Twice-monthly trade newsletter dedicated to the preservation and extension of the rail network in New England, the Maritimes, & eastern Québec.

operating railroads + ports, intermodal facilities, and government environment

Issue 00:18 22 September 2000

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

The e-bulletin
Print recipients may receive, free of charge, the ATLANTIC NORTHEAST RAILS & PORTS e-bulletin. It will give you a news update between the regular issues. You need only send me your e-mail address.

- Chop Hardenbergh

Next issue: 6 October.

REGиональные ИССУКИ

NS INTERMODAL
15 September. NORFOLK SOUTHERN CLOSED ITS BOSTON PAPER RAMP. According to a message to intermodal customers: ‘The improvements made to our New England service allow us to more efficiently serve the Boston market through our Ayer, MA facility. Any loads in route on September 15th will be moved to Boston and you should arrange for pickup as soon as possible. All empties on or after the 15th should be returned to Ayer, MA. Any billing submitted with a destination of Boston after September 15th will be changed and the unit delivered via rail to Ayer, MA.

New England Service update
‘As announced on July 26, 2000 Norfolk Southern has made several enhancements to our current New England train service. Since that time, train performance has improved (eastbound traffic is running 100% within 2 hours) and volumes have increased nearly 100%


‘Key improvements along this route include:
- NS’ route through Cleveland has been upgraded from a single track to a double-track line, nearly tripling its speed allowance
- Expansion of Bison Yard in Buffalo is now complete
- Intermediate block-swapping between Chicago and Buffalo has been removed

NS will also provide EMP truck sub-service to and from its Springfield, Mass., paper ramps over Albany (currently Croxton). For more information and the latest in NS Intermodal news, click on www.nscorp.com then “Doing Business with NS,”
PW COAL MOVE

19 September. **PW MOVED FOREIGN COAL FROM NEW HAVEN TO GRS.** Low-sulfur coal from Indonesia was imported by Wisevest, a Wisconsin company which owns coal-burning power stations in Bridgeport and New Haven.

A test burn for Mt. Tom

Due to the initiation of lower emission standards, the Mt. Tom Massachusetts power plant (located in the Town of Holyoke) must begin burning lower-sulfur coal. To test whether it can use the Indonesian coal, the plant took some railcars of the Wisevest coal for a test burn.

How did the coal get there?

The coal ship, carrying approximately 50,000 tons, anchored off Bridgeport. Wisevest transloaded some of the coal from the ship for its Bridgeport power station at Gateway Terminal’s Coy Angelo arranged to barge some from the ship to New Haven for transfer to Mt. Tom, Massachusetts. According to Keith Saunders of Northeast Utilities, the owner of the Mt. Tom plant, the barge came to the Gateway Terminal in New Haven. From there, cranes unloaded the coal into a hopper which fed trucks. The trucks drayed the coal to Gateway Terminal’s rail siding at the English Station power plant, and dumped it into hopper cars leased for the occasion. (Angelo said the Belle Dock siding did not provide enough room for Gateway moves.)

PW then moved the cars to New London, up to Worcester, and thence to Gardner for interchange with GRS. GRS, in turn, delivered the coal to Mt. Tom. Due to limited space in the Gardner yard and the fact that the P&W does not want to move all of the cars at once, the cars are moved up in blocks to Gardner.

“I looked at doing the test move through the Port of Albany, but that did not prove as economical as this,” said Saunders. “Getting a crane in place to handle the coal in Albany would have cost $20,000.” [ANR&W discussions 20-21.Sept.00; Dave Jodoin and Jeff Rost in NERAIL listserv 18-20.Sept.00]

The Mt. Tom test burn

The coal-burning power plant is owned by the Holyoke Water Power Company, a subsidiary of Northeast Utilities. Ted Kaczenski of the Mt. Tom plant said of the round-about delivery route: “That was a test train of test coal. You won’t see that again. We will use the most efficient route, which could be bargeing to Albany, bargeing to Boston, or other means of delivery.”

According to Kaczenski, the test burn went well. “We’ll probably use the Indonesian coal when we switch,” though the plant already is burning very low sulfur coal from the west. The move to even-lower sulfur content may take place in 2003, when at least per the draft Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, a blend of domestic and Indonesian coal will be required. [ANR&P discussion 20.Sept.00]
18 September.  **SUNBURY TRUCKING IS USING SLR’S AUBURN RAMP.** Officials close to the situation said trailers inbound to Auburn are off-loaded. The contents are reloaded into a Sunbury trailer in Auburn, and then drayed by Sunbury to New Brunswick or even Nova Scotia.

**Does this move make sense?**

Yes, said one official. As a general rule, all containers and trailers taken off trains at one ramp must return to that ramp. So sending the inbound intermodal trailer to New Brunswick would require Sunbury to ensure it returned to Auburn.

Second, Sunbury drives tractors and trailers to Auburn anyway for outbound service, so the equipment is available.

