

# ATLANTIC NORTHEAST RAILS & PORTS

Helping to move rail and port traffic through New England, the Maritimes, & eastern Québec.  
A weekly trade newsletter.

operating railroads + ports, intermodal facilities, and government environment

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Issue 04#08B 3 September 2004

\*Article unchanged from e-bulletin.

## REGIONAL ISSUES

**GRS:** Operating problems leaving coal undelivered. Box on problems.

**Amtrak:** Terminating mail traffic.

**CSXT:** Top waste mover.

**PW:** Call to cut employee compensation.

**QCR:** Giguere puts up for sale.

## CONNECTICUT

**TSB:** Moves ahead with commuter to Springfield.

**GRS:** Details on improved service on Waterbury.

**Bridgeport:** Feeder service RFP may proceed.

**New Haven:** Still talking rail subsidy.

## MAINE

**MDOT:** State port and rail system can relieve congestion elsewhere.\*

**Highway salt:** Detail of awards. New regions.

**Calais branch:** MDOT will start in Trenton.\* No plans for Ellsworth-Calais section.\*

**MERR:** Dragon upgrade done.

**GRS/NBSR:** Woodland traffic update.

## MASSACHUSETTS

**GRS:** New operator Westover Industrial Track?

**PVRR:** Lowe's breaking ground.

**PW:** Description of nine facilities in Greenwood Yard. *Map.*

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

[No report.]

## RHODE ISLAND

[No report.]

## VERMONT

**Rail Council:** July meeting highlights.

**Amtrak:** Contract for this fiscal year signed.

**LVRC:** Engineers Construction apparent low bidder to lift track.\*

**VRS:** Bennington wants to remove its rail line.

## MARITIMES/QUÉBEC

**CN:** Weyerhaeuser has improved service.

**CBNS:** NDP will seek legislation on abandonment.

**VIA:** Traffic down.

**NBSR:** See *Maine*.

## RAIL SHIPPERS/RECEIVERS

A cross-reference to companies mentioned here.

## PEOPLE, POSITIONS, EVENTS

Nate Moulton, John Pennington, Craig Della Penna, Ian Simpson, Paul Murphy, Jim Marshall, Jack Ferns.

## FROM THE PUBLISHER

### The end of summer

In Maine, we had about three weeks. The 'fall rush' is already overwhelming Los Angeles ports. I hope MDOT's statement that Maine railroads and ports can help with the congestion finds some resonance elsewhere.

- Chop Hardenbergh

Next issue: 17 September.

**Common abbreviations:** **BCLR** - Bay Colony RR, **BML** - Belfast & Moosehead Lake RR, **CBNS** - Cape Breton and Central Nova Scotia Ry, **CCCR** - Cape Cod Central RR, **CCRR** - Claremont Concord RR, **CFQ** - *chemins de fer Québec* System, **CMAQ** - congestion mitigation air quality (money from the US federal government for these purposes), **CN** - Canadian National Ry, **CPR** - Canadian Pacific Ry, **CSO** - Connecticut Southern RR, **CSRX** - Conway Scenic Railroad, **EOTC** - Mass. Exec. Office of Transportation&Construction, **GRS** - Guilford Rail System, **GWI** - Genesee & Wyoming Inc, **FHWA** - Federal Highway Admin., **FRA** - Federal Rail Admin., **FRTC** - Fore River Transportation Company, **FTA** - Federal Transit Admin., **HRRC** - Housatonic RR, **MERR** - Maine Eastern RR, **MBCR** - Mass. Bay Commuter RR, **MBRX** - Milford-Bennington RR, **MBTA** - Mass. Bay Transportation Authority, **MCER** - Mass. Central, **MDOT** - Maine Department of Transportation, **MERR** - Maine Eastern RR, **MMA** - Montréal, Maine and Atlantic Ry, **MPO** - Metropolitan Planning Organization, **MTQ** - Québec Ministry of Transport, **NAUG** - Naugatuck RR, **NBSR** - New Brunswick Southern Ry, **NECR** - New England Central RR, **NEGS** - New England Southern RR, **NHCR** - New Hampshire Central RR, **NHDOT** - NH Department of Transportation, **NHN** - New Hampshire Northcoast RR, **NNEPRA** - Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority, **NSDOT** - Nova Scotia Department of Transportation, **PVRR** - Pioneer Valley RR, **PW** - Providence & Worcester RR, **Seaview**-Seaview Transportation Company, **SLQ** - St.Lawrence & Atlantic RR (Québec), **SLR** - St.Lawrence&Atlantic RR., **TIRR** - Turner's Island LLC, **TEU** - twenty-foot equivalent unit (measure of container traffic, equal to a 20x8x8 foot box), **VAOT**- Vermont Agency of Transportation, **VRS**-Vermont Rail System (Green Mt. RR Company **GMRC** + Vermont Ry **VTR** + Clarendon&Pittsford RR **CLP** + Washington County RR **WACR**), **WHRC** - Windsor and Hantsport Ry.

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## REGIONAL ISSUES

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### GUILFORD RAIL SYSTEM

28 August, Providence. **WHY IS 65,000 TONS OF COAL SITTING IN PROVPORT, WITH NO EMPTY RAILCARS IN SIGHT?** [Because Guilford officials decline to speak with me, I have pieced this info together from other railroad sources. Because those sources fear retaliation, they have chosen to remain anonymous. *Editor*] One experienced railroad worker said when PW delivers loaded coal to Gardner it often sits for a week at a time before GRS picks it up. At this point, the cars are destined to Northeast Utilities' Bow generating station in New Hampshire, but NU will continue to use ProvPort for Bow and NU's plant in Mt. Tom, Massachusetts.

'Often the crews on GRS through-freights are short on time or the trains are maxed out on tonnage so they cannot stop to pick the cars up. GRS can't call in a relief crew because those crews are all too busy re-crewing the regular trains,' wrote one railroad source. {e-mails to *ANR&P* from various sources}

#### Coal cars now moving

Following the publication of the above information in our *e-bulletin* on 30 August, one source said GRS was reacting. On 1 September, the coal train at Mt. Tom was only half-unloaded, but 50 empties were sitting in Gardner awaiting pickup by PW.

By 2 September, PW was hauling 20 loads of coal from Providence to Worcester. From Bow, 114 empties had moved to Gardner and PW had moved them to Provport.

