

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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2024 Annual Report



Safe | Reliable | Sustainable

Message from the Interim Executive Director

The Maine Turnpike is more than just a roadway—it is a vital transportation corridor made possible by the dedicated employees who keep it running 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. While many of these individuals work behind the scenes, their efforts are seen by thousands of travelers every day. This year's annual report highlights some of these hardworking professionals—not just as members of the MTA team, but as members of your community. They are your neighbors, friends, and fellow Mainers, living in towns and cities across the state, committed to keeping the Turnpike safe and reliable.

In 2024, MTA advanced several major projects, including significant progress on a new interchange (Exit 35) in Saco, a collaboration with NHDOT and MaineDOT to implement part-time shoulder use on the high-level bridge in Kittery, and the rehabilitation and repaving of nine interchanges, 19 on- and off-ramps, two park & ride lots, and 86 lane miles of the mainline. These improvements reflect the dedication and expertise of our employees, ensuring that the Turnpike remains a reliable, efficient, and safe corridor for commuters, businesses, and visitors alike.

In September 2024, I accepted the role at MTA of Interim Executive Director following the departure of Peter Mills. Having spent 24 years as Chief Operations Officer, I have always been deeply involved in the maintenance and operations of the Turnpike—usually behind the scenes. Stepping into this new role has brought new challenges, like keeping my email box under control! But one of the most rewarding aspects has been the opportunity to connect more with employees and strengthen communication across the organization.



Peter Merfeld, Interim Executive Director

The search for a permanent Executive Director is underway and will continue into 2025. In the meantime, my focus remains on ensuring continuity, supporting our workforce, and advancing the projects that keep the Turnpike a cornerstone of Maine's transportation network.

I hope you enjoy this annual report and learning more about the remarkable people who not only keep the Turnpike running but also make up the fabric of Maine's communities—including yours.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Merfeld".

Peter Merfeld
Auburn

Highway Maintenance Paint Crew Foreman

Robert Webber

Hometown: Scarborough

In the winter you can find me behind the wheel of a plow truck. When not plowing, I oversee the complete dismantling and reassembling of all of our equipment including striping trucks, walk-behind stripers, and every other piece of equipment that we use for painting lines on the road.

I enjoy line striping on the Maine Turnpike—spring, summer, and fall. I'm passionate about it. At the start of every day at the Crosby Maintenance camp in South Portland, I organize, plan, schedule, and review the day's goals, and then oversee the projects. At the end of the day, I review progress and check on equipment with the crew.

I work with our paint crew and all levels of management to ensure the Turnpike's road striping is executed professionally and efficiently, conforming to all federal, state, and MTA standards. The MTA may pay my salary, but I work for the travelers out there on the road.

I started with the Turnpike 1991 when a friend who was already employed by the Authority suggested I come aboard. I got called in to plow a big storm on my first day. Over ten inches fell that storm.

Exit 46 is my favorite exit on the pike, it's my home away from home.





