



# Mileposts

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## ***A Publication for MTA Metro-North Railroad Customers March 2014***

### **A Look Back at a Tough Year**

Many of you have asked about our performance in 2013, which was highly inconsistent and unreliable, and was marred by incidents that brought our attention to safety into question.

Our system-wide on-time performance of 94.8% was far below our goal of 97.7%. In a nutshell, our service was less than you deserved and have come to expect from us.

The railroad hasn't performed this poorly since 1996, when service and our fleet were decimated by a major blizzard.

To give you a better understanding of how we fared on a month by month basis, this issue of Mileposts presents a chart chronicling our performance in 2013, and the events that impacted the quality of your service.

If you look at the chart on the next page, you will see that the railroad was off to a great start thanks, in part, to a mild winter, with on-time performance well over 97% for the first four months of the year.

But following the derailment/collision on the New Haven Line in May, service began to slip, with on-time performance remaining below standard for the remainder of the year.

This was due mostly to speed restrictions affecting all three lines, as we intensely focused on track inspection and improvements as a result of the incident.

Most of the initial effort has taken place in the Bronx, in an area where this ongoing track work is critical to the safe and reliable operation of the railroad. Track capacity was reduced by up to 50% during the project, the major portion of which was completed in November.

Other incidents that impacted your service were a freight train derailment in the Bronx on July 18th causing a major service disruption on the Hudson Line; the failure of a Con Edison power feeder failure on September 25th that affected service on the New Haven Line until October 7th, and the tragic December 1 Hudson Line derailment.

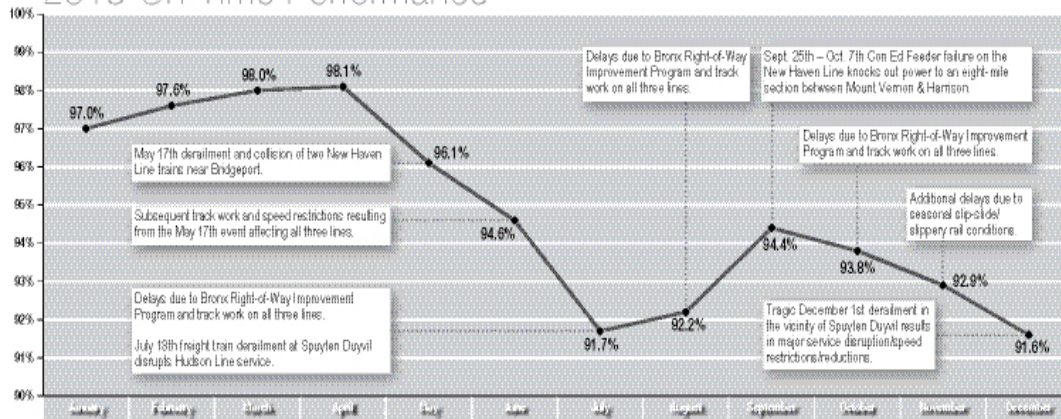
After that incident, we initiated new safety protections directed by Governor Andrew Cuomo in a letter to the MTA and by Emergency Order 29 from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), which included speed restrictions/reductions at multiple locations along our right-of-way.

We have been engaged in an extensive system-wide review of existing safety and operating practices and have aggressively addressed a number of areas. We have used state-of-the-art technology to perform a complete and comprehensive assessment of our track on all three lines. With this information, we have developed prioritized maintenance programs, keeping our right-of-way safe and in a state of good repair.

Metro-North is undertaking numerous steps to restore your confidence in our service and begin getting your commute "back on the right track," which we will be reporting on in upcoming issues of Mileposts.

### **There Were Successes, Too...**

# 2013 On-Time Performance



Even though it was a challenging year, we also recorded significant accomplishments in 2013. Some include:

