



MILEPOSTS

A Newsletter for MTA Metro-North Railroad Customers

February 2018

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Ten Things to Love About 2017

In honor of Valentine's Day, we take a quick look back at some of the improvements we made in 2017 to make your commute with us safer, more reliable, and hopefully more pleasant.



We Were Safer...

Some of the initiatives we undertook to keep you safe included:

- Continuing to implement **National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) recommendations**, while working with both the NTSB and other MTA agencies to ensure the coordination of industry best and safe practices;
- Providing **training to some 1,450 public first responders** (fire, police, and EMS) in a classroom and field environment;
- Progressing plans for the installation of **Positive Train Control (PTC)**, which is regarded as the most modern type of train protection;
- And continuing **TRACKS, our Safety education/community outreach program** to promote grade crossing awareness and rail safety to schools, busing and trucking companies as well as the communities the railroad serves. *(The program reached over 134,000 of you in 2017).*



...And More Reliable...

Our **system-wide on-time performance** for 2017 operated above goal at **93.4%** and train delay minutes were reduced by 4.8% from 2016.

The Hudson Line
performed at **93.6%**,

The Harlem Line
at **94.9%**

The New Haven Line
at **92.1%**.

Numerous challenges to our service delivery that were overcome throughout 2017 include aggressive track inspections and maintenance requiring temporary speed restrictions and ongoing catenary replacement on the east end of the New Haven Line.

...While Going the Distance...

We maintained a high mean distance between failure (MDBF) — the distance a train travels before experiencing a mechanical problem — of 193,883 miles. That makes our MDBF average for the last 3 years a very consistent 203,497 miles. Contributing factors include the performance of the new M8 fleet on the New Haven Line and aggressive car and locomotive maintenance programs. This also resulted in a consist compliance rate — **the percentage of cars in service every day providing seats for the railroad's customers** — of **99%**.



...And Carrying More of You...

Our preliminary annual ridership is approximately **86.5 million rides**, the highest in the railroad's history (*higher than the 2016 number of 86.2 million, by 300,000 rides*).



Total annual **East-of-Hudson ridership was approximately 84.9 million**, also the highest in Metro-North history (*surpassing 2016's record of 84.5 million by approximately 0.4 million rides*).

2017 was a record-setting year for the Harlem and the Hudson Lines,

which surpassed the 2016 record with **increases of 200,000 and 400,000 rides**, or 27.8 and 16.9 million annual rides respectively.

Contributing to our overall total was our **West-of-Hudson annual ridership (1.6 million)** and ridership on our **(Metro-North managed) connecting services (587,000)**.

...While Making Tracks...

We advanced our track work initiative, a system-wide effort that has rebuilt miles of the railroad in the last four years, resulting in safer and more reliable service.



In 2017, we...

- replaced **42,231 ties**, • laid **9.9 miles** of continuous welded rail,
- rebuilt **36 switches**, • performed **2,242 welds** on joints that connect rails with one another,
- renewed and/or upgraded **12 railroad crossings** (11% of all the crossings in the network).

Although such extensive track work brings an increased probability of train delays, we adjusted our train schedules to accommodate off-peak and weekend track outages.

...And Getting Ready to Do Some Self Improvement...

Safer, cleaner, brighter and easier to navigate stations are on their way for those of you traveling from White Plains, Harlem-125th Street, Crestwood, Port Chester and Riverdale stations as part of our Enhanced Stations Initiative.

The MTA Board approved a **\$90.8 million design-build contract** to the firm Halmar International to make state-of-the-art enhancements to five stations, setting the stage for similar improvements to other Metro-North stations in the future. Construction gets underway this year.

The general scope of the work includes

Upgrades at White Plains include

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • new signage | • improvements to customer restrooms | • improved station entrances |
| • platforms | • Wi-Fi and cellular connectivity | • a new elevator |
| • energy efficient LED lighting | | • new interior wall panels |
| • USB chargers | | • artwork |
| | | • floor tiles |
| • station dashboards and totems to provide convenient access to information | | • ceiling tiles and fixtures |

...And Showing the Bronx Some Love...



In an effort to build ridership and provide Bronx residents with more convenient travel options, we implemented a pilot program in 2016 that increased service at the Tremont and Melrose stations from a two-hour frequency to hourly frequency during off-peak and weekend travel times. The service day was also extended, with earlier inbound service on weekdays and significantly later outbound service on weekdays and weekends.

During the pilot period, **overall ridership at the two stations increased by 81%**, with an increase in weekday ridership of 67% and an increase in weekend ridership of 101%.

With the success of the program the increased service at Melrose and Tremont is now permanent.

...While Getting Greener...

Metro-North and the Hudson River Valley Greenway held public meetings on the anticipated Beacon Rail Trail, which will revitalize a little-used rail line that runs east-west across Dutchess and Putnam Counties, N.Y. Known as the **Beacon Line** or the **Maybrook Branch**, it connects with our Hudson Line at Beacon, and runs parallel with the Harlem Line north of Southeast.

The Rail Trail will be a shared-use bicycling and pedestrian path running along a **23 mile portion of the Beacon Line Corridor from Brewster to Hopewell Junction**, connecting with the Dutchess Rail Trail.

The proposed trail will typically be 12 feet wide and surfaced with asphalt. Appropriate treatments will be installed at all road crossings to provide safe trail use. Metro-North will oversee design and construction of the project, which is slated to start in the spring of 2019.



