operating railroads + ports, intermodal facilities, and government environment

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

REGIONAL ISSUES

NEARS: NS service to New England, both carload and intermodal. CSXT new services. Blue Seal Feeds use of rail.
CN: More on the Halifax-Ayer intermodal service.
CONNECTICUT
[No report.]

MAINE
Amtrak: Track modulus testing in November.
MDOT: Maine Rail Passenger Corridor Committee hears about Bangor passenger facility.

MASSACHUSETTS
GU: Weetabix will use new transload.
MCER: Seeking operator for Barre Reload. Box on Kanzaki Specialty Papers.
NECR: Description of transload operation in Moncton.
GRS: Dispute with Ayer to STB?
PW: Worcester proposes two rail-served industrial locations.

NEW HAMPSHIRE
CCRR: Holding breath about siding in Vermont.

RHODE ISLAND

VERMONT
NECR: industrial properties for sale.

MARITIMES/QUÉBEC
CN: second track for Halifax still in discussion.
B&A: Liberals will run a fund-raising train to l’Estrie. Tourist train possible.
WHRC: Excursion trains.

ATLANTIC NORTHEAST PORTS

Hantsport: purchase of wharf. Fundy Gypsum may expand.
Kent Line: GNP uses ro-ro service. Comments by new vice-president Graham Fraser.

PEOPLE, POSITIONS, EVENTS

Neil Marquis, NHDOT railroad operation engineer, Portsmouth executive director, SLR president.

FROM THE PUBLISHER
Fun?
Most of us may not associate our work with fun. Yet Graham Fraser’s comment [see Saint John] resonates with me: While employees should be serious about the bottom line, “we have to be having fun, or it’s just not worth it.”

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.

Correction
The PW coal move to Mt. Tom was done in three parts because the utility wanted to burn the product directly, not because PW could not move all the coal at once [see 22 September issue]. “We’ve been working on that for two years,” said PW Director of Marketing Frank Rogers.

- Chop Hardenbergh

Next issue: 20 October.
REGIONAL ISSUES

THE NEARS AUTUMN MEETING
The Northeast Association of Rail Shippers holds two meetings a year at which satraps of the rail industry report on efforts to improve rail service. The following stories come from the 27-29 September meeting in Danvers, Massachusetts.

NORFOLK SOUTHERN: SERVICE TO NEW ENGLAND
29 September, Danvers. SOME FIGURES ON NORFOLK SOUTHERN TRAFFIC IN THE NORTHEAST were presented to NEARS by Dave Childers, group vice-president NS, clay, paper, forest products, and shortline marketing.

For first 6 months of 2000, NS handled 269,336 carloads to the Northeast ($406 million in revenue), defined as Pennsylvania and east. It handled 125,392 carloads from the Northeast, and 162,841 carloads within the Northeast for a total of 557,569 ($700 million in revenue) for the six-month period.

Paper, forest products, and clay
Of the total group, the largest share for NS, some 24%, comes from kaolin. Pulp is the second largest at 21%. For Georgia clay, 31% of the originated carloads terminate in the Northeast, a total of 80,000 carloads a year.

NS has improved the average loaded-car transit time, Southeast terminal to Northeast terminal, from 12.1 days to 9.3 days.

Account managers for the Northeast
Childers announced that Chris Spiceland, former representative for the Northeast, had moved back to his home state of Georgia to become national account manager for originated clay.

Marty Fava will become the new NS account manager in Montreal with account responsibility for (mainly) lumber Manitoba to the Maritimes, and select paper accounts in Maine. {ANR&P discussion and coverage 28.Sept.00}

29 September, Danvers. THE INTERMODAL TRAIN HAS REVIVED OUT OF AYER. Tom Reese, account manager for the Northeast, said it is going very well: from June to September traffic has quadrupled. Dick Willey, GRS senior vice-president for marketing and sales, said the dedicated train has helped boost the traffic to 40+ intermodal units each way each day.

[Example: On 27 September, GRS ran train west from Ayer at 2000 with about two dozen trailers. {NERAIL@LISTSERV.AOL.COM}]

What makes the new service attractive?
Reese noted that the GRS/NS service “takes a day longer to Chicago [see time-table],” but shorter dray than from the competing offerings by CSXT in West Springfield. “We found that for companies around Ayer, the lower cost of our service and the dray attracts them to the Ayer ramp as opposed to using the West Springfield ramp.”

Evidence for this: “We kept customers in the Ayer area even through the intermittent service period of September 1999-June 2000. It showed people wanted a lower-cost service.”

Waterville service
NS has a schedule for service out of Waterville. However, Willey noted in a discussion with a Hub official, it had two problems. GRS does not run a dedicated train from Waterville to Ayer; intermodal units run with other railcars in mixed trains. This means [despite the schedule posted by NS from Waterville to Chicago] that the units could take three days because of the need to change trains in South Portland’s Rigby Yard.