Toll Collector

Gabby Melakian

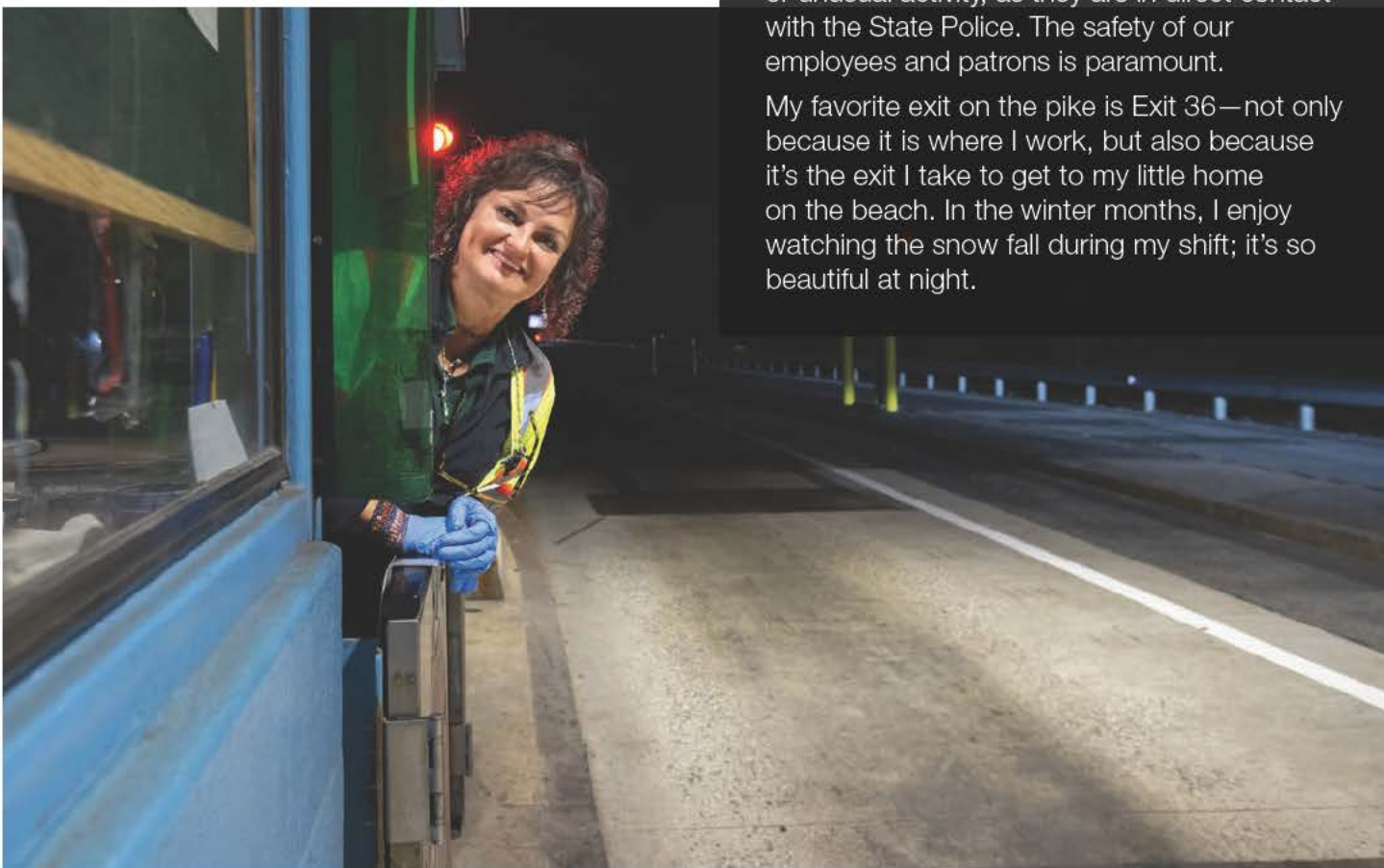
Hometown: Old Orchard Beach

A smile is all it takes. People may not realize how impactful my interactions with regular patrons are. I like to believe I brighten their day, just as they always brighten mine. I had always wondered what it would be like to be a toll collector, and after meeting one who shared their experience with me, I decided to give it a try. I don't regret it—I love my job, even if it requires a lot of coffee!

For the past 16 years, my workday has started at 10 PM at the Saco Toll. I like to arrive a little early to ensure our building is clean and welcoming for everyone who shares the space. After relieving my co-worker at the booth, I get to do what makes me happiest: greeting each patron who drives through with a smile and a friendly “hello.”

During my shift, I communicate with MTA's Traffic Management Center about any incidents or unusual activity, as they are in direct contact with the State Police. The safety of our employees and patrons is paramount.

My favorite exit on the pike is Exit 36—not only because it is where I work, but also because it's the exit I take to get to my little home on the beach. In the winter months, I enjoy watching the snow fall during my shift; it's so beautiful at night.



Construction Project Manager

Jamie Mason

Hometown: Falmouth

I have always enjoyed construction, working with people, and being outdoors, which led me to my current career. I started as an inspector, resident engineer, and town engineer. For the past six years, I've been the construction project manager at the Turnpike.

Every day is different. I review inspector reports, change orders, lane closure requests, and contractor pay requisitions. I also schedule and attend project meetings from pre-construction to project closeout. It's rewarding to see a project progress from its initial planning and development phases to completion.