- East-of-Hudson ridership for 2013 was the highest in the railroad’s history, at 81.8 million, surpassing the previous East-of-Hudson record of 81.5 million rides that was set in 2008. Combined ridership on the East- and West-of-Hudson markets was 83.4 million.
- Mean Distance Between Failure, the amount of miles a train car goes before developing problems that require it to be taken out of service, reached 156,615 (vs. a goal of 155,000 miles).
- The roll-out of the new M8 fleet continued through 2013. Two hundred and ninety two cars were placed into revenue service by the end of December. (To date, we have 302 cars in revenue service. Metro- North’s total order is for 405 cars.) Metro-North and Long Island Rail Road awarded an M9 railcar contract to Kawasaki Rail Car, Inc. in September of 2013. Funding for this procurement is dependent on future approval in the MTA 2015-2019 Capital Program.
- As part of our Station Enhancement Program, we completed upgrades at Crestwood, North White Plains, Valhalla, Hawthorne, Pleasantville and Sloatsburg. Work included painting, lighting replacement, new signage, “scratchitti” window replacement, recycling container rehabilitation, seat replacement and many other elements.
- A free Train Time Mobile App for smartphones debuted, providing customers with real-time train status, schedules, fare and station information. As of mid-February, the app has recorded more than 53,000 installations. The Grand Central Terminal (GCT) App, a handy, and intuitive smartphone application that has a wealth of information about GCT, was also released. Both are for iPhone and Android mobile devices.
- Additional cellular LCD monitors were installed at six stations: Rye, Mount Vernon West, Scarsdale, Crestwood, New Rochelle and Tarrytown. These new monitors display real-time train information and other station information and advisories. Additional real-time cellular displays will be deployed to 5 to 10 New York train stations per year through 2019. The current LED monitors at Stamford were also upgraded to display real-time train information. These station signs display train departure time, destination, track assignment and status.
- The first group of 20 “smart” Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs) were installed at several locations (Stamford Westport, Fairfield, West Haven, New Haven, White Plains, Poughkeepsie, New Hamburg), allowing customers with certain credit cards to “tap and buy.” An additional Ticket Vending Machine Center opened in Grand Central, which featured 9 of the new “smart” machines.
- Sustainability Initiatives not only focused on being “greener,” but also on less costly ways of doing business. These include a partnership with the New York Power Authority resulting in the implementation of several energy efficiency endeavors, such as the Grand Central Terminal Energy Conservation Project. This involves the installation of energy saving HVAC system upgrades, energy-efficient lighting and other energy-saving measures.
- Located midway between Milford and New Haven Stations, West Haven became the first new station to open on the New Haven Line since Fairfield Metro Station was added in 2011. Prior to the building of West Haven Station, the 10 miles between Milford and New Haven stations was the longest gap in the New Haven Line system.
- On the Hudson Line, drainage improvements in Ossining saw a 100-foot-long

## A Word on Our M8s

Have our M8s been experiencing problems this winter?

Yes, just like the rest of our fleet.

But the M8s have not experienced a higher rate of problems given the season’s harsh weather.

Extreme snow and cold have caused certain components on the M8 fleet to fail. These issues are being identified and corrected by the manufacturer under the M8’s warranty. Design changes are being engineered and applied in some cases. (In fact, if this year’s winter had not been so harsh, we might not have identified these problems as quickly.)

Overall, the cars have been performing well in their third year, attaining a Mean Distance Between Failure (MDBF—again, that’s the amount of miles a train car goes before developing problems that require it to be taken out of service) of 216,491 miles. (As of this writing, 302 M8s have been accepted for service by Metro-North.)

In fact, the M8's performance is comparable to the M7's in their third year of service.

It is not unusual for new cars to have some "growing pains" during their first few years of operation, during which modifications to correct problems are made under the warranty.

During the M7's "burn in" period when it was introduced at the Long Island Rail Road, it too experienced a number of issues. (We were fortunate enough to get the second "batch" of those cars, which had most of the bugs worked out.)

However, compared to the M7, the M8 is much more sophisticated—it is the most complex rail car in North America—because it is capable of using overhead AC power (of two different level voltages) as well as DC third rail power.

Since debuting on our territory in 2011, the M8 has undergone roughly 600 modifications to address problems. By comparison, the M7 required 1,000 modifications. (Non-weather related M8 issues have included component failures on various systems, but none of these have created unsafe conditions and corrective actions have been taken.)

When we finally identify and address all the M8's issues with the manufacturer, we expect them to perform beautifully, like our M7s, for years to come.

## Steps to Ensure Your Safety

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) has launched a series of initiatives to improve safety throughout its operations by strengthening reporting responsibilities, emphasizing management oversight and installing automatic speed protections.

The MTA has created the position of Chief Safety Officer, a new senior management post reporting directly to MTA Chairman and CEO Thomas F. Prendergast, to ensure safety is a top priority throughout all the authority's operations.

The MTA is also creating a new Safety Committee on its board to provide focused oversight of safety issues.

