

Restoration of Historic Granite Mileposts on the Northern Railroad Line



2011 (Rev. 2012)

Edwin R. Hiller
Andover Historical Society

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The Northern Railroad was constructed in 1847-48, and extends 69.6 miles from Concord, NH to White River Junction, VT. [See the attached map.] It was acquired by the Boston & Maine Railroad in 1887. The last scheduled passenger train on this line was in January 1965, and the last freight train was in May 1982. In 1992 the use of this right-of-way was abandoned and subsequently the tracks were removed for their scrap-iron value. The state of New Hampshire then purchased ownership of most of this line and now operates it as a recreational rail trail.

Around 1901 the B&M Railroad installed granite mileposts along their railroad lines, and many remain in place to this day. They are impressive dressed-granite posts, one foot square, standing 4 to 5 feet above ground.

On the Northern Line, one side of the post is painted with a “B” and the mileage to Boston, and the other with “WRJ” and the mileage to White River Junction. Originally they were positioned giving distances from Concord, NH, the southern terminus of the Northern Line. But some time around 1920 when the B&M absorbed the Northern Line into its total network, it repositioned these mileposts and repainted them to give distances from Boston. Some posts still show vestiges of the earlier “C” indication.

Unfortunately, with the demise of active use of the most of line many of these mileposts have been removed by private parties. Of the original 69 mileposts along the Northern Line, only 39 remain in place. Their locations are documented in Appendix A.

In Grafton County almost all of the mileposts have disappeared. Only 5 of the original 28 remain – three along the still-active track in Lebanon, one in Canaan and one in Grafton. At this time, three of the missing mileposts have been located on private property in Lebanon.

Merrimack County has been more fortunate – 34 of the original 41 remain. Danbury, Wilmot, Andover have retained all of theirs. Franklin has lost one. Boscawen has lost 5. (Two of the removals can now be seen standing at a driveway entrance to a farm on the east side of the intersection of Route 3 and Route 4 at the northern edge of Boscawen Center.) One post has disappeared from the still-active track near the Boscawen-Concord town line.

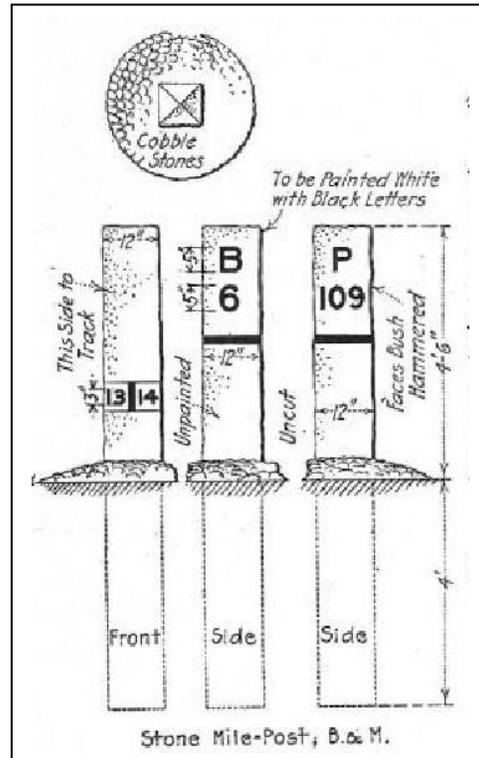
Since the termination of active maintenance and then abandonment of the right-of-way, the markings on the posts have faded, many almost beyond recognition. A project of

restoration is now underway, utilizing the historical B&M specifications for the mileposts and for the lettering fonts.

The granite mileposts were specified to be one foot square and 8½ ft. tall, extending 4½ ft. above ground (see adjacent figure). Thus each one weighs about 1,500 pounds. They were to be positioned as near to 15 ft. from the nearest rail as possible. They were placed (where possible) on the right side of the track as seen going outbound from Boston.

