

Friday, April 4, 2025

Title: The Mountain Division LD-676 ONTP

Subject: Rail Service and path side by side!

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No affiliation

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation,

- Thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts. Some don't think the rail and the rail trail can coexist, you should come out to Fryeburg and take a walk and I will humbly say you will learn it can be done and done right.
- This idea that \$500 is all that is needed, in my opinion, is a trick just to push this bill through on an unsuspecting committee. The "Mountain Division Feasibility Study" estimated it will cost \$1.8-2.1 million to remove the track. This bill's attempt to pull the wool over your eyes with this ridiculous amount of \$500 is deceitful & when they get this over to Appropriations (where the sponsor is the lead from his party on the committee) then they fully fund the other \$1,799,500+ with money we don't have! An honest bill would be up front with the actual costs! This is so deceptive and wrong!
- Removing the tracks will not add serious revenue to the area, in fact the 31 miles from Standish to Fryeburg has little to no local towns to support pedestrians who would need something to eat or a restroom to use. Then the parking lot areas that would need to be constructed for people to park just to get on the trail! It will not bring in the money to even recoup the estimated \$1.8 million! If we build the rail with sidings first, it will bring work to these towns and they will grow.
- Railways always take precedent in these situations! When the rails shut down in the 1980's it was specified and understood that when a railroad wanted to open it back up that it would immediately be granted approval to do so. The "Rail Preservation Act" in my understanding, says that any non-rail use is to be treated as interim (only temporary) until a railroad presents itself. It has been brought to my attention that the

Conway Scenic Railroad has stepped up to do just that. With that in mind, they ought to get the priority in your consideration.

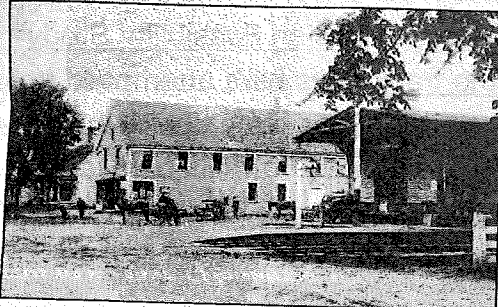
- I'm also submitting part of a recent article from page 13a of the "Conway Daily Sun" dated March 29, 2025 that was written by a local historian who lives over there on the dark side on the other side of the border! 🌍

The article spoke of the time in 1871 that the original tracks were going in within 1 1/2 miles of Brownfield, Maine and he quoted a newspaper article of the day that said "It makes the face of every business man in the vicinity look flushed with excitement," noted a correspondent of the Portland Press.

That summer the railroad reached both Brownfield and North Conway, and two years later, an excursionist noted a profusion of new sawmills that had sprung up along the railbed above Hiram." The town grew up around the tracks.


-The point being obvious it brought business and an economic boom for the region. It will do the same, perhaps to a lesser extent, today. Imagine businesses being located in small towns where people can go across a small town to work instead of commuting all the way into Portland, Gorham, Westbrook, or Scarborough to work. If you are environmentally minded, hundreds of cars not doing the daily round trip commute of +-80 miles ought to really excite you.

Then and Now



THE CONWAY DAILY SUN, Saturday, March 29, 2025 — Page 13a

William Marvel



LEFT: East Brownfield is seen circa 1917. (POSTCARD IMAGE) RIGHT: East Brownfield, 2025. (WILLIAM MARVEL PHOTO)

The train depot that made East Brownfield, Maine

At the time of the Civil War, Brownfield, Maine, had only one village, called Brownfield Center. It sat at the northern foot of Burnt Meadow Mountain, with the usual array of stores, shops, mills and churches perched above or along Sheepscot River, serving the wider agrarian community. The stagecoach from Portland had a regular stop at Brownfield Center, which offered the only hotel within miles. The town hall sat there, and there abode the Brownfield bourgeoisie.

Then, in the spring of 1871, came the railroad. By Memorial Day that year, the tracks of the Portland and Ogdensburg Railroad had reached within two miles of the spot where Brownfield's depot was already being built, a mile and a half east of the vil-

lage. "It makes the face of every business man in the vicinity look flushed with excitement," noted a correspondent of the Portland Press.

