

MILEPOSTS

A Newsletter for MTA Metro-North Railroad Customers

February 2016

ALL FOR YOU

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Ten Things to Love About 2015

Rather than give you a box of chocolates for Valentine's Day, we've decided to be sensible and present you with some of our accomplishments from 2015, which are the results of our continuing efforts to make your commute safer and more reliable. *(They're also less fattening.)*



- **More of you found us attractive.** Ridership reached record levels. Preliminary figures show total rail ridership was 86.1 million, which was 1.6% higher than the previous year, representing about 1.38 million additional rides. East-of-Hudson ridership increased 1.6%, representing 1.3 million additional rides. All ridership categories showed growth contributing to this record-setting year. The largest ridership increase occurred on the New Haven Line, which jumped to 40.3 million rides — a 1.8% increase over 2014. The Harlem Line experienced a 1.4% increase for a total ridership of 27.5 million. The Hudson Line had a 1.2% increase for a total of 16.4 million. West-of-Hudson ridership increased 4.9%, representing 80,000 thousand more rides. Additionally, connecting services ridership increased overall by 3.8%, representing 20,000 additional rides.



- **We did right by you.** Our right-of-way continued to get safer. Since 2013, we've replaced 97,961 ties, laid 16.5 miles of continuous welded rails, rebuilt 88 switches, renewed and/or upgraded 32 railroad crossings, and performed 2,905 welds on joints that connect stretches of track with one another. This reconstruction work has significantly enhanced the state of our infrastructure, making Metro-North a safer railroad.

- **We were more reliable.** Service reliability improved, with our system-wide, on-time performance reaching 93.5%, which was .5% better than our goal for the year and a solid improvement over 2014's 91.5%.

Hudson Line performed at 94.2%; the Harlem Line performed at 94.3%; and the New Haven Line performed at 92.6%.



AM Peak Service operated at 90.4%; PM Peak Service operated at 95.8%; reverse peak service operated at 94.7%; off-peak service operated at 92.5%, and weekend service operated at 95.8%.

- **We fit you into our schedules.** Our 2015 train schedules improved reliability and made travel more convenient for you while accommodating weekend track outages necessary to perform critical infrastructure maintenance and capital construction projects. *(See "We did right by you" above.)*



- **You were more satisfied.** According to the results of our 2015 Customer Satisfaction Survey, **Overall Satisfaction** with Metro-North jumped 10 points to 83% satisfied. Your rating for **Metro-North Train Service Overall** rose 11 points to 83% satisfied. [See more survey results.](#)

- **We kept giving you new cars.** The rollout of our new M8s on the New Haven Line was completed! With the conditional acceptance of 25 M8 single cars in July, all M4 and M6 triplets were removed from train service. *(They had a good run, but we know you won't miss them!)* M8s now operate during all service periods between New Haven, Stamford and Grand Central Terminal. Of the original order of 380 M8s, funded by Metro-North

and the remaining 342 were built at Kawasaki's plant in Lincoln, Nebraska.

- **We took steps to become more "positive."** We received funding to improve the safety of signal systems. The Federal Railroad Administration approved a loan of \$967.1 million, the largest and lowest-cost financing for the MTA, to finance the installment of Positive Train Control, a technology designed to remove the potential for human error that can lead to train-involved accidents, on our territory and the Long Island Rail Road's.
- **We took things to a new "level."** We received a federal grant of \$20.8 million to harden our Hudson Line against future storm-surge flooding events of the type experienced during Superstorm Sandy. This entails designing and building 92 elevated steel equipment platforms along 30 miles of track from the South Bronx to Croton-Harmon Yard in Westchester, as well as providing for the design and construction of perimeter protection, waterproofing, hardening of substations and train yard buildings, and installation of video and electronic monitoring of our facilities and infrastructure. The grant will be matched by \$6.9 million in MTA funds.



- **We were more efficient.** Grand Central Terminal saw the completion of the MTA's largest ever energy-efficiency project, which will save \$2.5 million in annual energy costs. The upgrades will reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions by more than 11,200 tons a year—the equivalent of removing roughly 2,140 cars from the road. The \$25 million project is the result of a partnership between the New York Power Authority and the MTA and was carried out under Governor Andrew Cuomo's BuildSmart NY program, a statewide initiative to increase energy efficiency in public buildings.

- **We gave you your space(s).** Our new North White Plains Garage opened in October, featuring 500 new additional parking spaces. The biggest "draw" may just be the Electric Vehicle Charging Stations available on the facility's 2nd floor. Other green features include natural lighting, reflective roofing and LED lighting.



As we stated earlier, this partial list reflects our continuing efforts to improve your service. Like the best "valentines," we will keep trying to make things better for you in the coming year, and will report on our progress in future issues of *Mileposts*.

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Communication is the Key to Any Good Relationship...

And that is why the rollout of our new wireless station LCD (liquid crystal display) monitors continues in 2016.

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 that went wireless in 2015 included: Yonkers, Dobbs Ferry, Botanical Garden, Fleetwood, Tuckahoe, North White Plains Parking Garage, Chappaqua, Mt. Kisco, Goldens Bridge, Brewster, Mamaroneck & Port Chester.

And the following stations will be getting the new monitors this year:

Hastings on Hudson, Peekskill, Beacon, New Hamburg, Pleasantville & Katonah.

With an annual budget of \$1.7 million, the selection of stations to receive cellular monitors is based upon several factors including ridership and frequency of service.

Aside from more information, there are other benefits to going cellular.

Previously, when real-time train status information was initially introduced at stations, traditional and more costly hardwired technology was used.

By utilizing wireless connectivity, hands-on work and costs are dramatically reduced and the time to install new monitors is considerably shorter.



