

ACR passenger service gets more help from Ottawa



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NEWS RELEASES

TRANSPORT CANADA

TONY MARTIN, MP

Government of Canada to continue funding Northern Ontario passenger rail service

OTTAWA, January 17 - The Government of Canada is providing Algoma Central Railway with \$4.2 million in operating funding to continue passenger rail service between Sault Ste. Marie and Hearst, Ontario until March 31, 2009.

The Honourable Tony Clement, Minister of Health and Minister of the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, announced today on behalf of the Honourable Lawrence Cannon, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities.

"Algoma Central Railway is an economic and community lifeline in Northern Ontario. The government is proud to support this valuable service," said Minister Clement. "As a part of our local infrastructure and transportation, we are investing in the people and communities that's an investment that always pays dividends."

"Passenger rail services in this region contribute to the economic and social well-being of our communities," said Minister Cannon. "This funding will allow Algoma Central Railway to provide a safe, efficient and comfortable transportation option to local residents and visitors."

In addition to providing a valuable transportation service to local residents, Algoma Central Railway's Sault Ste. Marie to Hearst passenger rail service supports the regional economy by carrying customers, staff and supplies to remote communities and wilderness tour points, many of which can only be reached by rail.

The service transported 7,842 passengers in 2007.

For over a decade, the Government of Canada has demonstrated its commitment to the Sault Ste. Marie to Hearst passenger rail service by providing operating funding of up to \$2.1 million per year to Algoma Central Railway, which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of CN Rail.

In 2006, the federal government also provided Algoma Central Railway with \$1.5 million for the refurbishment of its passenger rail fleet.

The revitalized fleet, along with upgrades and modifications, was put into service in April 2007.

"CN welcomes the government's continued support for this passenger rail service," said Michael A. Cory, vice president of passenger services in the eastern region. "CN, as the passenger service operator and maintainer of the fleet, will do its part to deliver a high-quality service to the communities serviced by this important Sault Ste. Marie to Hearst rail line."

Federal funding comes from Transport Canada's Regional and Remote Passenger Rail Services Class Con

The program ensures that safe, reliable, viable and sustainable passenger rail services are provided to areas where these services are either the only means of surface transportation for remote communities, or an alternative for rural communities.

These services also support economic activities in the lumber, mining, recreation and tourism sectors and provide access for isolated communities.

Martin recognizes train coalition, own Ottawa lobby and feds for ACR Funding

SAULT STE. MARIE - Sault MP Tony Martin congratulated the Algoma Coalition for Passenger Trains (CAPT) and the federal government after today's \$4.2 million funding announcement caps his own vigorous campaign to help Algoma

"The railway built our country and the railway can be a major player in rebuilding Northern Ontario," said Martin. "It is good news that there is money there for another 15 months. It is good news for our rail passengers, for First Nations communities. We will still need new money for railway infrastructure."

Last spring, Martin hopped aboard Train #1 for CAPT's epic journey that crisscrossed Northern Ontario on its way to Ottawa highlighting the importance of passenger rail service and wilderness tours.

Martin arranged for Ottawa meetings for CAPT with Transport Canada officials.

Martin later wrote and met with Conservative Transport Minister Lawrence Cannon and FedNor Minister Tom Longley for ACR.

"The coalition has made it clear there is a pressing need for railway infrastructure, a second train and increased funding. This money should go."