Second, the Hub official complained that GRS could not consistently provide intermodal equipment to shippers in the Waterville area. Willey acknowledged that difficulty also. {ANR&P discussion and coverage 28.Sept.00; schedules from NS website}
Norfolk Southern Intermodal Schedules

September 11, 2000 - v00.17

Origin: Ayer, MA

Gate Hours: Mo-Fr 0600-1800, Sa 0800-1700

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<th>Destination</th>
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Norfolk Southern Intermodal Schedules

September 11, 2000 - v00.17

Origin: Waterville, ME

Gate Hours: Mo-Fr 0600-2000

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CSXT: NEW SERVICES

29 September. CSXT IS LOOKING TO FOOD TO GROW ITS TRAFFIC. Gary Lewis, CSXT assistant vice-president for marketing in the manufactured products division, told NEARS that, while most of the pundits saw intermodal as the growth engine, he is looking to manufactured products and particularly food.

In his slides, Lewis noted that manufactured products made up 98% of CSXT’s boxcar traffic and 100% of its centerbeam cars. Within manufactured products (food, consumer goods, paper and forest products), paper and forest products consists of 72%, food 25%, and government 3%. Food is growing fast because of Express Lane and other services.

Express Lane

Lewis noted that CSXT, with UP, introduced ExpressLane earlier this year. He stated the service will deliver perishables in boxcars in 6.5-7 days from the west into Boston and New York, versus the published times of 8th morning is guaranteed into New York and 9th morning into Boston {www.csxt.com}. On-time percentage comes in the high 90s.
Express Lane Rates (effective April 4, 2000)

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CSXT North/South railway
According to Lewis, the railroad will introduce a north-south network product shortly. Done as boxcar (general merchandise), it aims to take trucks off the highway. {ANR&P coverage}

BLUE SEAL FEEDS
27 September. THE USE OF RAIL BY BLUE SEAL FEEDS was described by Bill Whitney, transportation manager for Blue Seal Feeds, in a presentation to NEARS.

Company activity
Blue Seal brings in about 500,000 tons a year of feed grains to its nine mill locations in New England (Richford VT B&A, Augusta ME MC/GRS, Bow NH NEG, and Brandon VT VRS), New York (Chatham NY CSXT, Bainbridge NY CPR, Arcade NY NS), and Maryland (Hagerstown). From the mills, which mix together different grains to produce animal feed, the company delivers product to 11 company stores and over 300 private feed dealers in the Northeast.

The company once moved 100% of its inbound product by rail; that fraction has declined to 41%.

Quality of rail service
Whitney rated current service levels “fair, but fragile.” If a lot of grain movement occurs, the system could get bad. “It’s still not as timely or consistent as in the pre-Conrail-breakup days.”

Every morning he gets a record of every car enroute; Blue Seal has about 100 inbound cars at any one time, but almost never more than one car at a time.

Unit trains as a solution?
Because the number of single-car shippers is shrinking, train masters are taking longer to assemble a merchandise train. If the operating department has available power for a 100-car train, it will do what is best for efficient operation: hold the train. The operating department believes—and Whitney agrees—that whatever Blue Seal traffic remaining on the railroad cannot be lost. While the railroads have lost 60% of Blue Seal traffic, Blue Seal will not move to truck for the remaining 40% of inbound traffic.

Whitney did not think railroads should shoulder all the blame for the shipping problems. Many shippers are “simply not giving carriers complete shipping instructions when cars are shipped.”

In addition, since railroads are not at their best handling single-car movements, perhaps shippers should cooperate to create unit trains which would travel to a major terminal on the receiving end. After splitting up there, the cars would travel to their destinations in small blocks.

Blue Seal participated in a cooperative effort like this one year ago. A broker built a 54-car unit train by selling corn to Decoster Egg Farms in Turner Maine, Central Connecticut Cooperative in Manchester Connecticut, Blue Seal, and others. “This worked well,” said Whitney. No one has tried it since because railroads would like to use 100 car trains, and because brokers, not feed companies, need to initiate the effort.

“It’s not practical (and potentially not legal) for competing feed companies to cooperate to put together a unit train and even the larger brokers find it difficult to coordinate the sale and movement of 100 carloads at once.

Current rail traffic
To supply grain to its mills, Blue Seal reaches out to hundreds of different origins, because it handles many different kinds of grains. Whitney emphasized that moving grain by rail requires continual adjustments. For example, this year the local New York crop is poor, and the southern Quebec crop, while bountiful, is of low quality. To make up for these local producers, he has had to bring in more grain than usual from the Midwest (Ohio, Indiana).