Third, Sunbury would not use the intermodal lane provided by its sister railroad NBSR along with CDAC/CP. “The service and the costing, to put it crudely, suck. It makes more sense to do it this way.” {ANR&P discussion with officials who preferred not to be named 18.Sept.00}

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**FOR THE RECORD: REGIONAL**

CONEG IS MOVING FORWARD ON ITS RAIL STUDY. Executive Director Anne Stubbs said during the initial phase, CONEG is learning how states can interact with each other on a regional basis for rail. She hopes to provide a first-order report to the governors when they meet in early 2001. {ANR&P discussion 19.Sept.00}

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SUBMISSIONS ON THE REVIEW OF THE CANADIAN TRANSPORTATION ACT would be welcome to the Panel reviewing the Act. Interested parties are invited to submit their views and comments on competitive rail access issues by 6 October 2000. Submissions that deal with other mandatory issues should be sent by 17 November 2000. Please contact the review committee at info@reviewcta-examenltc.gc.ca or call (613) 993-4743. Submissions will normally be posted on the CTA Review Web site. (Atlantic Transportation Watch 9.00)

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**MAINE RAILROADS**

**MDOT - MORE ON IRAP**

18 September.  **THE AMOUNTS OF STATE FUNDING WON BY EACH PROJECT:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Funding Won</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SLR</td>
<td>$90,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B&amp;A</td>
<td>$97,000, $298,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portage</td>
<td>$69,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockton Springs</td>
<td>$105,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**AMTRAK - CONNECTICUT**

21 September, Newington.  **ConnDOT IS WORKING WITH AMTRAK TO INCREASE SPEED** on the Northeast Corridor from New Haven to the New York state line. David Chase of the department said the state is replacing, in stages, the catenary dating to before 1920 now owned by the State of Connecticut.

Amtrak and ConnDOT are also investigating the speeds of the train in this section. Tracks in this section have a spacing of 12 feet on center, narrower than usual because the New Haven Railroad turned the formerly two-track line into a four-track line.

“We aim to get speeds up from the current 75 miles per hour to 90 miles per hour wherever possible,” said Chase. {19.Sept.00}

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**HRRC - CONNECTICUT**

20 September, New Milford.  **MORE ON THE CLOSING OF HOLTRACHEM.** The company began the temporary buttoning up of the facility, getting rid of the hazardous chemicals [see 15 September issue: Maine]. "We’re still hopeful that a buyer will emerge for the plant."

While GRS will lose the traffic HoltraChem generated, noted Fink, "we'll still have the same traffic for the paper mills, but it will come from outside New England." {ANR&P discussion with Fink 20.Sept.00}

**Impact on Food Ingredient Specialties**

This plant based in New Milford, Connecticut uses product from HoltraChem to make various ingredients for food. Food Ingredients Specialties, with headquarters in Solon, Ohio, is a subsidiary of Nestle. In addition to the mill, Nestle maintains its ‘Nestle R&D Center Incorporated’ in New Milford.

An official at the plant said she was able to replace the HoltraChem as a supplier, “not without a struggle. I was sorry to hear that source go away. We had a very good business relationship for many, many years. But at this point, their shutdown is presenting us with no problem.”

While FIS receives some raw material by rail, it ships all product out by truck. {ANR&P discussion 19.Sept.00}

[Nota bene: New Milford not only has the FIS plant which receives by rail, but also the Kimberly-Clark mill making paper-based household products using pulp railed from its mill in Abercrombie Point, Nova Scotia. See 15 September issue.]

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**CONNECTICUT RRs**

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-- Industrial track rehabilitation and extension beyond the existing track end on the City-owned rail spur in the Saco Industrial Park $141,000.
-- Track rehabilitation/replacement at Sprague Energy in South Portland to accommodate new asphalt and clarified petroleum oil unloading systems and a rail-to-truck loading/offloading platform for handling liquid and dry bulk commodities; $247,000.
-- Siding relocation/lengthening on the Guilford line at the Champion International paper mill in Passadumkeag $17,000.

The scoring and the projects which did not make the list
According to Allan Bartlett of MDOT’s Office of Freight Transportation, a committee of three people rated the projects using a scoring system. He listed some of the projects which did not rise high enough for funding as: SAPPI, Maine Wood Treaters in Mechanic Falls, Grimmell for a siding in Auburn, JB Brown for a siding in the Auburn Industrial Park, and 13 projects from the Bangor and Aroostook.

Status of projects from the 1999 awards
In April 1999, MDOT funded eight projects [see 30 April 1999 issue]. Per Bartlett, the siding on the B&A in Easton is completed, the siding for Lane Construction in Winterport awaits the laying of rail, and the B&A has signed agreements for the sidings in Portage and Taunton, but has not yet proceeded with them.

