

MRG, Inc. (Maine Rail Group)
Box 5494, Augusta, Maine 04332
<http://mainerailgroup.org>

A volunteer group working to enhance rail services in Maine

May / June 2022

Greetings

MRG, Inc. Annual Meeting & Train, Sat. 6/11/22

Maine Rail Group returns to Belfast & Moosehead Lake Railroad for our 2022 annual meeting, lunch and train ride at Unity, Maine on Saturday, June 11.

Unity Station doors open at 10:30 am for meet, greet and light refreshment, followed by call-to-order at 11 am for reports, election of directors and any other business before closing at 11:45 am.

Members proposed for election as directors are:

Russ Barber	Belfast, Maine
Michael Byron	Hallowell, Maine
Edward Hanscom	Gardiner, Maine
Robert Holland	Rockland, Maine
Stanley Koski	Augusta, Maine
Jack Madden	Hudson, New Hampshire
Richard Rudolph	Portland, Maine
Andrew Sandweiss	Washington, DC
Jack Sutton	Belgrade, Maine
Mark Walker	Hallowell, Maine

That provides a few minutes for the Board of Directors to assemble for re-appointment of officers, and for meeting participants to prepare for buffet lunch served at noon..

At about 12:45 pm, Joe Ferro, B&ML President will take a few minutes to update us all on goings-on at B&ML RR, followed by boarding the train. The train consists of two vintage coaches, one open car with seats and one caboose. At 1 pm our special train departs eastward to Thorndike, with a brief stop there to view yard, vintage cars and Farwell General, historic store. It departs Thorndike at about 1:30 pm west with a brief stop in Unity. At about 2 pm we

leave Unity for Burnham Junction, departing there about 2:30 pm for final arrival in Unity approximately 3:30 pm for final departure.

Train capacity is 100 persons with 50 seats reserved for current MRG, Inc. members until May 31. After that all open seats are offered to the public - first-come, first served – so reserve early!

Signup information is available on our website <http://mainerailgroup.org>, and the flyer included with digital and postal copies of this newsletter (see p.4).

Dave Potter Retires from MRG, Inc. Board

Dave has been an active member and major contributor to MRG, Inc. since its founding in 1989, He and wife Rusty recently moved from Maine to Northfield, Massachusetts and Dave will not run again for the MRG, Inc. Board, but he will continue group membership and he looks forward to participation at the Amherst Show as time and health allow.

MRG, Inc. is grateful to Dave for his many years of dedicated and active service and for his innumerable contributions, including rehabbing the siding at Newcastle, restoration of three passenger rail cars at Rockland and Newcastle, organization of chartered train rides and meetings, Group participation in many shows, especially the two-day Amherst Railway Society Show at the “Big E” in West Springfield, MA.

We’re glad Dave remains with us as an active member and wish him and Rusty the best for his retirement from the MRG, Inc. board.

“Let’s Get Rail” Program, Wed. April 27, Zoom

“Why connecting more cities in Maine is good for everyone” is the keynote and theme for the virtual program sponsored by Maine Rail Group on Wednesday, April 27, 2022: 6:30-- 8:00PM. Attendees must pre-register at the MRG, Inc. website. This program supports MRG, Inc’s vision to

restore passenger rail service to Augusta, Waterville and Bangor, Maine through a combination of some *Downeaster* train schedule extensions and more frequent local services provided by self-powered coaches, running singly or in multiple units. Our immediate challenge is to assure that Maine DOT commissions a Propensity“ study by qualified professionals to define first-approximation projections for the demand, benefits and costs the potential demand, benefits, costs and alternatives to such services.

Program speakers confirmed at this writing are:

Joseph P. Schwieterman will talk about Transit Propensity Analyses. He is the author of **When the Railroad Leaves Town: American Communities in the Age of Rail Line Abandonment**. He is a Professor in the School for Public Service, Department of Public Policy and Sustainable Urban Development at DePaul University | Chicago.