Another 40,000 tons of coal came into Provport on 2 September, leaving about 100,000 tons of coal in Provport. {PW e-list; e-mail to *ANR&P* from source}

### GUILFORD OPERATING PROBLEMS

All sources [see above for cautionary note] agree the operating problems stems from GRS' lack of train crews, which works with the lack of motive power and slow track to mean fewer trains. 'If you look at their web-site they are constantly looking for personnel.' Another railroad source wrote: 'Guilford, like the big roads, was hit by the change in the retirement eligibility from [62 years of age] and 30 [years of work] to 60 and 30.' In trying to replace those people, and several others that unexpectedly went on disability, GRS acquired a relatively high number of new hires. GRS, like several Class Is, has difficulty retaining new hires because of the toll on body and mind.

'The other part of the equation of lack of crews is a shortage of power and an overage of speed restrictions. Of course, the speed restrictions are part of the cause of the lack of power, as it takes longer to get from point A to point B to get another train. Same with the crews. And then when you lose a unit, you usually end up losing the crew because they don't have enough power to get to point B within their hours of service. Now the crew you were going to use for the extra is pressed into relief service, and the snowball starts.'

Another source said at Rigby Yard, section crews have no working units and are walking around the yard doing maintenance. Operating like this is "just not sustainable," especially with winter coming on.

#### A proposed solution

The answer? Major investment, wrote one. GRS must rent additional units 'right now' and rebuild the main line. 'Not just a tie job here and there, but new rail, 100% ties in places and a good ballast cleaning. A roadbed rebuild project. Will we see it in our lifetime? Only under different ownership. And who knows what the odds of that are.'

With the infusion of power and a track upgrade, existing crews could probably make the system work. {e-mails to *ANR&P* from various sources}

### AMTRAK

27 August, DC. **AMTRAK WILL EXIT THE MAIL AND EXPRESS BUSINESS** in early October, according to an announcement sent out by chief David Gunn this day. That said in part: 'You have probably heard the rumors that Amtrak is getting out of the mail and express business, and those rumors are true. Mail and express no longer makes business sense for Amtrak and has negatively impacted the quality of our passenger service, so the decision has been made to exit the

business.

‘As a first step, I have informed the Postal Service of our intentions. I realize that this will be painful for some employees, but we will make every effort to provide opportunities for affected employees to remain with the company.

There will be more information in a week or two about these changes and the specific actions that will occur over the next few months. However, it is my intention to have all mail and express activity concluded by early October.’ {text from Amtrak source}

### Effect to New England

New England should see only minor job cuts; only four trains per day still carry mail: trains 66-67 (*Twilight Shoreliner*), and 448-449 (*Lake Shore Limited*).

### Effect on Amtrak

Cliff Black, an Amtrak spokesperson, said that Amtrak would terminate its \$65 million contract with the United States Postal Service at the end of the federal fiscal year, 1 October. While Amtrak made a profit of \$3-\$4 million on the contract, management believed it would come out better by “running passenger trains as passenger trains, not as freight and passenger trains.” By eliminated the long dwell times at intermediate stations while mail cars are hooked up or taken off, Amtrak can run more reliable service. And Amtrak passengers complain most about reliability. Admittedly, said Black, the congestion of freight trains has most to do with reliability, but management believes that it can run a much better service without the distraction of mail and express, including the necessity of dealing with terminals.

As one instance, Black noted that the long-distance trains leaving Chicago for the west—the *Superchief*, the *Empire Builder*, the *California Zephyr* and others— all leave Union Station, run a ways, and then halt for forty minutes while a switcher attaches boxcars for mail at the end. And the cars can only run at the end of the train; they lack the ability to convey electrical power.

Moreover, Black noted, USPS requirements for Amtrak service were expected to decline. Plus, much of the boxcar fleet needed replacement or refurbishment. Current cars cannot operate in close clearances situations.

### Package express will continue

The railroad will continue to move small packages in its baggage cars, between stations which offer checked baggage.

### Refrigerated express will continue for the duration

Finally, said Black, Amtrak is under a Bankruptcy Court requirement to continue to move refrigerated cars for ExpressTrak, the independent but closely linked perishables transportation company now operating under bankruptcy protection. Once that situation is resolved, Amtrak will stop the service, the last actual express it handles. {ANR&P discussion 31.Aug.04}

The bankruptcy is proceeding in Michigan. In early 2004, the judge denied Amtrak’s motion to halt the service offering. {In re ExpressTrak, Case No. 03-67235, eastern district of Michigan, southern division}

## CSX TRANSPORTATION

18 August, Jacksonville FL. **CSXT RANKED AS THE TOP WASTE MOVER BY RAIL**, in the annual ranking by the journal *Waste News* according to 2003 revenue generated from the hauling, disposal and transfer of waste. Many other companies operating in New England made the list, published in the 19 July issue:

rank	Company
1	#Waste Management Inc.
2	##Allied Waste Industries Inc.*
3	Republic Services Inc.
4	###Safety-Kleen Systems
5	Onyx North America Corp.
6	Clean Harbors Inc.**(Braintree MA)
10	####Casella Waste Systems Inc.
18	BFI Canada Inc.
20	CSX Transportation Inc.
34	North East Waste Services (Marlboro MA)
41	E.L. Harvey & Sons Inc. (Westboro MA)
59	American Waste Services LLC (Raynham MA)

63	Jet-A-Way Inc. (Roxbury MA)
71	Waste Solutions Inc. (Marshville MA)
77	ABC Disposal Services Inc. (New Bedford MA)
84	BBI Waste Industries (Old Orchard Beach ME)
88	Troiano Waste Services Inc. (South Portland ME)

# Waste Management rail-served facilities include our *Directory* #369 on CSXT in Wilbraham MA.

## Allied Waste subsidiaries include ECDC, our *Directory* #225 on CSXT in Allston MA and #395 on CSXT in West Springfield), as well as BFI Brockton (MA) Recyclery #312 on CSXT

### Safety-Kleen rail-served facility #329 on CSXT at Southboro MA

#### Casella facilities #357 on CSXT in Auburn MA & 603 on CSO in Hartford.

\*Allied Waste revenue is the company's total revenue (not just hauling & disposal revenue). *Waste News* gathered Allied's data from its annual report. Most other companies filled out one of its surveys.

\*\* Clean Harbors data from 2002. Clean Harbors did not fill out the 2004 survey.

CSXT also receives waste from PW and BCLR, whose traffic has a significant waste component. In announcing the *Waste News* results, Henry Connors, director-emerging markets unit, said: "Shipping waste by rail is a market that is growing at a strong pace. We continue to see opportunities for market growth as we work hard to convert these shipments off of the highway onto the rails and demonstrate the economic benefits to customers." {CSXT press release; table courtesy of *Waste News*}

## PROVIDENCE & WORCESTER

20 August, Philadelphia. ***THE RAILROAD NEEDS TO CUT ITS COMPENSATION TO EMPLOYEES*** to improve its bottom line, wrote analyst Roy Blanchard in his *Railroad Week in Review*:

Providence & Worcester, though not one of the top ten traded rail operators we follow here, has offered up a second quarter 10-Q that is instructive none the less. What I've done is downloaded the Benchmark format from [www.rblanchard.com/resources](http://www.rblanchard.com/resources) and substituted 2Q03 results for the shortline averages and 2Q04 results for the sample shortline.

