



7. Transportation & Traffic

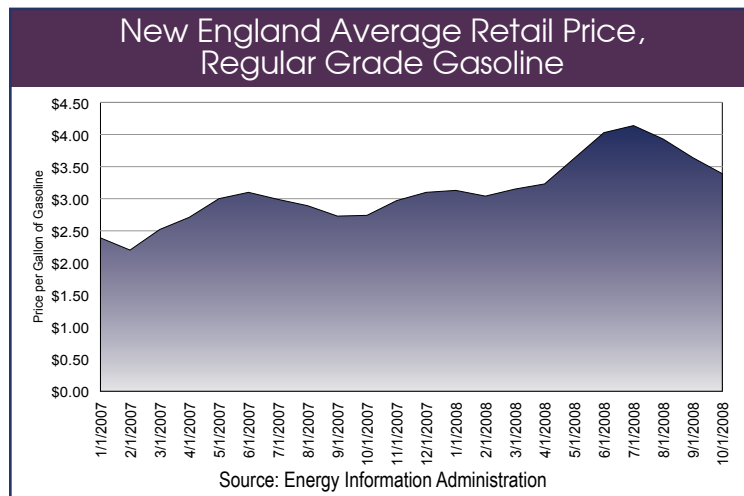
No discussion of transportation in New Hampshire can begin without first addressing the subject of gasoline prices. On January 1, 2007, the average retail price of a gallon of regular grade gasoline was \$2.39 in New England. By July 7, 2008, the price had peaked at \$4.14 per gallon.¹ High gas prices affect nearly every aspect of life. Workers experience a more expensive commute, while businesses incur higher costs of transporting goods and services which may lead to higher prices. The domino effect continues as families have less money available for recreational pursuits, especially those involving the operation of motor vehicles such as traveling and boating. Although gasoline prices declined during fall of 2008, increasing world demand and decreasing production could cause an upswing in prices.

As with any dark cloud, there is a silver lining for high gas prices as well. Americans have rediscovered

an enthusiasm for fuel efficiency. Hybrid vehicles have become more commonplace on New Hampshire's roadways and drivers are more inclined to keep personal vehicles properly maintained. Although these options can improve fuel economy, there is another alternative that can be done without cost. Many drivers can increase the fuel efficiency of vehicles simply by changing individual driving habits. Combining trips reduces the time vehicles spend idling and warming up to the optimum temperature for engine efficiency. Driving less aggressively has been shown to increase fuel efficiency, since gas consumption increases during rapid acceleration and fuel is wasted under heavy braking. In addition to fuel savings, driving with more patience can help reduce motor vehicle accidents and in turn reduce traffic congestion from these accidents.

Additional steps toward accident prevention were taken when New Hampshire enacted a law effective August 5, 2008 to provide increased safety for Department of Transportation workers and tow truck drivers.² The "Move Over" law requires drivers to slow down and move over when passing vehicles displaying amber emergency or warning lights. This law extends the same roadside working safety protocols of police, fire, and emergency medical response personnel to include highway maintenance and tow truck drivers.

¹ New England Weekly Retail. Energy Information Administration. Accessed October 24, 2008. <<http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/oog/ftp/area/wogjrs/xls/pswrgvwrne.xls>>



² "Amber Lighted DOT Vehicles Added to NH's 'Move Over' Law for Roadside Stops." On the Move. Summer 2008. New Hampshire Department of Transportation. Accessed October 24, 2008. <www.nh.gov/dot/media/newsletters/newsletter-summer2008.pdf>