On Guilford, SAPPI finished the siding in Hinckley, Saco did the track rehab in its industrial park, and Sprague finished the siding for kaolin in South Portland.

On the SLR, the track rehab and extension work at the Safe Handling facility in Auburn has not yet gotten underway. [ANR&P discussion 19.Sept.00]

GRS - STB DECIDES AGAINST MDOT
15 September, Topsham. GRIMMELL MUST DEAL WITH GUILFORD for the near future, according to a decision by the Surface Transportation Board this day. The STB ‘(1) granted Maine Central Railroad Company's motion to withdraw its notice of exemption; and (2) dismissed the notice of exemption filed on June 11, 1998.

Key dates in the case [For complete text of the STB decision, see www.stb.dot.gov/decisions/ReadingRoom.nsf/ 15 September. Nota bene: The STB uses ‘Maine Central’ or MEC to describe the railroad. I use ‘GRS’ or Guildford’. MEC is one of the railroads making up the Guilford Rail System.]

1987. GRS placed the line out of service.

1991. ‘In 1991, wishing to explore rail passenger and freight opportunities, MDOT purchased the physical assets of the 9.4-mile eastern portion of the Lewiston Line between Brunswick and Lisbon Falls, ME. However, MEC retained a freight easement and the common carrier obligation to provide rail freight service. The easement agreement provided that, as long as the State had not commenced passenger operations on the line, MEC would be responsible for maintaining the line and providing rail freight service. The agreement further provided that MEC’s easement would end when this agency removes the common carrier obligation for rail freight service on the line. Freight Easement Agreement, Section 2.3.’

1994. Grimmell Industries, a scrap dealer in Topsham about three miles from the junction in Brunswick, began asking GRS to provide service. Grimmell is connected to the Lewiston Line by a rail spur.

1997. ‘MDOT and Grimmell assert that MEC has consistently refused to provide Grimmell service at Topsham. They state that in 1997 MEC agreed to provide service only if Grimmell paid MEC $250,000 for track repairs on the Lewiston Line, paid MEC's crew expenses to serve Topsham, and paid a $600 per car rate for the rail movement from the Topsham facility to Portland, ME.

1998. ‘Following negotiations between the State and MEC in 1998, MEC agreed to abandon the entire Lewiston Line. MDOT claims that the parties further agreed that, following abandonment, they would negotiate for MDOT’s purchase of the remaining portion of the line, and MDOT would rehabilitate the line so that Grimmell could be served by another railroad.

1 July 1998. Publication of the notice of exemption on the 18.97-mile section. The notice stated that the exemption would become effective on 31 July 1998. ‘MEC acknowledged in its June 1998 notice of exemption that the line would be acquired by the State for the purpose of providing rail service and that therefore no salvage would be undertaken.’ [See 2 July 1998 issue.]

6 July 1998. The STB’s Section of Environmental Analysis ‘recommended that a condition be imposed requiring MEC to retain its interest in, and take no steps to alter the historic integrity of, all sites and structures on the right-of-way until completion of the historic review process mandated by section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 470f. Accordingly, in a decision served July 29, 1998, the Board’s Director of the Office of Proceedings (Director) imposed the recommended historic review condition.’

31 July 1998. GRS right to consummate abandonment came into existence.

After 31 July 1998. MDOT ‘began negotiations with MEC for the purchase of the segment it did not own. MDOT further states that, in good faith reliance on MEC’s agreement to abandon the line, MDOT commenced a $250,000 rehabilitation of the line to Grimmell’s facility, including replacement of ties and repairs of bridges, grade crossings, and wash-outs. MDOT indicates that it has already spent $150,000 on the Lewiston Line [see 23 July 1999 issue].’

February 1999. ‘MDOT informed MEC 7 months after the abandonment proposal [see 26 February 1999 issue] was filed that the SLR, a competitor of MEC in the area, would operate over the line. MEC argues that MDOT is biased against MEC and is attempting to isolate MEC for the benefit of other carriers in the state. MEC faults MDOT for making repairs without first
2 September 1999. GRS moved at the STB [see 24 September 1999 issue] to withdraw its notice of exemption, ‘because of the amount of time the proceeding has remained open, because of the significant work still required to complete the historic review process, and because of the recent work by the State of Maine to improve the portion of the Lewiston Line owned by the State.’

MDOT opposed the request, as well as Pejepscot Industrial Park, Inc. d/b/a Grimmell Industries (Grimmell)...’

12 November 1999. ‘MDOT ask[ed the Board], by letter filed November 12, 1999, to remove the historic condition as it applies to the State-owned portion of the Lewiston Line so that abandonment authorization as to that portion of the line can be made final and it can then terminate MEC’s freight easement on that portion of the line. In its October 12, 1999 letter, MDOT contends that it would run into federal preemption claims if it were to seek legal remedies against MEC without our having issued abandonment authority.’

