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Issue 04#03B 2 April 2004

**Regional Issues**

**Connecticut**

I-95: Week’s closing calls attention to freight.
HRRC: Provides door-to-door rates for transload customers.* G-P traffic.*

**Maine**

MDOT: IRAP winners announced next week.
Amtrak: Traffic and revenue up. North Station to close for Democratic National Convention. 79mph still possible.
BML: To meet with Frontier Energy.
MERR: Hopes for freight, passengers. Mason Station site lost.

**Massachusetts**

Freight policy: Committee wants policy bodies to plan for freight as well as passenger.
CSX West Springfield: Study asks how to expand intermodal traffic here.*

Commuter I-93: Commission will recommend double-tracking Lawrence to Reading.

BCLR: MBTA clarifies ownership in Newton.
Massport: No decision on leasing two parcels.

**New Hampshire**

NHDOT: Governor questions purchase of final mile of Manchester-Lawrence.
I-93 widening: State endorses [see New Hampshire].

**Rhode Island**

[No report.]

**Vermont**

State rail budget: Rail Council gets an outline of proposed budget.

**Maritimes/Québec**

CN: CAW strike over.*
MMA: Running a bit of intermodal.

Industrial Rail Services: Refurbishing Budd cars.

Rail Shippers/Receivers

A cross-reference to companies mentioned here. Veryfine sold to Kraft.

**People, Positions, Events**

Tom Egan, David Dufault, Meghan Timcke, Tom Dorn, Andy Devlin, Josh Sabin, Stephen Korta, Jon Chute.

**From the Publisher**

NE RR Club Expo

Last Thursday the New England Railroad Club put on its first Expo since its founding in 1883, at Worcester’s Union Station. I took the train to and from, as did others, and was delighted. Vendor booths ranged the main hall and the side halls: many railroad suppliers and consultants. Railroads themselves also exhibited, including GU and NECR.

With many, many folks to talk to, I had time to attend one of the two seminars, which will lead to two articles. I also appreciated the hospitality of the Providence & Worcester Railroad, which showed us equipment and motors, and the hospitality of the Providence & Worcester Railroad.
Vermont Rail System, which stationed an office car at the PW shop outfitted with liquid and solid refreshments.

Wanting to get back to Yarmouth at a decent hour, I left at 530 on the train to Boston and then the bus to Portland. The four hours spent were well worth it, and I hope the Club makes this an annual event!

- Chop Hardenbergh

**REGIONAL ISSUES**

**VTRZ TOFC LANE**

25 March. **TRAFFIC IS MOVING ON THE LANE BETWEEN PRESQUE ISLE AND PALMER.** At this point, according to reports from sources at VRS and in Presque Isle, cedar chips and peat moss from Canada (bagged and/or baled) are two of the commodities going south. {ANR&P correspondent Fred Hirsch interview 23.Mar.04; editor interview 25.Mar.04}

NOKL (Northwestern Oklahoma Railroad) is supplying at least some of the flat cars. {e-mail to ANR&P from Mark Fortin, local observer}

On 23 March, 26 trailers arrived in Presque Isle at the facility’s rail yard. Another 30 to 60 are expected for outbound local products. Larry Clark, executive director of the Presque Isle Industrial Council, which manages Skyway Industrial Park, declined to name a customer but did say that one was located nearby, and Canadian customers are looking at the service. Intermodal traffic has not moved through Presque Isle for two years [see 17 March issue]. {Bangor Daily News 24.Mar.04}

**Aroostook Flyer**
The railroads have dubbed the service the ‘Aroostook Flyer’, after the Bangor & Aroostook Railroad’s passenger train of the same name. {Herb Cleaves in Bangor Daily News 25.Nov.02}

**CONNECTICUT**

I-95


By 31 March, the state had re-opened the interstate. {various press reports}

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HOUSATONIC RAILROAD

HRRC PROVIDES DOOR-TO-DOOR RATES TO ITS TRANSLOAD CUSTOMERS in Connecticut, New York, and Massachusetts, Rian Nemeroff, HRRC marketing maven, pointed out. In amplifying the statement that few railroads provide door-to-door rates [see 17 March issue, MMA/WACR/NECR/MCER story], Nemeroff noted that applied to TOFC service. HRRC has long provided those rates for its customers which use reloads, warehouses, and team tracks located on the railroad.

Georgia-Pacific facility on HRRRC
Nemeroff also corrected the volume through the G-P distribution facility in Newtown [our Directory #684] about to become part of a Cerberus company [see 17 March Regional]: almost 400 cars a year. {e-mail to ANR&P 18.Mar.04}

MAINE

MAINE DOT - IRAP

18 March. MDOT EXPECTS TO ANNOUNCE THE WINNERS OF THE COMPETITION for the grants of the Industrial Rail Access Program [see 5 March issue] “in the next week or two.” Greg Nadeau, who heads MDOT’s Office of Policy Analysis and Communications, said the commissioner wanted to “find a way to fund as many as possible” of the proposals, which were of “very high quality.” Because these proposals offer a “good economic stimulus,” the commissioner has the strong backing of the governor. {ANR&P discussion 18.Mar.04}

Announcement on 5 April?
Rob Elder, head of the Office of Freight, said the department had made its selection and is notifying the winners and others. It will make a public announcement early next week. {ANR&P discussion 1 April 2004}

AMTRAK

27 March, Owl’s Head, Maine. THE CLOSURE OF NORTH STATION WILL COST THE DOWNEASTER $100,000 according to Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority Executive Director John Englert. Fearing the worst during the Democratic National Convention, security-conscious officials ordered the closing of the terminal because trains terminate beneath the Fleet Center, which will host the gathering.