Problems in Augusta
The mill in East Augusta switched to delivery out of Brunswick in early 2000 [see 3 March issue]; Maine Coast now runs the cars from Brunswick to Augusta as needed and Guilford does the final delivery. But Guilford, which initially provided five-day-a-week service in Augusta, has fallen off that due to crew shortages.

The Portland-Brunswick job has not become a permanent run yet for crews; GRS has bid out the job but had a hard time getting a crew together. “They have tried to go tri-weekly, but they are now providing the service catch-as-catch-can,” said Whitney.

Adding to the problem of getting the grain to Brunswick, GRS often has no crew in Waterville to send down to Augusta to do the switching. “What’s the problem here?” asked Whitney. “Why not let Maine Coast switch the mill” since GRS does not have the crews?

A saving grace for Guilford: the customer service people. Whitney praised them: “If there’s anything they can do, they will do it, including intimidating the operating people.” The customer service people “have a tough row to hoe, but they sure try.” {ANR&P discussion and coverage 27.Sept.00}

REGIONAL - CLIPPER INTERMODAL
4 October, Ayer MA. THE INTERMODAL TRAIN FROM HALIFAX CONTINUES TO DO WELL, running weekly with boxes from P&O’s Suez service. The train which arrived in Ayer on 27 September had about 50 loads: five NYK boxes, the balance P&O; of these, about 12 20-foot containers, the rest 40-foot; about half of the 50 were carried in well cars.

The train could have had more boxes, CN’s Dale Williams said at NEARS, but the ship was not stacked correctly.

Boxes in regular freight service
Mark Hunter, who handles New England for P&O, said the
number of European boxes destined for Ayer does not yet reach the 50 which would justify a dedicated train. So the railroads run the boxes in regular freight service. For example on 29 September GRS ran an 80-car train to Massachusetts; 15 had trailers and containers, mostly P&O.

Keeping the boxes until the dedicated train left on Monday did not make sense, Hunter said. The boxes from Europe arrive on a Wednesday and can get to Ayer sooner via the regular freight service, rather than await the dedicated service departing Halifax on Monday. {ANR&P discussion}

Will this help?
Murray is doing the testing in an effort to show the Surface Transportation Board “how difficult it was to carry out their order, and ask them to change or amend the order so as not to require measuring of track modulus. We are the only entity in the United States which has this condition.”

The STB decided in November 1999 that the upcoming Amtrak service from Portland to Boston may run at FRA Class 4 speeds if the track modulus (a measurement of deflection) showed the train would operate safely at those speeds. [See 18 February 2000 issue.]

How much work remains?
The crew laying rail has reached Biddeford, about 11 miles out from Portland, Murray said. “They’re doing about a mile a week so they have 11 weeks to go” which should bring them in just before the snow flies.

What about a Woburn stop?
During a meeting on 2 October with the MBTA, an Amtrak representative asked whether NNEPRA had looked at stopping at the new Woburn station, which has direct bus connections to Logan airport. Murray said: “We will monitor ridership at each location to determine how we can best serve our clients. If Haverhill [the current Massachusetts stop] does not have sufficient ridership, we would certainly would look elsewhere.”

MDOT:
RAIL ACCESS TO BANGOR AIRPORT
4 October, Bangor. IDEAS ABOUT LOCATION OF A REGIONAL PASSENGER INTERMODAL CENTER were outlined by Bangor International Airport Executive Director Bob Ziegelaar at a Bangor meeting of the Maine Rail Passenger Corridor Committee.

The most convenient and least expensive site for a multimodal facility would be near the current general aviation and airport maintenance buildings off Maine Avenue near the Hammond Street intersection. Not only is such a location a shorter distance to the Guilford Rail mainline (less than ½ mile), but buses and cars exiting from I-95 (about 1/3 mile away) would have easier access.

But, as this site is a half mile from the airport's passenger terminal, buses must shuttle passengers between the intermodal center and main airport facility. An alternative site would be much closer to the airport terminal, within walking distance, but this would require building railroad tracks across an area now used for parking of private aircraft near the general aviation hangar.

The current railroad tracks, which turn into the airport property from the east off the Guilford main line, formerly brought tanker cars to airport fuel tanks. Constructing a track to allow entrance to the airport from the west (effectively creating a Y to directly access trains to and from the Bar Harbor-Downeast area) should be considered, most agreed.

Ernie Phillips, a committee member and former Maine Central employee, said such a track could be built with little problem.

Also discussed was access to the airport track by Bangor and Aroostook Railroad trains from the west and trains from the Calais branch from the east. Ziegelaar and committee members believed Guilford Rail might be agreeable to trackage rights along a 2-3 mile section to the airport spur if the state in return was to build a new railroad bridge across the Penobscot River, something now being studied. Such a span would replace an aging nearby Guilford Rail bridge which now requires timely reverse train moves. Ziegelaar also pointed out BIA has a strong relationship with Guilford-owned Pan Am, and thought ties to airline officials would help in negotiating an agreement.