That summer the railroad reached both Brownfield and North Conway, and two years later, an excursionist noted a profusion of new sawmills that had sprung up along the railbed above Hiram.

His train rolled into Brownfield soon after he noticed a clear view of Pleasant Mountain, with the hotel at its peak, but the depot still sat in the middle of nowhere. The village, he said, lay out of sight far to the left of travelers on the northbound train, with its location marked by a "high hill," the name of which he didn't know.

Trains stopping in Brownfield often had to linger for

hours as cargo was transferred into wagons and carted away. By 1876, the P&O finally finished a 70-foot-long freight house, allowing for faster unloading, and a few years later a side track was built on the other side of the depot, so cars could be emptied while passenger trains could continue through.

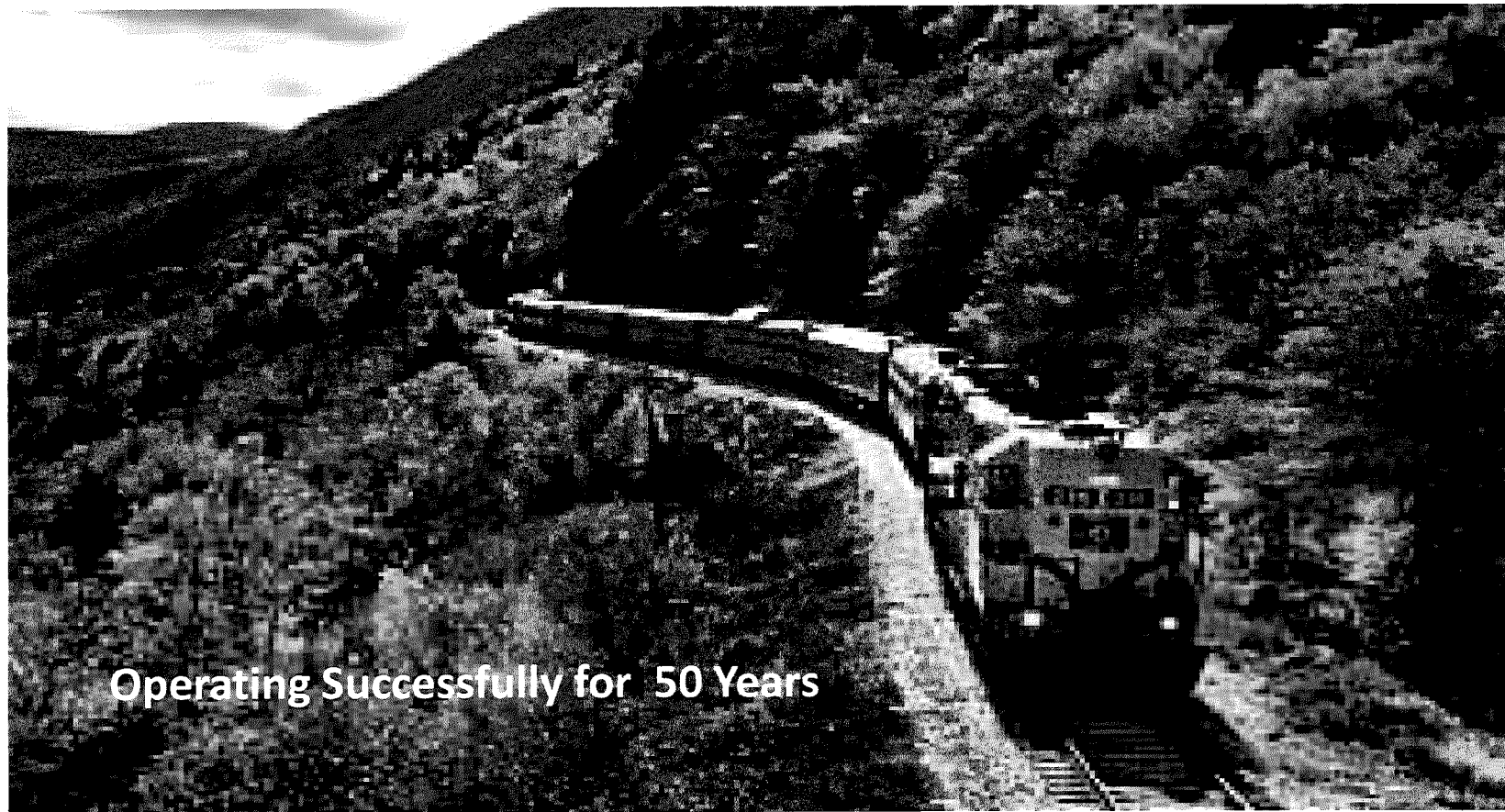
That sidetrack proved too short one day in September of 1881. Two freight cars that couldn't fit were still sitting out on the main track as the 12:46 passenger train approached the station. The engineer's brakes failed, and the locomotive knocked both cars off the track.

