



**NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND  
PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY**



# ANNUAL REPORT 2019

JULY 1, 2018 - JUNE 30, 2019

FY 2019

# who we are *leadership & staff*



## NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY

### OUR MISSION

To develop and manage a quality passenger rail system that meets the transportation needs of our customers, delivers value and enhances economic development within the region we serve.

### OUR GOALS

The NNEPRA team strives to meet and exceed financial and performance goals established each year. The staff is actively involved in the operation and promotion of the Amtrak Downeaster, and seeks to achieve maximum financial efficiency by controlling expenses and growing revenue. Strong collaborative partnerships with stakeholders and local communities are the keys to our success.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The NNEPRA Board of Directors is appointed by the Governor of the State of Maine. The Board, supported by the collective efforts of the NNEPRA staff, develops the operating strategies, marketing programs, community relations, food service and service planning activities for the Amtrak Downeaster.

#### FY19 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

John Melrose, *Chairman*  
Dana Connors, *Vice Chairman*  
Ron McKinnon, *Treasurer*  
Brian Hobart, *Director*  
Charles Large, *Director*

#### EX-OFFICIO

Commissioner, Maine DOT  
David Bernhardt, *Director (7/18 - 1/19)*  
Bruce Van Note, *Director (1/19 - Present)*  
- Mary Ann Hayes, *Alternate*  
Commissioner, Maine DECD  
George Gervais, *Director (7/18 - 1/19)*  
Heather Johnson, *Director (1/19 - Present)*  
- Steve Lyons, *Alternate*

#### NNEPRA STAFF

Patricia Quinn, *Executive Director*  
Marina Douglass, *Finance Manager*  
Brian Beeler, II  
*Manager of Passenger Services*  
Natalie Bogart, *Marketing Director*  
James Russell, *Manager of Special Projects*  
Stephen Houdlette, *Data Analyst*  
Jennifer Crosby  
*Marketing & Sales Coordinator*  
Lynn Harrington, *Graphic Designer*

#### AMTRAK MANAGEMENT TEAM

Stephen Corcoran, *Asst. Superintendent*  
William White, Jr., *Road Foreman*  
Dean Rybolt, *Trainmaster*



The Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA) is a public transportation authority created in 1995 by the Maine State Legislature to develop and provide passenger rail service between Maine and Boston.



# welcome aboard

## AMTRAK DOWNEASTER STATIONS

Most Amtrak Downeaster stations are owned and operated by the municipalities in which they are located. The Portland station is owned by Concord Coach Lines and staffed by Amtrak personnel.



## VOLUNTEERS & AMBASSADORS

Volunteer Train Hosts, sponsored by *TrainRiders Northeast*, are often on board trains to provide helpful information to passengers. Many stations are staffed by Amtrak Downeaster Ambassadors who assist passengers and visitors.

The Amtrak Downeaster makes **5 round-trips** daily between Brunswick and Boston serving a total of **12 communities in 3 states**. Amtrak operates the Downeaster under contract to NNEPRA at speeds up to 79 mph along the 143-mile corridor of track owned by MaineDOT, Pan Am Railways and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA).

## TRAIN EQUIPMENT



The Amtrak Downeaster operates with three train sets which are wheelchair accessible and have seating capacity for up to 306 passengers. The train equipment is cleaned, fueled and stored at layover facilities in Brunswick and Portland.

## TRAIN CREWS



Each Downeaster train is staffed by three Amtrak crew members and one NexDine Café attendant to ensure the safety and comfort of passengers.

## TICKET AGENTS



Ticket agents are available in Portland and Boston, and most stations have self-service Quik-Trak ticketing kiosks.

## POLICE & SECURITY



Amtrak police work with railroad, municipal and federal officials to ensure safety and security of our passengers and employees.

## RESERVATION SYSTEMS



Reservation, ticketing and passenger information is provided through Amtrak's national network.

“ In an area inundated by congested, construction-filled highways, more and more travelers from ME, NH and MA are choosing to ride the Amtrak Downeaster instead of driving. ”

- 2018 Passenger Survey





# what we do *marketing & promotion*

## MARKETING & PROMOTION

NNEPRA is responsible for promoting the Amtrak Downeaster and develops marketing strategies to meet ridership and revenue goals. In FY19, the multifaceted *TRANSform Your Travel* campaign focused on increasing brand awareness, attracting new riders and building repeat ridership.

## FY19 MARKETING EFFORTS



### TRAIN TO MAINE CAMPAIGN

Advertising in the Greater Boston market focused on increasing visitors to Maine.



### STATION SPECIFIC ITINERARIES

Developed to promote events & destinations in Downeaster communities.