Currently there are 35 stations that have monitors which provide real-time information.

Of those, 26 use cellular connectivity to display the information.

As part of the MTA Service Investments, Metro-North is expanding these monitors across all East-of-Hudson stations in New York State.

An average of 10 stations will be completed each year, until the installation project is concluded in 2020.

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Safety Isn't Rocket Science

But we are working with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to help make your commute, and our workplace, safer.

Metro-North recently became the first commuter railroad to provide access to the ground-breaking Confidential Close Call Reporting System (C³RS) to our entire operations workforce.



C³RS represents a partnership between NASA, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), and participating railroad carriers and labor organizations.

More than 4,000 Metro-North employees in our Maintenance of Way and Mechanical Departments gained access to C³RS shortly after the start of the year. The initiative was first rolled out last year to about 1,500 employees in our Transportation Department, including conductors, engineers and rail traffic controllers.

C³RS encourages employees to report any potential safety hazard or breach of procedures that they may observe by providing them with a convenient, non-confrontational, non-punitive and anonymous method to do so.

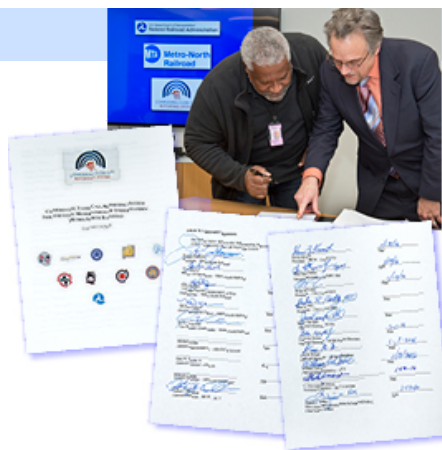
Each incident report goes directly to NASA via an online form. NASA analyzes the details, and "scrubs clean" any identifying factors before presenting it to a Peer Review Team consisting of local representatives from the FRA, Metro-North and participating labor unions. After review, appropriate action is taken to correct any unsafe condition.

At Metro-North, C³RS is one of the many tools we are using to improve safety.

This program confirms how much we depend on our employees to detect potential risks to our operations and to help prevent accidents before they happen. They are the eyes and ears of Metro-North, and their contributions are essential to making our service run safely and efficiently.

Other railroads currently using C³RS include Long Island Rail Road, New Jersey Transit, Amtrak and Strasburg Rail Road. Reporting results from each railroad provide the chance to see industrywide trends in close call incidents.

For more information about C³RS, visit <http://c3rs.arc.nasa.gov/>.



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You Deserve A Bigger Break...

...on the cost of your commute. And federal law now allows a pre-tax transit benefit of up to \$255 per month.

If your pre-tax benefit provider has not already notified you that your account has been updated, you should contact the workplace administrator of your transit benefit program for assistance in modifying your current pre-tax and secondary payments.



See links to information about [alternate payment options](#) available to you from your transit benefit program provider.

Anyone who commutes to work, but is not receiving the pre-tax benefit from their employer should learn more about how to save money by visiting www.commuterchoice.com.

Please note: The MTA no longer accepts prepaid vouchers as a form of payment for MetroCard, or for commuter rail tickets purchased through **Mail&Ride** as well as at Ticket Offices.



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Discount Dating!

Our One-Day Getaway packages are perfect for whisking your Valentine away to some of the region's most romantic attractions. *(And you don't even have to tell them that you are saving money on rail fare and admission. That would spoil the "air of mystery.")* May we suggest the following?



Save 25% on tickets to see the **Westchester Knicks** at the Westchester County Center in White Plains. It's a short, romantic walk from the White Plains Station, and you will be close to the action—on the court!

Everyone loves a winner! So take your date to **Empire City Casino**, where you will find 5,300 slot machines all in one place. Now add electronic table games, harness racing and live entertainment. Did we mention the restaurants and the food court... Our package includes a free shuttle bus and gaming bonus (includes \$10 Free Play and \$10 meal).

Show your date your playful side! (It's your best one.) **Play Fair** at the Javits Center on February 13-14, will feature the best of toys, games, and family entertainment by Hasbro, Mattel, Cartoon Network, Crayola, Toys"R"Us, and more.

[See more great date ideas on our Getaways pages.](#)



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Safety Rule of the Issue

Researchers say falling in love only takes about a fifth of a second.

Ironically, that's probably the same amount of time it takes for you to slip, trip and fall while getting on or off one of our trains.

And while falling in love can leave you feeling "euphoric," falling during your commute can leave you feeling bad, embarrassed, or worse.

We can't help you with your love life (*trust us, you don't want our advice*), but we can provide the following tips to help prevent you from getting "swept off your feet"... literally!

So for the remaining weeks of this winter, we urge you to:

- **Always watch the gap** getting on and off your train.
- **Always watch for icy conditions** in station parking lots, sidewalks, stairs, and platforms. Even if a platform looks clear, it can have icy patches.
- **Always use stair handrails.** Water dripping from overcoats, boots, and umbrellas can ice up with the slightest temperature drop, making stairs very slippery. A firm grip on a handrail can prevent serious injury.
- **Always watch for slippery conditions** even after you board your train. Snow, slush, and ice from boots can make train floors slippery.
- **Always avoid moving from car to car.** Icy conditions exist in the areas between cars.

We bring you these reminders because your safety, on Valentine's Day and every day, is always our first priority.

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Courtesy Corner



Everyone wants to look their best around Valentine's Day.

So go ahead and moisturize, clip those toe nails, trim your hair, floss your teeth... Just don't do any of them while riding on the train. (*You will look bad and repel potential dates.*) Leave the primping for the privacy of your "boudoir."

It's the courteous thing to do!

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