Arguments of MDOT
MDOT argued that under the law, ‘the Board has the discretion to deny a request to withdraw an abandonment filing if the carrier’s conduct is inconsistent with the public interest. According to MDOT, allowing MEC to withdraw its abandonment proposal would preserve an unsatisfactory status quo by rewarding MEC’s long-standing failure to fulfill its common carrier obligation.’

‘MDOT asserts that the motivation behind MEC's withdrawal of the abandonment is to prevent entry of a competing carrier, the St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railroad Company (SL&A), and the potential diversion of traffic from MEC. MDOT argues that MEC’s attempted withdrawal of its abandonment proposal lessens transportation service and competitive options for shippers in the State and is contrary to the public interest.’

‘Grimmell’s general manager charges that MEC has no intention of providing rail service to the company. He contends that it is in the public interest to allow the State to replace MEC with a different carrier that would provide service.’

Argument of GRS
GRS moved at the STB [see 24 September 1999 issue] to withdraw its notice of exemption, ‘because of the significant work still required to complete the historic review process, and because of the recent work by the State of Maine to improve the portion of the Lewiston Line owned by the State.’

‘MEC [also] submits that, because the line has been out of service for over 10 years and requires substantial rehabilitation, it will commence service only upon a reasonable level of demand and the feasible expectation of a compensatory return from freight traffic. It argues that we should not force it to provide service for a single shipper at a significant loss or else forfeit its proprietary rights in the line for the benefit of a competing carrier.’

Conclusion of STB
‘MEC’s authority to abandon the Lewiston Line has not automatically expired under 49 CFR 1152.29(e)(2), because the historic condition imposed by the Director in the decision served July 29, 1998, is a regulatory barrier to consummation. See Pittsburgh & Shawmut Railroad, Inc.--Abandonment Exemption--In Jefferson and Clarion Counties, PA, STB Docket No. AB-487 (Sub-No. 3X) (STB served Oct. 19, 1998). (10) Thus the abandonment proposal remains pending with us.

‘When we authorize a carrier to abandon a line, that authority is permissive, not mandatory. The carrier can choose to exercise that authority or not. Because we do not compel a carrier to abandon a line, we normally grant a carrier's motion to withdraw its request for abandonment authority. Moreover, denying MEC’s petition to withdraw the notice would not give MDOT and Grimmell the relief they seek–the ability to exercise rights that would assertedly be triggered upon abandonment of the line. That is because, until MEC exercises the abandonment authority it has received, the line is not abandoned and our primary jurisdiction over the line continues. Refusing to allow MEC to withdraw the notice would not force MEC to exercise the abandonment authority....’

‘MDOT and Grimmell do have remedies available to pursue the relief they desire. MDOT or Grimmell may file a third-party application with the Board under 49 U.S.C. 10903, asking us to find that the public convenience and necessity no longer require the presence of MEC on the line. If we were to make such a finding, we would withdraw our primary jurisdiction over the line, thereby clearing the way for the operation of state law. Modern Handcraft, Inc.--Abandonment, 363 I.C.C. 969 (1981) (Modern Handcraft); Kansas City Pub. Ser. Frgt. Operation Exempt.-Aban., 7 I.C.C.2d 216, 224-26 (1990) (Kansas City); Chelsea Property Owners-Aban.-The Consol. R. Corp., 8 I.C.C.2d 773, 778 (1992), aff'd sub nom. Conrail v. ICC, 29 F.3d 706 (D.C. Cir. 1994). As the ICC explained in Modern Handcraft, 363 I.C.C. at 972, we will not allow our jurisdiction to be used to shield a carrier from the legitimate processes of state law while there is no overriding Federal interest to protect....

‘Line owners dissatisfied with carriers operating over their lines have often filed third party applications for discontinuance, not to terminate service but rather to replace the existing operator with a new one. See City of Rochelle, Illinois-Adverse Discontinuance-Rochelle Railroad Company, STB Docket No. AB-549 (STB served May 27, 1999); Tacoma Eastern Railroad Company--Adverse Discontinuance of Operations Application--A Line of the City of Tacoma in Pierce, Thurston, and Lewis Counties, WA, STB Docket No. 548 (STB served October 16, 1998), reconsideration denied, STB served Mar. 3, 1999; Cheatham County Rail Authority "Application and Petition" for Adverse Discontinuance, Docket No. AB-379X (ICC served Nov. 4, 1992)
(Cheatham County); Fore River RR. Corp.-Discon. Exempt.-Norfolk County, MA, 8 I.C.C.2d 307 (1992) (Fore River). Moreover, this agency has withdrawn its primary jurisdiction in order to allow parties to assert rights arising out of a contract, Grand Trunk Western Railroad Incorporated-Adverse Discontinuance of Trackage Rights Application-A Line of Norfolk and Western Railroad Company in Cincinnati, Hamilton County, OH, STB Docket No. AB-31 (Sub No. 30) (STB served May 13, 1998), or out of the termination of contracts, Fore River and Cheatham County.