Total revenues were up 4.2% to \$6.6 mm on a 7.4% decrease in revenue units handled but with a 12.5% increase in RPU, though operating expense per carload increased 17.6%, indicating lower unit yields. Operating expense went up 4.2% as well, adding four points to the OR, now 94.8, an industry high. Assuming the employee and loco counts have not changed since the 10-K for last year revenue per mile operated including Amtrak rights, revenue per employee and revenue per loco unit all increased 4%.

The high operating ratio pushed 2Q04 net income down to \$222,000 from \$389,000 a year ago. Thus the low net margin (3.3%), low sales-to-asset ratio (seven cents of sales per dollar of assets), and limited leverage (assets/equity = \$1.32) combine to push ROE down below one percent. The view from here is they pay too well. Comp & benefits continue to consume more than half the revenue base. Everything else being equal, slicing C&B to a third of revs (more in line with other rails) could drop the OR to 80 or better. That would be a big help here. {text from Blanchard}

### Munificent attitude

Robert Eder, chair of the company, explained in 2001 the enlightened [to my mind - *editor*] policy under which PW operates: Creating shareholder value is just one part of running a successful business. "Where I think a lot of people get off base is when you talk solely about shareholder value. This company has constituencies other than its shareholders." The company should treat its employees fairly, reinvest in its rail lines, and run a reliable railroad for its shippers, he said. These goals sometimes conflict with creating shareholder value, but are worthy ones.

"Obviously everyone wants to see value in the stock. Every employee is a stockholder, too, and everyone has an interest in seeing the value of our shares rise. But we're not going to degrade our system to raise earnings."

{cited in 01#04B issue}

## QUEBEC CENTRAL

26 August. ***LE CHEMIN DE FER QUÉBEC CENTRAL IS FOR SALE***. The former CPR shortline which serves the Beauce region of Quebec, south of Quebec City, has had a number of difficulties lately, capped by the loss of a major customer contract. The freight railway was revived by trucking company operator Jean-Marc Giguère about four years ago [see 00#22]; he owns 100%. The line houses two popular tourist excursion operations. Talks are apparently underway with possible purchasers or contract operators. {Tim Green's *Train Scan* 9.04; 6PM news 2.Sept.04 CHLT-TV Sherbrooke

courtesy Green}

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## CONNECTICUT

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### TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY BOARD

24 August, New Haven. **THE BOARD VOTED TO MOVE AHEAD ON COMMUTER SERVICE TO SPRINGFIELD**, after hearing a presentation on the proposal. The TSB in 2002 endorsed a study [see 14 January 2003 issue], which Wilbur Smith & Associates is conducting along with ConnDOT. The study showed that to provide reliable service with 30-minute headway (14 one-way trips per day), the state would have to fund 12.4 miles of double-track sections if only service to Hartford (attracting about 1400 riders per day), or 15.6 miles for service to Springfield as well (attracting 1800 riders per day). Capital cost was estimated at \$120 million to \$140 million. {study website}

The Board voted to move ahead with the Springfield option, at least as far as calling for public hearings on it. It is expected to formally vote on the proposal itself after the hearings.

#### Positive reaction

Proponents say the train service would help link three major New England cities long overshadowed by New York and Boston. That would create a region that is larger and more visible to compete in an increasingly global economy. “Our view is this project has the potential to move people but also the economy,” said Timothy Brennan, executive director of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, which represents 43 cities and towns in western Massachusetts. “This is a strategic move to change the future.”

“I think it’s incredibly important to Connecticut,” said Michael Gallis, a transportation expert who wrote an influential report several years ago warning that the state risked becoming an economic cul de sac if it did not solve its transportation crisis. “In New England, the tradition of home rule has really blinded people to the need to create larger units of competition that are better linked to the global marketplace.”

But proponents acknowledged funding the rail project would be a challenge. Oz Griebel, TSB chair, said other issues also will need to be addressed, including determining an operator and ensuring the travel time on the train would be attractive to commuters. {AP in CTNOW website}

#### Future meetings

At the 21 September TSB Meeting, the Board will discuss Finance Plan Revision, DOT Long Range Plan, and I95 Commuter Shoulder Study. At the 19 October meeting, it will evaluate the ‘Section 16’ projects [those which got initial funding, including the Bridgeport barge feeder service—see 29 August 2003 issue], and will discuss the New Haven Line Branchline Study and Revision of TSB Strategy. {Board website}

### GUILFORD RAIL SYSTEM

23 August, Berlin. **A SECOND WATERBURY BRANCH TRAIN WILL BECOME PERMANENT**, thus helping the several customers who wanted more switching. At present, GRS runs one train from Plainfield to East Deerfield (PLED) on Saturdays, and a return train (EDPL) on Sunday. Running on weekends works better because Amtrak has one fewer turn to Springfield. Guilford will continue the two switchers after the stone season ends; the AmeriGas distributor will ramp up deliveries during the winter. {e-mail to ANR&P from Bill Sample}

EDPL had to run this day, Monday, due to an automobile parking itself on the Amtrak ROW on Sunday; it had 22 cars for the southbound run. {NERAIL e-list}

PL-1 (the first Waterbury branch switcher) works Monday to Saturday; PL-2 works Sunday to Friday. PL-2 mainly turns the Tilcon stone between New Britain [our *Directory* #619] and Waterbury [our *Directory* #633, see map in 3 June issue]. Normally, PL-1 will take an EDPL train to E Deerfield Saturdays, and PL-2 will go get PLED on Sunday.

GRS still has only one engine for all four trains. PL-2 uses the same engine that PL-1 had during the day. Even with a high-tonnage train, Guilford will tell the crew to double the hill at Berlin instead of adding a second unit at Deerfield. Coming out of Berlin and up to New Britain is probably the steepest grade from Deerfield to Plainville, not including the East Deerfield Loop track. {CT shortlines e-list}

**Improved service to Prime Source**

John Kycia, who manages this facility [our *Directory* #632], said Guilford service had improved. He gets only two to three cars a month for the distribution center, one of 38 of the national company Prime Source Building Products. It is, according to its website, the largest distributor of fasteners in the world; the centers also carry a full assortment of building materials from industry leaders such as USG, Owens Corning, Elk Premium Roofing, GAF Materials Corporation, GE Sealants & Adhesives, and many other recognized and respected manufacturers.