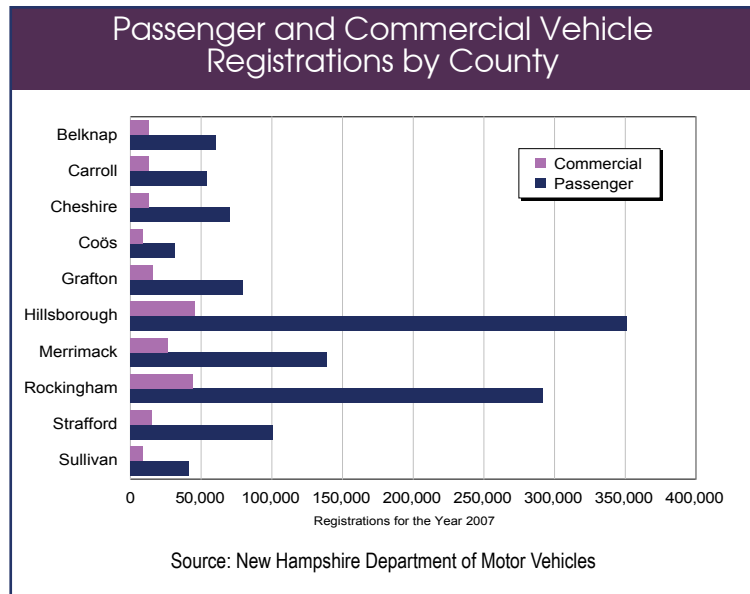
7. Transportation & Traffic

Roads and Bridges

Weather had a major impact on New Hampshire's roadways in 2008. Local roads were temporarily closed by fallen trees from the July tornado that destroyed parts of Epsom and surrounding communities; but more damage to local roadways came from the heavy rains that followed. Sections of over two dozen roads were washed away, causing an estimated \$2.5 million in damages to roads and the Concord-Lincoln rail line.³

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation continues progress on many major road and bridge rehabilitation projects. Major projects scheduled for completion by the end of 2008 include:

- ⊙ Reconstruction of U.S. Route 3 in Belmont from Union Road to the Laconia Bypass.



³ "Heavy rains, wind, flooding, road washouts, rail damage and ...yes, even a tornado..." *On the Move*. New Hampshire Department of Transportation. Fall 2008. Accessed October 24, 2008. <www.nh.gov/dot/media/newsletters/newsletter-fall2008.pdf>.

Registrations, Licenses, and Fuel Consumption 2004 2005 2006 2007 Source

Vehicle Registrations					
Passenger Vehicles	1,218,631	1,107,026	1,228,869	1,220,360	ISDS/NHES
Annual percent change	2.4%	-9.2%	11.0%	-0.7%	ISDS/NHES
Commercial Vehicles	198,964	189,319	204,606	204,467	ISDS/NHES
Annual percent change	5.5%	-4.8%	8.1%	-0.1%	ISDS/NHES
Persons per passenger car (population/# of vehicles) ^a	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.1	ISDS
Total driver licenses on issue	991,796	1,016,325	1,028,670	1,029,415	ISDS
Annual percent change	1.3%	2.5%	1.2%	0.1%	ISDS/NHES
Boat Registrations	101,703	102,497	101,117	100,485	ISDS
Annual percent change	0.1%	0.8%	-1.3%	-0.6%	ISDS/NHES
Motor Fuel Consumption (fiscal year)					
Millions of gallons of gasoline and diesel fuel	870	862	841	857	RTDS
Annual percent change	3.2%	-0.9%	-2.4%	1.9%	RTDS/NHES

^aBased on 2006 OEP Total Population Estimate of 1,315,000

Postal Service 2004 2005 2006 2007 Source

First handling pieces - Manchester and Portsmouth Post Offices					
(millions) (FY ending 9/30)	1,057.3	1,003.6	n/a	n/a	USPS

7. Transportation & Traffic

- ⊙ Repainting the bridge carrying U.S. Route 3 and NH Route 25 over the Pemigewasset River in Ashland and Bridgewater.
- ⊙ Route 302 bridge replacements and road construction in Bartlett.
- ⊙ Replacement of the Saint Lawrence and Atlantic Railroad Bridge over NH Route 110 and reconstruction of portions of NH Route 110 in Berlin.
- ⊙ Repaving and safety improvements to NH Route 11 in Claremont.
- ⊙ Replacement of three bridges, improvements to safety and drainage, and repaving NH Route 26 in Colebrook.
- ⊙ Bridge deck replacement and repainting of the Newbury Crossing Road bridge over the Connecticut River from Haverhill to Newbury, Vermont.
- ⊙ Replacement of the Route 175A bridge over the Pemigewasset River from Holderness to Plymouth, and construction of a roundabout.
- ⊙ Bridge and pavement rehabilitation along NH Route 12 in Keene and Surry, including drainage and safety improvements.
- ⊙ Reconstruction of the NH Route 28 Exit 5 ramps in Londonderry, as well as the construction of a Park and Ride.
- ⊙ Bridge deck repairs and repaving I-93 in Manchester from I-293 to Exit 7.
- ⊙ Replacement of the Cross Street bridge over I-93 in Salem.
- ⊙ Reconstruction of South Policy Road in Salem and construction of a new Park and Ride facility at I-93 Exit 2.
- ⊙ Replacement of the NH Route 123 bridge over the Cold River in Walpole.⁴
- ⊙ Replacement of the lift motors and electrical system of the Sarah Long Bridge connecting Portsmouth, New Hampshire with Kittery, Maine via the U.S. Route 1 Bypass.⁵