All in attendance agreed passenger rail service in Bangor was still years away, though a bus terminal at the airport's preferred intermodal site could be "imminent," with Ziegelaar adding that any such facility would be designed with eventual rail access in mind. He told the committee he has intentionally left the now mile-long siding intact, though grown over in many places by weeds, noting that if ever the tracks were pulled, other development would likely have replaced the right of way.
The Maine Rail Passenger Corridor Committee was formed earlier this year to promote passenger service connecting Brunswick and Bangor, a provision which currently is not part of Maine DOT’s 20-year plan. The committee not only wants the connection included in the long-range plan, but also in DOT’s six-year plan. [Fred Hirsch, special to ANR&P. Hirsch sits on the rail corridor committee]

MASSACHUSETTS RRs

GRAFTON AND UPTON
3 October, Grafton. WEETABIX WILL USE A TRANSLOAD ON THE GU. Located in Clinton, Massachusetts, the plant has no direct rail connection, though the town is served by both GRS and CSXT. GRS on its ‘Worcester Main’ has a forty-car siding in town though not near the plant. Customers are switched out from Ayer. CSXT runs a local out of Framingham to Leominster (end of track) five days a week.

Current rail use
According to officials from Weetabix, the company receives grain, mostly in containers which are stored at an outside warehouse in Ayer and drayed to Clinton as needed. Weetabix also occasionally sends out its breakfast cereal in containers. Both inbound and outbound container operations are handled by Hub Group.

Future rail use
The Weetabix officials confirmed that the plant might receive grain over a transload facility on the GU. According to Florence Sairs, the railroad vice-president, after months of work [see 15 September issue] the facility is ready to go. “We had to comply with some stringent requirements for quality control” by the recipient, who said it would be used to make cereal.

Sairs believed that first car would arrive at the transload dock whenever Weetabix ordered it. Other customers for the transload facility are “not ready to start. All these customers are local.”

To serve the GU, a CSXT switcher works out of Framingham to North Grafton daily if needed (no switcher works east out of Worcester).

MASSACHUSETTS CENTRAL
5 October. WOULD YOU LIKE TO OPERATE A RELOAD FACILITY? Paul Crawford, the president of the railroad, said MCER is seeking an operator for its Barre Reload Facility, and is talking with some interested parties. “If we don’t find an operator by the end of the year, we will close it.”

Why the change?
Crawford said the railroad would like to get out of operating the facility. [in addition, the reload facility is losing a major customer, Kanzaki Specialty Papers–see box.]{ANR&P discussion}

Keeping it open requires MCER to keep at least 14 miles of track, from Ware to Barre, in operation.

Intermodal business
The railroad continues to search for steamship traffic delivered by CSXT to use its facility in Palmer[see 3 July issue]. Crawford said CN intermodal traffic [brought in by NECR] remains at a good level. {ANR&P discussion}

KANZAKI SPECIALTY PAPERS
This company, owned by Oji Paper (www.ojipaper.co.jp), produces thermal imaging paper, in part for thermal fax machines. Two officials of the company, Kato and Vic Tidlen, both believed the market for the imaging paper will remain strong.

But Kanzaki in early September sold part of its paper mill product line, pressure-sensitive paper, for $45 million to Morgan Adhesives Company (MACtac), an affiliate of the Bemis Company. {Oji press release 12.Sept.00} With the sale, Kanzaki anticipated no longer using the Barre Reload facility.

Offices and corporate relations
Oji, a major Japanese corporation, owns Kanzaki USA, the holding company for Kanzaki Specialty Papers. Oji also owns 25% of Bowater Maritimes.

Kanzaki Specialty Papers (KSP) has a sales office in Springfield, as well as headquarters and manufacturing in Ware.

Ware and use of rail
When using Barre, KSP has received raw materials both in Barre and in Ware. The material stored in Barre was moved back to Ware both by truck and by rail, according to Crawford.

Now, KSP will continue to receive paper rolls in Ware, directly by rail. The thermal paper moves out exclusively by truck. {ANR&P discussion with Kato 5.Oct.00}

An earlier scandal
In September 1995, Mitsubishi Paper Mills and New Oji Paper Co. agreed to plead guilty and settle price fixing charges. Mitsubishi Paper Mills agreed to pay $1.8 million and New Oji Paper agreed to pay $1.75 million in criminal fines. Kanzaki Specialty Papers, of Ware, Massachusetts; its former president, Kazuhiko Watanabe; Mitsubishi International Corporation, of New York; Mitsubishi Corporation, of Tokyo, Japan; and Elof Hansson Paper & Board Inc. previously pleaded guilty to similar price fixing charges. Kanzaki Specialty Papers was fined $4.5 million and Watanabe was fined $165,000. Mitsubishi Corporation was fined $1.26 million and Mitsubishi International was fined $450,000. Elof Hansson was fined $200,000. [US Department of Justice press release 26.Apr.00]

NECR: MASSACHUSETTS
5 October, Monson. A COMPETITOR TO THE BARRE RELOAD exists just 27 miles away: Northeast Warehousing and Distribution (NWD), Limited. Roger Desrosier, founder and president, said, “We started transloading in the mid-1970’s and have been at our present location since 1984.” He described the
ability of his firm to give his customers just-in-time, seamless service.