Kevin Sutherland is Bar Harbor’s Town Manager Kevin also served as Saco’s City Administrator. He will speak about the economic development generated with arrival of *Downeaster* service to southern Maine.

Eric Chinburg is the President / Founder of Chinburg Properties, a land development, design, construction and property management firm headquartered in NH. The company has created thousands of residences in New Hampshire. Peter Cole will read is statement.

Senator Joe Baldacci (District 9, Bangor and Hermon) sponsored LD 227 which was passed by the Maine Legislature in 2021. He will discuss why he supports passenger rail and how it will benefit residents of Central Maine.

Senator Ben Chipman chairs the Legislative Taxation Committee and serves on the Joint Transportation Committee. He will also talk about the importance of passenger rail in Maine.

Stephanie Clement is Conservation Director, Friends of Acadia. She will discuss work that the organization is doing with the National Park Service to reduce the impacts of high visitation by investing in transportation alternatives.

Jim Dinkle, Executive Director of Kennebec Regional Development Authority / First Park will talk

about how the restoration of passenger rail service could impact economic development in Central Maine.

Mike Duguay, Executive Director, Harold Alfond Institute for Business Innovation at Thomas College, Waterville, Maine. He will talk about how restoring passenger rail could benefit students and colleagues and members of the larger Waterville community.

Mike Frager, Vice President, Amalgamated Transit Union Local 714, is one of the leaders of the Maine Labor Climate Council. He will talk about how transit alternatives are needed in Central Maine.

Richard Parkhurst, Developer, will talk about the impact that train service could have on economic development in the City of Augusta.

Andrew Sandweiss, a recent graduate of the University of Pennsylvania’s Transportation Planning Program, works as Planner at Gorove Slade & Associates in Washington, D.C. He will talk about why students and the younger generation support alternative forms of transportation.

STB Approves PAR/PAS Sale to CSX

The Surface Transportation Board approved CSXT’s application to own and operate Pan Am Railways and PAR’s share of Pan Am Southern, effective April 14, 2022. Here are some notes from the STB’s Decision document. It refers to the present PAS/NS freight route from Ayer, MA to Rotterdam, NY as the “Northern Route” and the parallel CSXT line between Worcester, MA connecting with NS at Voorheesville, NY as the “Southern Route”.

- “Applicants state that the trackage rights comprising the Southern Route would give NSR the capability to provide double-stack intermodal service by avoiding a tunnel constraint that exists on the Patriot Corridor, i.e. the Northern Route...Specifically the height limitations of the Hoosac Tunnel.”
- “...NSR will also need to rehabilitate an existing line of track in the Village of Voorheesville, (NY) for its trains to access the Southern Route... According to NSR’s representative it will take approximately six to 12 months before NSR trains can begin using the Southern Route...”
- An important consideration in this merger was the position of Pan Am Southern (PAS), a

company jointly owned by Pan Am Railways and Norfolk Southern Railway (NSR) to operate the Northern Route, or Patriot Corridor, as well as portions of the north-south Knowledge Corridor along the Connecticut River. Concerns were voiced that CSXT ownership of PAR's 50 percent interest PAS would be positioned to unfairly influence competitive rates and capital investments between competitors CSXT and NSR. STB resolved the issue by accepting Pittsburg & Shawmut Railroad, LLC d/b/a Berkshire & Eastern Railroad to replace PAR's Springfield Terminal as the operator of PAS, placing conditions on the merger to assure that B&E operates as a separate for-profit company independent from CSXT and NSR for rate-making and investment purposes.

