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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

Survey Finds 93% of Metro-North Customers are Satisfied with Service

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Customers of MTA Metro-North Railroad, surveyed in June, said overwhelmingly that they were satisfied with the train service. A whopping 93% said they were happy with Metro-North overall.

The railroad surveys a sampling of trains across all lines and times to identify areas that need improvement and to help guide its investments decisions. Questions concern a range of topics from comfort, seat availability, and scheduling, to on-time performance and employees courtesy.

"We at Metro-North are gratified that our customers are for the most part happy about taking our trains and that our front line employees continue to get extremely high ratings - 96% are satisfied with the courtesy and responsiveness of employees," said Metro-North President Howard Permut.

"We will increase our efforts to improve in areas customers are least satisfied with, such as the perennial problems - toilets, both on trains and in stations, and communications during disruptions," Permut added.

Customer satisfaction is highest on the Harlem Line at 97% and the Hudson Line at 96%, while the New Haven lags at 88%, largely due to the age of its fleet of railcars and a chronic shortage of cars. This rating is expected to improve dramatically when the new M-8 fleet of 342 rail cars is introduced in the near future.

(The ratings are weighted by ridership and the low rating on the New Haven line, which is the busiest, brings down the overall satisfaction rating to 93 %.)

On the two lines west of the Hudson, which are operated by NJ Transit under contract to Metro-North, the Port Jervis Line satisfaction rating is 84%, owing mainly to complaints about scheduling, and the Pascack Valley Line is 93%, higher because of the recent expansion of service with increased frequency.

Back on the East of Hudson side, among time periods, weekday off-peak and weekend off-peak got the highest ratings at 95% each, followed by the reverse peak at 93% and inbound AM peak at 92%. By line segment, the Upper Harlem and Lower Hudson each scored 98% satisfaction. The lowest ratings went to the Outer New Haven at 88% and the Inner New Haven at 89%.

Customer priorities identified by the survey have led Metro-North to initiate program to address those concerns.

For example, customers want more parking at their home boarding station. Metro-North is in the midst of a construction project that will add 750 spaces at the Cortlandt Station on the Hudson Line, and the Connecticut DOT is in the process of building a new station with 1,400 spaces in Fairfield.

"The customer survey is a useful tool to help Metro-North decide where to focus its efforts and its resources both in personnel and money," Permut said.

"Because of these findings, we intend to conduct focus groups to investigate restroom cleanliness on trains and at Grand Central, as we plan to implement a new program to renew restrooms at outlying stations."