NWD enjoys good rail service, sitting only 1.5 miles from the main line in Palmer. NECR switches out the CSXT traffic at Palmer every 24 hours, and NECR switches out NWD twice a day. In this fashion, NWD incurs no demurrage costs, and does not pay a high rate for the short switch done by NECR.

**Pre-tracing**

“We provide proactive pre-tracing of cars,” meaning NWD requires all customers to describe upcoming raw material needs. “We take that information, looking at what the customer wants to produce a month out. Working with the supplier mill, we identify the car or cars needed” to deliver the product to Monson. When the cars are loading, “then we begin the actual standard tracing.”

**Drayage options**

NWD handles dray in four different ways. (1) The customer may employ its own corporate fleet to service facility. “Unlike some other facilities, we do not require corporate fleet trucks to go to the back of the line while we load our own trucks.” NWD works by appointment only. (2) The shipper has the prerogative of routing the product with a carrier of its choice. (3) NWD will use its own delivery trucks; or (4) NWD will employ a contract carrier. “I prefer the contract carrier,” said Desrosier. “It’s cheaper than my own trucks.”

**How’s the facility doing?**

As a result of these services provided by NWD, transload makes up 90% of his work. “We’re not a warehouse. The material is pre-sold, the customer gets seamless service.” The customer experiences none of the usual negatives which come with rail service.” NWD handles about 1500 carloads a year. {ANR&P discussion}

**PW - WORCESTER**

3 October, Worcester. **TWO SITES FOR RAIL-RELATED DEVELOPMENT** here were identified by a ‘Rail Corridor Redevelopment Study’ prepared by the city's Development Office, and the Worcester Redevelopment Authority, consulting with the Providence and Worcester Railroad

**Beacon Street site**

The Beacon Street site has nearly 77 acres and 121 parcels. It is bordered by Madison Street to the northeast, Lamartine Street and Quinsigamond Avenue to the southeast, Hammond Street to the southwest and Beacon Street to the northwest.

**Harlow/New Street site**

The Harlow/New streets site has 29 acres and is located directly south and southeast of the Interstate 290 and Interstate 190 interchange. Of the six parcels in that area, three contain active businesses.

**A second study**

Everett R. Shaw, the city's assistant city manager for development who supervises both the city economic development office and the Worcester Redevelopment Authority, said both areas have substandard conditions in terms of land use and appearance. Apparently, no business on either site takes advantage of the easily accessible railroad lines. Because both sites have excellent rail accessibility, he said, the city has determined, based upon the WRA's findings, that a detailed redevelopment/revitalization study of those two areas is warranted.

The city is seeking $100,000 from the state so it can hire a consultant to perform detailed redevelopment studies and evaluate redevelopment alternatives. Those would seek to preserve and redevelop limited rail-served properties, with the ultimate goal of creating jobs and further identifying Worcester as a viable hub for rail and other transportation-related industries.

“Economic revitalization of these two areas would undoubtedly make a significant and hastily seen positive impact on the transportation-related industrial portion of Worcester's economy,” Mr. Shaw said. “This could potentially mean more jobs for people living in neighborhoods nearby, and more direct connections between Worcester and points elsewhere inside and outside Massachusetts.”

State moneys would come from the Rail Freight Fund administered by the state's Executive Office of Transportation and Construction. Shaw said the Providence and Worcester Railroad has agreed to provide up to $25,000 in matching funds for the study. {Nick Kotsopoulos in Worcester Telegram & Gazette 3.Oct.00}

**GRS - AYER**

25 September, Ayer. **SOME PROGRESS TOWARDGETTING A SECOND AUTO FACILITY HERE.** John Kreidler, the town administrator, said the federal judge [see 3 July issue] had asked for the two parties to submit on 11 October a joint order referring the matter to the Surface Transportation Board. The Massachusetts Superior Court case is awaiting the result of the federal case. {ANR&P discussion}

**NH RAILROADS**

**CCRR - Twin State customer**

5 October, West Lebanon. **LACK OF A SIDING IN VERMONT COULD BAR TRAFFIC** for this year, according to Bud Ames, president of Twin States Sand and Gravel. CCRR has got the siding into ‘Twin States’ West Lebanon property about 50% done.