- Under the Vermont Settlement Agreement VRS has trackage rights between White River Jct. and Bellows Falls; VRS has "service failure 'pop-up' trackage rights between Bellows Falls and East Deerfield when PAS service drops below a level agreed to by VRS, NRS's haulage rights from Mechanicville to Hoosick Jct. will be extended to East Deerfield, subject to "price stability"; when any GWI subsidiary operates PAS lines as contract operator; CSX has haulage rights between Rotterdam Jct. and Hoosick Jct. subject to "price stability we"; and PAS provides "price stability" for interline traffic over PAS between Bellow Falls and PAR destinations and origins when B&E or any GWI subsidiary operates PAS lines as a contract operator.
- STB gave much attention to passenger rail services on the PAR/PAS lines in question, finally accepting Conditions 1 through 5, and 7 of the seven conditions proposed by Amtrak. Condition 6 applied to the proposed Berkshire Flyer, for which a separate settlement was reached. **Regarding MRG, Inc.'s passenger rail interests, Amtrak Condition 2. Reads in**

part: CSX should be ordered to cooperate in good faith with Amtrak and third party public agencies for addition, expansion or modification of existing intercity passenger rail services, operation of seasonal services or "extra sections" of existing regularly scheduled Amtrak trains, and /or development of new intercity passenger rail service over the PAN Am routes and CSX's Albany-Worcester route;...

To read the entire STB decision text, see

<https://www.stb.gov/proceedings-actions/decisions/>

and look for decision FB_36472 issued 4/14/22.

Mark Your Calendar

Regular meetings are virtual, by Zoom, starting at 6pm unless otherwise advised. Please check in advance for changes if you plan to participate. President Russ Barber (rustyrailsis@gmail.com) will send links to virtual meetings by request.

Apr. 27, 6:30-8:00pm virtual (Zoom) public information forum

Apr. 29, 12:30pm Rail Users Network (RUN) Conference (Video)

May 11, 6:30pm MRG, Inc. meeting (Virtual)

May 14, 10am-3pm Train Show – Westbrook, ME MRG, Inc. represented

May 18, 6 pm MRG, Inc. Board Meeting (Virtual)

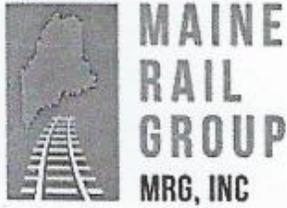
May 21, 9am Mass. Bay RR Enthusiasts train trip- Meredith to Lincoln, NH & return

June 11, 10:30am MRG, Inc. Annual Meeting & B&ML RR train ride, Unity, ME (SEE BELOW)

For the MRG, Inc. Board,

Jack Sutton

MRG, Inc. a volunteer non-profit corporation, is dedicated to railroad education and enhanced rail services in Maine and New England. Membership is open to those sharing our goals and interests. Dues \$40 /yr. (effective 1/1/2022). Meetings are bi-monthly. Inquiries welcome.



POST OFFICE BOX 5494
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**JOIN the MRG at its Annual Meeting and Train Ride
 Saturday, June 11 in Unity, Maine**



Maine Rail Group (MRG, Inc.) will hold its 2022 Annual Meeting on Saturday, June 11 at the **Belfast & Moosehead Lake Railroad Depot in Unity, Maine** (212 Depot Street Unity Maine), followed by a luncheon and a ride on the B&ML RR train.

We chartered the entire train with total capacity of 100 riders. After providing for current MRG, Inc. members and their guests, first come-first served guidelines apply so early reservations are advised.

Masking and vaccination rules in effect on June 11 will apply - please come prepared.

- 11:00 am Annual Meeting call to order
- Noon Buffet Lunch (can be ordered for \$12.00 per person)
- 12:45 pm Welcome to B&ML RR & introduction to the train ride by Joe Ferro
- 1:00 Train departs for Thorndyke & returns to Unity
- 2:00 Train departs Unity to Burnham Jct. & returns to Unity
- 4:00 Train arrives for final stop at Unity

**Learn about efforts to bring train service to Central Maine cities
 while enjoying a train ride through rural Maine!**

Reservations and payment (by check) for the June 11 event should be sent to the address below:

Name _____ Email (to confirm your ticket) _____

___ Lunches @ \$12 pp \$ _____
 ___ Train Rides @ \$15 pp Adult \$ _____
 ___ (under 12) @ \$ 5 pp Child \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Please mail check (made out to 'MRG') to: MRG, Inc., PO Box 5494, Augusta, ME 04322