‘Alternatively, MDOT or Grimmell may file an application under 49 U.S.C. 10907, the “feeder line” provision of the statute. Under section 10907, we may require a railroad to sell its interest in a line if it is shown that the carrier operating the line refuses to provide adequate service over the line; the service is inadequate for the majority of shippers on the line; the sale will not significantly harm the railroad financially or operationally; and sale will result in improved railroad transportation for shippers using the line. Upon such a showing, any financially responsible person—and all governmental authorities are deemed to be such persons—may acquire the line for its constitutional minimum value in order to provide rail service.

‘In sum, petitioners have failed to show why MEC’s motion to withdraw its abandonment request should not be permitted and we therefore will dismiss MEC’s notice of exemption. The effect of dismissal is that MEC’s common carrier obligation to provide rail service over the line will remain in place. However, the petitioners may seek to eject MEC from the line by filing either an application under section 10903 requesting that we withdraw our primary jurisdiction over the line so as to permit MDOT to invoke its asserted contract rights, or an application to acquire the line under the feeder line provision of section 10907.’

**Grimmell has rights in federal court**

‘We also note that Grimmell has filed an action in a federal District Court to enforce MEC’s common carrier obligation [see 10 September 1999 issue]. See Pejepscot Industrial Park, Inc. dba Grimmell Industries v. Maine Central Railroad Co., Springfield Terminal Railway Co., Guilford Transportation Industries, Inc., 215 F.3d 195 (1st Cir. 2000) (holding that the district court has jurisdiction to hear the failure-to-provide-service complaint but should refer the issue to this agency under the doctrine of primary jurisdiction). STB Docket No. AB-83 (Sub- No. 16X), Maine Central Railroad Company—Abandonment Exemption—In Androscoggin County, ME, Decided: September 14, 2000)

**Reaction and comments**

David Fink, GRS executive vice-president, said on 20 September that his company is reviewing the options available. “We still have litigation pending” with Grimmell, “and we’d like to see what they will do.”

Jamie Kilbreth, Grimmell’s attorney, said on 21 September his client would want to talk to MDOT to ascertain what the department is thinking. He noted that the US Court of Appeals told the district court that it should consider Grimmell’s claims of contract violation which arose when Grimmell asked GRS for rates, GRS quoted Grimmell rates, and then GRS refused service. The district court has scheduled a conference with the judge in October to discuss how to proceed on the litigation of those four claims.

On the question of GRS’ continuing obligation to provide service, the Court of Appeals said the district court should defer to the STB. Kilbreth said his client is evaluating whether to take that matter up with the STB.

MDOT Commissioner John Melrose said on 21 September, “Naturally I am disappointed. We need to think about what to do. In particular, I need to sit down with the communities involved to see what their preferences are. 

**FOR THE RECORD:**

**MASSACHUSETTS RRs**

**CSXT - SOUTH SUDbury**

22 September, Sudbury. NO SPACE EXISTS FOR MORE RAIL CUSTOMERS at the Chiswick Industrial Park, home to the three-acre Saxonville USA lumber yard. The park’s principal, Ted Pasquarello, said this day that his 52-acre park (the remainder of the 55-acre park) has 360,000SF of office buildings, with little room to grow.

Saxonville wants to move when it finds a new location [see 18 August issue], CSXT (after fixing up the damage from the recent derailment) would like to serve it at a new location, and Pasquarello does not encourage industrial tenants.

[So, despite the thirst for rail-served industrial sites in eastern Massachusetts, this one will go off the rolls eventually.] {ANR&P discussion}

**Status of track rehab**

Debbie Dineen, conservation agent, said CSXT appealed the conditions of the protection order concerning the use of non-creosote treated ties. The track remains a mess. Saxonville representatives, looking at the site on 21 September, said they were losing tens of thousands of dollars a week by transloading.

{ANR&P discussion 22.Sept.00}
A FEE PROPOSAL for the preliminary engineering. Roy O’Blenis of PB’s Boston office will handle the contract, according to Kit Morgan; O’Blenis handled Big Dig rail liaison for PB.

Morgan, NHDOT rail administrator who met with PB this day, said the scope of work goes “way beyond what is necessary to actually build the track and run the trains.” PB is preparing NHDOT’s submission to win FTA New Starts construction money. While New Hampshire won FTA funding for the preliminary engineering, it must now compete against other projects to win the funding to actually build the commuter service.

Thus PB work will include updating old studies, meeting with stakeholders and railroads, holding public meetings, looking at alternative locations for a Nashua downtown station and doing a conceptual design for the station, updating ridership figures, providing infrastructure reports, and proposing service plans. As well, PB will provide reports on operating costs, 13C impact, layover facilities, and environmental assessment.