Air Transportation

Manchester-Boston Regional Airport felt the sting of rising fuel costs, seeing lower passenger counts and reductions in flights.

⁴ "2008 New Hampshire Highway & Bridge Construction Work." *Traveler Information*. New Hampshire Department of Transportation. Revised June 16, 2008. Accessed October 27, 2008. <www.nh.gov/dot/traveler/alert/pdf/construction2008.pdf>.

⁵ "Portsmouth Bridge Repairs Will Require Closure To All Traffic." *Department News Releases*. New Hampshire Department of Transportation. October 20, 2008. Accessed October 24, 2008. <www.nh.gov/dot/media/nr2008/documents/nr102008portsmouth.pdf>.

Highway Traffic - Annual totals	2004	2005	2006	2007	Source
Interstates, NH - Mass. State line (thousands, from traffic counters, Salem & Seabrook) ^a	73,006	71,798	71,856	72,021	DT
Annual percent change	n/a	-1.7%	0.1%	0.2%	DT/NHES
Rural traffic, annual percent change	1.0%	-0.5%	0.6%	-0.8%	DT
Annual vehicle miles (millions of miles)	14,701	14,649	17,078	17,311	RTDS
Annual percent change	3.2%	-0.4%	16.6%	1.4%	RTDS/NHES

^a 2003 figures for highway traffic annual totals - interstate, and annual percent change are not available because the Salem station did not operate in 2003.

7. Transportation & Traffic

The number of total passengers declined ten percent from 2005 to 2006, and another tenth of one percent through 2007. In August 2008, airport officials reported a two percent over-the-year decrease in passengers, and a nearly ten percent drop in available seats over the same period. At the same time, Southwest Airlines announced elimination of three flights per day as of January 2009.⁶ Other reductions in available seats came from Delta/Comair cutting four flights in 2008, and Northwest and United each eliminating one flight.⁷ Airport officials are hopeful that these flights will return in the spring of 2009.

At Pease International Airport in Portsmouth, Skybus, the lone provider of scheduled service, ceased operations in April 2008. The airline cited rising jet fuel costs and a slowing economic environment as the reason for shutting down.⁸ In spite of the loss, renovations to the Pease International terminal were completed in October 2008, meeting the need to separate

domestic and international arrivals. Troop flights and charters have been ongoing during the construction, and airport officials are hopeful of finding a replacement airline in the near future.⁹

Railways

The Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority reported continued passenger increases for the Amtrak Downeaster. Ridership for August 2008 was 50,854, up 34.3 percent from August 2007, while ticket revenues increased 38.2 percent over the same period.¹⁰ The Amtrak Downeaster provides passenger rail service from Portland, Maine to Boston, Massachusetts with stations in Dover, Durham and Exeter, New Hampshire. These stations provide seacoast residents with a low cost alternative to

⁶ Tirrell-Wysocki, David, The Associated Press. "Three flights cut from Manchester." *Concord Monitor*. August 27, 2008.

⁷ Paiste, Denis. "Airport stats paint the picture." *Manchester Union Leader*. September 29, 2008.

⁸ Barr, Meghan. "Skybus shuts down." *Seacoastonline.com*. April 4, 2008. Accessed December 23, 2008. <www.seacoastonline.com/articles/20080404-NEWS-80404030>.