By then, a new village had grown up around the

- I want to thank you for your time and your serious consideration in this matter and urge you to vote that LD-676 "Ought **Not** to Pass" Have a blessed day!



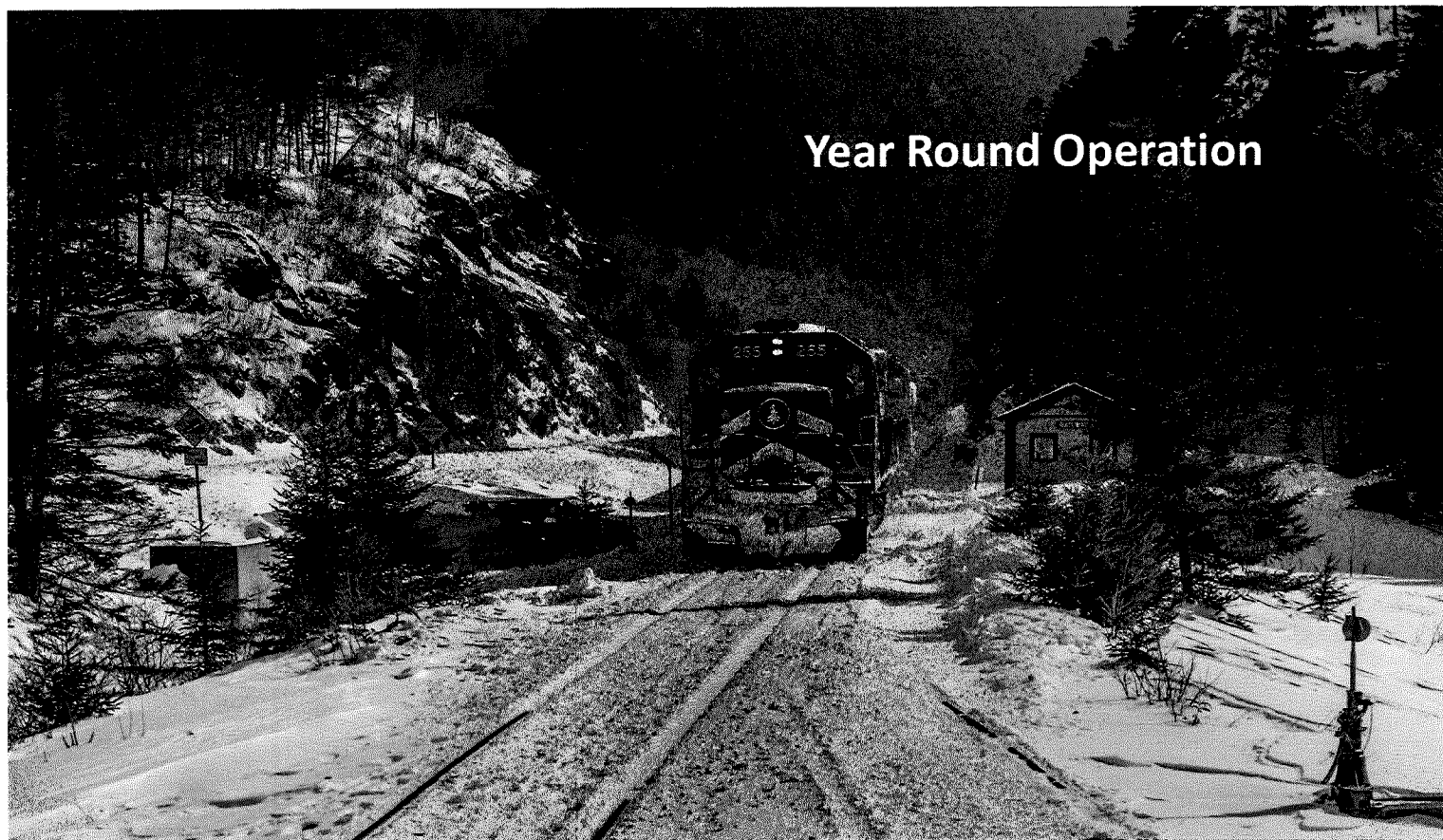
**A Picture is
Worth 1000
Words**

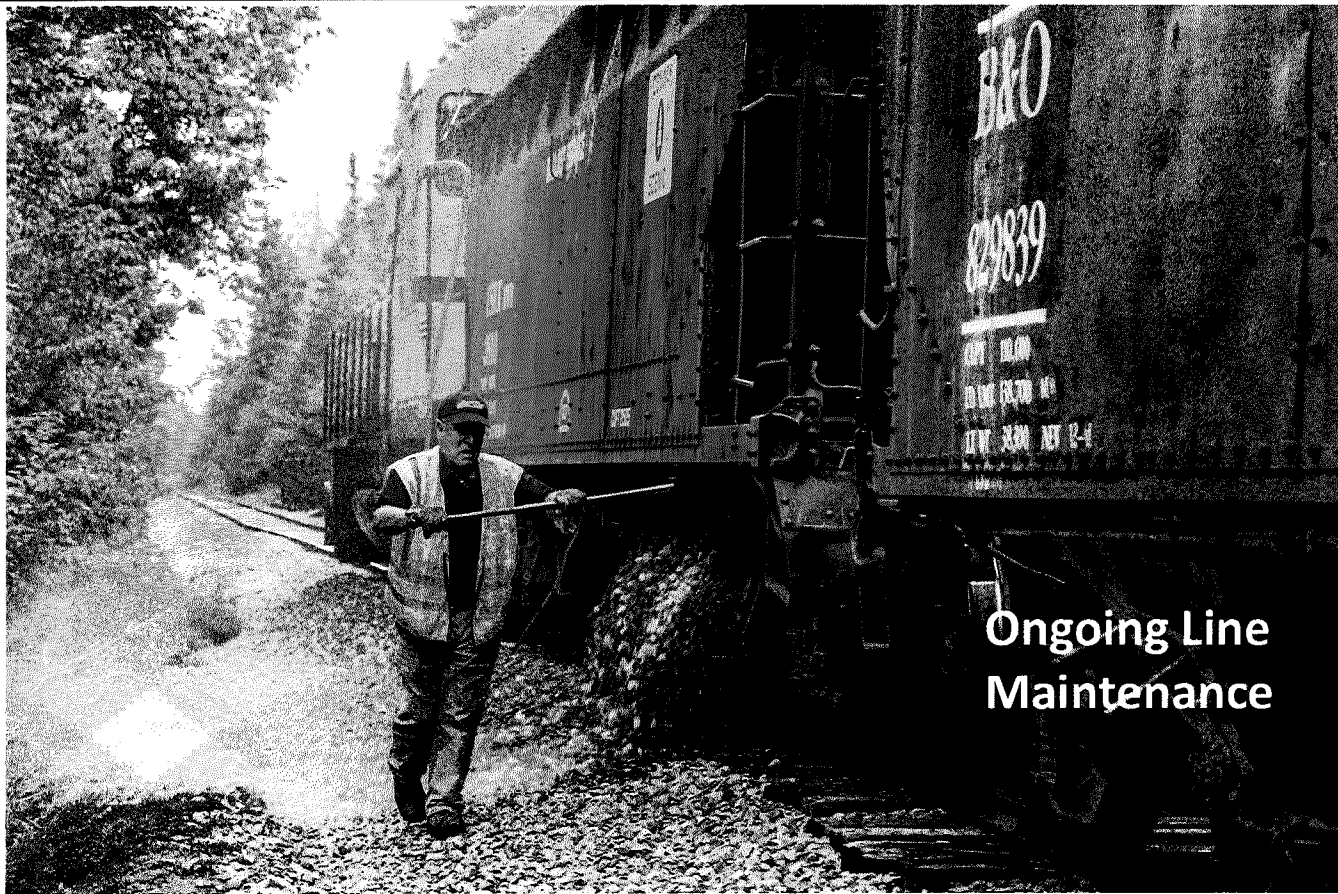


