

CAPT to Meet with Transport Canada



News Release for SooNews.ca
Wednesday, April 18, 2007, 3:44PM
Printed from <http://www.soonews.ca/viewarticle.php?id=11893>



Coalition for Algoma Passenger Trains to Meet with Officials from Transport Canada

Will Press for Increased Federal Support for Wilderness Trains

The Coalition for Algoma Passenger Trains (CAPT) has succeeded in gaining an audience with Transport Canada at meetings scheduled in Toronto on April 25th and Ottawa April 26th, the latter having been arranged with the assistance of Sault Ste. Marie MP Tony Martin. CAPT is a Northern Ontario based organization dedicated to preserving and enhancing wilderness train service.

"We're very excited to have this opportunity," says CAPT co-chair Dr. Linda Savory-Gordon. "We want to make sure that Transport Canada is fully aware of the economic, cultural and environmental benefits that trains hold for our region. It's vital that our federal government demonstrate foresight by increasing funding for rail service in Northern Ontario so that our wilderness train corridors can reach their potential." Savory-Gordon also adds that, "It's very interesting to see that just now a study has been released in America showing that enhanced passenger rail service could create over twenty-three billion dollars in benefits and close to sixty thousand jobs in the American Midwest." Full text of the announcement of the study can be found by [clicking here](#).

The meetings will come on the heels of CAPT's All-Aboard event that will take place from April 22nd-24th. All-Aboard is a journey by rail from Sault Ste. Marie to the Franco-Ontarian town of Hearst; and then after a bus trip to Cochrane participants will take an ONR train from Cochrane to Toronto. The wilderness train corridors traversed on this trip provide access to some of North-Eastern Ontario's more remote communities and much spectacular wilderness, including the Chapleau Game Preserve – the largest in the world.

Maintaining access to these areas is an issue of great importance to many communities along or near the ACR and ONR railways. "Increasing tourism is a big component of our economic diversification strategy," says Shana Verrier, tourism coordinator for the Hearst Economic Development Corporation. "Hearst's distinctive French Canadian culture and fantastic natural surroundings make us an attractive destination. Passenger train service is vital to the economic well-being of our town."

Lori Johnson, director of Community Services and Tourism for the town of Wawa, is also concerned with seeing passenger service maintained and improved. "Algoma Central's passenger service is an important economic asset," says Johnson. "It's encouraging to see the CAPT group secure these meetings with Transport Canada to press for a renewed federal commitment to the ACR line and to help represent our interests."

North Bay is another community that is desirous of seeing rail service maintained and improved. "We believe in the value of passenger rail travel and its importance to Northern Ontario," says Mayor Vic Fedeli. Resolutions of support for CAPT have also been received from Sault Ste. Marie, Prince Township, Township of Hornepayne and Township of Michipicoten.

At the meetings with Transport Canada, CAPT representatives will advocate that the federal government work to restore service between Hearst and Sault Ste. Marie to the former schedule of four times a week and they will also seek funding for a full feasibility study

regarding the potential of the ACR corridor. The CAPT envoys will also discuss long-term strategies for passenger train service in Northern Ontario.