### FLASH SALES

Leveraged a variety of Amtrak's national flash sales to build ridership on off-peak trains.



### COMMUNITY EVENTS

Participated in senior expos, business to business events, college orientations, trade shows and family festivals.



### DEALS & DISCOUNTS

Developed special offers that targeted specific markets on off-peak trains.



### GROUP TRAVEL & SPECIAL TRAINS

Promoted group and event trains such as the Great Dome Car and Santa train.

## FY19 DOWNEASTER WEBSITE

Website traffic increased 21% during the year and total media impressions increased to more than 40 million, resulting in the second highest ridership in Downeaster history, despite a 6-week construction-related service interruption.



## TRANSform YOUR TRAVEL

“Passenger rail service provides additional economic and health care opportunities for our colleagues, patients, and visitors who travel for work or medical appointments.”

— Chris Chop, Program Manager, Maine Health



# our community

## 2019 MITCHELL AWARD RECIPIENT

This year, we dedicate the 2019 Mitchell Award, to our station community partner in Saco, **Kevin Sutherland**.

As Saco City Administrator, Kevin has promoted and supported transportation connectivity as a catalyst for economic growth. *We thank him for his commitment and service.*



The Mitchell Award is presented annually to recognize the vision, commitment and leadership of Senator George J. Mitchell, a founding force for the restoration of passenger rail service to the people and communities of Maine. The award is presented annually to an individual or collective individuals who have demonstrated Service, Commitment, Community and/or Innovation.

The **Amtrak Downeaster** is an integral part of Maine's transportation network **linking twelve communities in three states** to Boston, and to each other.

The Downeaster is supported by the communities which sponsor, staff and maintain stations along the corridor. The involvement, dedication and commitment of these communities, their leaders and their residents, has contributed to the success of the Downeaster and has helped the communities grow and prosper as well.

NNEPRA thanks and acknowledges the contributions made by our all of our community partners.

## FY19 COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS

**150**   
TRADE SHOWS  
& COMMUNITY  
EVENTS

**\$3M**   
GOODS  
& SERVICES  
PURCHASED FROM  
MAINE BUSINESSES

**331**   
TICKET DONATIONS

**18K**   
VOLUNTEER  
HOURS

Hundreds of Downeaster Ambassadors provide customer assistance at stations and on board trains, going the extra mile to make the Downeaster one of the most customer-friendly passenger rail services in the nation. NNEPRA is deeply grateful to our station partners and TrainRiders Northeast for their continued support and dedication to the Downeaster service.





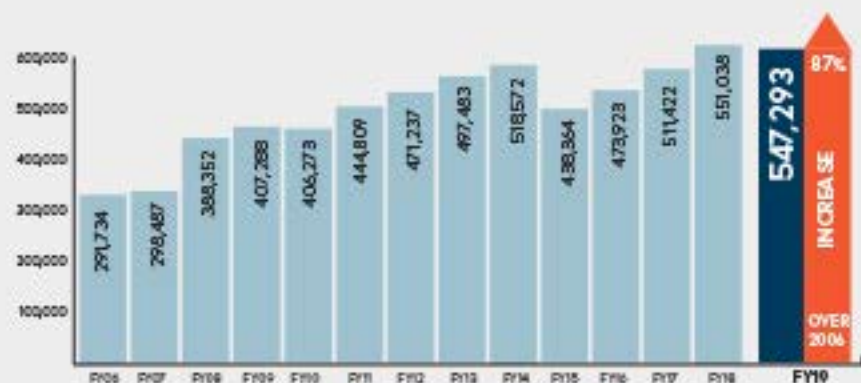
# performance *fast facts*

FY2

To date, the Amtrak Downeaster has transported more than **7.6 million** passengers the equivalent of **622 million** passenger miles and has generated more than **\$117 million** in passenger revenue.