The Waterbury center, formerly the site of Portanova reload center, used to handle engineered wood, and received around 12 to 15 carloads a month. But Prime Source sold that which became part of Seven-D's Suffield facility [our *Directory* #566]. Now, the Waterbury center receives only "nail cars and cars with cement board." {*ANR&P* discussion 2.Sep.04}

**Improved service to National Eastern**

Guilford service has significantly improved, said Larry Snyder, who handles transportation for the National Eastern steel fabricating company in Plainville [our *Directory* #621]. For rail traffic, he expects 50-60 carloads a year, much for a big job in Rhode Island. Last year was an off-year, but in 2002 National Eastern received 80-100 cars.

Snyder remembers getting switched every other day, then only thrice a week, then in 2003 only once a week and not on the same day. "That made things very tight with the way we bid and set up our delivery schedules." Now, "I really cannot complain." {*ANR&P* discussion 19.Aug.04}

**BRIDGEPORT**

31 August. **THE PORT AUTHORITY HAS NOTICE TO PROCEED FOR BARGE FEEDER SERVICE**, said a Bridgeport official [see 11 February issue]. The Bridgeport Port Authority signed a contract to receive the \$1.5 million several months ago, and just on 1 September received the ConnDOT signature in return. Now the Port Authority can start advertising for the operator and terminal manager. {*ANR&P* discussion}

**NEW HAVEN**

31 August. **CONNDOT CONTINUES TO TALK ABOUT A RAIL SUBSIDY** with PW and terminal operators [see 13 July issue], said Mark Rolfe, construction chief for the Q Bridge project, not yet underway. He would like to utilize the railyard under the bridge during construction, but a compact to permit that is complicated by ROW questions, by operating agreements, and the subsidy. Stakeholders are now furnishing information on the impact to bridge construction of rail service, of the impact to terminal operators of bridge construction, and if rail service ended north of I-95 what would be the cost. "During construction, terminating north of I-95/Q Bridge would be ideal," so workers would not deal with live rail traffic. That would require PW to give up its public loading dock [see map in *ANR&P* website].

Rolfe could not estimate when the discussions would conclude, but suggested I contact him in a month. {*ANR&P* discussion 31.Aug.04}

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**MAINE**

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**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

*Note: In the spring, I wrote a set of inquiries to Commissioner David Cole about rail policy and rail issues facing Maine. He responded in a 7 May letter, and we had the chance to discuss some of the issues in greater depth in early August.*

2 August, Augusta. **THE STATE'S PORT AND RAIL SYSTEM OFFER A CHANCE TO RELIEVE CONGESTION**, said Commissioner David Cole, because of the projected doubling of freight traffic by the year 2020. In an interview, Cole and other top officials noted that New York and even Boston were overflowing with containers. Maine's three ports, especially Mack Point which has the only operating near-dock rail, could take up this slack. [Eastport still seeks rail-see 20 May 2003 issue, and in Portland Guilford has expressed a lack of interest-see 1 July issue.]

MDOT wants to "preserve options" for Maine companies, said Cole, with a "robust and redundant" transportation system, including rail. Cole wrote in his 7 May letter: "We are proud of our rail achievements to date, such as the recent IRAP announcements totalling \$3.9 million, considerably in excess of the \$2.6 million allocated by the last bond issue. We are also working with the Legislature to include an additional \$1.7 million for IRAP [the Legislature later balked about adopting any bond issue at all this year-editor] in the next bond issue. We have also continued our support of the Montreal, Maine, and

Atlantic Railway (MMA) in the last bond issue at \$2 million, and also are committed to capturing Searsport's [Mack Point] rail potential and capitalizing on our joint investment there with MMA.'

### **Chance to describe policy**

By December, said Greg Nadeau, head of the department's Office of Policy, MDOT will complete the first draft of the next 20-year plan, a document required by the federal government to receive federal funding. A key part of the 20-year plan will look at where the state will obtain the funding to maintain existing services and do the projects the plan will envision. In addition, MDOT is working on the East-West Corridor study with New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. Cole emphasized that this will study the corridor, not merely highways, looking at overall freight flow including rail transportation. The public will have a chance to comment on both documents during their preparation. {ANR&P interview}

## **CALAIS BRANCH**

2 August, Augusta. ***MDOT WILL MOVE SLOWLY ON THE CALAIS BRANCH***, at least that part from Ellsworth to Brewer. Commissioner David Cole and Ron Roy, chief of the Office of Passenger Transportation, said that the Bangor to Trenton Corridor Study, while not complete, is leading the department to conclude that it will start at the Mount Desert Island end, and move slowly toward Bangor.

In May, the commissioner had written that if 'the study concludes that passenger rail services is the preferred alternative, then we can begin working with our congressional delegation and the Legislature to pursue that strategy. If, however, a bus alternative is selected [see 17 October 2003 issue], then we are going to have to work on a corridor preservation strategy.' However, the cost of the desired infrastructure from Bangor International Airport to Trenton was mounting to, Roy said this day, \$200 million to \$300 million. So the department decided to postpone decisions about major infrastructure by starting at the Mount Desert Island end.

Officials now are leaning toward the first step as constructing a passenger intermodal facility at Trenton, where passengers using the airport or dropping their cars can board the Island Explorer, the free, propane-powered bus service. The facility would also serve as a visitor center. Next, the department would extend the bus service to Ellsworth, which would provide access to major shopping. Assuming that worked, the department would then decide how to extend a transit service to Bangor.

### **What about the rest of the line?**

The term 'Calais Branch' applies to the state-owned rail line beginning in Brewer at a junction with Guilford's line to Bucksport, and running downeast through Machias and Ayers Junction to a junction in Baring with Guilford's line from Calais to Woodland. In the 1990s, five different individuals or groups proposed to run passenger excursion service on the Ellsworth-Machias stretch: Peter Dearnness of NEGS [see 19 February 1998]; Bill McDonald, a former Amtrak engineer who in 2004 was operating a dinner train in Florida [see 9 January 1998 and 30 April 1998]; Maxx Robinson of Maitland Florida [see 18 December 1997 issue]; Robert Wright of Roundabout Realty [see 4 June 1998]; and Dale Earle [see 7 June 1996 issue]. Both Wright and Earle were offered one-year leases, but never signed them [see 7 June 1996]. In addition, Safe Handling of Auburn expressed an interest in running freight [see 12 November 1999], as did Dearnness [see 20 June 1996 and 15 October 1999].