The panels for the lettering on each side were to be *bush hammered*. [This is a surface preparation by hammering with a heavy tool having a head of conical or pyramidal points that creates a smooth texture that resembles naturally weathered rock. This hammer was invented by the French sculptor Henri Bouchard (1875-1960), hence the name “bush”].

The B&M Standard Plans defined the font to be used on the mileposts. The letters were to be 5 in. tall, 3.75 in. wide (most characters), and stroke width of 5/8 in. (See Appendix B).



Alan LePain, mechanical designer and computer design (CAD) expert, has worked extensively with the B&M RR Historical Society on restoration of mileposts on the Boston-Northampton line in Massachusetts. He has computerized this historic B&M font, and has supplied us with a full set of computerized scale drawings, from which stencils were cut on Mylar sheets. These include the full set of numbers, plus the “B” and the “WRJ”. [Appendix C]

The restoration of the painting on the mileposts consists of a number of separate steps.

1. Clearing of brush around the post
2. Cleaning of the surfaces using a wire brush
3. Applying a coat of white paint to each face
4. Positioning the “B” and the “WRJ” stencils and painting with black paint
5. Positioning the number stencils and painting with black paint
5. Taping the 3 inch borders at the bottom and painting with black paint
6. Touching up of unavoidable bleeding of paint under the stencil with white paint

The total time on site per post to accomplish these steps has been 3½ to 4 hours. In addition, three separate round-trip visits to the milepost site are required to allow for

paint drying time. By working alternately on two posts the travel time can be minimized.

The paints that we have found suitable are:

Black: Benjamin Moore N09680 exterior acrylic latex

White: Benjamin Moore N10301 exterior acrylic latex

Use of water-based paints allows easier clean-up in the field, and appears to provide long lasting paint coverage.

A photo montage of some of the posts that have been restored to date is included in Appendix D.

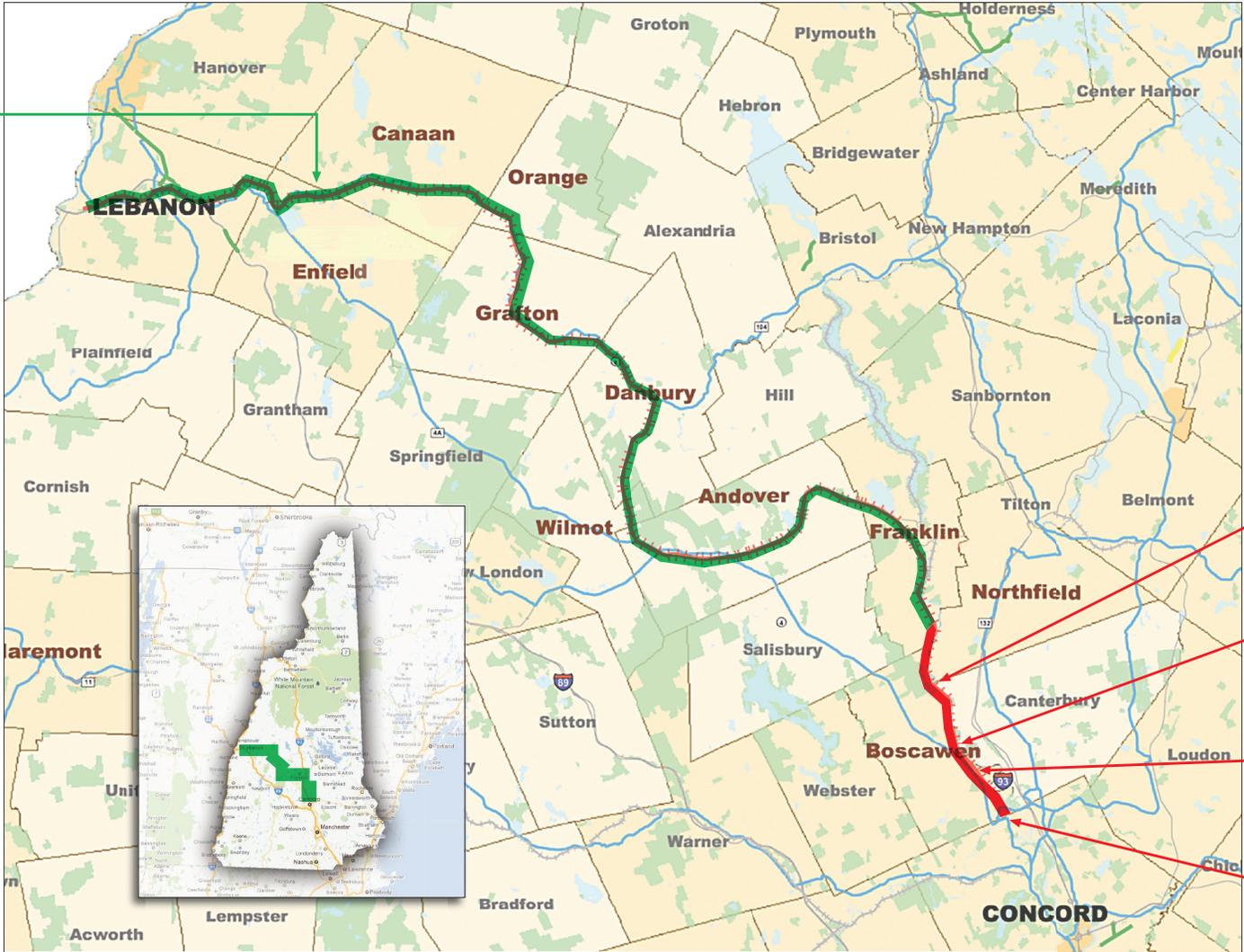
The photo below gives some idea of the care that has been taken in restoring these historic monuments.