While driving the Pike, you'll see construction projects from Kittery to Augusta, often operating 24 hours a day, five to six days a week. I spend a lot of time ensuring the construction teams adhere to MTA's specifications and communicating with both the crews and our inspection team. When you drive by a construction site and see someone "just standing there," trust that is not the case—we're making sure the job is being done safely for the workers and travelers, and ensuring it's done right. That's our highest priority.

I travel all 109 miles of the Maine Turnpike several times a week, but my favorite exit is 53 in Falmouth—that's home for me.





Maine State Police Troop G

Corporal Douglas Cropper

I always dreamed of becoming a State Trooper. Even 25 years ago, when I was attending the police academy, I would see the State Police cruisers parked at the Turnpike's Crosby Farm Maintenance Facility in South Portland, which fueled my ambition. I aspired to reach the rank of corporal, and I achieved that goal.

Now, while working 12-hour shifts patrolling the Turnpike, my responsibilities include enforcing motor vehicle and criminal laws, as well as assisting motorists who may have broken down or, worse, been involved in an accident. As a member of Troop G of the Maine State Police, I collaborate closely with MTA maintenance staff, especially in work zones and at accident scenes. Troop G solely patrols the Maine Turnpike and we lend support to local police departments if needed.

Though our primary focus is patrolling the 109 miles of the Turnpike, there are times when we conduct our own investigations and assist the Major Crimes Unit of the Maine State Police with sexual assault and homicide cases.

For the last 24 years, on the job and on the road, my focus has been to make sure those who are using the Turnpike are safe.



Sign Maker

Joe Chase

Hometown: Gray

If you see a sign on the Maine Turnpike, chances are I made it or will remake it at some point. That is, if you're going slow enough and paying attention, you'll see them! I joke that I spend all day making signs that no one notices.

I create signage for the entire stretch of the Turnpike, from Kittery to Augusta. This includes the mainline of the highway, service plazas, interchanges, and ramps. I also make all the orange construction signs you see in the work zones—those are the ones I really want you to pay attention to.

Almost 10 years ago, I started in Highway Maintenance, working out of Crosby Maintenance—I enjoyed plowing in the winter, but during the summer, I started working with the sign maker and realized there was so much to the job that people didn't see. When he retired three years ago, I was lucky enough to get the position.

One of my first memories of working on the pike is showing up at Crosby Maintenance on my first day and thinking this is where my wife had started her career at the turnpike 15 years earlier and hoping my career would be as successful as hers.





Communications Center Supervisor

Jaime Tishim

Hometown: Sanford

At MTA's administration building on outer Congress Street in Portland, the Traffic Management and Communications Center (TMCC) operates as a hub of activity, serving travelers on the pike 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. As a supervisor of the center, I'm responsible for training dispatchers and coordinating with MTA's maintenance crews, toll collectors, Troop G, and the public.

My workdays are dictated by what's happening on the road—whether it's a holiday weekend, snow in the forecast, or a lane is closed as part of a construction project. All of these factors influence my day. If a patron breaks down or has an accident on the pike, it's my crew (or me) who gets the call. We'll dispatch a wrecker or a trooper, and ensure the patron is safe and gets the help they need.

I didn't always see myself in dispatch. Growing up, I wanted to be a teacher. But after landing a dispatch job in Florida, I was hooked. I've been at MTA's TMCC for nine years now.

One of my first memories of the turnpike is going to the Maine Mall with my mom and holding on to the paper ticket. I would hold on to it very tightly to make sure it didn't get lost!



E-ZPass Customer Service Representative

Alex Paquette

Hometown: Biddeford

For the last eight and a half years, I have been answering calls from Maine E-ZPass customers and assisting them with any issue they may have. Every day, I work alongside other customer service representatives and violation clerks, striving to provide the best customer service we can.

Every caller has a unique situation. I help people get the most out of their accounts, maximize their discounts, and verify all their license plates to clear any violations they might not even be aware of.

I didn't always know I wanted to be in customer service, but I do enjoy helping people solve problems. Over the years of working with Maine E-ZPass customers, I have developed a specialized skill set that allows me to do this work with ease. Perhaps my ability to help and empathize stems from

when I was 16 and didn't have the cash to pay the toll. The toll collector was very helpful and informative, and that experience stuck with me.