Officials in the department at the time (Cole became commissioner in 2003, after John Baldacci was elected governor in 2002), Roy and Rob Elder, head of the Office of

Freight Transportation, said two factors, safety and funds, prevented a shoe-string startup. At that time the right-of-way needed clearing and repair, for which the department did not want to provide funds. If the department had let a shoe-string operation begin, officials feared for the safety of passengers.

Now, said Cole, Elder, and Roy, the right-of-way is cleared and repaired, but the track itself requires significant upgrading. Cole reiterated what he wrote in May: 'Finally, the Department's policy toward the Calais Branch continues to be one of preservation of an intact corridor. However, as you have reported, freight opportunities on the line are small and far exceed capital costs. We have no current plans to reactivate the line for freight rail.' {ANR&P interview; text of 7 May letter}

## MAINE HIGHWAY SALT

### MAINE ROAD SALT CONTRACTS AUGUST 2004

Region	Location/former district@	Provider	Pile/delivery	Estimated tonnage	Price 2004 \$/ton	Price 2003 \$/ton
Five/Northern	Aroostook/1 plus northern 2 & 3	Harcros	Pugwash/truck	28,230	42.52	38.18
Four/Eastern	Washington + Bangor/eastern 2 & 3	Cargill**	Sussex NB/truck	29,000	42.48	~38
Three/Western	Mountains/7 + northern 4	ISCO*	Portland or Searsport/ship	19,250	48.98	37.41
Two/Mid-Coast	August-Winterport/5 + southern 4	ISCO	Portland or Searsport/ship	19,500	46.86	36.37
One/Southern	Lewiston-Kittery/6 + southern 5+7	Morton***	Newington or Portland/ship	15,590	42.31	31.04
<b>Total</b>				111,570	tons 2003: 111,200	
Maine Turnpike		Granite State	Portsmouth/ship	4,500 (03)	39.04 (York)	29.21 (York)
Maine Turnpike		Granite State	Portsmouth/ship	11,000(03)	44.29 (W. Gardiner)	34.62 (MP99)
GPCOG		ISCO	Portland or Searsport/ship	~70,000	43.35	31.16

\*ISCO salt comes from Chile and will arrive at Merrill's Marine Terminal in Portland or Sprague in Searsport. {e-mail to ANR&P from Arthur Bush of ISCO 30.Aug.04}

\*\* Typically, Cargill supplies its road salt customers in Maine by trucking from the Sussex NB potash/salt mine operated by Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan (PCS). {e-mail to ANR&P from Ken Ellen of Cargill 30.Aug.04}

\*\*\* Morton will supply its piles from eastern Canadian sources, to wit the mine on Isles Magdalene. {ANR&P discussion with Joe Wojtonik of Morton 3.Sep.2004}

Source: Denise Baron, procurement officer MDOT; Carol McKenzie of GPCOG; Mary Ellen Tetreau of the Maine Turnpike Authority.

@ Maine revised the seven districts into five regions.

### BIDS TO MAINE TURNPIKE {from Turnpike public affairs}

	Granite State Price/ton	Morton Salt Price/ton	International Salt Price/ton	Harcros Chemical Price/Ton
York	39.04	43.78	51.54	57.00
Kennebunk	39.76	44.42	49.77	57.00
So. Portland	40.81	44.12	49.77	57.00
Gray	42.17	44.55	49.77	57.00
Auburn	42.94	47.01	50.88	57.00
Litchfield	43.68	48.05	54.18	57.00
W. Gardiner	44.29	48.57	53.85	57.00
To be awarded 9/10/04				

## MAINE EASTERN

25 August, Thomaston. **DRAGON CEMENT HAS COMPLETED THE \$50 MILLION MODERNIZATION** of its cement plant in Thomaston, including \$10 million to add railcars and construct new storage capacity. The plant changed from a wet, slurry-type cement-making process to a dry, state-of-the-art process, reducing the process time of the kiln and at the same time increasing production by over 30%. With the modernization, the Dragon plant can produce over 700,000 tons of cement on the same amount of fuel currently used to produce 500,000 tons.

Dragon will “increase our exports from Maine, enabling us to continue to grow at a steady pace,” said President Joseph Koch. The plant is the only cement manufacturing facility in New England, and the largest supplier of ready-mix concrete in Maine. The cement is supplied to most ready-mix companies in the state, and others throughout New England by barge through Coastal Cement terminals in Newington, N.H. and Boston. Dragon also is Maine's largest ready-mix concrete supplier with operating concrete plants in Biddeford, Westbrook, Portland, Lewiston, Brunswick, Augusta, Canton, Fairfield, Farmington, Madawaska, and Presque Isle. {Dragon press release}

### Rail work

In April [see 27 April issue], Veysey was selecting loading equipment and rail cars. He expected to hire a track contractor for the IRAP-funded project. Veysey said on 3 September that these projects are still progressing, and he expects to complete them this autumn. {ANR&P discussion 3.Sep.04}

## NEW BRUNSWICK SOUTHERN-GRS

2 September, Baileyville (Woodland). **DOMTAR DID MOVE SOME PRODUCTION OUT BY RAIL** in July and August, according to spokesperson Gail Nicholson. Although nearly all production moves via Eastport [see 3 June issue], a customer in Wisconsin requested about 1 700 tons of pulp (two days of production), which Domtar moved in about 25 railcars. {ANR&P discussion}

### The Louisiana Pacific plant

Plant manager Clint Shilts said he is shipping maybe 60% of the oriented-strand board production from the LP plant here out by rail. “Rail is advantageous, it’s difficult to get truckers here.”

The wood supply problems which caused a shut-down in 2003 [see 17 December 2003 issue] are still there, Shilts noted. {ANR&P discussion 3.Sept.04}

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## MASSACHUSETTS

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### GRS - WESTOVER

31 August, Chicopee. **IF THE TRACKS ARE NOT RESTORED TO THE WESTOVER INDUSTRIAL PARK** by Guilford, as requested by the Westover Metropolitan Development Corporation (WMDC), then “there’s little chance to get someone else to operate the track,” said WMDC chief executive officer Allen Blair. He clarified the ownership situation [see 20 August issue]: WMDC has always owned the 1.5 miles of track inside the Park, and gave GRS operating rights. WMDC took in fee from the federal government the 2.57 miles of track from there to the ConnRiver line, and deeded it to Guilford for one dollar, with a reversion to WMDC if GRS abandoned the line, which has now happened.