Englert noted that the Republican National Convention will be held at New York City’s Madison Square Garden, but there’s no plan to close Penn Station where Amtrak, New Jersey Transit, and Long Island Railroad trains terminate. [And Democratic officials refused to move the convention to South Boston. Whose plot is this? Editor]

Traffic, revenue up
Over the past five months, Downeaster revenues increased 5% over last year, and the passenger count 9%. Major long-term concerns are sources of funding and purchases of cars and locomotives. In the short term, matters needing attention include balancing the passenger load (sometimes too many or too few seats available) and increasing overall speed by fixing the many spots where, due to track conditions, the train must slow to 20 or 30 miles per hour.

Englert praised Guilford for contributing to the Downeaster’s 95 percent on-time performance, one of the best on the Amtrak system. Englert says the Downeaster must improve its overall velocity and to that end NNEPRA is working with the MBTA in Massachusetts in dealing with what is essentially a one-track railroad [see I-93 in Massachusetts]. NNEPRA is pushing to get a bypass track laid down to run around Lowell’s MBTA station, among other improvements.

And 79 miles per hour?
Englert voiced more concern about those slow orders than attaining a 79 mile an hour maximum. About the latter issue, Englert said, “There’s a lot of forward motion in the D.C. Court of Appeals,” referring to the ongoing battle with Guilford Rail about increasing speeds. {ANR&P coverage by correspondent Fred Hirsch}
BELFAST & MOOSEHEAD LAKE
27 March, Owl’s Head, Maine. GENERAL MANAGER BILL MONSON WILL MEET WITH A PROSPECTIVE FREIGHT CUSTOMER SHORTLY, he told the annual meeting of Downeast Rail. A firm wanting to unload biodiesel said it’s had difficulty in dealing with another railroad [see Frontier Energy in 5 March issue]. “We’ll tell them they can leave their car on our track as long as they want.” {ANR&P coverage by correspondent Fred Hirsch}

MAINE EASTERN RAILROAD
27 March Owl’s Head, Maine. PLANS FOR GROWTH OF THE RAILROAD were outlined by Gordon Fuller, chief operating officer, at the annual meeting of Downeast Rail. He pointed to increasing freight, creating viable passenger rail service, and increasing awareness to rail locally.

Increasing freight
Building team tracks and intermodal is how freight service can be expanded, though he did not elaborate. About resuming freight service to Augusta on the Lower Road, Fuller said discussions were ongoing with Guilford, adding later, “We are expecting to move freight soon.” MERR is speaking to four prospective customers on the Lower Road.

Passenger operations
Fuller hopes to see excursion service between Rockland and Brunswick, commuter service to Bath servicing Bath Iron Works, and eventually Amtrak service to Rockland. He presented drawings of passenger cars (“We have our eyes on 20 Comet cars from New Jersey Transit”), former Amtrak F40 units, each with Maine Eastern lettering, and mentioned ex-Metro-North FL9 locomotives.

Fuller said he is working to establish a public-private partnership with the Maine Department of Transportation. Asked if this summer might be the start of some sort of passenger service, Fuller responded, “If it’s going to be summer, it’s going to be late summer.”

When he queried MDOT about passenger service to or from Augusta (presumably commuter), he was told to “work on Rockland first, then we’ll talk about Augusta.” Maine Eastern, says Fuller, has an obligation to “make a contribution to the passenger industry.” Maine Eastern’s parent company, Morristown & Erie Railroad in New Jersey, has a successful passenger excursion and charter business with passenger equipment meeting NJ Transit and Amtrak standards. {ANR&P coverage by correspondent Fred Hirsch}

30 March, Wiscasset. A PRIME INDUSTRIAL SITE IS LOST TO THE RAILROAD. Mason Station, the former oil-fired power plant located on deep water and on the railroad, will likely become a ‘maritime village’ according to plans of National Resources LLC of Greenwich CT, which bought the site from former owner FPL Energy in December for $3.9 million.

About six months ago Dragon Cement sought to buy the power plant property from FPL Energy and announced plans to invest $5 million in a cement storage and barge transport operation on the site. Local opposition sank that possibility [see 30 September 2003 issue]. {Dennis Hoey in Portland Press Herald 30.Mar.04}

MASSACHUSETTS

STATE FREIGHT POLICY
March. MASSACHUSETTS SHOULD AWARD MUCH MORE ATTENTION TO FREIGHT in the region’s transportation plans [see 20 January issue], according to the Freight Committee of the Boston area Regional Transportation Advisory Committee. Chair Frank Demasi, in his minutes of the February monthly meeting, wrote that the Freight Committee would like four elements included in the region’s plans: expansion of rail intermodal capability, the impact of expansion of coastwise shipping on ports and landside infrastructure, explicit designation of highway improvements which would speed truck traffic, and integration of all parts of transportation system/corridor projects.

At the February meeting of the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization’s (MPO) Transportation Planning and
Programming Committee (TPPC), Barbara Lucas, senior transportation planner at the MPAC and vice-chair of the Boston TPPC, suggested that a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Study could look at the movement of freight and its integration with the general transportation system.