Moreover, the FTA (following the direction of the US Congress) will want to know how the project will increase mobility, reduce congestion, benefit the environment, be cost-effective and operationally efficient, improve liveability, and be land-use, pedestrian, and transit friendly. And then PB must provide a 20-year financial plan. [Whew!]

PB has until September 2000 to prepare the FTA report.

What the FTA does with the report
Reports seeking New Starts money must arrive at FTA in September. Staff there rates each proposal using objective criteria. A book is published each March containing the ratings of each proposal: highly recommended, recommended, not recommended, or not rated.

In the March 1999 book, noted Morgan, of the 41 total projects nine received a ‘highly recommended’ rating, 23 ‘recommended’, and nine were ‘not recommended’. [Report summaries may be found at www.fta.dot.gov.] {ANR&P discussion 21.Sept.00}

NHDOT - STATE RAIL PLAN
19 September. THE FIRST MEETING ON THE STATE RAIL PLAN occurred in Manchester. Morgan said only the consultants and one staff member of the Southern New Hampshire planning commission appeared. {ANR&P discussion 21.Sept.00}

CCRR
18 September, West Lebanon. THE RAILROAD IS WORKING HARD to restore service. Jeff Albright said: “We’ve changed out 112-pound for the existing 85-pound rail on the main line curve. Next weekend, contractor ITS will reconstruct the 1st switch of the Westboro yard so we can go into the yard. We’re also changing ties on the main line.”

At Twin State Sand and Gravel, ITS [Industrial Track Service] is rebuilding the existing switch. The railroad has lifted the existing siding, and will lay down a new one. Hoppers for the gravel move are receiving a cleaning and some repairs at CCRR’s maintenance site in Claremont. The locomotive for the West Lebanon trains currently sits on a Pioneer Valley Railroad industrial siding. Albright was confident that the locomotive would arrive before CCRR and NECR had worked out a means to load the gravel in Vermont. “We’ll reach an amicable agreement” with NECR, he said.

Traffic at home and abroad
CCRR recently acquired a new customer in Claremont. Davis Timber Frame brings in large timbers from the West coast, 4x8s to 8x12s 20-40’ long. CCRR transloads them at LaValley Lumber. Albright expects 8-12 carloads a year.

In West Lebanon, Albright was enthusiastic about future business growth, both south via NECR/GRS, and north via NVR. He declined to name any potential customers. {ANR&P discussion 18.Sept.00}

NHVT
14 September. A SECOND MEETING ON NORTH COUNTRY RAIL occurred [see 18 August issue]. Sharon Penney of the North Country Council said the group is looking at NHVT and customers in the Lancaster-Groveton-Gorham area. While Clyde Forbes did not show up as planned, Mike Gooden, NHVT general manager, did attend.

“We have a lot of abandoned [and unused] rail corridors up here. We would like to know which could feasibly be used for rail now, and which could become trails in the near term. An inertia about the use of the corridors was settling in, and we would like to dissipate that.”

Once the group had tentatively identified on which corridors rail could still function cost-effectively, it hopes to turn to NHDOT’s Bureau of Rail and Public Transit for some funding. “It’s got to be a partnership. The state should not totally subsidize rail freight,” said Penney.

State rail plan meeting
The group would like to have a presentation ready for the state rail plan group meeting in the North Country on 24th October. {ANR&P discussion 20.Sept.00}

MARITIMES/QUÉBEC RRs

CAPE BRETON AND CENTRAL NS
18 September, Stellarton. THE RAILROAD IS MEETING ITS 2000 TRAFFIC TARGET, said new general/business development manager Peter Touesnard [see People 1 September issue]. The projections took into account the weakness at DEVCO and SYSCO. To meet the target, the railroad has done better with its existing customers such as Kimberly-Clark, Michelin, Stora, and TrentonWorks; but worse with the new fractionation plant in Point Tupper.

Per Touesnard, the plant has not produced as much traffic as expected because the plant in Goldboro designed to separate out the product for the fractionation plant from the natural gas
is not working well.

As for the Milford Industrial Reserve, no announcements have emerged about future rail users there on the west side of the Strait of Canso, but, said Tousenard, “check in early October during the offshore oil conference.”

Why Tousenard moved
He characterized it as family-oriented, permitting his wife to stay at her position in Truro [a pat on the back to them]. “I was very fortunate to have two very good companies both interested in me. I didn’t leave for a better job, but for an equivalent job.....NBSR is fortunate to have the Irvings as owners; the railroad is in a position to do well into future.” [ANR&P discussion 18.Sept.00]

Two customers for sale
Cape Breton has two old-economy companies, formerly good CBNS customers, now for sale. Unions, seeing jobs and pensions threatened, are struggling with the governments involved. The federal government is selling DEVCO, the coal-mining company at the tip of Cape Breton. U.S.-based Oxbow Carbon & Minerals signed a letter of intent to buy DEVCO, with the goal of completing the deal this summer. [Coal Week International 17.7.00] [See 3 July issue.]