In addition, each MTA agency is taking steps to ensure its top safety official reports directly to the agency's president. This will reinforce that safety is a prime concern for every agency's management. Previously at Metro-North Railroad, where safety and security reported to the same position, the responsibilities have been separated and a new position of Chief Safety Officer has been created.

Key among the agency presidents' efforts is emphasizing and improving the safety culture within their organizations, so all operations have safety as their primary objective.

These steps, along with the safety improvements we are enacting throughout our territory (which we have outlined in this and previous issues of Mileposts), are important actions to ensure the MTA, and Metro-North, earns your trust again.

## Safety Rule of the Issue

There are no Olympic gold medals for beating a train to a grade crossing. (Consider taking up curling...)

Always remember:

- Trains and cars don't mix. Never race a train to the crossing — even if you tie, you lose.
- The train you see is closer and faster-moving than you think. If you see a train approaching, wait for it to go by before you proceed across the tracks.
- Be aware that trains cannot stop quickly. Even if the locomotive engineer sees you, a train moving at 55 miles per hour can take a mile or more to stop once the emergency brakes are applied. That's 18 football fields!
- Never drive around lowered gates — it's illegal and deadly. If you suspect a signal is malfunctioning, call the 1-800 number posted on or near the crossing signal or your local law enforcement agency.

We bring you these reminders because your safety—no matter where you are on our territory, train or car—is always our first priority.

## Back in the Batter's Box!

The Bronx Bombers will be putting their pinstripes back on to take on the Baltimore Orioles on Opening Day, April 7 at 1:05 PM.

And Metro-North will be ready with its easy, convenient game-day service to Yankee Stadium. Let us take you out to the ball game without the major league expense of filling up the gas tank, or paying for parking and tolls. (And don't forget the hassle of dealing with all the traffic to Yankee Stadium...we didn't!)

Harlem and New Haven Line fans, and of course, attractive fares (for those who, unlike Masahiro Tanaka, can't afford a private jet to take the family).

Look for our special Yankees–E. 153rd Street Station Game-Day Timetable, available now in Grand Central Terminal and at outlying stations, or visit [mta.info/mnr](http://mta.info/mnr).

On game days, Hudson Line fans enjoy direct service from Grand Central Terminal, Harlem–125th Street Station and outlying Hudson Line stations.

For Harlem and New Haven Line fans, there is direct service from select stations for 7:05 PM weeknight games, as well as for weekend and holiday games.

At other times, Harlem and New Haven Line customers can transfer to Hudson Line trains or special game-day shuttles at Grand Central Terminal or Harlem–125th Street Station for service to the Yankees–E. 153rd Street Station.

Did we mention that train service is provided before, during and after the game? (So, in case newbies Jacoby Ellsbury or Carlos Beltran leads a Yankee blowout, you can leave any time you like.) Or that getting to and from the game is a one-ticket ride from all three lines? Or that you can buy your tickets at any ticket office, from one of our many ticket vending machines or from WebTicket by visiting [mta.info/mnr](http://mta.info/mnr)? (Well, we just did...)

Also, monthly and weekly ticket holders who normally travel to or from Manhattan (on any of the three lines) can travel to or from Yankees–E. 153rd Street Station at no extra charge!

So travel like a pro this season: Take a Metro-North “Train to the Game”!

## Courtesy Corner

Who doesn't love generous people? (Cheapskates, we imagine...)

So feel free to share a joke... share your opinion... even share your sandwich. Just don't share your germs!

It has been brought to our attention that some of your fellow travelers don't cover their coughs and sneezes. Instead they feel free to just “spray” their germs on total strangers.

We plead with these individuals, “Don't be so giving.” Instead:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Don't leave that tissue behind on the train. (No one is going to reuse it!) Take it with you and dispose of it properly.
- If you don't have a tissue, we recommend you sneeze or cough into your sleeve.

It's the courteous thing to do!

### January 2014 On-time Performance\*

Line	AM	PM	Off-Peak		Total	YTD**
			Weekday	Weekend		
Harlem	86.8%	91.9%	88.6%	98.4%	91.2%	91.2%
Hudson	89.5%	87.9%	89.3%	96.9%	90.9%	90.9%
New Haven	76.0%	83.7%	86.3%	95.4%	86.2%	86.2%
System	82.9%	87.4%	87.8%	96.7%	89.0%	89.0%

\*\*Year to date.

\*Arrivals within 5 minutes, 59 seconds of schedule.

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