Funding the Finish of THE NORTHERN RAIL TRAIL

The Longest Rail Trail in New Hampshire

49 miles built
since 1995



Funds Needed to Finish:

\$44,000, 3 miles to Gerrish Depot, Boscawen

\$57,000, 4 miles to Depot Street, Boscawen

\$28,000, 2 miles to River Road, Boscawen

\$10,000, to Concord City Line

Friends of the Northern Rail Trail in Merrimack County www.fnrt.org info@fnrt.org
 Friends of the Northern Rail Trail in Grafton County www.northerntrail.org info@northerntrail.org

Information as of February 27, 2012

Appendix A

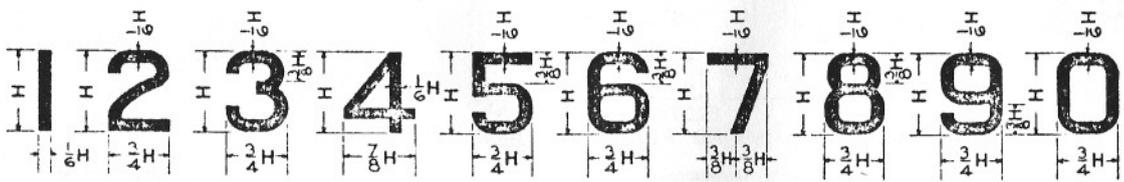
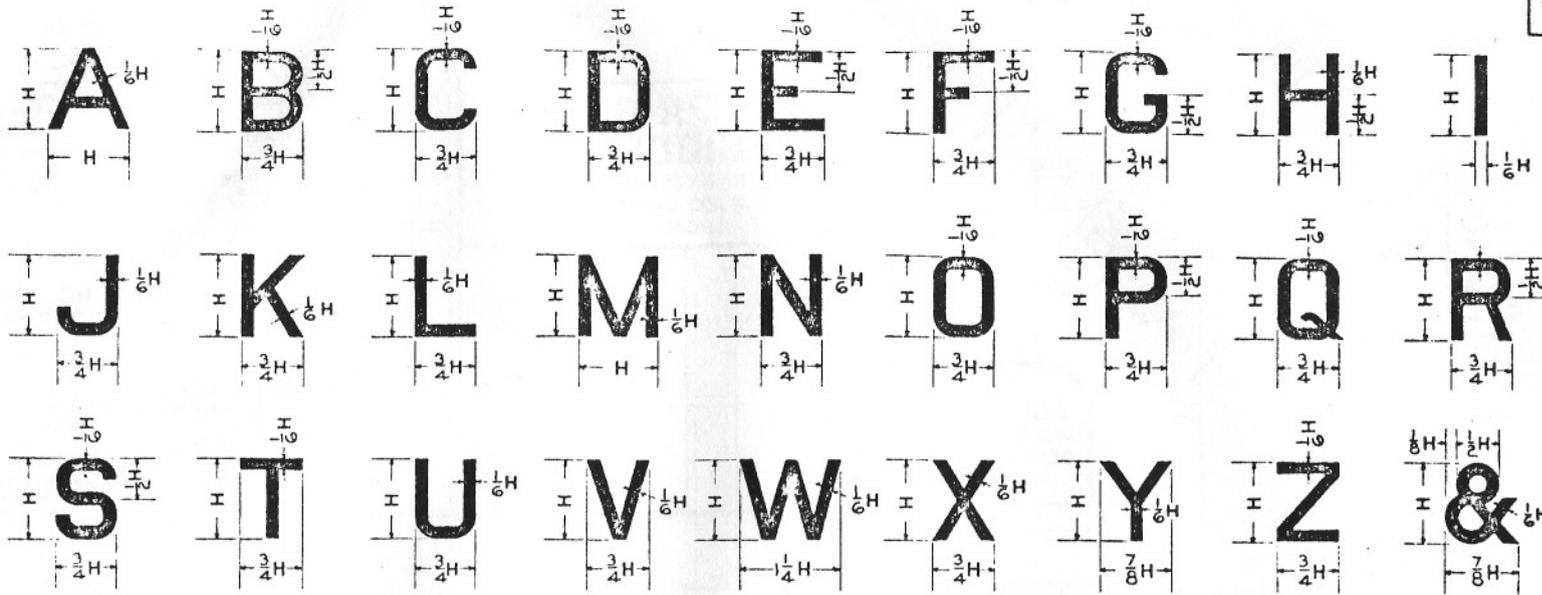
NORTHERN RAILROAD - Existing Mileposts (2012)

Milepost	Location
142.930	White River Junction Station
142.667	Connecticut River
B142	above lake Sunapee Bank on S. Main St.
B141	near Glenn Rd.
B140	---gone---
B139	by Mechanic St., W of Jake's Mkt.
138.270	Trail Head at Spencer St.
B138	---gone---
B137	---gone---
B136	---gone---
B135	---gone---
B134	---gone---
133.745	Enfield-Lebanon Town Line
B133	---gone---
B132	---gone---
B131	---gone---
130.176	Canaan-Enfield Town Line
B130	---gone---
B129	---gone---
B128	---gone---
B127	---gone---
B126	---gone---
B125	500 ft W of Canaan Freight House
124.013	Orange-Canaan Town Line
B124	---gone---
B123	---gone---
122.209	Grafton-Orange Town Line
B122	---gone---
B121	---gone---
B120	---gone---
B119	---gone---
B118	---gone---
B117	---gone---
B116	---gone---
B115	0.61 mi N of Zaccaria Rd, 553 ft N of TL post
114.895	Danbury-Grafton Town Line
B114	0.2 mi N of Ford Mill Rd
B113	0.8 mi S of Ford Mill Rd
B112	1500 ft S of High St, 0.5 mi N of Danbury Ctr
B111	1000 ft S of Rte 4 overpass, near Spear Hill Rd
B110	900 ft E of Rte 4 overpass, near Juniper Meadow Rd