The province is selling the Sydney Steel Corporation to Swiss company Duferco [see 3 July issue], with a closing set for 31 October. United Steel Workers are staging a protest about pensions. The province is giving no signs of softening its position. Steelworkers say they won’t leave until they get a better deal, even if that means the sale of the plant falls through. [CBC website 14.Sept.00]

NBSR
13 September. A STUDY OF RE-OPENING RAIL SERVICE TO BAYSIDE was presented to the stakeholders this week. Peter Fullarton, rail officer with NBDOT, described the conclusions reached by FGA Consulting [see 14 April issue Ports]:

Market for rail
The consultants saw a good market for rail traffic at the port and at the Champlain Industrial Park, with Westroc gypsum potentially making up the majority of the traffic in the beginning [see 3 March issue]. The traffic could grow to 4600 carloads annually, if the rail line reached the port floor, and if rail costs remained competitive with trucking. [Nota bene: that works out to 216 carloads per mile, well above the 100-150 carloads per mile thought necessary to keep a short line going.]

The quarrying necessary
Running the track down from the headland to the port floor will require quarrying, and leaving some of the stone to support the railbed. Thus, noted Fullarton, the cooperation of JAMER, which has the franchise to quarry on the provincial land [see 2 May issue], is needed.

Cost
The study stated $2.3 million would cover the cost of rehabbing the 21 miles of line from Watt (the junction with the line to St.Stephen) to Bayside. To run the track down from the headland to the pier will cost another $1.6 million. Finally, Westroc would need a means to unload the gypsum once the railcars reached the McAdam facility: estimated cost $700,000. Total cost $4.6 million.

This total did not include the cost of grade separation, which may be needed when Canadian Route One is twinned in the coming years.

The cost of operation is affected by the fact that one crew cannot do the McAdam-St.Stephen-Bayside run in the permitted hours of service. “CP had trouble with this,” noted Frye [see below].

Next meeting/source of funds
The stakeholders will meet again in late October or early November. At that point, hoped Fullarton, each would have assessed the project and determined what, if anything, it could contribute. “The railway is interested, the port is interested, let’s see what everyone is prepared to bring to the table.”

The province has no designated rail assistance program [unlike Quebec, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine, to name a few].

Reaction from one stakeholder
Peter Frye, the owner of Bayside Food Terminals and Bayside Stevedoring, said after the meeting, “The cost is too great for the benefit to be derived from it. It’s such a long spur, with customers only at the end of it.”

He looked askance at the reliance of FGA on the Westroc traffic. That company (www.westroc.com), Canada’s largest manufacturer of drywall, finishing products, decorative mouldings, and pre-finished wall systems, could rail the gypsum direct if it had a transload facility at McAdam. Currently the gypsum moves by rail from a Nova Scotia quarry to Halifax, then by ship to Bayside, and then by truck to McAdam. If Westroc had the rail transfer facility, it would probably find an all-rail route cheaper than using the ship, believed Frye.

A TEAM TRACK IN ST.STEPHEN?
Peter Frye of Bayside Food Terminals promoted this idea to a few people after the formal presentation of the FGA study. In a discussion with ANR&P, Frye asserted that the siding “made sense logistically–everyone’s in favor. Questions arise on the political side: Who will pay for it?”

The rail line to Calais now runs through the St.Stephen Industrial Park; installing a siding for public use would give everyone there access to rail. Frye believed the track could pay for itself, and needed only seed money to get started. He is asking the local Assembly representative, Tony Huntjens (Conservative), for assistance. Fullarton supported the siding.

What about the existing sidings
Ganong has one on its own property for liquid sugar imports. Frye has used it, needing to work out of the Ganong parking lot
Frye himself could not benefit from a rail line. “I need refrigerated trailers and containers, which are just not available... I chased that idea a few times. For example, I looked at the cost of moving a container from Bayside to Georgia via ship to Miami [using Kent Lines bi-weekly sailings], and then draying to Georgia. It didn’t make sense, because the drayage was so expensive.”

When the rail line was active, Frye shipped 8-10 carloads over the course of a year to Georgia. For his use, though, he doesn’t need the line to come to Bayside. “I would have to move the product in a closed truck anyway, whether the one mile to the Bayside station or 15 miles to a siding in St. Stephen [see box].”

The port could gain some additional cargoes. Its officers are discussing lead ingot for Noranda, and a backhaul from Jacksonville of perlite, a fertilizer.

