



MTA Press Releases

[Select Language](#) | ▼

Press Release

October 24, 2011

[Metro-North](#)

IMMEDIATE

Metro-North to Resume Full Port Jervis Line Service November 28th

Flood Repairs Ahead of Schedule and Below Earlier Cost Estimate

An extraordinary, ongoing rebuilding effort on the Port Jervis Line has expedited the resumption of full service by an entire month with through trains now set to begin on November 28, Metro-North President Howard Permut announced today.

Since the end of August, when flooding associated with Tropical Storm Irene devastated 14 miles of the Port Jervis Line, track repairs have been underway by Metro-North's own workforce. The progress of this effort has been so great that the amount of work that still needs to be done by a third party contractor has been significantly reduced.

In addition, the cost of repairs, substitute bus service and lost revenue currently is estimated between \$30 million and \$40 million, less than the original \$60 million estimate.

"Since Irene, Metro-North's top priority has been the restoration of train service on the Port Jervis Line and thanks to the tireless work of the railroad's own employees, we are very pleased to announce that full, through train service will be restored a month earlier than expected. We invite our customers to come back to Metro-North and thank them for their patience during this crisis."

On November 28, Metro-North trains will return to the full pre-storm schedule of 26 daily trains and 14 trains each weekend day and the interim train-bus-train service will cease.

Until then, Metro-North will continue to operate 17 trains daily between Port Jervis and Harriman, representing 65% of regular weekday train service. This train shuttle service began September 19. Trains from Port Jervis connect at Harriman with express bus service to NJTRANSIT's Ramsey/Route 17 for trains to Hoboken, Secaucus and Penn Station. The schedule provides some peak period train service only. Buses continue to provide service for the remaining trains and on weekends.

"This alternate service has been working very well, thanks in part to the resources of MTA Bus," Permut said. "NJTRANSIT and Leprechaun Lines also have been very helpful and cooperative during this crisis." Permut said. "I'd also like to give special thanks to Orange and Rockland counties for their patience and understanding during this extraordinary catastrophe."

A number of factors contributed to the accelerated timetable.

A declaration of emergency by the MTA Chairman authorized Permut to initiate expenditures, procurements and repairs in the most expedited manner possible, including negotiating property easements to gain access to the right-of-way.

The railroad cited excellent cooperation from the Village of Sloatsburg, which provided land that allowed the railroad to accept delivery of stone and enabled track workers to build an access road to bring stone and heavy equipment to the damaged right-of-way.

Several other property owners also cooperated with the railroad to provide property easements so that Metro-North workers and heavy machinery were able to reach the tracks.

Four local quarries were hired to delivery stone. Heavy machinery was rented and emergency contractors were hired to work alongside Metro-North forces.

In addition, maintenance of way workers were able to salvage significant amounts of stone and ballast (the loose rock that is placed between ties to stabilize them), which had washed away, but was deposited sandbar-like not too far away.

An engineering assessment by AECOM earlier determined that it would take about 150,000 tons of stone - roughly 5,000 tractor-trailer-sized dump trucks - to stabilize the track bed and shore up the river bank for the long term.

Much of the 150,000 tons of stone that had to be moved was salvaged from the stream bed by Metro-North maintenance of way employees using bulldozers and backhoes. This effort greatly reduced the amount of stone that had to be purchased and delivered.

In all, there were 50 washouts that added up to 2 miles of right-of-way gone in the 14-mile stretch between Suffern and Harriman that was most severely damaged.

Fast-moving water topped the tracks and scoured away ballast, sub-base and earth to depths of 7 feet. Large sections of track hung in mid-air; some track was grossly twisted out of alignment by the force of the water.

Because of the expedited engineering report, the railroad was able to solicit competitive bids for the work not done by railroad employees and an expedited award was made October 12 to Halmar, of Pearl River, for \$10.5 million to cover the remaining work.

Halmar currently is working in the Sloatsburg area to repair Track 2, the first track that will be put back into service. This means continuing to fill in wash outs, finishing culvert installations and completing critical bridge repairs.

Although full train service will resume November 28, much work still needs to be done, including stabilizing the river bank along the right-of-way, building retaining walls and other flood mitigations.

Given the tremendous progress made to date, the original estimate for completion of all Port Jervis line repairs has been moved forward from fall 2012 to June 2012.

Periodic off-peak and weekend train outages with substitute busing will be needed to allow for the second phase of work to begin.

Meanwhile, Metro-North continues to work with the MTA to seek maximum reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and insurance.