The siding, which belongs to NHDOT, will have a trestle at one section. This will enable the loaded hopper cars to bottom-dump the product from Vermont through the open track. Ames said he would use a bucket loader, at least temporarily, to move the product from the trestle.

**How late could Vermont traffic run this year?**

Twin States is currently limited by its agreement with the Act 250 regulators that it will not operate out of the Vermont pit after 24
December. That stipulation has two grounds: First, neighbors would like quiet during part of the year, and second the land parcel provides winter habitat for deer.

Ames will ask the regulators to re-open the agreement once rail is established. Rail should prove quieter than the trucks. As for the deer ("Vermont’s sacred cow," says Ames), they clamber through the quarry during its days of operation anyway. Nearby grade crossing. On 5 September, the Sharon Selectboard agreed to ask the Vermont Transportation Board for assistance in resolving the safety problem. Ben Moffatt, the executive secretary of the board, said his agency had "broad powers" over the operation of all surface transportation including rail. He emphasized it was not part of the Vermont Agency of Transportation.

The White River Junction properties
Symmes is also handling 11 parcels, 10 contiguous as one piece, in downtown White River Junction. Here, he does not see rail-related industry resuming its former place. In most cases, CV Properties is selling the land under buildings; the building owners lease the land. Some owners would like the Town of Hartford (containing White River Junction) to buy the property and resell the individual parcels to them.

The town is negotiating separately to buy one lot which is already used for downtown parking. This week, the Selectboard voted not to buy the parcel now, but to do so in the next fiscal year, which begins 1 July 2001. Symmes is also brokering the sale of the former roundhouse, some distance from the other 10 parcels.

A railroad museum and transportation institute?
Symmes serves on RIVER, Riverfront Initiative for Viable Economic Redevelopment. Among other projects, RIVER is promoting the use of some of the property to house the Vermont Rail Museum, an organization already existing in White River Junction. Supporters of the concept envision a Transportation Institute affiliated with the museum, which would draw on the area’s educational institutions including the Vermont Law School, the University of New Hampshire, Dartmouth College, and the University of Vermont. {Alex Hanson in Valley News 25.Aug.00; Janice Aitken in Valley News 7&30.Sept.00; ANR&P discussion 5.Oct.00}

Interested in these properties? Contact Symmes at 802-295-9400

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**VERMONT RAILROADS**

**NECR - industrial properties**

5 October. **CN HAS PUT UP ALL ITS REMAINING PROPERTY FOR SALE** along the former Central Vermont (now NECR) corridor. Jack Burke, CN spokesperson in Chicago, numbered the properties at 59, with over thirty in Vermont, all owned by CV Properties, a CN subsidiary.

**The Sharon property**

In Sharon, CV Properties has listed the 42-acre Sharon Industrial Park for sale. Earlier this year, Gas Supply Resources of Houston dropped its effort to locate a natural gas distribution facility there [see 4 February issue]. The park has two businesses: Green Mountain Container, and Huttig Building Supplies; the latter has a rail spur.

The Town of Sharon recently amended its town plan to discourage distribution facilities, according to Alex Bird, chair of the Planning Commission. But Douglass Symmes, the commercial real estate broker handling the property, hoped that the town would accept a rail use. “I think the citizens are beginning to realize that rail has a good future in the state. We see constant reminders in the media, and we see a state and federal government in favor of rail.”

The town could host a facility which would add value to the inbound or outbound product at the site, thereby adding probably well-paying jobs. Symmes emphasize that Vermont has relatively little flat, open space for such work which has rail service. But companies are not beating down his door, because of the stringent environmental regulation in Vermont.

At a meeting 27 September to discuss the fate of the site, some citizens supported the town buying the industrial park in order to control its future. Suggestions for use included recreation, small non-polluting businesses, and residential development.

The industrial park traffic has generated concern about the nearby grade crossing. On 5 September, the Sharon Selectboard agreed to ask the Vermont Transportation Board for assistance in resolving the safety problem. Ben Moffatt, the executive secretary of the board, said his agency had “broad powers” over the operation of all surface transportation including rail.

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**MARITIMES/QUÉBEC RRS**

**CN - Halifax second track**

28 September, Halifax. **CN AND THE MUNICIPALITY REACHED AGREEMENT ON PRESERVING THE RAIL BED** between Halifax and Windsor Junction until the Halifax Regional Municipality completes a comprehensive regional transportation study. According to an HRM press release:

Keith Heller, CN Vice-President, advised in a letter to HRM today that even though the rail company will remove some sections of the second track on the line, CN agrees to preserve the entire rail bed for the next year to allow the municipality ample time to undertake a major commuter study.

