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IMMEDIATE

Customers Give MTA Metro-North Railroad Record High Ratings

Overall customer satisfaction with MTA Metro-North Railroad in its largest market (inbound customers traveling on its Hudson, Harlem and New Haven Lines) climbed to 94% in 2008, setting a record high for the second year in a row.

In addition, it marked the fourth consecutive year that customer satisfaction has increased according to Metro-North's annual customer satisfaction survey. The survey is conducted each Fall and is jointly sponsored by the railroad and its partners – the Connecticut Department of Transportation, the Metro-North Rail Commuter Council and the Connecticut Metro-North New Haven Rail Commuter Council.

Fully half the customers surveyed said that they were very satisfied with Metro-North overall which is the first time in the history of the survey that this level has been reached.

Another milestone was attained with 90% of New Haven Line customers saying they were satisfied with Metro-North overall for the first time. Satisfaction has been steadily increasing on the New Haven Line since 2005, with a total gain of 8 points over that span. In addition, satisfaction among peak New Haven Line customers improved by 4 points over 2007.

With 90% of New Haven Line customers satisfied, now for the first time in the history of the survey, 90% or more of the customers on all three East of Hudson lines - the Hudson, Harlem, and New Haven Lines - were satisfied with the railroad, as high satisfaction scores for the Hudson and Harlem Lines were maintained in 2008.

"From superb on-time performance to new electronic display signs to industry-leading mechanical reliability, I am pleased that Metro-North Railroad's efforts to improve customer service are being recognized by its customers," said Elliot G. Sander, Executive Director and CEO of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. "Our MTA-wide efforts to improve customer service also emphasize customer engagement through initiatives like this customer survey. This is an area where Metro-North has led the way."

With the Courtesy and Responsiveness of Employees service category receiving an astounding 98% satisfaction rating, MTA Metro-North President Howard Permut stated, "Our highest-ever customer satisfaction was achieved through the hard work and dedication of our employees, our cooperation with Metro-North's unions, and the partnerships we have forged with the Connecticut Department of Transportation and New Jersey Transit. We will continue to listen to our customers through the survey and other means in order to fulfill Metro-North's reputation of providing excellent service."

In terms of the "direction" of the railroad (whether it's getting better or worse) 89% of inbound customers said the railroad was getting better or the same as a year ago. More customers felt that the railroad had improved than thought it had gotten worse.

There was improvement among inbound customers in most of the seven major service categories tracked by the survey, capped, as in past years, by Grand Central Terminal and the Courtesy and Responsiveness of Employees. Both of these categories satisfied 98% of customers. The category of overall conditions on trains had the largest increase, 3 points, compared to last year.

Among the factors that explain the favorable responses include a strong on-time performance level of 97.8% system wide year-to-date through September, which includes the mid-September survey distribution period, introduction of rehabilitated rail cars and consistent maintenance of the entire fleet, improved car availability especially on the New Haven Line, completion of numerous station projects and elevated levels of customer communications.

Overall customer satisfaction also rose in two other key markets measured in the survey with a record high of 96% customer satisfaction in the reverse peak and satisfaction with West of Hudson service rising by 2 points to 89% from 2007. (West of Hudson service includes the Pascack Valley and Port Jervis Lines, operated by NJ Transit under contract to Metro-North)

Customer satisfaction on the Port Jervis Line increased by 5 points over 2007. Focus groups conducted in Spring 2008 enabled the railroad to work closely with NJTRANSIT to develop and implement programs to address customer concerns. Both railroads worked together to improve train car availability (providing more seats), car cleanliness and customer communications. These improvements helped drive the increase in West of Hudson satisfaction.