TICKET REVENUE HISTORY



RIDERSHIP HISTORY



## \$10,280,700

TICKET REVENUE



## 547,293

RIDERS



## 44,297,074

PASSENGER MILES



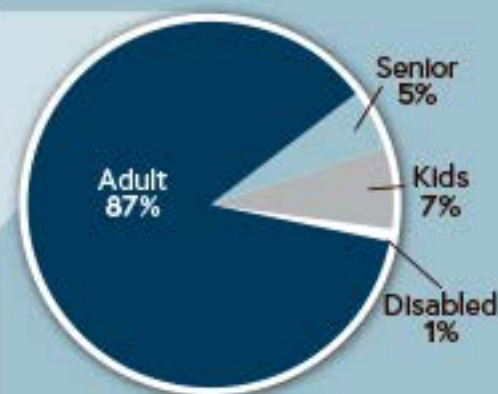
## FY19 HIGHLIGHTS

### TICKET REVENUES

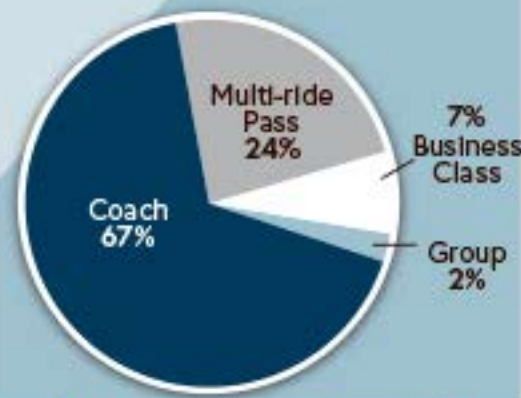
- » Highest revenue in Amtrak Downeaster history.
- » Broke records in 9 of 12 months.
- » 136% Increase over 2006.

### RIDERSHIP

- » Second highest ridership in Amtrak Downeaster history.
- » Broke records in 6 of 12 months.
- » 87% Increase over 2006.



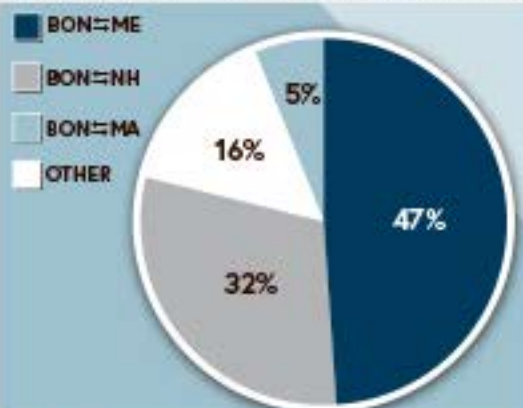
RIDERSHIP BY PASSENGER TYPE



RIDERSHIP BY TICKET TYPE

019

## 84% OF ALL RIDERS TRAVEL TO/FROM BOSTON



RIDERSHIP BY DESTINATION



TOTALS: PETS &amp; BIKES



MULTI-RIDE PASSES

## PASSENGER ON TIME PERFORMANCE\*



\*October 2018 - June 2019

## OVERALL SATISFACTION



The Downeaster maintains one of the highest customer satisfaction ratings in the country.

## WHY PASSENGERS RIDE THE DOWNEASTER

33% Work/Business

21% Leisure/Recreation

19% Visit Family/Friends

13% Event

7% School

Other 4%

Medical 3%



## PROMOTIONS - PASSENGER UTILIZATION

50% Off

26,545  
SENIOR DISCOUNT

50% Off

4,598  
DISABILITY DISCOUNT

Discounted Rate To Boston

733  
CANCER CARE FARE



# financial performance

**FY19 WAS A YEAR OF SOLID FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE WITH THE HIGHEST REVENUE IN AMTRAK DOWNEASTER HISTORY.**

## TICKET REVENUE

Ticket revenue of **\$10,280,700**, which represented **88%** of all revenue, was the highest in Downeaster history, with a record-breaking average fare per passenger of \$18.73. Overall revenue of **\$11,712,285** was only 0.4% less than budgeted.

## OPERATING EXPENSES

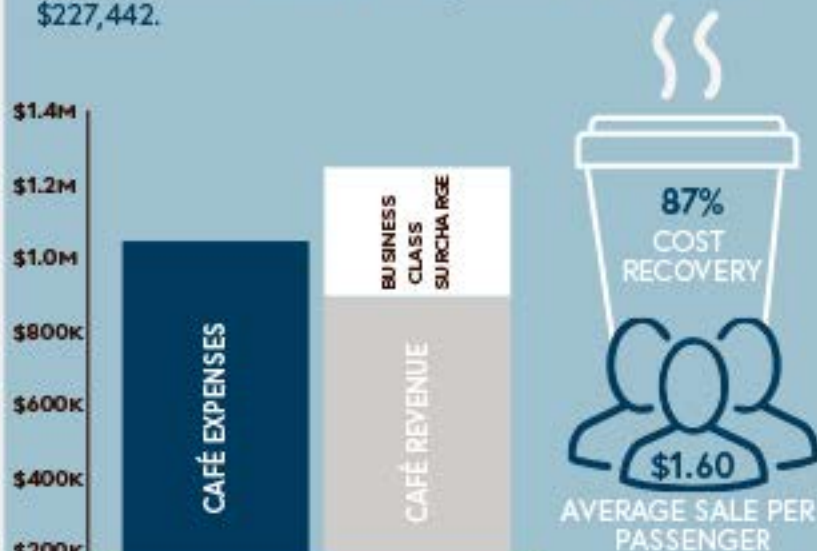
Operating Expenses of **\$22,885,921** were approximately 7% less than budgeted.

