in spring 2002.

**Parking/laydown area**
Nucci Vine is also analyzing the re-use of space now occupied by two salt sheds to the north of the rail yard. This could become single- or double-level parking for the new people-oriented activities at the State Pier, or laydown area for cargo, or both. Armstrong has his eye on another site for the storage of the highway salt, which is delivered to the port area by truck [!!].

**New bulk terminal**
Farther up the Taunton River, but on the same bank as the State Pier, lies a former Shell tank farm purchased by Jay Cashman Construction of Dorchester Massachusetts (www.jaycashman.com) in December 2000 for marine use [see box].

**Containers?**
The Port of New York/New Jersey’s consultants once considered Fall River for a feeder port [see 20 July issue]. While NY/NJ has moved away from that idea, Armstrong strongly supports it. “Fall River is the underbelly of manufacturing in southern New England, and it can be a player there.”

The Traffic Board of the North Atlantic Ports Association, at its meeting this week, examined the role which the smaller ports will play in container traffic. The hub ports, such as Halifax and New York, will handle the traffic moving east or west. The smaller ports, using feeder services, will handle the north-south traffic flows, a role which should increase “given the I-95 traffic strangulation.”
While Armstrong agreed that Quonset Point/Davisville is a candidate for PIDN, “we’re going to spend the next few months looking at a role for Fall River, and spend some time in discussion with New York on the issue.”

Perrault of Cashman Construction [see box] believed (citing others in the industry) that his site, with an area of only 50 acres, might not have enough size for an intermodal operation.

Bridge rebuild
The Commonwealth is currently building a new Brightman Street Bridge over the Taunton River, which will provide a new alignment (taking out an angle), move the opening, and make it wider. This will provide better access for the coal-carrying ships which, per Armstrong, arrive about every six weeks at the Somerset Power Station of the Montaup Electric Company. Ships for the Cashman terminal will benefit as well. {ANR&P discussion 10.Aug.2001}

A NEW MARINE TERMINAL IN FALL RIVER
Alan Perrault of Jay Cashman Construction discussed his company’s measured approach to the former Shell tank farm it bought in December 2000. This year, he has asked Cecil Company to do a master plan for the 68-acre site (Cecil is doing the city’s harbor plan). He has also hired Nucci Vine to look at how to unload cargo to the site, whether by pier, bulkhead, or spudbarge and a ramp. Finally, he has asked Vanasse Hangen Brustlin to do a traffic study.

Furthermore, Cashman has already engaged Acorn Construction of Worcester to rebuild a 600-foot rail spur into the site, and that will be ready in three to four weeks.

“We’re not necessarily going to use this site for bulk,” said Perrault, emphasizing that a 68-acre site with deepwater, rail, and excellent highway access (via divided highway Route 79) is a rarity in New England. Cashman has already turned down users who want only two or three acres of the site. As Perrault said, “the whole is worth more than the sum of its parts.....We’re keeping our options open for uses” needing large areas, which could include bulk cargoes, energy products or other liquids such as asphalt, cement, a laydown for projects staged by water, etc.

Rail
The CSXT-owned Fall River branch (EOTC owns to Cotley Junction) runs right through the site, leaving 50 acres next to the water, and 18 acres across the track. Given the current amount of traffic on the line [three trains a week, roughly - editor], using the land across the tracks creates no problem at this point.

However, Perrault pointed out, when [probably not if - editor] the MBTA starts commuter service to downtown Fall River, that could change. CSXT has assured Cashman that the T will provide enough time for freight service to the site, but frequent passenger trains could interfere with traffic across the tracks between the two parts of the parcel.

Channel access
Perrault said Cashman is doing some of the work on the Brightman Avenue bridge, which crosses the Taunton Avenue bridge downstream from the Cashman site. The current width of 98 feet, and the lack of height, limits the kind of ships which can dock at the Cashman site. However, upon completion (scheduled for 2004) the bridge opening will have 200 horizontal feet, and a lift deck, so much larger ships can move upriver. {ANR&P discussion 13.Aug.2001}

NEW ENGLAND SOUTHERN
8 August, Bow. CIMENT QUÉBEC WILL SOON EXPAND ITS TRANSLOAD FACILITY here, which opened at the end of May [see 1 May issue] using the 1000-foot siding which runs through the building from south to north. Jean Lebrun said 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 Québec asked NEGS to start work on a second, 400-foot siding off the first, north of the building, and NEGS will start that on 18 August. NEGS will also add a siding south of the building for locomotive storage, as Ciment Québec will acquire its own locomotive to do the switching.