(The TPPC makes recommendations to the EOTC about which programs in the Boston Metro Area should be funded and scheduled for execution in the current fiscal year's Transportation Improvement Program. The TPPC also approves which studies get performed by the CTPS–Central Transportation Planning Staff.)

Bob Reyes, Massport's representative to the MPO, said the freight study must emphasize the transport systems, but also look at economic demand and supply in some fashion.

After the March meeting of the Freight Committee, members concluded that the study needs to look beyond the Boston Metro Area to include the importance and impact of statewide freight corridors and their systemic relation to concurrent and dependent local and regional requirements.

The committee is recommending that a freight study include mapping both highway and rail freight routes, including port access, as well as considering alternate rail routes and transload terminals in addition to Beacon Yard, Ayer, Worcester, and Springfield. These additional terminals would reduce the increased drayage needed for increased intermodal traffic to the existing facilities. {e-mail to ANR&P from Demasi 24.Mar.04}

MORE INTERMODAL TRAFFIC FOR WEST SPRINGFIELD?

As part of the effort to create a plan for the neighborhood around the West Springfield Yard, the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission is creating a series of studies [see 14 November 2003 issue].

Reebie analysis

On 10 February in West Springfield, consultant Reebie presented an analysis of a possible increase in intermodal traffic through the West Springfield Rail Yard. The study constitutes part of the Merrick-Memorial Neighborhood Plan, which ‘seeks to identify ways to enhance the longstanding relationship between the rail yard and the neighborhood’s various constituencies, including residents, industrial users, and commercial businesses. The plan, currently being administered by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission through a grant from the federal government, is focused on identifying transportation improvements, economic development options, and appropriate neighborhood linkages between the yard and the surrounding neighborhood.’

The Neighborhood Plan wants ‘to identify a series of improvements that result in the following: thriving intermodal rail yard, revitalized and/or remediated industrial areas, job creation, improved vehicular and pedestrian circulation, neighborhood stabilization, and streetscape improvements.’ {PVPC notice of 26 February meeting}

The Reebie draft study stated:

2.1 Goals of the Study

This study, commissioned by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (in connection with a redevelopment plan for the Merrick Neighborhood that surrounds CSX’s West Springfield Yard) seeks to develop (1) a baseline of freight movement activity that can be used to measure real economic growth, (2) a broad assessment of the forecasted demand for transportation infrastructure investment, and (3) an analysis of the region’s current intermodal infrastructure, and its ability to accommodate and sustain projected traffic growth.

The foundation of this Freight Analysis is an overview of the current regional freight market. This data provides the origins and destinations of freight in The Pioneer Valley, the quantity and

Outbound truck volume from study region (shaded area) in annual tons. Thickest line represents 3.1 to 7.3 million tons; thinnest 180,000 to 250,000 tons.
Source: Reebie Associates study for Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
commodity mix of that traffic, and the distribution of traffic between and within surface modes. The freight traffic data used in this report has been assembled using Reebie Associates’ Year 2002 TRANSEARCH® database.

The following article on the Reebie’s conclusions about increasing traffic in the rail yard are based on the draft Reebie report and on discussions with its author, Jim Blair.

A. THE WEST SPRINGFIELD INTERMODAL RAIL YARD

CSX Corporation owns an area in the City of West Springfield which serves as a carload rail yard (operated by CSX Transportation), and as an intermodal terminal (operated by CSX Intermodal). In addition to the West Springfield terminal, CSXI operates or utilizes intermodal terminals in Worcester (three) and Boston (Beacon Park).

According to the Reebie study: ‘The West Springfield intermodal terminal has long been a significant fixture in the region’s transportation portfolio. Originally constructed as a “Flexi-Van” terminal for the New York Central in the 1960s, the facility soldiers on today as an unremarked fixture in the national intermodal network. Under CSX, the facility handles some 37,000 annual lifts in a 31-acre footprint.\(^\dagger\)&quot;[In 1999, 55,000; in 1995, 33,000. Atlantic Northeast Rail and Marine Transport Review 1999.] The traffic, comprised almost exclusively of domestic trailers and containers, serves primarily facilities in western Massachusetts and northern Connecticut.

‘CSX efforts to compete for traffic east of the I-495 Beltway, and south of New Haven have been thus far unsuccessful. The concentration of proximate intermodal facilities in the Boston and New York area industrial markets has further limited growth prospects for West Springfield. Previously, baseload volumes of regional mail traffic bolstered West Springfield volumes, but since the “Conrail split”, this traffic has shifted to competing facilities in Eastern Massachusetts and New Jersey. CSX continues to market the West Springfield Terminal aggressively, although only incremental growth levels have been achieved.’

CSXI wants to keep the terminal

Blair found that CSXI does want to keep the West Springfield terminal, but he otherwise concludes: ‘From both a service and cost standpoint, maintaining small TOFC ramps in secondary markets is generally not viable. Railroad intermodal strategy over the past decade has focused on building large terminals served by dedicated intermodal trains around major metropolitan areas. In the struggle for scarce railroad capital, CSXI routinely uses a “40,000 annual lift” threshold for evaluating intermodal market opportunities. Those opportunities that fall above that line generally offer attractive market opportunities, while those that fall below that figure are generally deemed too small for investment.’