## NET FUNDING

The net funding required of **\$11,173,636** was approximately **\$1.6M** or (12.5%) less than budgeted.

## DOWNEASTER CAFÉ

Café sales of **\$876,463** were also the highest on record, with an average sale per passenger of \$1.60. Café expenses of **\$1,005,121** were within 1% of budget projections. Overall, the Café cost recovery rate of 87% was also within 1% of budget. The net cost of the café of **\$128,658**, was offset by the **\$356,100** Business Class surcharge for a net revenue of **\$227,442**.





# our network

NNEPRA facilitates the coordination between transit agencies to deliver a seamless travel experience.



Boston North Station Pedestrian Tunnel



Improved access to Boston destinations and Amtrak's NE corridor.



Enhanced partnerships with Portland region transit.



MBTA Charlie Cards & Metro Breez bus passes available in the Downeaster Café.

## KEEPING NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND CONNECTED

The Amtrak Downeaster is an integral part of Maine's transportation network and connects people and businesses to markets beyond our borders. NNEPRA promotes a variety of multimodal transit options that provide customers with easy and convenient access to a variety of locations.



The **Boston North Station Pedestrian Tunnel** opened in January 2019, enabling Downeaster passengers to connect from North Station to Amtrak services to New York City, Washington DC, and beyond without ever stepping outside in Boston.

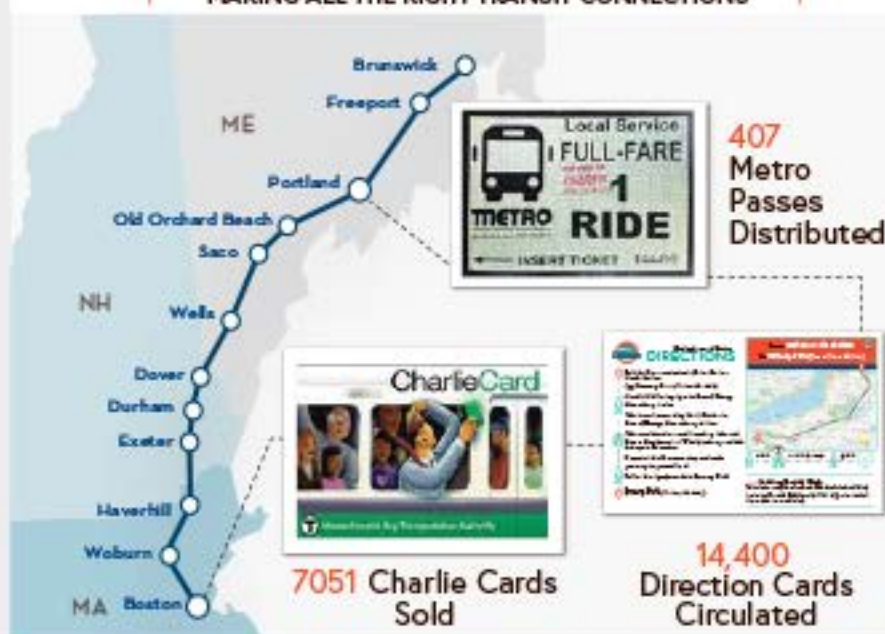


**MBTA transit Charlie Cards** are available for sale in the Downeaster Café, as well as direction cards to a number of popular attractions to simplify last mile connectivity for passengers.



The **Amtrak Downeaster** and **METRO Breez** partnered to increase travel options and expand flexibility with an integrated schedule and seamless fare structure. In addition, NNEPRA provides METRO tickets at no cost to Downeaster passengers alighting in Portland.

## MAKING ALL THE RIGHT TRANSIT CONNECTIONS





# capital projects & performance improvements

## ROYAL SIDING DOUBLE TRACK PROJECT

Construction continued on the Royal Siding double track throughout 2019, with the project set to be complete by the end of FY20. The Project, funded by FTA and MaineDOT, includes the construction of a 4-mile section of double track in Falmouth and Cumberland and will facilitate the reliable operation of ten daily Downeaster trains between Brunswick and Portland. Pan Am Railways and Amtrak modified their schedules to permit all Downeaster trains to begin operating north of Portland in FY19 in advance of the completion of the project, but the resulting conflicts and delays further demonstrated the need for the additional track capacity.



## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

NNEPRA and Pan Am Railways partnered to replace 15,000 ties between Wells, ME and Dover, NH during September and October 2018. The six-week project required alternate service plans which included bus transportation between segments of the line and the cancellation of 53 trains. Ridership and revenue during September and October 2018 were impacted by the service interruptions.

## FY19 PROJECTS

### Rockingham Siding & Grade Crossing Rehabilitation

NNEPRA was awarded a grant from the New Hampshire Department of Transportation to rehabilitate a passing siding, known as Rockingham Siding, in Newfields, NH. The two-mile siding, which had not been rehabilitated to passenger standards, was used as a meet location for Downeaster trains.

The ten mile per hour speed limit on the siding required a ten minute schedule change for impacted trains. Work on the siding commenced in summer of 2019 and is expected to be substantially complete by the end of the year.

In addition, NNEPRA and Pan Am Railways partnered on the rehabilitation of five public road crossings. These projects, among several others throughout the fiscal year, help to assure the railroad remains in a state of good repair.

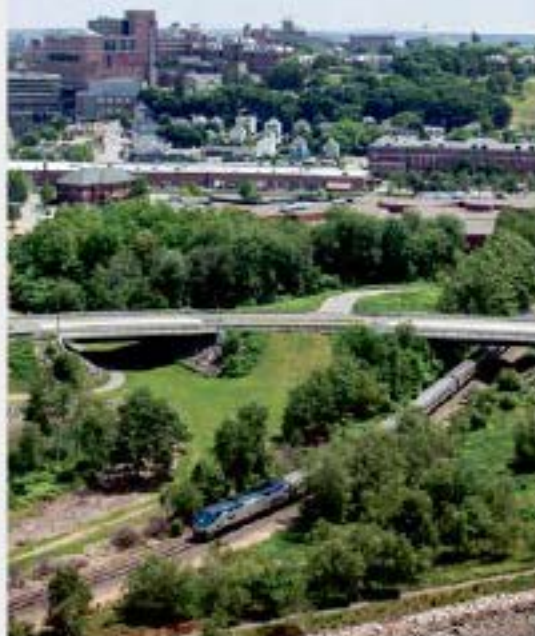


NNEPRA manages a variety of capital projects in collaboration with MaineDOT, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), to sustain, improve and grow the Maine to Boston connection. Continued investment and improvements to increase frequency, reduce travel time, expand service and improve safety have directly stimulated Amtrak Downeaster growth as well as supported freight movement.



# moving forward >>

The NNEPRA team is committed to the sustained growth of the Amtrak Downeaster and is exploring innovative ways to improve mobility, advance safety, support a growing economy and provide value for the people of Maine and Northern New England.



NNEPRA appreciates the financial support provided by the State of Maine, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), as well as Pan Am Railways, the MBTA and Amtrak, that enable us to plan and execute projects to improve reliability, enhance safety, and expand service.



Pan Am  
Railways



Massachusetts Bay  
Transportation Authority



Federal Transit Administration  
Federal Railroad Administration

## « Initiatives under consideration to support and enhance existing Amtrak Downeaster service



### Inbound Commuter Service

Capacity improvements to **improve reliability** are underway. The Wells Siding Project will support a new morning inbound Downeaster train between Wells and Brunswick making the Downeaster a **car-free commuter option** for workers in Maine. Project funding is being pursued.



### Portland Station Improvements

NNEPRA is exploring mainline station alternatives which will **improve Downeaster connectivity** to and within the greater Portland region by **reducing overall travel time** and decreasing bottlenecks.



### Amtrak Downeaster Coastal Connection

Efforts are currently underway for a 2020 pilot program introducing **seasonal weekend service** to Bath, Wiscasset, Newcastle and Rockland.



### West Falmouth/Exit 53 Station Stop

NNEPRA is exploring an additional Downeaster stop in West Falmouth at exit 53, which **provides improved connectivity** from the I-95 corridor and reduces parking demand in Portland.

## « Planning initiatives that explore the potential for new passenger rail services in Maine



### Lewiston/Auburn Passenger Rail Service Plan

NNEPRA managed for MaineDOT, the development of a Service Plan for **commuter rail service between L/A and Portland** which identified ridership potential, outlined corridor options and estimated costs. Next steps, currently unfunded, include an economic evaluation to explore how **investment in rail service could benefit the region**.



### Portland-Westbrook Rail Shuttle Feasibility Study

In partnership with private developers, NNEPRA completed a high-level feasibility study of a rail shuttle between Westbrook and Portland, **connecting high-density developments** with the downtown and local transit options.





The Amtrak Downeaster is a service made possible with funding through the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA).



**NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND  
PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY**

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