Outside of work, my favorite time of year is autumn in Maine—the leaves changing, the smell of the air, picking apples, and best of all, no bugs!





Operations Coordinator

Jacqueline Hansen

Hometown: Waterboro

There are no “typical” days working as the Operations Coordinator at MTA. I assist with five departments in my role—Highway Maintenance, Equipment Maintenance, Building Maintenance, Engineering, and Public Safety. In addition, I interact with most other departments at MTA.

I started in the E-ZPass Violations department 17 years ago, then moved to Executive Assistant Operations, and was recently promoted to my current position in 2024, taking on a greater role coordinating projects like the \$3 million headquarters renovations. I couldn't be happier with where I've landed.

My days are always varied. I might be reviewing, approving, and processing construction contracts and consultant invoices, verifying a maintenance employees' clothing reimbursements, or assisting a staff member with an urgent issue. And later, I'm researching a bridge project from two decades ago for a consultant. While on other days, I'm fielding calls from patrons whose vehicles were damaged in construction zones, and I'm often the go-to person when people have questions about...anything!

I traveled the turnpike often as a child, as my family had a camp in Limington. My favorite exit was Wells. I knew when we got off there we would be at camp soon. And on the way home on Sunday evenings, I often made wishes on the first star I'd see while traveling back home on the Turnpike.



Intelligent Transportation Systems Coordinator

Andrew Constantine

Hometown: Gray

Did you know that some over-the-road electronic signs on the Pike are serviced from the inside? When I work on these boards, I enter through a side door and walk into the sign. This allows me and my tools to stay safely inside, reducing the risk to traffic below.

These signs are just one type of technology I work on every day. I also maintain electronic toll systems, install and maintain traffic signals, radar count stations, and all the networks that integrate these with our systems. I work closely with our Traffic Management Center, Engineering, Highway Maintenance, and consultants. A typical workday can involve stopping to address small issues at multiple sites or working alongside others in our department or other MTA crews on larger issues at one location.

I always thought I would have a career in aviation, but while at SMCC, I did an internship at MTA and worked here while in college. I realized how much I enjoyed the work and how diverse the field is, ranging from technical networking to heavy electrical work. The internship eventually transitioned into a full-time job, and MTA recently helped me complete my Bachelor's Degree in Technology Management from the University of Southern Maine.

I travel the Pike daily for work, but my favorite time is when I'm off and can take Exit 75 "UPTA" camp in Rangeley.



LIST OF ACTIVE CONTRACTS IN 2024

Project Type	Municipality	Description	Amount	Contractor
Bridge	Falmouth/Auburn	Bridge Repairs - Various Locations North	\$2,500,000.00	CPM Constructors, Inc.
Bridge	York/Kennebunk	Bridge Repairs - Various Locations South	\$900,000.00	CPM Constructors, Inc.
Bridge	Various Locations	Cleaning and Painting Steel Structures	\$1,600,000.00	Saffo Contractors, Inc.
Bridge	Auburn	Superstructure Replacement of Route 122 Underpass	\$4,700,000.00	CPM Constructors, Inc.
Capacity	Saco	Modifications to Exit 36 and the Construction of Exit 35	\$42,000,000.00	Sargent Corporation
Maintenance	Cumberland	Replacing underground storage tanks at the service plaza	\$2,500,00.00	SRS Petroleum Services
Maintenance	Kennebunk/Biddeford	Roadside Clearing mile 25.8 to mile 32.0	\$150,000.00	Comprehensive Land Technologies, Inc.
Maintenance	York	York Vehicle Storage Garage	\$2,200,000.00	Optimum Construction, Inc.
Maintenance	Saco/Biddeford/Kennebunk	Exit 36 Pavement Repairs & Biddeford/Kennebunk Park and Ride	\$440,000.00	Coastal Road Repair, LLC
Maintenance	New Gloucester	Culvert and Slope Repairs Mile 72.2	\$1,350,000.00	Chase Excavating, Inc.
Maintenance	Various Locations	Slope and Drainage Repairs Mile 11.4 to 51.9	\$480,000.00	RJ Grondin
Maintenance	Various Locations	Variable Message Sign & Walkway Replacement mile 30NB and 48 SB	\$300,000.00	Moulison Electric, Inc.
Maintenance	Portland	Improvements to Administrative Building	\$2,500,00.00	Benchmark Construction
Pavement	Wells	Pavement Rehabilitation, Clearzone and Drainage Improvements mile 20.0 to mile 23.3	\$7,000,000.00	Pike Industries, Inc.
Rehabilitation	Kittery/York	Pavement Rehabilitation- Exits 1, 2, 3 and mile 1.3 to mile 6.8	\$18,000,000.00	Pike Industries, Inc.
Pavement	Portland Area	Portland Area Pavement Rehabilitation Southbound mile 42.0 to 49.3	\$8,500,000.00	Coastal Road Repair, LLC
Rehabilitation	Auburn	Pavement Rehabilitation - Exit 75 Auburn	\$1,300,000.00	RJ Grondin
Pavement				
Rehabilitation				
Total			\$91,420,000.00	



