

The
AROOSTOOK INTERURBAN
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SCRIBBLES ON AN OLD SECTION REPORT

Its spring time in Aroostook County. Although you would be hard pressed to know it. 7 inches of snow came down in Presque Isle on the 24th of March and quite frankly these "Good Old Winters" can take a long walk off a short pier in my opinion.

Speaking of Spring - it is the time of rebirth and I think it is time to reveal to you, my fellow AVR employees, the plan the board of directors and I have been cooking up over the long, cold, winter.

Lets face it - this railroad has been on the rocks since 1996. But, this year, 2024, is our comeback year. We plan to re-lay the line back to Washburn. Yes - the trail will revert to its original use as a railbed and we will run back to Washburn in 2024.

Why Washburn? Simple - we plan to establish a hydro electric generating station on the shores of the Aroostook River. This environmentally friendly, largely green energy source will be combined with an adjacent solar generating farm for peak generating capacity. The railroad will be used to haul in both the equipment and workers to setup both sites as access by road is impractical. In addition a backup to the hydro electric plant will be installed. This backup plant is another reason to reactivate the rail line as it will be coal fired. Our railroad will be instrumental in hauling the coal in to the stock pile location.

I realize that this is a shocking plan, from potatoes to power, from wood to watts, but it makes sense as we look forward into the remaining half of the 2020s and beyond to provide as much clean, green, electric power for the people of Aroostook County and our diesel powered railroad, hauling coal, is the best way to do it.

There are some more surprises for you in 2024, keep reading for more details about the exciting 2024 we have in store!

-Joey

"Joey" Kelley, Editor

ABOUT THE COVER



March 2, 1979 found 12 and 10 shoving the plow in Caribou. Photographed by James P. Marcus this photo is part of the JoeyKelleyPhoto.com Collection

NEW MOTIVE POWER

It has become clear that our current locomotive fleet is going to be insufficient for the coming expansion back to Washburn and the increase in our coal hauling traffic. As a result, the board of directors and I have taken it upon ourselves to find and scope out the best option for new motive power for our needs. I believe we have done that.



Before you scream out "THATS A TRUCK!" yes - its a truck. More accurately, it is a Brandt Power Unit, Tie Crane model. They actually have more horsepower, adhesion, starting traction than our current fleet and have the bonus of being able to work for our MoW forces as we expand back to Washburn.

The Brandt Power Units have a genius system of using whatever is coupled to them to force more weight onto the drive axles and therefore increase the tractive effort. These units are a turnkey solution to both our current and future needs.

I cannot wait to see one in AVR Blue hauling coal to our new trackside power plant!

APRIL FOOLS!

Ok folks - time to come clean. The Aroostook Valley Railroad was officially resolved in the year 2000. This rather unique short line of just under 30 miles connected with both the Bangor and Aroostook and the Canadian Pacific - the latter owning considerable stock in it. With the changing economics of Aroostook County - transitioning to truck traffic for most of the freight being hauled and the loss of the direct connection to CP after flooding in 1987, the line simply was not viable.

If you are not already aware, I publish, quarterly, new issues of the Bangor and Aroostook's magazine the Maine Line. I am in my 7th year of doing so and you can view all of the issues, plus an archive of the original issues on the Maine Line website:

<https://mainelinemagazine.joeykelleyphoto.com/>

I do occasionally let my creative writing and oddball sense of humor out for a run and create the occasional April Fools joke, so I hope you have enjoyed this one. Please look on the next page for a unique look at one of the locations on the Aroostook Valley!

-Joey Kelley, Editor



WHAT IS AND WHAT WAS

The Northern-most short line railroad in the State of Maine was the Aroostook Valley Railroad. Memories and the name of a multi-use trail are the only ways that today's youth might become aware of the AVR - once a lifeline of commerce. This bridge, which you can walk, bike, ATV or snowmobile across today was once the home of AVR's diminutive 44 ton GE diesels. The bridge is still very much there - ripe for photographing - but the only train you'll see on it today - is the ghost of the AVR. The image of the AVR train, by James P. Marcus, was shot in 1979 - on this very bridge - in Washburn, Maine.

All I have - are someone else's memories.

-Joey Kelley, JoeyKelleyPhoto.com