Though the West Springfield ramp falls below that threshold, CSXI wants to keep the terminal as part of its New England mix. ‘CSX Intermodal Marketing is managing the mix of traffic within its several New England terminals to maximize overall income opportunities. A recent local example is found in CSX’s relocation of some suburban Boston traffic from the congested Worcester Terminal to some excess capacity at their Beacon Park facility. With the Providence and Worcester (P&W) [these handle international and some domestic boxes] and CSX Terminals [this handles only TOFC] in Worcester essentially land-locked [but PW has recently acquired additional space for its terminal–editor], the terminal capacity constraints in New England are likely to grow more acute over time. West Springfield Terminal is located some distance from Boston’s current activity centroid, and thus its ability to profit from congestion at more eastern terminals is limited. Indeed, the Worcester terminal is already located west of the eastern regional market centroid.’

‘CSX anticipates that the West Springfield terminal will sustain average market growth rates for the foreseeable future, although projected volumes remain subject to the vagaries of the regional economy. The announced construction of regional distribution centers in the Springfield area is notable, but CSX is doubtful that these projects will provide substantial additional volume of intermodal freight.’

B. WHAT OPPORTUNITIES TO UP INTERMODAL TRAFFIC?

The Reebie study primarily addressed the possibilities of converting some of the truck traffic of the Pioneer Valley region into intermodal traffic moving by rail through the West Springfield Terminal.

Definition of Pioneer Valley region for truck and for rail

In cooperation with PVPC staff, Reebie defined the region as four counties in western Massachusetts, one in Vermont, and

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1 Merrick Neighborhood Redevelopment Plan -- Rail Yard Operational Assessment; October 14, 2003; Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB)
five in western Connecticut [see shaded area of map].

Existing truck traffic
Using its databases, Reebie looked at data per county for truck traffic in the region. Total truck traffic came to 198.7 million tons; inbound truck traffic accounts for 23% and outbound 11%, local truck traffic counts for 27% and through traffic 39%.

Cannot capture through truck traffic
Blair reported: ‘In our opinion, the through truck volumes in the Pioneer Valley Region would be difficult to attract. Most of the through truck traffic originates or terminates only a short distance from West Springfield. It would be unlikely that freight terminating in Boston would be more economically served out of West Springfield than say Worcester or Beacon Park, where service frequencies and possible origin/destination ramp links are greater. The same would be true for New York area traffic. This is not the case in places like Ohio or Indiana where through freight volumes are often moving hundreds of miles beyond, and the opportunities to stop-in-transit or process-in-transit are sometimes more likely.’

Capturing originating or terminating traffic
Blair did find that some of the traffic originating or terminating in the Pioneer Valley could be converted from truck. The report described the ‘limited opportunities for rail intermodal expansion. These are found in lanes with annual truck densities of 100,000 to 400,000 annual tons and lengths of haul in excess of 1500 miles, and in lanes of greater than 400,000 annual tons and lengths of haul of greater than 750 miles. These characteristics generally provide the economic and operational conditions that are favorable to rail intermodal operations.

‘Not surprisingly, these opportunities occur between major markets and the Pioneer Valley, including markets currently serviced by CSX intermodal products such as San Francisco and Los Angeles, CA; Chicago, IL; St. Louis, MO and Dallas and Houston, TX.

‘Some 83% of the region's truck traffic moves less than 750 miles. At 750 miles and above, rail intermodal and truckload compete aggressively (in Eastern US Markets). Of the remaining 17%, 71% is through truck traffic, which is difficult to capture in this circumstance because of the proximity to major markets with superior intermodal service options. Thus only 4.9% of total truck traffic is reasonably divertible, that is, it moves more than 750 miles and originates or terminates in the greater Pioneer Valley region.’

The primary opportunity is the nearby economy: urban (Hartford and West Springfield), and suburban locations too remote to be effectively served from the Boston terminals such as Ware and Southbridge.

Capturing local traffic
While not as likely an opportunity as long-haul traffic, Reebie concluded that CSXI could capture some of the local (under 750 miles) traffic. However, short-haul, high volume opportunities are generally better served with carload products.

Diverting truckloads to Springfield for economic development?
Blair did not think that would pan out. West Springfield is generally too far out from Boston and New York to serve as a cost-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Truck Tonnage in Region</th>
<th>Approximate Tons</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Approximate Loads</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Originating and Terminating</td>
<td>64,587,312</td>
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<td>52,538,290</td>
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<td>Truck Tons &gt;750 Miles</td>
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<td>Rail Intermodal Tons through West Springfield terminal</td>
<td>525,524</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>37,537</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rail Intermodal &gt;750 Miles West Springfield</td>
<td>487,168</td>
<td>92.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Combined Rail IMX + Truck tons &gt;750 miles</td>
<td>11,432,229</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>762,149</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rail IMX as % of Combined I/M &amp; Truck &gt;750</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
effective distribution center for traffic that delivers in the urban cores. Conversely it is too far in to justify intermediate processing of manufactured goods, such as repackaging or sub-assembly. Thus the best opportunities lie in the nearby market.

Example: Freight moving from Texas to Boston. It would not be logical to stage finished product at West Springfield for distribution to urban Boston; that’s generally too far to make efficient use of local motor freight operations. It would also be illogical to establish a subassembly point in West Springfield for the freight because there is no economic benefit in stopping in-transit at a location two hours from the final consumption market, and then needing to dray the final two hours.