**The companies involved**

Eastern Canada Stevedoring did the loading work. {ANR&P discussion with Forcier 19.Sept.00}

**How successful?**

Forcier listed the 1999 [see graph for 1996-1998] results as: Coal 1,270,608; Ores 497,152; Gypsum 224,048; Sulphuric Acid 157,456; Petroleum 69,174; Coke 81,442; Other 28,886 Total 2,328,766 {ANR&P discussion 19.Sept.00}

**NEW HAVEN**

22 August. **TWO TERMINAL OPERATORS WON BIDS TO STORE NORTHEAST OIL RESERVE**, the US Department of Energy announced. The Motiva Storage Terminal [formerly Cargill, see 16 May issue] will provide 500,000 barrels of inventory. Wyatt Energy, which has two terminals, will also provide 500,000 barrels of inventory. The Hess terminal on the New Jersey side of New York harbor will provide one million barrels. {AP in Manchester NH Union Leader 23.Aug.00}

20 September. **THE CITY IS RE-EVALUATING THE RAIL IN WATERFRONT STREET**. Lisa Bardon, a city engineer acting as project manager for the rebuilding of the rail there, said so many projects affecting the area are now occurring that the city wants to wait for some clarity about the future shape of the waterfront before proceeding with preliminary engineering for the tracks.

**The rail project and Tomlinson Bridge**

The city and state are currently finishing rebuilding the Tomlinson bridge, which carries US Route One over the Quinnipiac River. As part of the project, the PW rail line which used the bridge to cross the river to reach Waterfront Street was removed. Any transloading for maritime use takes place at the Belle Docks site across the river.

**Qbridge**

For some years, ConnDOT has been preparing to rebuild the I-95 bridge over the Quinnipiac River in New Haven. It is currently entertaining an amendment to the Environmental Impact Statement to change the location of a highway ramp in the vicinity of the harbor. The redesign may call for the elimination of the transmission towers from the Wisevest (former United Illuminating) plant. Since the towers sit only a couple of feet from the east edge of Waterfront Street, planners had to run the rail down the street. If the towers go, planners could possibly place the line out of Waterfront Street.

**East Shore Parkway**

Bardon noted that the city has a parcel adjacent to Waterfront Street, along East Shore Parkway. The latter was never developed as a parkway, though a park lies at the end of it.
around the Wisevest power plant. “Everyone wants the property for industrial development. The city must decide how to divvy up that land and what uses would work. Three different modes serve it [rail, water, road].

The intermodal project
ConnDOT has begun a feasibility study for a container terminal in New Haven [as well as Bridgeport and New London]. While not absolutely required, access to rail could help the container site, so the new line should be planned in connection with that, Bardon believed.

ConnDOT/GRS local road report
According to Tim Wilson in ConnDOT’s consultant design office, the department asked URS to look at local road configuration as part of the Q Bridge project. “GRS went a little beyond what we wanted them to do, and we are not comfortable with certain recommendations and observations. So releasing the report is a little preliminary.”

Wilson said the department would talk with GRS about the report. It could be released later. “But we are using some of it, such as the ramping configuration.”

Next step
Judy Gott, executive director of the South Central Region Council of Governments, will meet with Bardon, other city officials, and ConnDOT officials on 29 September to discuss the delay of the rail line renovation and other matters. “To us, a rail line is important from the harbor to bring in or take out goods. The holdup does not mean that Waterfront Street will never get rail access, though.”

Bardon noted that URS, the waterfront configuration consultant, was also hired to do the rail line preliminary engineering and is handling Qbridge. {ANR&P discussions with Lisa Bardon and Judy Gott 20.Sept.00}

PEOPLE, EVENTS

The New York Cross Harbor Railroad received a new president at its parent, New York Regional Railroad: Ronald W. Bridges. Calls to NYRR to find out the fate of its former president, Bob Bentley, were not returned. Before moving to NYCH, Bentley worked for MCER and for Maine Coast. {NYRR press release 19.Sept.00}

All employees of the federal entity Port of Belledune were automatically transferred to the Belledune Port Authority, including Wynford Goodman as chief, and Luc Forcier as financial and administrative office [see Ports].

John F. Flaherty has joined Vanasse Hangen Brustlin’s Boston-based Transit & Rail Group as Senior Rail Operations Specialist. Flaherty has an extensive career in passenger rail operations, largely with Amtrak and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA). Most recently, he was General Manager of Amtrak’s Massachusetts Commuter Rail operation.

John Weston has joined VHB’s Transit & Rail Group as a senior transportation planner. He most recently served as a transportation planner for the Georgia Rail Passenger Program in Atlanta, where he evaluated over 200 highway-rail at-grade crossings, in anticipation of passenger rail service along two rail corridors. He also conducted a cost benefit analysis of potential rail improvement projects for the Georgia State Rail Plan. Earlier in his career, John was a Project Coordinator for the Vermont Agency of Transportation’s Rail and Air Division.

Kristine A. Wickham has joined VHB’s Transit & Rail Group as a Senior Project Manager. Wickham has worked throughout the country on projects in New England, California, Washington, Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey. Most recently, she was involved in rail planning and feasibility studies in Massachusetts and Vermont; track designs for passenger rail service in Maine and Vermont; and design of improvements to bring several Massachusetts rail stations into compliance with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act.