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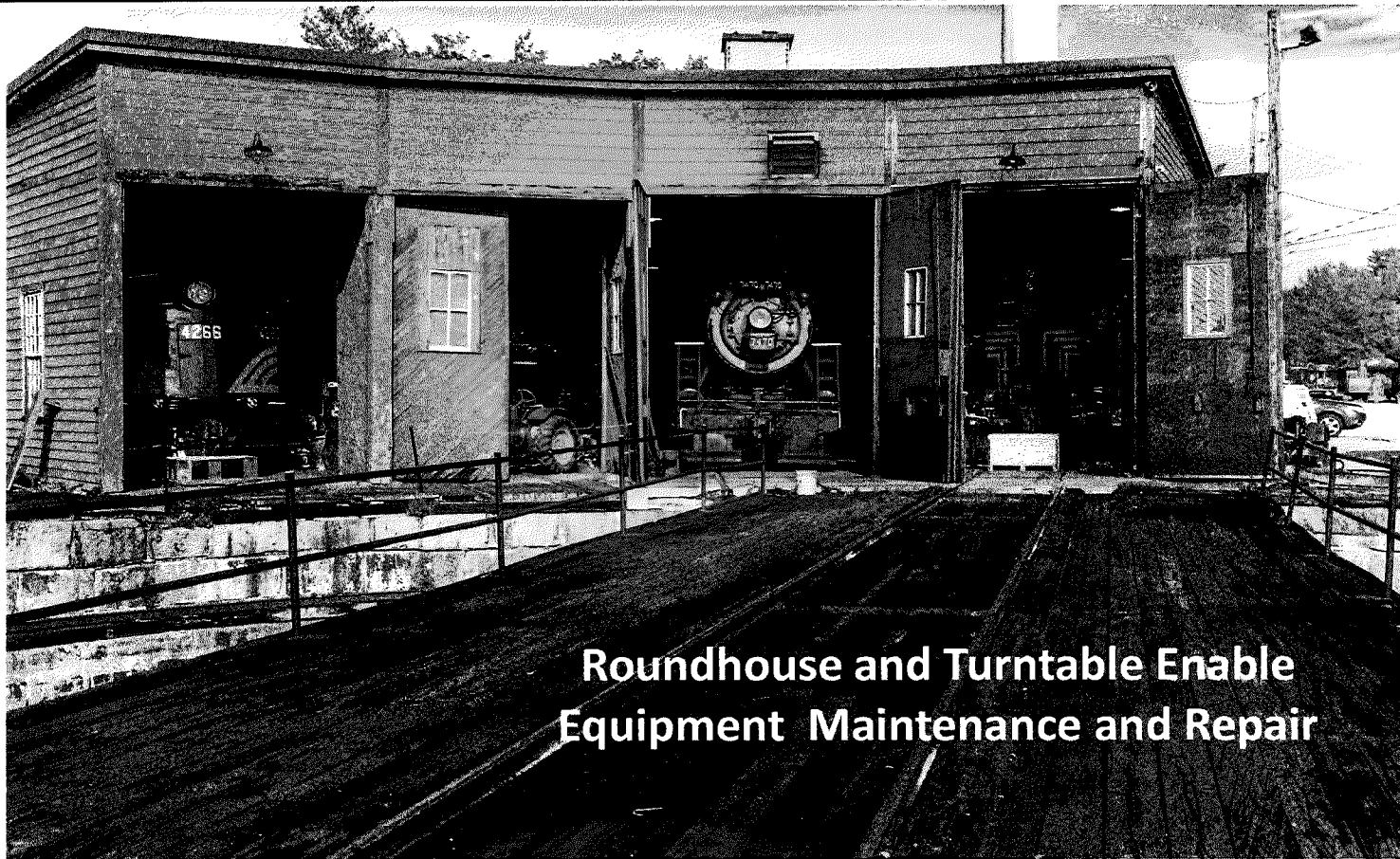


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