WMDC counsel is reviewing what steps to take next to pursue its effort to get Guilford to pay for track rehab. Blair believes that at least one occupant of the Park would like to rail, “maybe more.” {ANR&P discussion 31.Aug.04}

### Interested parties?

Blair has received one phone call about rail service, from PVRR’s Mike Rennie. The latter said PVRR is investigating the potential for the line, and will conduct a marketing study. {ANR&P discussion 2.Sep.04}

### PIONEER VALLEY

2 September, Westfield. **LOWE’S WILL BEGIN CONSTRUCTION ON ITS DISTRIBUTION FACILITY** here next week [see 13 July issue], said General Manager Mike Rennie. PVRR will install a switch and track, using contractor W.R.Riegel.

### Lack of space on rail line

Rennicke said available space along his lines is disappearing. He can continue to expand only if new industrial parks build rail spurs, or via access to other tracks such as the Westover Industrial Track [see above]. {ANR&P discussion}

## PROVIDENCE & WORCESTER

23 July, Worcester. **MID-STATES HAS THREE OF THE NINE FACILITIES JUST SOUTH OF WORCESTER** in the area called the ‘Greenwood Yard’ by PW. An official at Mid-States described the three operations, all served by Giroux Transportation trucks:

Mid-States bulk, off Hulquest Street. [Our *Directory* #450.] This facility consists of three long tracks, each of which can hold 20 cars; each track is accessible by truck from both sides. Including the PW Greenwood Yard tracks, the facility has room for 350 cars.

The official said that about 15 cars a week are emptied, so the turnover comes to about 750 carloads a year.

Mid-States also uses two other tracks near Cargill Sweeteners; both have truck access.

Mid-States packaging, off Hulquest Street. [Our *Directory* #449.] A large building adjacent to the bulk facility houses a packaging facility. A spur alongside the building will hold about twenty cars of plastic pellets, which are used to manufacture plastic packaging. Observers have several times seen two or three cars there but never more.

Mid-States warehouse, off Route 146 (access off Millbury Street). This facility is located in a building north, and across the Blackstone River, from the packaging facility. The official said it had four car spots, with five to six boxcars parked there at a time. The warehouse holds paper, and wood pellets.

A connected building formerly housed Strategic Materials, now moved to Connecticut [see 1 July issue]. The lead to the warehouse was built recently, when reconstruction of Millbury Street required the severing of the spur from the south. PW in June and July was using the lead to load waste from the Route 146 rebuilding project into gondolas. {ANR&P discussion with source}

### MORE ABOUT MID-STATES

Mid-States Packaging and Distribution was founded in 1981. Facilities in Massachusetts and New Jersey empower Mid-States with the capability to provide fully-integrated logistics programs for the plastic industry. ‘We offer over 500 paved, well lit fenced rail car spots; all facilities are truck-accessible.’ {website}

Mid-States is a subsidiary of Giroux Bros Transportation, Inc, established in 1961 as a small Massachusetts regional LTL carrier. Giroux offers a wide variety of warehousing, packaging and distribution services making it the logistics provider of choice within our services area. Giroux has facilities in Worcester, Massachusetts, Jersey City, New Jersey, and Dalton, Georgia. {website}

### Other facilities

Aggregate Industries [our *Directory* #446] (off Millbury Street). AI has three rail-served facilities, of which this is one. Cement comes inbound to create ready-mix concrete.

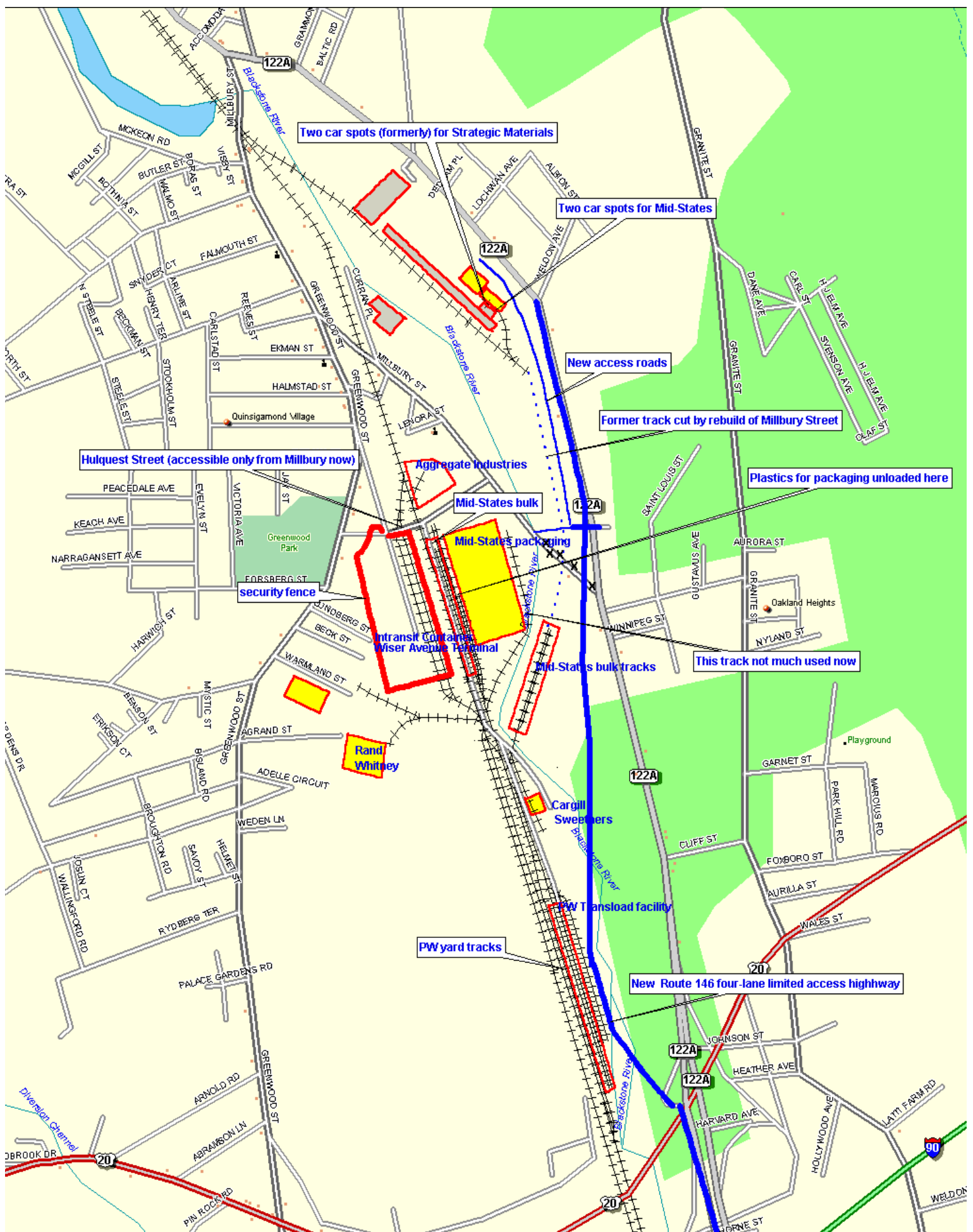
Intransit Container [our *Directory* #447] (off Hulquest Street). This facility called the Intransit Wisner Avenue yard, along with the Intransit Southbridge in central Worcester, handle all of PW’s container traffic. In 2003, that came to 65,485, up from 59,391 in 2002. {PW 2003 Annual Report}

Rand-Whitney [our *Directory* #451] (off Agrand Street). The company has two facilities on rail [see 02#10B]. This facility makes corrugated boxes; as of 2002 it received about 500 carloads a year.