⁹ Leech, Adam. "Pease terminal nearly done, expanded airport eyes carrier." *Seacoastonline.com*. October 7, 2008. Accessed October 27, 2008. <www.seacoastonline.com/articles/20081007-BIZ-810070383>.

¹⁰ *Performance Report, August 2008*. Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA). August 2008. Accessed October 27, 2008. <www.amtrakdowneaster.com/documents/PerformanceReportAugust2008.pdf>.

Aircraft Travel	2004	2005	2006	2007	Source
Manchester-Boston Regional Airport					
Total Passengers	4,003,307	4,329,478	3,896,532	3,892,630	MA
Annual Percent Change	11.2%	8.1%	-10.0%	-0.1%	MA/NHES
Enplanements	2,004,122	2,166,623	1,952,277	1,948,313	MA
Annual Percent Change	11.2%	8.1%	-9.9%	-0.2%	MA/NHES
Deplanements	1,999,185	2,162,855	1,944,255	1,944,317	MA
Annual Percent Change	11.1%	8.2%	-10.1%	0.0%	MA/NHES
Air Cargo (Tons) ^a	81,040	77,820	88,191	96,744	MA
Annual Percent Change	0.6%	-4.0%	13.3%	9.7%	MA/NHES

^aDoes not include air mail

7. Transportation & Traffic

commuting down I-95 into Boston by automobile. The Durham station also increases the attractiveness of the University of New Hampshire, making the large cities of Portland and Boston seem much closer to campus than they were just a few years ago. New interest has been developing for passenger rail service to Boston and Montreal. In April 2003 the first phase of a planning and feasibility study was completed regarding high-speed rail service from Boston to Montreal. This study forecasted a maximum ridership of 683,667 annually. The nearly 330 miles of proposed track would include in-state stops in Nashua, Manchester, Concord and Franklin, as well as stops in Massachusetts, Vermont and Canada.¹¹ Although the expense of infrastructure improvements became a stumbling block for this proposal, many citizen groups continue to push for expanded passenger rail service as an alternative to highway expansion. There is no doubt that high fuel prices as well as the success of the Downeaster helped to renew the public's interest in passenger rail service.

¹¹ Boston to Montreal High-Speed Rail Planning and Feasibility Study, Phase 1. Parsons, Brinckerhoff, Quade & Douglas. April 2003. Accessed October 27, 2008. <www.aot.state.vt.us/planning/BostonRail.htm>.

Bus Service

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation announced a new I-93 corridor commuter bus service which began in November 2008. This expanded service operates seven days per week at the Exit 5 terminal in Londonderry and the Exit 2 terminal in Salem. During weekdays, it also serves the Exit 4 terminal in Londonderry. Destinations include Boston's South Station and Logan Airport.¹² A future evolution of this service may include an active breakdown lane on I-93 for use by commuter buses only, as a component of the I-93 widening project. But, people are skeptical of active breakdown lanes as they can pose a danger to drivers using them. Additionally, the lanes don't prohibit use by drivers who are either unfamiliar with the roadways or are attempting to pass slower moving traffic. The idea of an active breakdown lane may be irrelevant, as the widening project itself is intended to reduce congestion and improve traffic flow.

¹² "Bus Service Fact Sheet." Fact Sheets and Newsletters. Rebuilding I-93: Salem to Manchester, New Hampshire Department of Transportation. October 3, 2008. Accessed October 28, 2008. <www.rebuildingi93.com/content/factsheets/>.

Portsmouth Harbor Freight Traffic	2004	2005	2006	2007	Source
Total (thousands of short tons)	4,795	5,254	4,823	n/a	USACE
Annual percent change	-3.5%	9.6%	-8.2%	n/a	NHES
Domestic	879	756	806	n/a	USACE
Annual percent change	26.1%	-14.0%	6.6%	n/a	NHES
Foreign Imports	3,613	4,286	3,706	n/a	USACE
Annual percent change	-12.2%	18.6%	-13.5%	n/a	NHES
Foreign Exports	303	213	311	n/a	USACE
Annual percent change	89.4%	-29.7%	46.0%	n/a	NHES
Canadian percent of Foreign Imports	52.7%	49.3%	44.1%	n/a	NHES