CN declined a request to donate the portion of the right-of-way containing the second track, because some sections of the second track will be required in the future for CN’s freight operation. Mr. Heller stated “I would like to emphasize that it is not our intention at this time to remove the whole of the second track. Also, it is important to understand that the second track and its corridor are only a part of the infrastructure that will be required for the operation of a commuter service, especially if the HRM is considering light rail.”
He also stated that CN appreciates the municipality’s interest in commuter rail and advised that the company is prepared to enter into negotiations with HRM on a commercial basis should it decide to undertake such a project.

In closing, the letter stated "...it is important that the HRM’s long-term interest in this project be determined soon after your comprehensive transportation study is completed to permit CN to better plan for this important freight corridor."

{text of press release}

HRM staff comment

Marcus Garnet, staff member of HRM, noted: ‘The second track is not critical for present or near-future freight or for VIA, but it is critical if we are to have diesel light rail for our commuter service. Our analysis at HRM points to diesel light rail as the most promising option for within the metro area, though conventional rail would be the best choice for service beyond to the Annapolis Valley and Truro. Diesel light rail can't mix freely with other types of trains; hence the importance of the second track. So the ultimate vision would be to have local diesel light rail (Beaver Bank/Bedford-Halifax) on the "second track" with regional commuter rail (Windsor/Truro-Halifax) on the main track.’ {e-mail to ANR&P 26.Sept.00}

Some protest

"In the last day or so I've been hearing no, no," Councillor Graham Read said. "Fifty to seventy percent of the tracks are going to be pulled up by CN." The Ecology Action Centre's Transportation Committee spokesperson Rebecca O'Brien says she's worried Halifax's traffic problems will get worse if the tracks are removed and not used for a new commuter system.

"Once they are removed the only option then is to look at road/vehicle capacity or years down the road putting enormous sums of taxpayers money back into replacing the tracks," she said. Councillors asked staff at Tuesday night's meeting [3 October] for a clear explanation of the CN agreement and its impact on the region's transportation options. {CBC 4.Oct.00}

B&A - Quebec

5 October, Memphremagog. THE LIBERAL ASSOCIATION WILL RUN A TRAIN on 20 October. Denis Paradis, federal member of Parliament from Brome-Missiquoi, is coordinating the event which will raise funds for the Liberal Party. Permission to use the tracks must come not only from Quebec Southern Railway, but also from CP, since the train will start out of Montreal.

What about the tourist train?

A staffer in an office in Paradis’ riding said the idea of a tourist train remained alive [see 14 July issue]. It could bring Montrealers to the fall foliage, as well as to the annual two-day swimming event in Memphremagog. Some department of the federal government could provide seed money to start the effort. {ANR&P discussion}

WINDSOR & HANTSPORT

30 September. THE RAILROAD ASSISTED THE FIRST ANNUAL FALL FOLIAGE train for the WHRC’s Benevolent Society, from Windsor to Mount Uniacke. According to a WHRC employee, the railroad donated the train, but members of the Benevolent Society volunteered their work to crew the train. The Benevolent Society uses its funds to help WHRC employees and others in the community.

The Evangeline Express

The WHRC regular excursion train ran again this summer, and “went pretty good,” the employee said. {ANR&P discussion 5.Oct.00}

Minas Basin Pulp and Power, Hantsport

(photo not available in fax and e-mail versions)
HANTSPORT
22 September. TRANSPORT CANADA ANNOUNCED THE OFFICIAL TRANSFER OF THE HANTSPORT GOVERNMENT WHARF at the Port of Hantsport to Minas Basin Pulp and Power Company, effective immediately. The transfer agreement includes a $220,000 federal contribution to be used exclusively for operational and maintenance costs. Only Minas expressed a formal interest in acquiring the facility following a public meeting held to solicit proposals in July 1997.

The transferred property includes the marginal wharf measuring approximately 137 meters by 50 meters, as well as the vessel bed and associated upland property. The wharf last saw cargo in 1994: 4,526 pounds of fish meal.

Why buy it?
Dwight Whynot, the president of Minas Basin, said the company had bought the wharf because it needed, and is already using, the upland as part of its operation. It will continue to permit Fundy Gypsum, whose loading facility lies nearby, to tie up its tug M/V Spanish Mist at the wharf.

Fundy Gypsum’s operation
Contrary to earlier rumors, the company is not planning to move, nor to dredge the basin [see 24 September 1999 issue]. Kirk Hillman, Fundy’s president, said it is considering expanding the facility. “We have all permits, and we are doing some engineering work to investigate the feasibility.” {ANR&P discussions with Hillman, Whynot, and Transport Canada spokesperson Paul Doucet 5.Oct.00}

Fundy Gypsum is owned by USG Canadian Mining Limited, in turn part of the USG Corporation. Fundy Gypsum supplies sister US Gypsum Company. Interestingly, another sister company, CGC (formerly the Canadian Gypsum Company), leads eastern Canada in gypsum wallboard. Fundy does not supply CGC. {www.usg.com}

SAINT JOHN
June. MAINE’S GREAT NORTHERN PAPER USES THE PORT to ship directory paper to Australia. Jim Clark, regional account manager for Great Northern (GNP), said: “Our customer in Australia is Pacific Access, which purchases the paper and prints the telephone directories for the Australian telephone company, Telstra.”