Cargill Sweeteners [our *Directory* #453] (access road off Hulquest Street). Cargill, a privately-held company, has five facilities in New England. Two tracks runs into a building south of the Mid-States packaging plant. PW spots covered hoppers containing corn syrup and sugar here.

P&W transload [our *Directory* #454] (access road off Hulquest Street). The southern-most facility in Greenwood Yard was formerly operated by RSI Logistics (began as Rail Services Inc).

{ANR&P on-site visit; our *Directory*; e-mails to ANR&P from P&W observer}



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## VERMONT

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### VERMONT RAIL COUNCIL

14 July, Montpelier. **THE COUNCIL CONSIDERED SEVERAL ITEMS**, as noted in these ‘Highlights’:

- Vermont Rail Day 2004 was held in St. Albans on June 24<sup>th</sup> and was attended by close to 340 people, with 250 riding the train to the event from Montpelier and Essex Junction. Sponsors consisted of VAOT through Patricia McDonald, Secretary; the City of St. Albans; Vermont Railway; and Rail America. VTrans rail operations manager Charlie Miller introduced the recipient of this year's Rail Advocate of the Year, Charlie Moore, regional vice-president of Rail America.

- [Contract to lift the track of the former] Lamoille Valley Railroad: (a) Environmental documents required for the RFP were completed. (b) It is hoped work will begin by September 1<sup>st</sup>. (c) It was reiterated that the LVR conversion to trail was a directive from the Legislature.

- State Rail Plan Update: Rail Operators are still being encouraged to submit requested information to the consultants, Ken Withers of R.L Banks and Gary Gordon with Hanson-Wilson, Inc. The last rail plan update occurred in 1986 and in order to secure federal funds that may become available for projects, a current plan is required. Discussion was had over the ABRB (Albany-Bennington-Rutland-Burlington Project), various other reports that have been done in the past, and the many areas of poor track, bridges and culverts over which Vermont's Amtrak services have to travel.

- Update of the Subcommittee on Infrastructure Improvements. To date the subcommittee has looked at bridge capacity and 286# standard.

- Clearances. ‘Clearance’ was defined as the ‘movement of a rail car through a structure at track speed.’ Height and width restrictions are the issues. Recently an auto car traveled through the Bellows Falls tunnel successfully, opening up opportunities for rail freight transport. Double stack capacity is the future of rail, so height requirements “must be included in planning.”

#### Next meeting

‘Proposed 9/22 Agenda - Clearance Variance; Rail Crossings; Tax Incentives on Rail Property.’ Next meeting 4 November. {Highlights prepared by VAOT’s Nancy Rice}

### AMTRAK

28 July. **VERMONT HAS REACHED AGREEMENT WITH AMTRAK** for another year of *Ethan Allen* and *Vermont* service, agreeing to pay \$2.5 million, \$200,000 more than 2003-2004 [see 14 November 2003]. In March 2003, the governor's budget sought \$3.5 million [see 12 March 2003 issue], but Vermont and Amtrak ended up with an agreement for \$2.3 million covering the 1 July 2003-30 June 2004 period (state fiscal year).

Under the 2004-2005 agreement, Amtrak no longer provides ticket agents at any stations in the state. Amtrak pays for a custodian to open and close the station in downtown Rutland an hour before and after each arrival and departure. As an alternative, the governor requested funding for four ticket machines but the legislature chose not to fund that portion of the expenditure.

‘We have also agreed to fund a study of the current service and how it can be changed to maximize its effectiveness and ridership. This was done for the potential Albany-Bennington-Rutland-Burlington routing by Amtrak a few years ago and those calculations will be updated as well as looking at possible alternatives.’ {e-mail to *ANR&P* from Charlie Miller, head of VAOT rail division 26.Aug.04}

### LAMOILLE VALLEY RAILROAD

30 August, Montpelier. **THE APPARENT WINNING BID FOR LIFTING THE TRACK** came from Engineers Construction Incorporated (ECI) of South Burlington, Vermont. Its bid would yield the state \$1.524 million, said Jim LaCroix of VAOT’s contract administration office. The other five bidders: A&K Railroad Materials, \$1.504 million;

Progress Rail Services \$1.464 million; LB Foster \$1.250 million; New England Quality Services of Rutland Vermont \$0.855 million; and Cando Contracting with a main office in Manitoba, \$0.103 million.

Bids were submitted earlier this month. {ANR&P discussion}

### More about ECI

ECI has completed numerous railroad projects including: Crossing improvements from Burlington to Charlotte, Vermont; and various crossings on the NECR, CSO, and VTR. Embankment and culvert repairs. Bridge repairs including timber replacement, abutment repairs, and girder replacement. Numerous cased bores below active tracks. Installation of signal wires by directional drilling and rail plowing. Track work including: installation of switches and track. Railroad flagman for various projects. Consulting (geotechnical, structural, track) and design-build projects. Emergency response to derailments, culvert failures, bridge damage, etc.

The railroad services group is headed by Eugene Trombly, former NECR roadmaster. Ken and Alan Pidgeon (vice-president and president of ECI) are on-staff registered professional engineers. {ECI website}

Trombly is currently working on the GRS-caused derailment in Hartland, Vermont [see 30 July issue].

## VERMONT RAIL SYSTEM

23 August, Bennington. ***THE BENNINGTON SELECT BOARD DECIDED TO SUPPORT TRANSFORMING THE BENNINGTON BRANCH INTO A TRAIL.*** Paran Pathway Coalition has advocated for a path on the spur from the Molly Stark Elementary School to North Bennington since 1998, but the Select Board had not wanted to let go of the potential economic gain from reactivated commuter trains between the two towns, or between Bennington and New York City. Instead, they wanted to run the path from Molly Stark to North Bennington along the river, but reversed that policy this day.

