

Articles and summaries of news to come in the 3 July issue, 03#06B

*Correction to date of next issue: 3 July.*

**Belfast & Moosehead Lake:** Railstar Corporation will buy.

**Montreal, Maine & Atlantic:** Paycuts reinstated. Traffic climbing.

**Vermont Northeast Kingdom:** A list of MMA and WACR customers, plus operations.

**Wilmington & Woburn:** Seeks permission to start new terminal railroad to serve transload.

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## BELFAST AND MOOSEHEAD LAKE RAILROAD

25 June, Unity. A *PURCHASE AND SALE AGREEMENT WAS REACHED WITH RAILSTAR CORPORATION* of Cape Vincent, New York. Larry Sterrs, chair of the board of the Unity Foundation, said the parties had scheduled a closing for 21 July, contingent on upon a contract with MDOT for maintenance of the track bed.

“For the past six months, our focus has been in getting the railroad out on the market for sale,” said Sterrs. “We marketed it in the railroad community, people who are just crazy about railroads. We did get a fair response, but only two that we could work with who were interested in operating it. We got many responses from people who wanted to buy equipment. Individual railroads are operating all over the county and it's hard for them to get replacement parts. You're not going to find parts for 100-year-old steam engines down at Wal-Mart.

“The major thing, from my perspective, is Mr. Clifford loved the railroad and also knew how important it was to the communities it serves,” Sterrs said. “Since he passed, we have made every effort to find a buyer interested in operating the railroad instead of just selling the equipment and real estate. Mr. Clifford loved the railroad and spent a lot of time and a fair amount of his money to keep it going.” Bob Lamontagne, general manager of the B&M for six years, said he is “very excited” about the pending sale. “I think it is positive for everyone, the state of Maine, the county of Waldo — actually all the counties.”

### More about Railstar

Railstar's vice president and general manager, Ronald J. Trottier, said trains will continue to operate between Unity, Burnham Junction and Belfast, including charter and dinner train service. Originally from Massachusetts, Trottier said he went to school in Boston and his familiarity with New England drew his interest to the local railroad. “We don't have a lot of tourist lines. This will sort of be our first entry into that aspect of it,” Trottier said from his Railstar headquarters in New York. “We feel the interest is there in railroads; we need a certain number of people to make a business like this fly.” {Darla L. Pickett in *Central Maine Morning Sentinel* 28.June.03}

A Google search of the web provides only these points: Railstar owns and operates Erie Canal Village, a tourist attraction in New York. It has also bought two antique locomotives for restoration. {*editor*}

## MONTREAL, MAINE, & ATLANTIC

Montreal Maine & Atlantic has quietly restored the pay cuts imposed when its largest customer imploded two hours after MMA opened the doors last January. VP Marketing Bill Schauer told me during my visit to Bangor this week the paper mill that sparked the initial troubles will be

back to full speed by mid-2004. What's more, they're building back the business by calling on former customers and working with them to regain *their* former customers. Service design has a key role, too: it's second morning delivery to the

CP in Montreal from a 2 PM pull in Presque Isle. That's 500 miles and three trains with the longest dwell just 15 hours. Track speed is 40 MPH, tops, so they have to hustle. No wonder MMA will be shortly be back at the 60,000 annual carloads they started with before the unpleasantness. {Roy Blanchard's newsletter, *Railroad Week in Review* 27.June.03}

### VRS/WACR & MMA

18 June, ConnRiver. **MMA AND WACR ARE MOVING A FAIR AMOUNT OF TRAFFIC** on the stretch from White River Junction to Farnham. According to Bill Schauer, MMA vice-president marketing, MMA was "quite pleased at the way this is working, better than we thought it would."

#### NECR haulage

NECR is "happy with the haulage arrangement" which gives it a paper interchange with MMA in Newport.

#### MMA Farnham PQ to Newport

MMA runs trains southbound five times a week, Sunday through Thursday, and on the other days as needed. MMA has four customers on this stretch, totalling perhaps 1600 carloads. Adding the WACR cars for interchange, perhaps 20 a day five days a week or 5200 a year, that totals 6800. [Under the rule of thumb of at least 100 carloads per mile per year, that falls just over the necessary 6500 carloads for the 65 miles from Newport to Farnham.]