C. HOW MUCH CAN CSXI CAPTURE?
Blair views intermodal traffic as possibly growing even while manufacturing and retail employment shrink. ‘Productivity improvements in industry can allow employment to decrease but potentially allow transportation volumes to continue unchanged….Intermodal has been able to gradually enter new industrial markets that could expand demand even though employment is declining. This has been the case nationally for the last two years.’

Reebie created the following table to indicate the percentage of capture currently, and the potential capture.

Blair thinks the 24% figure for national market share is skewed by Western carriers with higher corridor market share because of the longer distances involved. He suggests that 6-8% of combined truck and intermodal for distances greater than 750 miles is not unreasonable for West Springfield.

As a point of comparison, in the lane between Atlanta, Georgia and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, the intermodal market captured approximately 5.3% of the combined intermodal and truck volume. In the lane from Chicago to New York City, the intermodal market share is approximately 25% of the combined truck and intermodal volume.

D. HOW TO CONVERT THE TRUCK TRAFFIC?
Reebie found no fault with CSXI efforts: ‘CSX appears to be pursuing a logical strategy for intermodal market development in West Springfield, and for New England. The firm is focusing its energies and its limited resources on those corridors that provide the greatest operating income. The factors that have influenced the company’s commercial choices include terminal capacity, train capacity, line capacity, line clearances, and empty equipment availability. To some degree, each of these factors exists in the intermodal corridors currently serviced through the West Springfield Terminal. Changing this status quo will require an added expense that when weighed against the railroad’s other available investment alternatives may delay desirable improvements to the West Springfield Terminal, and thus additional economic development in the Pioneer Valley.’

What can PVPC and CSXI do?
Reebie found that motor carrier executives contacted about the West Springfield Terminal expressed frustration operating into and out of the terminal. CSXI indicated that customers of the facility express similar concerns. While none indicated an intent to move as a result of the difficulty, the economics of the inefficiency are apparent.

Blair continued: ‘The terminal does not show well to potential customers, and even a casual observation reveals access, potential damage, and potential security concerns.’

The report therefore concluded: ‘Improving the efficiency of the West Springfield Intermodal Terminal through improved highway access, terminal paving, or security lighting will help maintain the current base of traffic and help to attract new customers.’

A dissenting voice
Doubts that improved looks would help were expressed by Mike Smith, general manager of the MCER which operates the nearby Palmer intermodal terminal. He has watched the West Springfield terminal since Conrail, CSXI’s predecessor, operated it. “Conrail terminals were very spare in many respects, and about right for the nature of business they were handling.” Smith argued the esthetics of the terminal were not a big problem to piggy-back. “Conrail put together a profitable business by paying attention to the basics: attractive schedules, and low cost.” {ANR&P discussion 10.Mar.04}

E. CAN CSXI HANDLE ADDITIONAL TRAFFIC?
If Reebie’s suggestions and expanded marketing produce more traffic in West Springfield, could the system handle it?
Terminal capacity okay
‘Comparative terminal efficiency figures suggest that the current footprint of the West Springfield intermodal terminal could accommodate an increase in throughput of between 60% and 70% without the need to increase the terminal size. Accommodating such volume increases would likely require a modernizing of the existing intermodal facilities to a more efficient configuration. More problematic would be the impact of a significant increase in truck volume on the narrow streets of the Merrick Neighborhood.’

Train and track capacity?
Reebie stated that significant growth at the Springfield intermodal facility would require additional trains. Blair based this conclusion on ‘the perception of current CSX and CSXI employees, or former CSX operating personnel, and public statements by the railroad.’

Clearance problems
Reebie reiterated the fact that Massachusetts cannot accept full domestic doublestack service, though it can accept ocean doubles. So the option of doublestacking to increase capacity is currently foreclosed.

But no problem in the immediate future
Blair concluded: ‘Market share points are difficult to capture as motor carriers have successfully defended market shares. Thus the likelihood that CSXI will outgrow the current facility (and adjacent railroad-owned land) would seem to be relatively small in the foreseeable future. I would love to be wrong about that, but I call it like I see it.’

F. CONVERT TRUCK TRAFFIC TO CARLOAD?
In addition to examining the conversion of trucks to intermodal, the Reebie report looked at the opportunities for increasing carload traffic at the West Springfield yard. While the Scope of Work did not require this, Blair noted that PVPC clearly was interested in the question. ‘[W]e thought we could contribute to the collective knowledge through the analysis of historical traffic volumes.’

Shrinking carload basis
The Reebie analysis found: ‘Forecasted trends suggest that the rail-favorable industries will see employment shrinkage from current levels, further weakening the demand for rail carload services, but potentially increasing the demand for rail intermodal and truckload services.’ In particular, manufacturing employment in the Springfield metropolitan statistical area, according to Economy.com, will shrink from 30,000 in 2002 to 27,000 jobs in 2025, but transportation and warehousing will remain level at about 7,000. Retail trade, which Reebie characterizes as intermodal-oriented, will shrink from 31,000 to 29,500 by 2025.