Crews use equipment to rebuild the slope in Auburn in October 2024



Clearing project in Biddeford in February 2024



The new southbound on-ramp and toll plaza area at Exit 35 in Saco in May 2024.



The remains of the old Route 122 Bridge in Auburn in May 2024

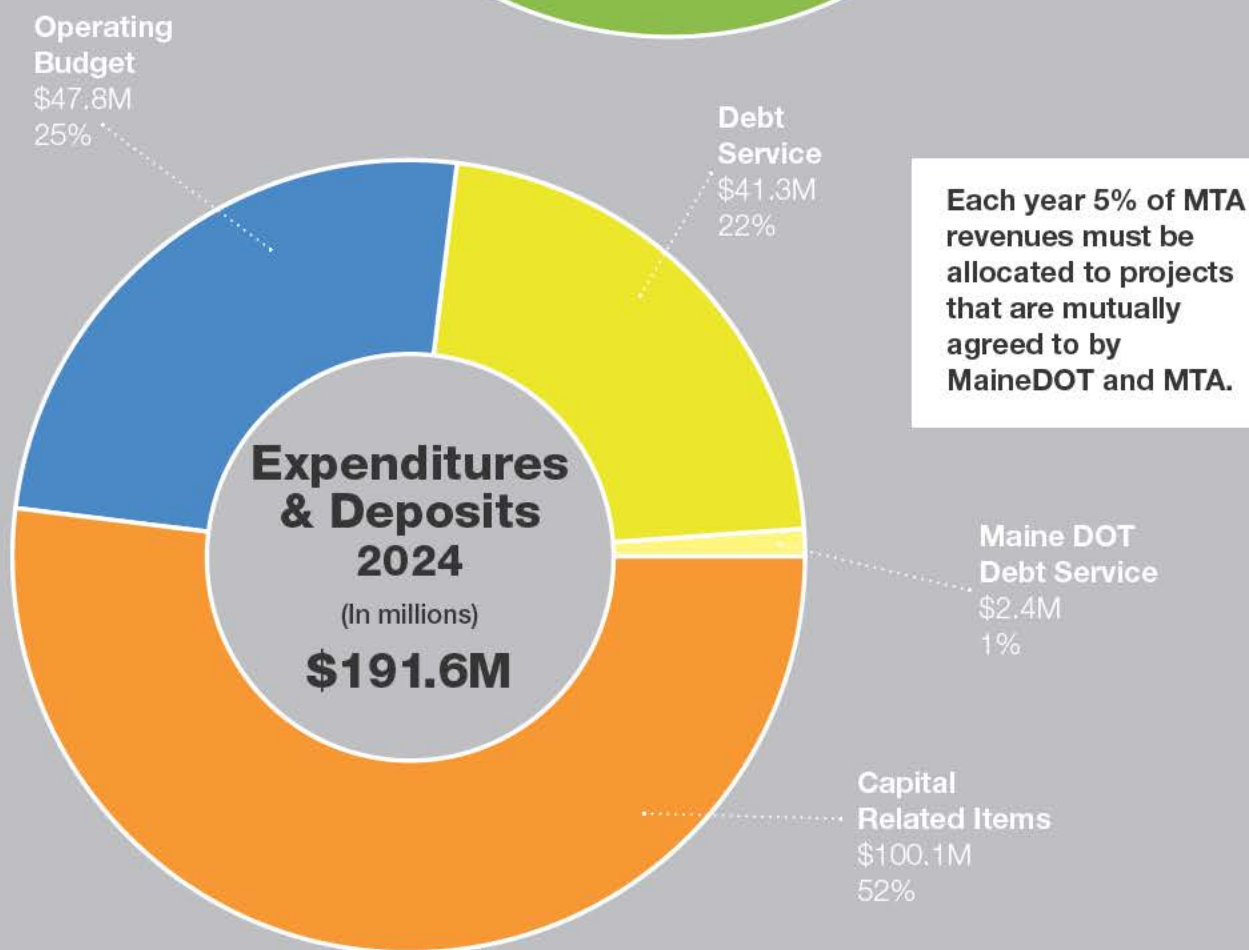
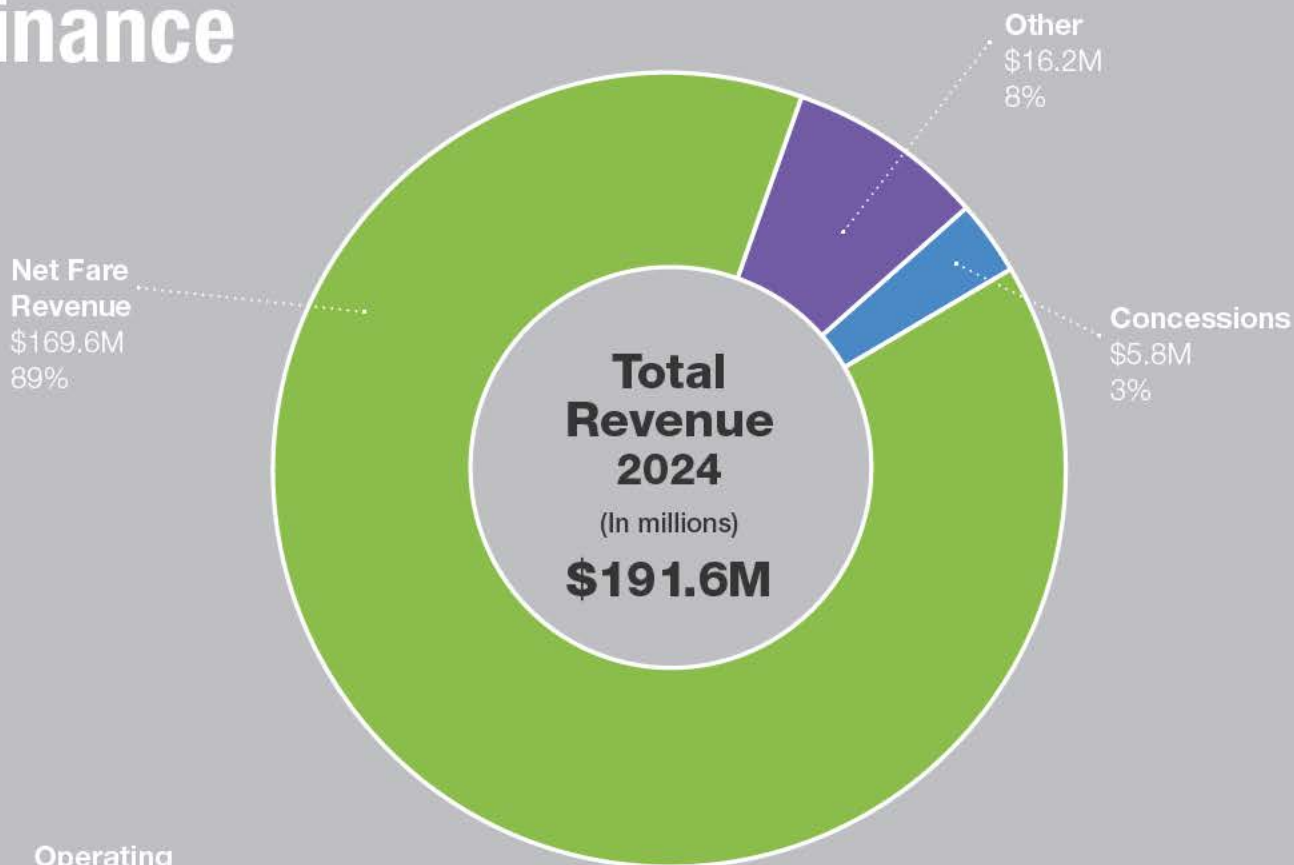