#### Active customers.

*Blue Seal Feeds* (Richford). Bill Whitney, transportation manager, gave the annual traffic as 1000-1100. 'Service has been acceptable. I get the feeling that these folks want to do a good job and, given the condition of the paper industry and its effect on the MMA's income, they are doing quite a good job with the resources at their disposal.' {e-mail to *ANR&P* 23.Jun.2003}

*Poulin Grain* (Newport). Jeff Poulin said the company had "no major problems then or now. The mill could not get away without getting new cars for a week." The company does about 800 carloads a year. {*ANR&P* discussion 23.May.03}

*Columbia Forest Products* (Newport). Larry Boisvert, shipping coordinator, explained that Columbia had a sister plants for hardwood veneer in Presque Isle Maine, Rutherglen Ontario, and Mellen Wisconsin. The Newport facility ships veneer outbound via boxcar (4 cars in a recent five-week period) , and logs to Rutherglen and Presque Isle via gondolas. "The railroad is working pretty good, making sure we have cars available." Rail use "depends on the market, inventory, time to get in there, and whether the receivers have room in a warehouse." The railroad does have "a great rate." {*ANR&P* discussion 23.May.03}

*Feed Commodities* (Newport). Glen Burnett, plant manager, said the company is doing an increased business mixing feed, bringing in about 150 cars a year. "A lot of people are changing how they feed, who used to use standard pellets. Now everyone has their own nutritionist, recommending a different feed, so the farmer is mixing and matching, getting the feed in grist form as opposed to pellets."

Feed Commodities purchased four other former Agway mills, in Vergennes VT, Middlebury VT, Detroit Maine, and Bernardston MA. {*ANR&P* discussion 19.Jun.2003}

Interchange with WACR. Perhaps 5200 carloads a year [see below.]

#### WACR Newport to White River Junction

According to Doug Morton, transportation planner for the Northeast Vermont Development Association, VRS' Ed

Fitzgerald has stated to him that it has 20 sidings on the line, of which 13 are active. The other seven not shipping at moment or are out of business, but the site remains as potential. WACR, with an engine based in MMA's Newport Yard, moves 15-20 cars per day on the line, either north or south (service south three days a week—Monday, Wednesday, Friday; and north three days a week—Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday). The railroad is “looking to increase that to every day.”

The draft of *New England Rail Shippers and Receivers* (forthcoming 2004) identifies some of these.

#### Active customers (8 listed)

*Blanchard Oil* (Orleans). Inbound tank cars.

*Local breweries* (Orleans). Some local breweries receive malt in covered hoppers, on a team track on the west side of the line.

*Calcium chloride* (Orleans). A highway contractor will receive calcium chloride in tank cars on a track on the east side of the line, trackage formerly used by Ethan Allen, which still has a plant there.

*Outbound lumber* (St.Johnsbury). A lumber mill loads its product on a siding on the east side of the main line. The siding was expanded last winter to hold two cars instead of one. Cars are lifted just about every other day.

*Quest Transportation* (St.Johnsbury). This company's website advertises transportation, distribution, and warehousing services, including a rail connection.

*Morrison Milling* (Barnet). Covered hoppers from the north supply this feed mill, which delivers by truck. An official at the mill said the rail is working “pretty good,” equivalent to the service from the B&A System. “They get the cars here when we need them” to the tune of 150-200/year. {ANR&P discussion 25.May.2003} [Morrison wanted to use rail in 2000—see 20 October 2000 issue, Twin State Fertilizer comment.]

*Twin State Fertilizer* (Bradford). Owner Craig Trischman receives *inter alia* potash from New Brunswick, and phosphate from Montreal. In late May he was having problems with delivery in late May. In one instance, two cars remained in Chicago undelivered, yet the railroad had “shipped the bills long before the cars—that's not a good thing.” In another instance, Twin State was due two potash cars from same company. “We got one car, don't know where the other car is.” Trischman lamented that he does not “know where issue lies. I don't know how system works. It would be nice if things got here when we thought they should.” {ANR&P discussion 25.May.03}

*Jewell Transport* (Wilder). This transload did a fair bit of business in the 1990s [see issues 99#10 and 00#20]. An official at the company office said it now does “maybe one carload a year.” {ANR&P discussion 23.May.03}

#### Inactive customers

Ryegate Associates (East Ryegate). Chip-powered plant, not using rail as of three years ago. [See 20 October 2000 issue.] MMA is actively discussing possible rail traffic here.

Ethan Allen (Orleans). Not using rail

Allen Lumber (St.Johnsbury). Not using rail, though the line runs right through it

Closed former customers

Kimberly-Clark (Ryegate). Paper mill, closed, did use rail

Interchange in White River Junction. WACR may interchange with NECR, GRS, and CCRR. Observers report quite a few grain cars northbound for local mills, as well as cars with products left after milling in Ayer, Massachusetts.

18 June, Northeast Kingdom. **WACR IS CONTEMPLATING TWO CHANGES.**

**Possible service to Gilman**

According to an employee of WACR, VRS is pushing the state to acquire operating rights on the TSRD from St.Johnsbury to New Hampshire. In addition to the mill in Gilman which should reopen this summer [see 20 May: *New Hampshire*], customers could include Fairbanks Steel, a cement company, and a maple syrup producer.

