

MRG, Inc. (Maine Rail Group)
P.O. Box 5494, Augusta, Maine 04332

<http://mainerailgroup.org>

A non-profit group working to enhance rail service in Maine

March/ April 2013

Greetings Members and Friends:

Membership

Welcome aboard to new members Will Savage of Portland and Keith Knowlton of Brooklyn, CT.

We regret to report the recent deaths of Jane Tucker, charter member of Maine Rail Group; Kay Mayer, long time member and supporter and Ralph Knobel, former director, long-time friend, and active contributor to our rail car restoration program.

From President Dave Potter

I'm extremely happy to announce the award of two grants from among Maine Rail Group's 2012 Maine Rail Interest grant applications. The winners of these \$1,000 grants are Downeast Rail Heritage Preservation Trust (Downeast Scenic Railroad), and Brooks Preservation Society (Belfast & Moosehead Lake Railroad). We also provided a grant of \$150 to the Maine Better Transportation Association for their fund to provide transportation-related scholarships to University of Maine engineering students.

Downeast Scenic Rail will apply the money toward the purchase of a track tie inserter, while Belfast & Moosehead Lake Railroad will use the grant toward repair of their tamper. We wish them good fortune in accomplishing these important track maintenance projects.

MRG, Inc. 25th Anniversary Trip – June 16th

Maine Rail Group was founded in 1988 and to celebrate the occasion, together with Father's Day, we have chartered a special Conway Scenic Railroad to run from the station in North Conway to the end of CSRR territory at its connection with New Hampshire Central Railroad in Whitefield, NH (Hazens). The train will leave North Conway at 10am and return approximately 5pm, with provisions for lunch on dining car *Hattie Evans*..

Many of us have already experienced Conway Scenic Railroad's trips through Crawford Notch as far as Fabyan, but the next 12 miles of the former MEC Mountain Division is less traveled. We look forward to seeing this area west of Mt. Washington from the train, where once several railroads were busy bringing tourists to and from this attractive but out-of-the-way region.

The announcement with reservation form for this event accompanies this newsletter. Space on the train is limited and we urge early reservations. By the way, June 16th is also Father's Day and this trip offers great gift opportunities for those rail-fan dads and families.

These comments by Paul Hallett, CSRR Operations Manager and MRG, Inc. member, edited from The 470 newsletter, Jan., 2013 relate to our June 16th trip:

... We took advantage of the time right after the end of Notch Train operations to install about 1100 ties between Bartlett (MP 72) and Crawford Depot (MP85). This work, along with the work of rebuilding the 43 open culverts that are located between Frankenstein Trestle and the Gateway, plus all of the surfacing work that was done, puts the line between Bartlett and Crawford Depot in excellent condition. We were already in very good condition between North Conway and Bartlett so now we have a really good physical plant from Conway right up through the Notch. The stretch between Crawford Depot and Fabyan could use a few ties but is still in good shape, and we will work on that soon.

While tie work was going on in the Notch, there was another crew working up beyond Fabyan in the town of Carroll just a bit west of the Lennon Road crossing. We replaced an old 18" diameter culvert that provides drainage under the track there. The beavers have been blocking this pipe for years, creating a nice beaver pond for themselves and, in the process, had succeeded in raising the water level to the top of the rail there on more than one occasion. The new pipe is 36" in diameter and will be much more difficult for them to plug. Notice I did not say that it would be impossible for them to plug because I know better! At least it will be more difficult for them and should slow them down for a while.

Back at Nancy Brook just east of Notchland, we have to bring in some more large stones to place in the bank to stabilize it. This is the very last of the remedial work done to repair the damage that was inflicted by Tropical Storm Irene last year. Once again I want to say what an excellent job was done by the State of New Hampshire's Bureau of Rail & Transit in responding to this potentially line-closing event. Without access to funding and the expertise they provided, trips by rail through the Notch could have become extinct.