...And Staying Positive...

We moved forward with the installation of **Positive Train Control (PTC)** on our territory., which is regarded as a significant improvement to existing train protections.

Installation of wayside CSE transponders components has been completed on

[The Hudson Line](#)

[The Harlem Line](#)

[The New Haven Line](#)

between Grand Central and Spuyten Duyvil between Mott Haven and Woodlawn between Mott Haven and New Haven including the New Canaan Branch

Wayside CSE transponders (similar to EZ-Pass Tags) convey the speed limit for the next section of track a train is entering. Installation of the remaining CSE transponders will be completed in March.

A full PTC pilot program is set to begin on the Hudson Line late summer 2018. And we expect to be in federal compliance by the December 31, 2018 deadline.

...And We Did it Without Wires!

We continued to roll out new **wireless station LCD (liquid crystal display) monitors**. The new cellular LCD monitors display the next nine trains that arrive at the station, the stops they will make, departure times, real-time train status and track information. Stations completed in 2017 included Scarborough, Irvington, Cortlandt, Woodlawn, Williams Bridge, Hawthorne, Croton Falls, Purdy's and Valhalla, bringing the total number of stations equipped with this real-time information to 55.

We are installing these monitors across all East-of-Hudson stations in New York State. Seven stations will be completed in 2018 and the final 11 will be completed in 2019.



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Who Doesn't Love Dogs?

People who might be up to no good, of course.

But the rest of us will love the fact that thirteen canines and their MTA police officers handlers graduated from the department's explosives detection and anti-terrorism training at a ceremony held at Grand Central Terminal in late January.



And what we love best about these dogs — most of them young German Shepherds and Belgian Shepherd mixes — is their noses!

They aren't just cute as buttons, they are powerful, too! A dog's sense of smell is 3,000 to 5,000 times stronger than the human nose (*all the more reason to wear underarm deodorant!*) And that comes in handy for following scents untraceable by humans.

Here is one more thing to love:

Each canine forms a deep, emotional bond with his or her police partner. They not only work together for life, the canine lives with the officer, becoming part of their family. (*It's like a blind date that actually worked out!*)

The dogs are named after fallen police officers, firemen, and armed service members.

Among them is Mac, named in honor of NYPD Detective Steven D. McDonald, who was shot and paralyzed by gunfire in 1986 and who passed away in 2017.

Mac and the remaining dynamic duos are already at work checking out suspicious packages and patrolling all of Metro-North's territory (as well as LIRR, and the Staten Island Railway).

The dogs and their handlers were trained over a 12-week period in Stormville, NY

with state-of-the-art, transit specific training for one of the largest canine explosives detection forces in the country.

With approximately 50 dogs in service, in the last year alone they responded to over 25,000 calls for service and cleared 4,015 unattended packages.

[They don't call them a person's best friend for nothing!](#)

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Safety Rule of the Issue

Soul crooner Jimmy Jones once sang in a smooth falsetto that he could "fix broken hearts" (*making him the true "Handyman" way before James Taylor made the same claim*).

But what about broken arms, legs, and other body parts?

Jimmy and James never mentioned those things while serenading you because they are truly painful and require a doctor, expensive medical bills and extensive recovery time.

But we will. Because slip, trip and fall injuries remain "number one" on our "hit parade" of causes of customer injuries.

So here are some "handy" tips to avoid them:

- **Always watch — and step over — the gap** getting on and off your train!
- **Always use the stair handrails**, especially after rain/snow, when steps and platforms can become wet and slippery.
- **Always walk, never run for your train.** Remember, another one will arrive shortly.
- **Always use the designated walkway/overpass/underpass** to get from your station parking lot to the platform.
- **Always stand back from platform edges.**



We bring you these reminders because your safety is our first priority, and because we don't want you to have to "nurse" anything, including a broken heart, on Valentine's Day, or any other day!

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Sweets for the Sweet and They're Fat Free!

What could be sweeter than taking the one you love on one of our **discount getaways** (*It sure beats giving them a heart-shaped box of chocolates, and it has less calories!*)

Here are a few suggestions to get your heart racing:

This Deal Rocks!

Take our Getaway package to see **School of Rock** on Broadway and save up to \$50 on full priced tickets through May 31!



Not for Eagles Fans Only

Sure the Super Bowl may be over, but you can still "huddle up" with our discount getaway to the **NFL Experience Times Square**.

Get closer than ever to your favorite teams. (*Did we hear Oakland Raiders, anyone?*) Combining immersive content, interactive displays, a state-of-the-art, 4D cinema and other multimedia effects, the experience takes you from the stands to the field.

Schuss!

What can be more romantic than a weekend **getaway to the Thunder Ridge Ski Area**.

Just 70 miles north of Manhattan in Patterson, New York, **Thunder Ridge's** scenic slopes are perfect for all levels of skiers and snowboarders — from beginner to expert. There are slow and gentle trails, as well as advanced trails to challenge the daring and adventurous!



See our **complete "sampler" of Getaways**. They are all sweet deals!

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Courtesy Corner



Everyone who is single wants to look their "best" around Valentine's Day. (*Because married folks don't have to care anymore... for better or worse, they already have someone!*)

But please refrain from tweezing, brushing, clipping, shaving or flossing in public!



Let everyone think you just look that good all the time, and do your "primping" or "manscaping" before you board the train.



It's the courteous thing to do!

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