**Possible change of base to St.Johnsbury**

The employee also said that the base may move to St.Johnsbury, where the train would run northbound and southbound on alternate days. {ANR&P discussion 19.Jun.2003 Mark Fortin}

**WILMINGTON AND WOBURN TERMINAL RAILROAD**

19 June, DC. **THE WILMINGTON AND WOBURN TERMINAL RAILROAD COMPANY SOUGHT COMMON CARRIER STATUS** in a notice to the Surface Transportation Board (STB) to operate over a GRS spur, trackage to be built through the former Olin Corporation facility, and then on an industrial track owned by New England Resins and Plastics (not a current customer). Total trackage about 1.5 miles.

New England Transrail, d/b/a Wilmington and Woburn Terminal Railroad (WWR), would acquire a portion of the Olin facility at which to construct a transload facility served by the new railroad.

**The proposed operation**

GRS owns a spur leading at North Woburn Junction west off the south-bound MBTA line between Lowell and Boston (the MBTA New Hampshire Route) less than 1000 feet to the Glens Falls Lehigh Cement Company plant on the north side of Eames Street. [The spur is part of a former branch through western Woburn which joined back to the New Hampshire Route at Winchester Center. *Editor*]

Currently, GRS runs one train a day to the site, which must reach the spur off the south-bound MBTA track. The train must then back northward off the siding to proceed farther south.

New England Transrail LLC, doing business as the Wilmington and Woburn Railroad (WWR), proposes to take over the train after it drops or lifts cars for Glens Falls, cross Eames Road, and enter the transload area via newly-constructed track. After dropping cars for the transload, it would proceed still along new track to connect to an existing—but unused—industrial track belonging to New England Resins.

Running by (but not serving) the New England Resins facility, the train—turned back over to the GRS crew—would rejoin the MBTA New Hampshire Route less than 1000 feet over the Woburn line.

The transload will open for up to 16 hours a day, and close during the hours that WWR will interchange with Guilford (at night).

**Why wouldn't GRS handle the switching?**

Ron Klempner, principal of New England Transrail, said that Guilford had no desire for ownership or operating rights

through the Olin site, much of which remains heavily contaminated. [The contamination may sound familiar, but the Olin site is not connected with the book and movie ‘A Civil Action’, depicting a case in east Woburn. The Olin site lies in western Woburn.]

WWR will retain a machine to switch its own site, as well as Glens Falls and other rail customers who may also locate there. Klempner said his situation did not resemble that of LB Railco, which tried to use a railroad front to operate a C&D facility outside of Massachusetts DEP regulation. [In LB Railco, the company would construct a spur off the PW line and become a railroad on that new spur. In the case of WWR, the company will be taking over a rail line already in interstate commerce. Moreover, Klempner has already subjected his operation to local permitting. *Editor*]

### **Why another transload?**

Klempner sees many transload customers: GAF, lumber, aggregate, and the plastics manufacturers in the area. The filing at the STB notes that the transload will ‘facilitate rail access for area industries now precluded from direct service by the limited window allowed to B&M freight service on the MBTA line.

Klempner also seeks to load onto rail cars outbound containers with contaminated soil, and to load previously-processed construction and demolition debris. He does not plan any permanent structures. He would not store salt because it may exacerbate the site conditions and clean-up efforts. Indeed, he plans to store no material on site because ‘any storage would less space for rails and reload activities, and the key to success at the property would be a compact and efficient rail operation which maximizes car movements and minimizes car and material storage.

He selected this site ‘[b]ecause it was a large enough parcel located in proximity to the major highway networks, I-93 and I-95, and the closest available location to downtown Boston.’ {*ANR&P* discussion 23.Jun.2003; text of filing}

### **The request to the STB/delay in effective date**

On 19 June, WWR filed ‘a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.31, to acquire and operate, pursuant to contract rights from Boston and Maine Railroad Company, certain trackage in Woburn and Wilmington, MA.’ Klempner invoked the exemption open to Class III railroads to commence operations without a formal Board decision. Under 49 CFR 1150.32(b), the exemption would normally become effective on June 26, 2003 (7 days after the notice was filed). Parties objecting to an exemption have 20 days from the service date of the decision (here, 19 June) granting the exemption to file a petition to reopen and 10 days from the date of service to seek a stay.

‘On June 25, 2003, New England Transrail requested that the exemption not become effective until July 11, 2003. New England Transrail states that it has been engaged in meetings with the community and with the staff of US Representatives Edward Markey and John Tierney, and, as a courtesy to them, it is requesting a delay in the effective date of the exemption. New England Transrail’s request will be granted.’ {STB decision published 26 June}

### **Some resistance**

The Town of Wilmington has presented several argument against the proposed use [see STB filing]. On 26 June, it filed a petition for a stay of the exemption, which will probably be granted by 2 July, thus giving more time for opponents. [More in a future issue.]

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