2013 Annual Meeting

We plan to hold a brief MRG, Inc. annual meeting on board the Conway Scenic Railroad train on June 16,

when group members will be gathered together. Since the main event will be the train ride itself, meeting formalities will be limited to brief reports by the president and treasurer, followed by election of directors. At this writing, the current board of directors is expected to seek re-election. They are:

- Russell Barber, Vice President Belfast, ME
- Arthur Emanuelson Waldoboro, ME
- Edward Hanscom, Treasurer. Gardiner, ME
- Robert Holland, Secretary Rockland, ME
- Stanley Koski Augusta, ME
- David Potter, President S. Gardiner, ME
- Jack Sutton Belgrade, ME
- Mark Walker Hallowell, ME

Our board welcomes this trip as an important opportunity for networking between current and prospective Maine Rail Group members regarding our interests, projects and priorities going forward.

Amherst Railway Society Show, Jan. 26 & 27

Russ Barber, Dave Potter and Jack Sutton again represented Maine Rail Group at the ARS show this January. Sales of maps and donated books were brisk and we distributed promotional materials for the Amtrak *Downeaster*, Maine Eastern Railroad and Maine Tourism Association. As always, we enjoyed the opportunities to discuss Maine railroad issues with the many visitors to our booth and to renew associations with friends.

Looking ahead to next year's ARS show, please be on the lookout for rail-related books and other portable memorabilia for donation to Maine Rail Group for sale and re-circulation to interested rail fans. Our table display reaches a wide range of rail interests. Beyond its obvious financial help to MRG, Inc., it's satisfying to see how some long neglected materials will catch the eyes of interested buyers.

Our special thanks to Dan Moscato, Chop Hardenburgh and Russ Barber for their contributions to this year's ARS show.

Along the Belfast & Moosehead Lake RR

(Contributed by Bob Holland – Brooks Preservation Society Treasurer, locomotive engineer, signal maintainer, and Maine Rail Group Secretary, among other activities in his retirement from Norfolk Southern Railway.)

Since 2008, Brooks Preservation Society (BPS), has operated the Belfast & Moosehead Lake railroad owned by the State of Maine. Investing in the railroad has infused dollars into the Waldo County economy. Most notable, were the many tour buses that the railroad handled near the end of 2012 season. The buses stayed

over one or two nights in Belfast to enjoy a train ride. The tour bus operators indicated the tours that included train ride were their most popular. Increased tour bus business is forecast for 2013.

The train to the Common Ground Fair from Thorndike and Unity has surged in growth over the past couple of years. It has served to reduce congestion on route 139 leading to the fair grounds. The train stops at the fair to discharge passengers.

The 2013 season started out on a very positive note. BPS received the H. Albert Webb Memorial grant to repair the foundation of the historic Brooks, ME passenger station. Mr. Webb had a keen interest in the railroads of New England. In his honor, his son established a foundation that funds worthy projects with the intent to preserve New England railroad heritage. The grant money will allow BPS to start work this spring. Any organization or individual that would like to contribute to the repair and renovation of the station – be it material or money is encouraged to contact BPS at (207) 722-3899 or jfeero@brookspreservation.org.

Season train operations will begin Memorial Day weekend with trains departing 11am and 2pm from City Point Railroad Museum (Belfast, ME) each Saturday, Sunday and holiday Monday. For more information visit [www..brookspreservation.org](http://www.brookspreservation.org).

Growth Mobility Forum

This forum, sponsored jointly by *Maine Rail Transit Coalition, Maine Association of Realtors, Sierra Club Maine and US Rail Car*, was scheduled for February 28th but postponed due to weather. It is now re-scheduled for March 15th, 8:00 – 11:30 am, at the Lee Auditorium, Wishcamper Center, University of Maine in Portland.

The original announcement states:

Come listen to Keynote Speaker Lee Sobel, EPA Office of Sustainable Communities, and hear our other speakers Tony Donovan of Maine Rail Transit Coalition; Christopher Coes, Managing Director of LOCUS, a network of real estate developers and investors affiliated with Smart Growth America; and Tom Faber, a Business and Sales Executive with Bombardier, one of the world's largest passenger train manufacturers based in Canada.