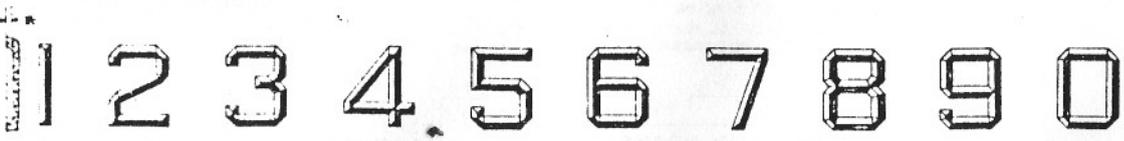
Appendix A

B109	900 ft N of Roy Ford Rd underpass
B108	0.1 mi S of South Danbury Cemetery
107.364	Wilmot-Danbury Town Line
B107	500 ft N of Eagle Pond Cemetery (visible from Rte 4)
106.168	Andover-Wilmot Town Line
B106	0.21 mi S of Eagle Pond Rd
B105	0.46 mi N of Rte 11 overpass (behind #241 Depot St)
b104	Behind Lenny Caron gravel pit, off Depot St
B103	0.33 mi E of Bridge Rd
B102	0.27 mi W of Blackwater River bridge near N. Short St
B101	50 ft W of Mountain Brook bridge
B100	750 ft W of Plains Rd
B99	100 ft W of Icehouse Lane
B98	800 ft E of Maple St
B97	0.25 mi W of Sam Hill Rd
B96	0.23 mi E of Dyers Crossing Rd
95.084	Franklin-Andover Town Line
B95	500 ft W of Marston Hill Rd
B94	800 ft W of Chance Pond Rd
B93	0.3 mi S of Carr St
B92	185 ft N of Depot St underpass, at Franklin Depot
B91	0.1 mi S of Rte 3 overpass
B90	100 ft N of Punch Brook bridge
B89	0.5 mi S of Webster Place
B88	---gone---
87.948	Boscawen-Franklin Town Line
B87	0.4 mi N of Gerrish Station (broken)
B86	---gone---
B95	1,000 ft S of Forest Lane
B84	---gone---
B83	---gone---
B82	---gone---
B81	---gone---
80.064	Concord-Boscawen Town Line
B80	---gone---
B79	0.7 mi N of Sewell's Falls Rd.
B78	0.6 mi N of Second St.
B77	0.4 mi S of Second St.
B76	opposite NH State Prison
B75	opposite Calvary Cemetery
B74	behind Concord Center Bldg.
73.330	Concord Station site

DRAWN BY AGM	
CHECKED BY	
CORRECTED BY	
ISSUE	DATE
A	6-10-30



NOTE
WHEN NECESSARY TO USE A CONDENSED FORM OF LETTER, THE HORIZONTAL DIMENSIONS, EXCEPT THE THICKNESS OF THE BODY OF THE LETTER, SHALL BE TWO THIRDS OF THAT SHOWN.



