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Press Release

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LIRR

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MTA LIRR 2006 Year-End Ridership Up, Highest Since 2002; on Time Performance Best in Four Years

In 2006, the MTA Long Island Railroad achieved its highest ridership since 2002, with 82.1 million customers riding LIRR trains. The figure represents a 2.4 percent increase over 2005, when 80.1 million riders were carried.

The ridership gains round out a year of improved performance, with 2006 bringing the Railroad its best year-end on-time performance figures since 2002. On-time performance for calendar year 2006 was 93.3 percent - a significant increase over 2005's 92.2 percent ranking.

MTA Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer Elliot Sander said, "I am encouraged by these figures. They indicate an agency that is heading in the right direction. The ridership increase is a good indication of the strength of the New York region's economy and the efforts of MTA agencies to encourage the use of mass transportation to enhance our region's mobility. All of us at the MTA will continue moving forward to further improve service for the people of the New York metropolitan area."

The year-end on-time performance figure was among the best in the 28 years that the current on-time performance methodology has been in place. Only 2002 (94.0 percent) and 1992 (93.7 percent) ranked higher than 2006.

In 2005, the Railroad logged 18,339 late trains. In 2006, that number was down to 16,228 -- an improvement of 2,111. The year-end figure is especially noteworthy in light of the fact that the LIRR increased its service in 2006, operating a total of about 242,000 trains, versus approximately 234,000 trains in 2005.

"The fact that we registered significant gains in on-time performance even while operating 8,000 additional trains is due in large measure to the dedicated efforts of LIRR employees and the customer-first approach they bring to their jobs," noted LIRR Acting President Ray Kenny.

Kenny also credited the new M-7 fleet of electric rail cars, which has proven to be even more reliable than anticipated. The Mean Distance Between Failures for the M-7 fleet was nearly 300,000 miles through November 2006, while the goal for 2006 was 110,000 miles. Mean Distance Between Failures is a measure of fleet reliability referring to the number of miles a rail car travels before experiencing a failure that results in a delay.

The M-7 fleet has achieved better-than-expected MDBF results since it began arriving on the property in 2002 to replace the aging fleet of M-1 electric cars built in the late 1960s. At the end of 2007, the Railroad expects to have taken delivery of all 836 of the M-7 cars.

The positive ridership trend was evident throughout the year, with 10 of the 12 months of 2006 registering higher ridership than the same month of 2005. The gains were seen in both the commutation and non-commutation customer segments. Traditional commutation ridership -- those customers purchasing monthly or weekly tickets -- was 48.5 million for 2006, a 1.7 percent increase over 2005's figure of 47.7 million. Non-commutation ridership achieved even greater gains, reaching 33.5 million in 2006, versus 32.4 million in 2005, a 3.5 percent increase.

In the commutation market, there were 20,000 more monthly tickets sold in 2006 than in 2005. The improvement in the commutation market was positively influenced by gasoline prices and job gains in New York City, with 2006 yielding 54,200 new jobs in the city -- including a 2.1 percent increase in the Financial Activities sector and a 1.5 percent increase in the Professional & Business Services sector. Together, these two job categories make up 55 percent of LIRR commuter ridership.

Among the largest increases in the non-commutation market were in the sales of one way off peak tickets, which increased 3.4 percent, from 17.5 million in 2005, to 18.1 million in 2006; peak ten trip tickets, which saw an 11 percent sales increase in 2006; off peak ten trip tickets, up 5.7 percent in 2006; and off peak family fare tickets, up 5.9 percent in 2006.

Mr. Kenny noted, "The combination of renewed economic vitality in New York City, increased gas prices, and improved service on the Railroad all contributed to this positive ridership trend. People are seeing, once again, that the Railroad is not only a convenient way to get to work, but also a convenient and efficient way to visit the attractions of Long Island and New York City."

The MTA Long Island Rail Road is North America's largest commuter railroad, serving 282,400 customers on 735 trains each weekday.

A train is considered on time if it reaches its final destination within 5 minutes and 59 seconds of its scheduled arrival time. This standard measure, used throughout the commuter rail industry, was adopted by the LIRR in 1979.