The agenda will provide attendees with information on the Smart Growth Mobility Project and new trends nationally regarding funding along with:

- *Roundtable – Mobility, Accessibility, Liveability – Ask the Experts*
- *What's up in Augusta Regarding Rail*
- *Networking – Meet & Greet - Refreshments*

Cost \$15. Students \$5. For more information call the chapter office at 207-761-5616,

Maritime, Rail, Road Container Service To Portland (edited from *The Portland Press Herald*, Feb. 12, 2013)

Icelandic shipping company moving to Portland
By Kelley Bouchard

PORTLAND – Eimskip, an Icelandic shipping company, has signed a contract with the Maine Port Authority to begin operating out of the International Marine Terminal in Portland, Gov. Paul LePage announced today.

Eimskip will open a warehouse in Portland and begin providing biweekly cargo service at the end of March, replacing the company's container operation in Norfolk, Va, according to Eimskip's website.

The company is moving to Maine's largest commercial port in order to shorten travel time between North America and Europe. Eimskip also will partner with Pan Am Railways to offer cost-competitive access to other North American markets, according to the governor's news release. Eimskip President and CEO Gylfi Sigfusson said, "Pan Am has been very helpful working with us to make this possible and we believe our work together is critical for success moving forward."

In 2011, Eimskip added a new route to its shipping system, connecting North America to northern Norway, according to the company's website. The new shipping route has opened new markets for Eimskip customers in the North Atlantic. Maine's agricultural, forest and seafood industries will benefit from the expanded service, providing new opportunities for growth in Canada and Europe, Maine officials said. Access to these markets may result in both larger freight volumes and access to previously cost-prohibitive markets for importers and manufacturers.

John Henshaw, executive director of the Maine Port Authority, said Maine's congressional delegation helped secure federal investment for the terminal and supported the contract with Eimskip. Eimskip has 1,300 employees in 18 countries and operates 16 vessels in the North Atlantic. Eimskip was established in 1914 and has been sailing to the United States since 1917.

By moving established container business from Norfolk, Va. to Maine Eimskip's Portland operation should have a running start. Elsewhere it's reported that upgrade to unused track along Commercial Street to serve the marine terminal will be made this spring. (Ed.)

Patricia Quinn Speaks to KVCC Women's Network

On February 13th Patricia Quinn, Executive Director of Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority, spoke to a luncheon meeting of the Kennebec Valley Chamber of Commerce Women's Network at the Senator Inn & Spa in Augusta, on the challenges of providing and expanding passenger rail services in Maine.

The Issues she outlined include:

- Maintaining and improving the Downeaster trunk system between Boston and Portland, in terms of reliability, reduced transit times, increased service frequency, coordination with freight operations. These are all critical to the long-term success of Downeaster operations, and its expansion. Ongoing construction of double track between Haverhill, and Lawrence, MA will help.
- Funding availability for capital improvements and operational support are deciding factors.
- Boston North Station platform time slots for the Downeaster compete with Boston commuter train schedules – thus control Downeaster schedule expansion options.
- Downeaster service is regional in design and not wholly adapted to the morning and evening demand peaks and frequencies characteristic of commuter railroads. This is significant in considering services in Maine beyond Portland.
- The proposed "wye" track at the Portland Transportation Center (PTC) will reduce travel times for trains operating beyond Portland. Consideration of other rail services that would use the PTC must take into account platform arrangements and passenger access. For example, the new Brunswick station cannot accommodate *Downeaster* and Maine Eastern trains simultaneously because of combined train lengths and road crossing blockage issues.
- End-of-route layover facilities that are heated and convenient to passenger terminals are important to avoid costly dead-head moves, excessive crew times and weather-related problems with routine service and maintenance of the trains. Issues regarding the proposed layover facility at Brunswick should be resolved and the facility completed ASAP.

Crude Oil By Rail

Rail movements of crude oil by rail from north-central U.S. and south-central Canada continue to increase at a rapid rate. AAR reports weekly petroleum and petroleum products traffic for North American railroads averaged 20,288 carloads in January, 2013 – up 46.2% from the same period in 2012. During the same periods coal shipments averaged 116,167 carloads in January, 2013, down 13.7% from 2012. The following samples of recent

Progressive Railroading Daily News reports indicate the scope of this rail business:

- *PR 1/2013: Global Partners, Canadian Pacific to transport Bakken crude for Phillips 66*
A five-year contract to ship about 91 million barrels of crude oil equates to 50,000 barrels per day.
- *PR 1/28/13 Texas-New Mexico Railroad operates first crude oil unit train*
TNMR has experienced massive growth in carloads because of the vast expansion of drilling and oil production in the Permian Basin.
- *PR 1/28/2013 Global Partners to acquire BNSF-served crude oil trans load facility in Oregon*
The Oregon site is linked via BNSF to Basin Transload facility in Beulah, N.D., while our Albany, N.Y. terminal is connected via single line haul on Canadian Pacific to the Basin Transload location in Columbus, N.D.
- *PR 1/30/2013 Eighty-Eight Oil to build BNSF-served unit train facility at Wyoming hub*
The unit train facility will be the first rail trans load terminal capable of loading multiple crude types, including those from Williston Basin in the Bakken Shale, the Powder River Basin in the Niobrara Shale, southwest Wyoming, the Big Horn Basin and Canada, said Eighty-Eight Oil officials in a prepared statement. Initial rail loading capacity will be about 80,000 barrels per day.
- *PR 3/1/2013 CN, LBC Tank Terminals to increase flow of crude oil through Louisiana facility*
"Louisiana terminals on the east shore of the Mississippi River are a good fit for heavy crudes," said Jean-Jacques Ruest, CN's executive vice-president and chief marketing officer, in a prepared statement. "Crude oil by rail is one of CN's fastest growing businesses. We moved 30,000 carloads of crude last year, and we believe we have the scope to double this business in 2013.

In the early morning of March 7th 15 tank cars loaded with crude oil of a 96 car Pan Am Railways train derailed on their track along the Penobscot River, just south of Mattawamkeag, Maine. The train was reportedly traveling 8 mph on FRA Class 1- rated track as it approached the junction with Eastern Maine Railroad at Mattawamkeag. Cause of the accident was under investigation and not reported at this writing.

Each tank car carried a reported 31,000 gallons of crude oil that was being pumped to other tank cars at press time. It's reported that none of the tanks ruptured and that remarkably, only three gallons of oil spilled in this incident, consisting of oil accumulated in containments around the fill caps of overturned tank cars.

Locomotive 470 At Waterville

A private group interested in restoring ex-MEC steam locomotive 470 to serviceable condition recently performed a series of inspections and tests on critical areas of the boiler and firebox to help assess that feasibility. Evaluation of the results is not available at this time.

From Way Down East

Woodrail Rail LLC, a subsidiary of Woodland Pulp, LLC now owns the Calais Industrial Track between Calais and Baileyville - purchased from Pan Am Railways in 2012. That track is 11.8 miles long with 6.7 miles in the U.S. and 5.1 miles in Canada, reaching the mill at Baileyville from New Brunswick Southern Railway(NBSR) in St. Stephen via three international bridges across the St. Croix River. It is now operated under contract with NBSR's U.S. subsidiary Eastern Maine Railway. Its route includes St. Croix Junction (SCJ) with the inoperable segment of the former Maine Central Calais Branch that remains between SCJ and Ayers Junction. (Wikipedia)

Nate Moulton of Maine DOT advises that improvements to the industrial track were made with a state IRAP grant and that significant quantities of pulp wood and chips are now moving to the pulp mill by rail.

On February 22, Thermogen Industries, a subsidiary of Cate Street Capital (CSC) of Portsmouth, N.H. announced plans to build a plant in Eastport to produce up to 300,000 tons of torrefied wood pellets for shipment to Europe as a substitute for coal in power plants. Rail implications for the proposed Eastport plant are not now known. CSC announced previously that it will convert the former paper mill at Millinocket to torrefied wood manufacture,

Mark Your Calendars

- **MRG, Inc. Meeting, Friday, Mar. 22, 6:00pm, Great Wall Restaurant, Augusta**
- **2013 Eastern Region Rail Crossing Conference & Expo, DCU Center, Worcester, MA Apr. 16-18**
- **MRG, Inc. Train Ride & Annual Meeting, Sunday, June 16, Conway Scenic Railroad**

MRG, Inc. is a non-profit corporation dedicated to railroad education and enhanced rail services in Maine and New England. Membership is open to everyone who shares our goals and interests. Annual dues are \$25. Regular meetings are bi-monthly. Inquiries are welcome.