Last year, GNP bid on, and won, a five-year contract to supply the paper. Annual volume began at 14,000 tonnes per year, and has now increased to 28,000 metric tonnes on an annualized basis.

GNP provided the paper 1995-1998 as well, but shipped it in containers via the Port of New York. Under the new contract, GNP is shipping the paper rolls as ro-ro traffic on Wallenius Wilhelmsen’s bi-weekly service. {Port of Saint John Port Progress 6.00}

Fundy Gypsum Shed, Hantsport

(photo not available in e-mail and fax versions)
How is it done?
Dana Burleigh, GNP’s manager of transportation, said on 6 October that the rolls are railed via B&A and NBSR to the Forterm shed in Saint John. When the ship arrives, stevedores place 10-14 rolls on flatbed trailers and drive them into the vessel. On arrival in Australia, stevedores there attach tractors, drive the flatbeds back out, and stack the rolls in a shed for eventual delivery.

“It’s working very well,” said Burleigh. Pacific Access is now receiving the paper in both Sydney and Melbourne. [ANR&P discussion]

Expansion into Midwest?
Kent Line would like to make the Miami service available to Midwest shippers, said Fraser, giving them a faster and cheaper lane, if the rail connections work. Kent Line needs to put a team in place to provide the chance to go northeast first, and then south.

The breakbulk lanes
Kent Line's breakbulk side runs a service to Europe, and a service to the Caribbean. To Europe, the rotation runs Pictou, Saint John, Eastport (sometimes), and then over to European ports. [www.kentline.com]

If we're not having fun, why bother?
Fraser joined Kent Line because he believed he could grow the company. He likes the size, because it enables him to talk to actual customers. "Management [at steamship lines] often becomes too distant and loses sight of who is paying their wages." The Irving transportation group believes that while employees should be serious about the bottom line, "we have to be having fun, or it's just not worth it." [George Lauriat in Atlantic Journal of Transportation 25.Sept.00, plus information from websites where indicated]

PEOPLE, CALENDAR

PEOPLE & POSITIONS
Old news: Neil Marquis, who handled operations for the Windsor and Hantsport Railway, left the company about a year ago. WHRC has not replaced him.

NHDOT is moving to fill Finn Posner’s job as railroad operation engineer. Internal candidates have the first shot, said Kit Morgan, over the next ten days or so. [ANR&P discussions 5.Oct.00]

Hanging fire (aka chopped liver*)
The search committee looking for a new executive director of the...
New Hampshire State Port Authority has finally produced some names. Pamela Law, press secretary of Jean Shaheen, said on 5 October that the committee had recently forwarded them to the governor for her choice. Shaheen, per Law, intends to interview the candidates and make a recommendation to the Governor’s Council sometime this autumn. [When the process began, the authority anticipated having a director by September - see 14 April issue.]

Bob Snover, chair of the authority board, emphasized that under New Hampshire law, the governor has the authority to appoint not only the board, but also the executive director. Members of the board participated in the selection committee, but have no official voice in the selection. {ANR&P discussions 5. Oct. 00}

Emons Transportation joins New Hampshire in taking a long time, in its case to select a new president, successor to Matt Jacobson who left in June [see 26 May issue]. Robert Grossman, head of Emons, said: ‘We are still conducting the job search. We are being selective. But meanwhile SLR/SLQ are doing very well. Business is strong. We are not missing a beat. Our people are doing great and I am spending a fair amount of time at SLR.’ {e-mail to ANR&P 3. Oct. 00}


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### Calendar

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<td><strong>11th</strong></td>
<td>Town of Ayer and GRS submit order to refer dispute to STB.</td>
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<td><strong>19th</strong></td>
<td>Eastern Maine Railroad Development Commission, Cherryfield. Agenda:</td>
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<td>- Acquisition of land for a rail alignment into Eastport</td>
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<td>- Search for a potential operator of the Calais Branch line</td>
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<td>- Developing a strategy for dealing with opponents of the Calais Branch line restoration.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>23rd</strong></td>
<td>Kickoff meeting, Conservation Law Foundation NNE rail study group</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>24th</strong></td>
<td>NH rail plan outreach meeting with North Country Council, Bethel</td>
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<td><strong>25th</strong></td>
<td>Parsons Brinckerhoff to supply a fee proposal for the Nashua work [see 22 September issue]</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>25th</strong></td>
<td>New deadline for bidders on the reconstruction of the Rockland branch in Maine. Extended from 20 September.</td>
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