‘The paper industry and associated commodity areas represent some 44% of carload traffic in the region according to the carload waybill sample (CWS). [The CWS is collected by the Surface Transportation Board and made available in various formats for analysis. Reebie is the perhaps the foremost analyzer and provider of this data. Editor] The CWS also reports carload traffic in the region declining by 3.6% from 1998 to 2002.’ {ANR&P discussion with Jim Blair, text of Reebie report}

Next step
Tim Doherty of PVPC hoped, with his consultants, to devise three development scenarios for the neighborhood and rail yard. The advisory committee will review them at its next meeting, probably in May. {ANR&P discussion 30 March 2004}

COMMUTER RAIL I-93

March. EXPAND RAIL SERVICE INSTEAD OF, OR ALONG WITH, WIDENING I-93?

Current status of I-93 in Massachusetts
This interstate begins south of Boston [a portion of what will always be called, I hope, Route 128– editor] and runs through Lawrence, Derry, Manchester, Concord, and Littleton to St.Johnsburry, where it ends at I-91. The Massachusetts portion
between Boston and Wilmington has four lanes in each direction with a breakdown lane. North of Wilmington, I-93 narrows to three travel lanes in each direction; the breakdown lane is used as a travel lane during rush hours.

**Status of widening and options in New Hampshire**

While Massachusetts has just begun, New Hampshire is well along the permitting to widen its stretch of I-93 from Manchester south to three lanes in each direction.

[New Hampshire’s Executive Council approved the widening on 24 March. The project still needs permits from the US Army Corps of Engineers and the NH Department of Environmental Services. The $420 million project will take ten years; it includes a strip of land reserved for light rail or dedicated bus. {AP in Portland Press Herald 26.Mar.04}]  

[New Hampshire is not enthusiastic about light rail or re-opening the Manchester-Lawrence line. New Hampshire legislators refused to act on a bill to oversee the I-93 project to ensure the light rail option would remain. See 30 September 2003 issue. Turning some of the Manchester-Lawrence corridor into a bike path has significant support. See 12 February 2003 issue. In 2002, NHDOT seemed to say it would preserve the option of light rail, but not the Manchester-Lawrence line. See 14 June 2002 and 19 November 2002 issues.]  

**Massachusetts consideration**

The Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC), working on behalf of the Merrimack Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization and in cooperation with the Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority (MVRTA), has hired VHB to do a draft corridor study of the Route I-93 Corridor in Andover and Methuen.

On 16 December, a meeting was held to introduce the draft corridor study recommendations for the I-93 Corridor from Wilmington to the New Hampshire line, including bus and rail improvements.

**Rail expansion**

According to the Draft Corridor Study, several studies already examined the rail potential, including two by VHB (1999 and 2000). VHB reviewed in detail the MBTA's service between Boston and Haverhill, as well as GRS freight service. The segment between Lowell Junction in Andover and Haverhill carries approximately five million gross tons of freight each year, and is part of the second-busiest freight line in New England.

VHB reviewed the poor state of the Manchester-Lawrence rail corridor.

VHB also reviewed the option of building new light-rail lines within the I-93 corridor, as considered by New Hampshire. The grades (up to 4 percent) and curves (as tight as 83 feet) of I-93 preclude standard commuter rail operation, but permit light rail [think of the Green Line's B route—*editor*].

**Cost of Alternatives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Rough cost</th>
<th>Cars off the road*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase service on Haverhill Line**</td>
<td>$156 million</td>
<td>9095-8760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reopen Manchester-Lawrence Line</td>
<td>&lt;$356 million</td>
<td>9095-8944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light rail to Lawrence</td>
<td>$213 million</td>
<td>9095-9030</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Vehicles per hour in 2025 during the morning rush projected in Massachusetts on I-93 between the New Hampshire state line and Exit 41 without widening, less vehicles per hour projected on I-93 with the rail alternative in place.

** This option would result in double tracking from Lawrence to Reading.

Tony Komornick, transit planner for the MVPC stated: “We are recommending widening I-93, plus implementing some commuter rail improvements, plus improving bus service.”

In particular, MVPC is recommending that the single track section between Lawrence and Reading (13.7 miles) be double-tracked. VHB states that the single-track section of 3.9 miles between Melrose and Medford cannot be double-tracked.
Since the GRS freight uses the longer section, double-tracking that would provide significant benefits to both passenger (commuter and Amtrak) and freight.

**Next step**
Komornick said the corridor study would be finished in about two months, for presentation to the regional MPO for its adoption. He said that any project to widen I-93 would require an environmental impact statement. {ANR&P discussion 9 Mar 04}

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**BAY COLONY**

29 March, Newton. **Clarification of some questions in the Millis Line bid process** was provided in Amendment #5 to the request for proposals [see 5 March issue].

- ‘The spur to Needham Street is owned by the MBTA only up to the grade crossing (V4.27 sheet 1). The spur is included as part of the offered Premises.’

- ‘The MBTA has no ownership of the land in the Needham Industrial Park. The New York New Haven and Hartford Railroad Company had easement rights to construct, maintain and use railroad tracks over land in the area of Newton called the Newton Industrial Center and Needham Extension to provide freight services to occupants of the Industrial Center. The easement rights were conveyed from the New York New Haven and Hartford R.R. Co to the Penn Central Company, and the MBTA became the successor in title to the easement rights through its acquisition of the Penn Central Transportation Company in 1973. The MBTA subsequently released its right, title and interest in the railroad track easement in the Industrial Park over land that is now owned by HC Starck, Inc. from Needham Street, across Industrial Place and Charlemont Street to Christina Street. The easement continues further south from Christina Street and ends between Second Avenue and First Avenue in Needham. There is no way to reach the easement south of Christina Street without the consent of HC Starck. The tracks in the Industrial Park area are paved over in some places and overgrown with vegetation.’