Operation
H&D Trucking has contracted with Ciment Québec to operate the plant. Only two workers are required: one from H&D to load trucks, and one from NEGS to unload cars. “It’s a new building, so it’s almost maintenance-free,” said Lebrun. But Ciment Québec will hire someone to operate the locomotive. {ANR&P discussion 13.Aug.01}

VERMONT RAIL SYSTEM
7 August, Rutland. THE DRAFT VHB REPORT ON MOVING THE RAILYARD here will see the light of day this evening, when consultants VHB and Matthew Sternberg, director of the Rutland Redevelopment Authority, present it to the Rutland City Aldermanic Council inter-municipal committee (composed of two or three aldermen). {ANR&P discussion with Sternberg August 7, 2001}

Public hearing 15 August
On 31 July, Sternberg led a train-borne tour of the rail yard and the proposed new connector in Center Rutland [see 20 July issue]. Participants included Aldermanic Council members, Susan Compton of VAOT, David O’Brien of the Rutland Economic Development Corporation, Frank Heald, chair of the Redevelopment Authority, plus Paul Craven and David Wulfson of VRS.

Sternberg said a feasibility study would be presented to the public 730PM 15 August at the Rutland town office. {Gordon
Dritschilo in Rutland Herald 1. Aug. 01

QUÉBEC/MARITIMES

SAINT JOHN

4 August. J.D. IRVING WILL BARGE WOODCHIPS from Weymouth Nova Scotia to Saint John, using the deck barge ATL-2701, the former Irving Whale. {CBC website} Irving spokesperson Mary Keith wrote that ‘[t]he route across the Bay of Fundy is new and operates exclusively from our mill at Weymouth to Saint John where it supplies pulp and paper operations. The barge can carry 100 transport truck loads of chips (maximum), after refitting with large sidewalls on deck. No cargo is carried below-deck.’ Irving’s Saint John operations receive other chips from Nova Scotia via truck.

The J.D. Irving forest product operations ‘The Irving Group of Companies include a kraft pulp mill, a newsprint and specialty paper mill, and a parent roll tissue plant in Saint John. We also recently acquired a tissue plant in Toronto and have converting facilities in Fort Edward NY and Moncton, New Brunswick and a corrugated medium plant at Lake Utopia, New Brunswick.’ {e-mail to ANR&P from Keith 9. Aug. 01}

First stage of contract

Brett Hodgins, the NSED official who is handling the file, said on 7 August that within days, Stevens will meet with key shippers, as the contract calls for him to present his findings to a public meeting in Sydney on 24 August. The findings should include an “understanding of Rail America’s contentions,” an “environmental scan,” and identification of near-term market opportunities.

What about the Georgia Pacific gypsum move {see 20 July issue}? An effort to re-examine whether to ask GP to put its gypsum on rail instead of truck “was not within the terms of reference” of Stevens’ contract, said Hodgins.

Following the presentation on 24 August, the stakeholders will decide Stevens’ brief for the second phase of the study. {ANR&P discussion 14. Aug. 01}

PEOPLE

Tom Howard, who handled government relations for Georgia Pacific, as of 13 August will become director of US government relations for Domtar, still retaining his Augusta office.

Bert Clifford, who bought and revitalized the Belfast & Moosehead Lake Railroad, died on 10 August at 81 of cancer. In addition to the railroad, he founded and supported many other local organizations and businesses in Unity Maine. Out of respect, the railroad closed for the day on 13 August. Requiescat in pace.

CAPE BRETON & CNS

7 August, Halifax. BOB STEVENS WAS HIRED AS THE CAPE BRETON RAIL CONSULTANT around 20 July, with his fee split between Nova Scotia Economic Development [NSED, the fancy way of saying Nova Scotia Department of Economic Development] and the federal corporation Enterprise Cape Breton [see 20 July issue]. According to NSDOT’s Steve Newson, Stevens served as a consultant to Rail Tex when it considered buying the CBNS line from CN. Stevens also consulted with NSDOT during the examination of rail links between Nova Scotia and New England [see 12 March 1999 issue] pending the decision of Sea-Land/Maersk on whether to put a major facility in Halifax.

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Atlantic Northeast Rails & Ports

87 Main Street Yarmouth, Maine 04096
Vox (207) 846-3549 Fax: (603) 215-4482
Chalmers (Chop) Hardenbergh, publisher and editor
e-mail: C_Hardenbergh@juno.com

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