* NOTE - DEPTH OF PATTERNS FOR 1-5 LETTERS - 1/2 H
 DEPTH OF PATTERNS FOR 6-0 LETTERS - 3/8 H

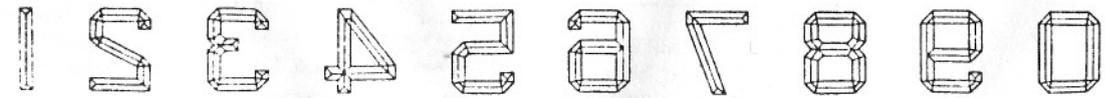
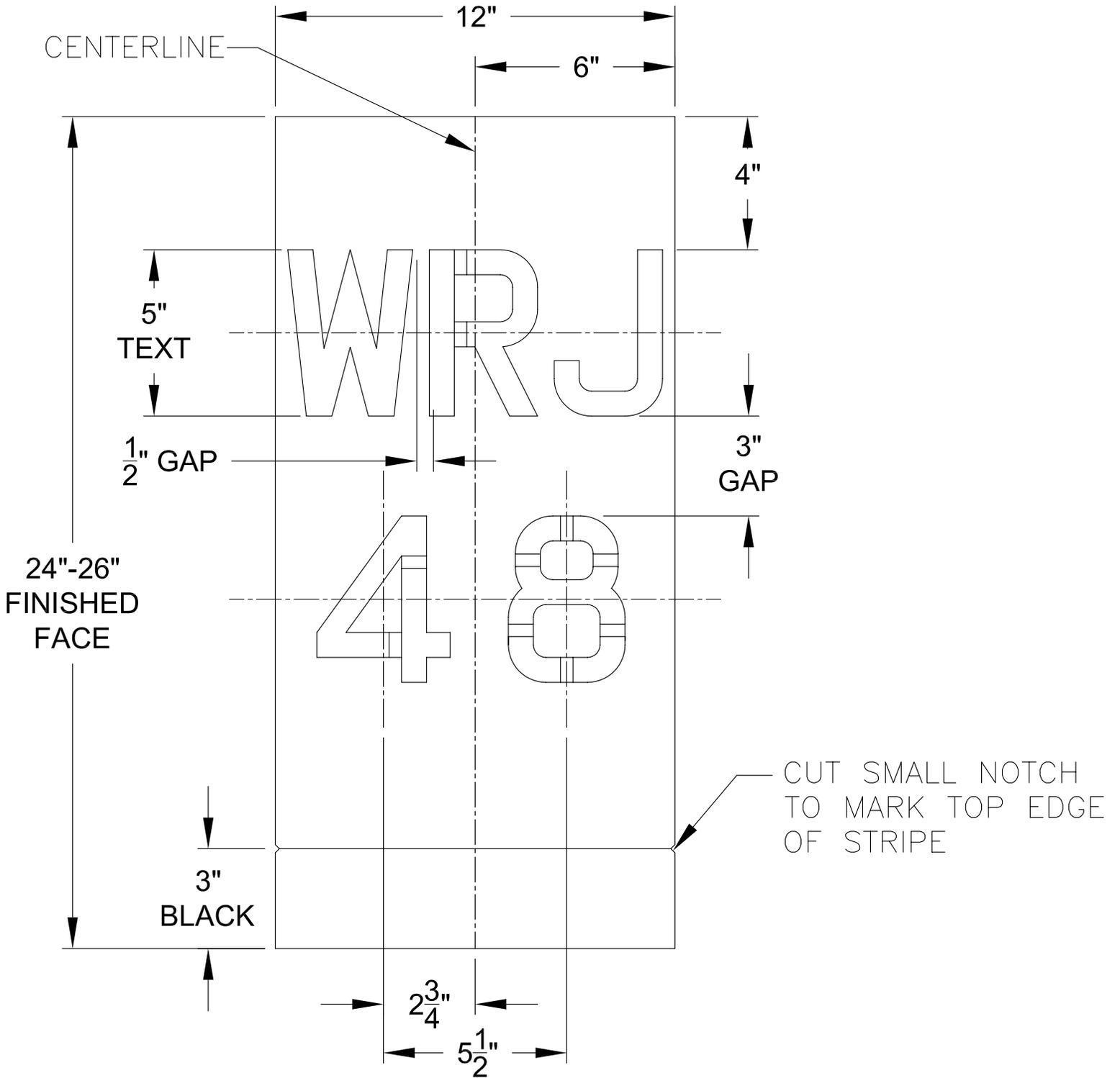


FIGURE PATTERNS FOR CONCRETE POSTS

BOSTON & MAINE R.R.
 STANDARD
 LETTERS AND FIGURES
 FOR
 SIGNS AND NOTICES

APPROVED
A. F. F. F.
 ENGINEER M. OF W.

A. J. ...
 CHIEF ENGINEER



TYPICAL STENCIL
 TEMPLATE DIMENSIONS
 FOR 5 INCH TEXT