**MBTA will fund capital improvements**

‘[T]he Dover and Millis Trestles may require significant capital improvements. The MBTA will agree to apply a credit of up to two-thirds of the documented cost of capital improvements against the Annual Fee amortized over the ten-year term provided however, that the annual credit shall not exceed fifty percent (50%) of the Annual Fee, and that the total cost shall not exceed a pre-approved budget for said capital improvements. The MBTA retains the right to review and approve the nature, scope, and cost of proposed capital improvements to the Trestles. All construction contracts for capital improvements for which the MBTA provides a credit must be competitively bid.’ {text from Transit Realty}

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**MASSPORT**

24 March. **The Authority received proposals on both sites it put out to bid,** according to Deb Hadden, deputy director property & transportation. She expected a decision within two or three weeks on the Mystic Piers site [offered on 30 January—see 2 February issue]. “The other site [Medford Street Terminal offered 4 December] may take a little longer: we’re wrestling with some policy issues.”

Hadden declined to provide more details pending decisions. {ANR&P discussion}
NEW HAMPSHIRE

NHDOT ROW PURCHASES

THE GOVERNOR QUESTIONED WHY THE DEPARTMENT WAS PURCHASING ABANDONED RAILROAD LINES. All such purchases must be approved by the Governor and Council. According to Kevin Smith of Governor Benson’s office, when the governor reviewed the agenda for the 10 March meeting, he “was wondering why we were continuing to purchase certain parcels of land.” Two purchases, one of a stretch in Goffstown, and one by NHDOT of the final mile of the Manchester and Lawrence line in Salem, were pulled from the agenda.

Benson asked the NHDOT Commissioner Carole Murray to explain this to him. The Goffstown item went back on the agenda for the 24 March Council meeting, but the Salem parcel is not yet on the agenda. {29.Mar.04}

[See I-93 in Massachusetts.]

I-93 WIDENING

VERMONT

VERMONT RAIL COUNCIL

25 February. THE GOVERNOR’S BUDGET FOR RAIL SHRUNK AGAIN. Highlights, as described in a presentation to the Vermont Rail Council this day:

Rail property management

Washington County RR
Lease Subsidy $110,000
Infrastructure Upgrades $40,000
Total $150,000

Washington County RR-Conn River Division
Lease Subsidy $300,000
Infrastructure Upgrades $150,000
Total $450,000

Statewide Property Management
Total $300,000

Green Mountain Railroad
Track and Tie projects $200,000
Bridge 116, Chester $150,000
Bridge 120, Chester $150,000
Rail Bridge Bearing Projects $625,000

Vermont Railway
Bridge #214, Pittsforder $150,000

Statewide Rail Bridge Program
Rail Bridge Inspection Program $300,000
Rail Bridge D & E $200,000
Bridge # 101 (FY 04 Funding)

ABRB* Projects
Rail Bridges (Scoping/Design) $600,000
Bridge #201 Rutland

Rail Budget in $M

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY 2002</th>
<th>FY 2003</th>
<th>FY 2004</th>
<th>FY 2005</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rail Budget</td>
<td>$21.8</td>
<td>$19.2</td>
<td>$15.4</td>
<td>$13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
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<td>$6.8</td>
<td>$7.3</td>
<td>$8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>$7.5</td>
<td>$12.4</td>
<td>$7.7</td>
<td>$4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>$1.0</td>
<td>$0.0</td>
<td>$0.4</td>
<td>$0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bridge #205 Proctor
Bridge #212 Proctor
Bridge #215 Pittsford
Bridge #219 Pittsford

Track Reconstruction/Rehab
Rutland-Charlotte $700,000
(Specific projects to be determined)

**Rail/Highway Crossing Program**

PE and Construction $1,111,111
Rail Work Program and Admin $964,125

**Freight three-way program**
3 Way Partnership Program $200,000
[State share only, matched by railroad and shipper. *Editor*]

**Route 7/NHS Rail Corridor Projects**

*Rutland Railyard Relocation*
Complete Environmental Work (Funded in FY2004)
Project Administration $75,000

*Middlebury Rail Spur*
Continue Environmental Work $500,000

**Passenger rail**

*Burlington-Essex prelim engin*
(FTA Approval Necessary) $400,000

*Middlebury-Charlotte*
(Track Improvements) $1,000,000

*Vermont High Speed Rail*
(Grade Crossing Inventory) $125,000

*Intercity Passenger Rail*
(Amtrak Service) $3,500,000

*ABRB refers to the restoration of passenger rail Albany-Bennington-Rutland-Burlington. {text from VAOT*}

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**QUEBEC/MARITIMES**

**CANADIAN NATIONAL**

20 March. *THE CAW STRIKE AGAINST CN ENDED*, after the union ratified new collective agreements on 19 March. That means the domestic intermodal terminal, shuttered during the strike [see 17 March issue], has reopened. {CN website}

**MONTREAL, MAINE AND ATLANTIC**

March. *MMA AND NBSR ARE MOVING A BIT OF INTERMODAL BETWEEN MONTREAL AND SAINT JOHN*. Rail observers report, for example, that on 21 March, the westbound train had a three-pack intermodal car with doublestacks, and an empty five-pack. On 20 March the eastbound train had one five-pack with three 53-foot containers on it. {MMA-rail e-list}
INDUSTRIAL RAIL SERVICES

27 March, Owls Head, Maine. INDUSTRIAL RAIL SERVICES CONTINUES TO REFURBISH BUDD CARS, according to David Phillips, the company’s director of operations who spoke before the annual gathering of Downeast Rail. The company, located in Moncton, New Brunswick, has primarily focused on servicing the Canadian rail industry, and "just started talking with American firms." In 1999, the company purchased the no-longer-used CN eastern regional maintenance center, built in the 1950s, and began renewing Budd Rail Diesel Cars (RDCs) for others and for itself [it owns more than 50]. It also does locomotive work.