“I’m really excited. Now all of the groups can coalesce,” said Bill Colvin, town director of economic and community development. “For the first time, everyone’s on the same page.”

### VRS attitude

The Vermont Rail System has long-term operating rights over most of the state-owned rail system, including the branch from North Bennington ending at Bennington. Board member Michael Lochner recently met with Vermont Rail and other local officials to talk about a path. VRS told them that just a half-mile stretch of the spur would require a \$1 million investment in track improvements. Said Lochner later: “We ought to say the heck with them and take the track.” Wrestling the rights to the spur from Vermont Rail is a “major hurdle,” Colvin said, but he is optimistic.

Scoping for the second half of the trail from Molly Stark to North Bennington will have to be in the hands of legislators by January when the session starts in order to have a good chance of convincing the state to give up the spur, said Board Vice-chair Joseph L. Krawczyk Jr., a Republican state representative. {Laura Raskin in *Bennington Banner* 24.Aug.04}

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## QUEBEC/MARITIMES

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### CANADIAN NATIONAL/DARTMOUTH

2 September, Dartmouth. ***THE WEYERHAEUSER FACILITY HERE IS GETTING “SATISFACTORY RAIL SERVICE”***, said Ken Fleck, who handles transportation at the Simmonds Drive facility in Burnside Industrial Park on the Dartmouth branch. Service improved after much better communication among his manager Martin Baker, CN supervisor of the Dartmouth spur Al MacDonald, and himself. Fleck estimates annual volume at around 250 carloads, with most arriving in the first half of the year.

### Improvement after strike

In December 2003 and January 2004, before the CN strike, CN was providing Weyerhaeuser with uneven service. “I could wait two days for a car.” After the strike ended in late March, CN began providing one shunt a day which has resulted in the improved rail service. [Uncertain whether this resulted from when in May CN began using two crews to shunt the Park—see 16 June issue.] Each morning by 10AM a CN crew will remove the empties, and spot two cars on Weyerhaeuser’s track; Fleck’s workers empty the cars by 4PM.

**One additional improvement**

Most of the cars are placarded ‘do not open this side’; the originator has loaded the car so that the door on the placarded side might be blocked from opening. The Weyerhaeuser building permits unloading from only one side, and unfortunately most of the cars arrive wrong side to. In the past, Fleck has had to ask CN to take back cars arriving wrong-side to, whose doors could not be opened. Turning the car and re-spotting it consumed up to five days.

Fortunately, since the strike the train crew has permitted Weyerhaeuser workers to ascertain if they can open the door before the car is spotted, and, added fortune, they have always been able to open the door. So the train crew has been able to spot all incoming cars. Fleck would like to share the cost of a rebuilt dock which would permit unloading from either side. {ANR&P discussion 2.Sep.04}

**CAPE BRETON & CENTRAL NS**

2 September, New Waterford. **THE NDP DECIDED TO PURSUE LEGISLATION PREVENTING ABANDONMENT** of the line in Cape Breton, if the overall line is profitable, said MLA Frank Corbett [see 20 August issue]. New Democratic Party researchers are drafting legislation at this point, for presentation to the House of Assembly which will recommence its sitting on 23 September. {ANR&P discussion 2.Sep.04}

**VIA RAIL CANADA**

June. **REVENUE AND RIDERSHIP DIPPED IN APRIL, BUT ROSE IN MAY.** Through May, the Eastern Services (the *Ocean* and the *Chaleur*) from Montreal east showed revenue of \$5.8 million compared with 2003's \$6.8 million. Ridership came to 65,228, a dip of 14%; on-time performance 62.9% versus a target of 77%. {Vialogue summer.04}

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**RAIL SHIPPERS**

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Described in this issue.

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

Aggregate Industries (PW, Massachusetts, #446), Cargill Sweeteners (PW, Massachusetts, #453), Domtar (GRS, Maine), Dragon (MERR, Maine), Intransit (PW, Massachusetts, #447), Louisiana Pacific (GRS, Maine), Lowe's (PVRR, Massachusetts), Mid-States (PW, Massachusetts, #s 449, 450), National Eastern (GRS, Connecticut, #621), Northeast Utilities (GRS Regional, Mt. Tom MA and Bow NH), Prime Source (GRS, Connecticut, #632), PW Transload (PW, Massachusetts #454), Rand-Whitney (PW, Massachusetts #451), Weyerhaeuser (CN, Nova Scotia).

**New to the region? This helps:****RAIL SHIPPERS & RECEIVERS  
IN SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND**

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**PEOPLE**

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**Nate Moulton** became Alan Bartlett's successor as **MDOT's** manager of rail transportation. Rob Elder, head of the Office of Freight Transportation, said the hiring committee had reviewed "a good cast" and unanimously agreed on Moulton. He has a background in transit, and most recently worked at NNEPRA and then as a transportation planning analyst in MDOT's Office of Passenger Transportation. {ANR&P discussion 30.Aug.04}

On 21 August, **John Pennington**, former president of the **Vermont Railway**, died in Shelburne at the age of 75. Donations in his memory may be made to either the American Cancer Society or Hospice of the Champlain Valley. To send online condolences, please visit [www.readyfuneral.com](http://www.readyfuneral.com).

**Craig Della Penna**, former head of Rail Distribution Services, the PVRR sister company, resigned 13 August from **Rails to Trails Conservancy** because the office, formerly in Worcester, is moving to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

**Ian Simpson** will leave Sunbury Transport to become full-time general manager of the **New Brunswick Southern Railway** on 6 September. **Paul Murphy**, who served as NBSR general manager and as director of Irving Transportation Services (ITS) fleet maintenance center, will do the latter job full-time. ITS subsumes Sunbury Transportation, RST Industries, Kent Line, Atlantic Towing, NB Southern Railway, but not Midland Transportation Group.

As of 1 July, the **New Hampshire Department of Transportation** contracted from five to four divisions. This statutory change moved the division of rail and transit from Director **Jim Marshall's** purview to Director **Jack Ferns**. Formerly just aeronautics, now Ferns covers aeronautics, rail, and transit. {ANR&P discussion with Jim Marshall 3.Sept.04}

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## ATLANTIC NORTHEAST RAILS & PORTS

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### Coverage

The newsletter covers the operating freight railroads and ports in New England, the Maritimes, and eastern Québec, as well as the government environment they function within. Coverage includes passenger rail and ships when relevant to freight operations.

### Frequency and the e-bulletin

*ANR&P* appears at least four times a month. We send a formal issue twice a month, via post or e-mail. Between the issues, we send out the *e-bulletin*, only by e-mail. All information in the *e-bulletin* is included in the issue.

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*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 unto itself.'

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