As Phillips explained, the company strips each old RDC down to just a shell and rebuilds it with modern technology, either refurbishing it or performing a complete rebuild. "We can re-develop the RDC and make it viable." Among improvements, the cab is made bigger and equipped with electronic controls; seating is made more comfortable; and restrooms are built to ADA standards. (Though Canada follows the CTA guideline for accessibility, Phillips’s company followed the more stringent US ADA). Four heating zones are installed with Phillips noting that on east-west trips in Canada the sun on one side of the RDC helps warm passengers, but on the other side of the car, heat is needed.

The initial work occurred when VIA Rail had Industrial Rail rebuild five of VIA’s own units, which remain in service. Similar units have been purchased by other Canadian firms. The units run remote rural routes, on historic/tourist railroads, and in commuter service. Phillips said Industrial Rail Service’s units, which sell for $500,000 to $1.5 million Canadian depending upon options, are not really in competition with Colorado Rail Car, the only other North American producer of RDCs. He calls Colorado Rail Car’s units “pricey” and not affordable and adaptable to all operational startups. ANR&P coverage by correspondent Fred Hirsch

[Phillips was invited by Downeast President Jack Sutton, who in 2003 journeyed to Moncton with Farmrail’s George Betke to view work on a Budd car Betke hopes to place in service. (Farmrail owns six others.) Sutton found the Industrial Rail facility and quality of work “impressive” and believes that modernized RDCs should be seriously considered for certain northern New England passenger applications. {ANR&P discussion with Sutton and Betke 30.Mar.04]}

[Colorado Rail Car’s diesel multiple units (DMUs) sell for $2.9 million. Their advantage over locomotive-hauled passenger cars: the DMU consumes only ½ gallon per mile. Their advantage over RDCs: the DMU can pull two coaches. {company literature}]

RAIL SHIPPERS

Our Directory of Rail Shippers & Receivers in Southern New England has more information on the companies denoted with their directory number.

Described in this issue.
Frontier Energy (GRS, Maine), Georgia-Pacific (HRRC, Connecticut, #684), Industrial Rail (CN, Quebec/Maritimes), West Springfield intermodal facility (CSXT, Massachusetts, #396).

Updates on rail shippers and receivers
Veryfine Products [see 5 March issue: Ayer auto facility] of Littleton, Massachusetts (ourDirectory#208), a juice maker that has been owned by the same family since 1900, was sold on 29 March to Kraft Foods Inc. The Rowse family had owned Veryfine for 104 years before this week’s sale. {Boston Business Journal}
At the end of March, Tom Egan founded the Egan Consulting Group. He volunteered for a buyout agreement from his position of director of short line and regional railroad development at CSXT. From his office in Hingham, he'll continue to promote railroads, working with “several short lines, as well as local Architectural and Engineering firms.”

David Dufault, senior account manager for CSXT, also took a buyout, and is retiring. He’ll return with his wife to his home in the Berkshires, wintering in St. Augustine.

Also accepting a package—though not voluntarily—was Meghan Timcke, CSXT account manager for Connecticut and Rhode Island.

The three became part of the targeted 800 to 1000 management employees that CSXT announced last fall it would shed as part of its Organizational Effectiveness Initiative. Approximately 575 people left CSXT last week, joining the approximately 140 let go previously. Unlike Egan and Dufault, a huge portion were not willing participants.

Looks as though CSXT will retain two local marketing people: Tom Dorn from his base in Selkirk will cover Forest Products accounts from northern Pennsylvania to Maine, including most of New England. Andy Devlin will remain in Boston, working within the emerging markets unit, helping the increasing number of facilities which transload construction and demolition debris and municipal waste.

Josh Sabin, who worked at Northern Maine Junction for Iron Road Railways, has worked for some time at Amtrak’s Government Affairs Department Chicago office and spends most of his time on issues in the Midwest.

Stephen Korta, new commissioner for the Connecticut Department of Transportation, will soon take office. He currently heads the Bradley International Airport. Governor John Rowland named the longtime aviation enthusiast to succeed retiring ConnDOT Commissioner James F. Byrnes.

Jon Shute of Maine Eastern Railroad has been elected chair of Maine Operation Lifesaver.
Subscribers may purchase half-page ads for $50 per issue. Non-subscribers, $100.

Purpose

Atlantic Northeast Rails & Ports, née Maine RailWatch (1994-1997) and later Atlantic RailWatch (1998-1999), is dedicated to the preservation and extension of the regional rail network. The editor believes that publishing news on railroads and ports spotlights needed action to preserve the rail network. The publication also imbues the region with a sense of an interdependent community, employing the network to move rail and port traffic. ‘No railroad is an island, entire onto itself.’

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