Two crews paving the northbound and southbound lanes in Kittery in October 2024

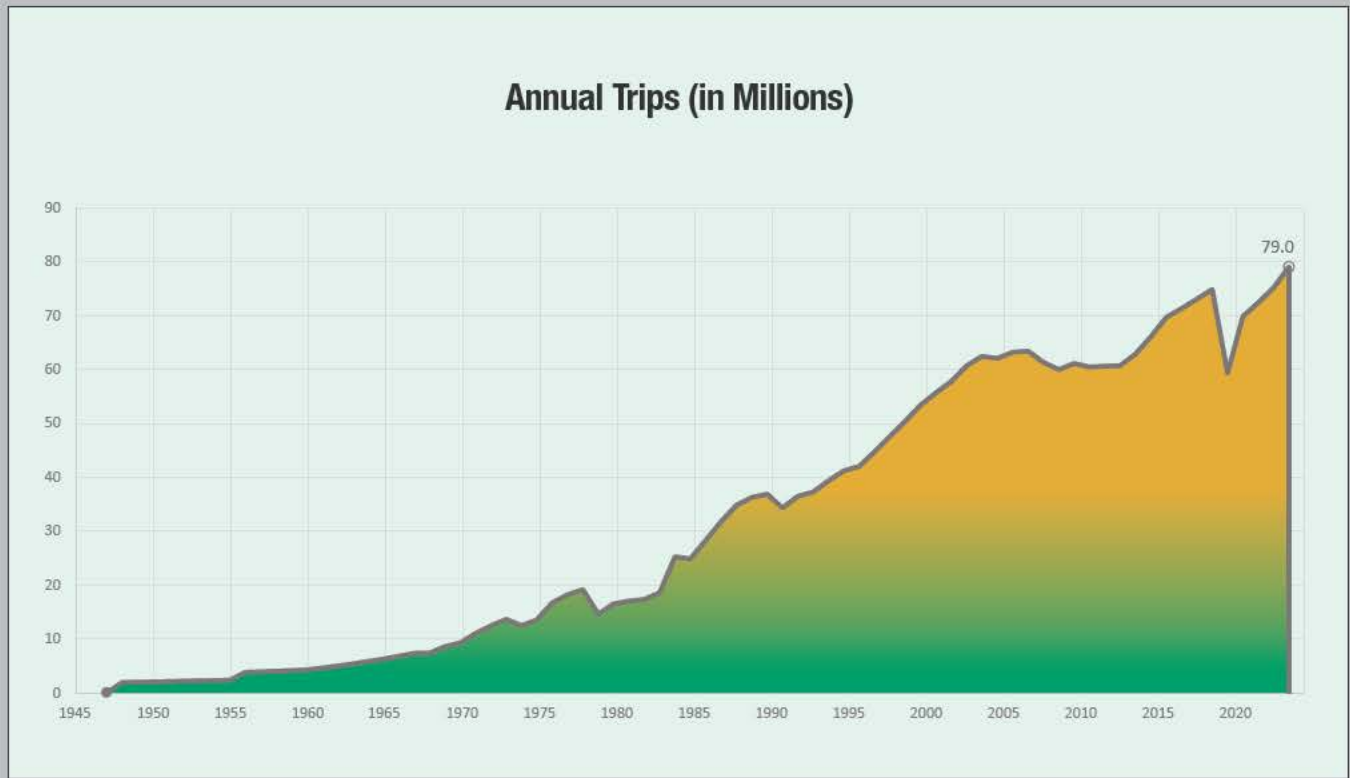


Ceiling tiles at MTA headquarters awaiting new LED lighting in August 2024

Finance



Traffic Through The Years



Employee Recognition

Maine Turnpike Authority's success as a leader in transportation innovation would not be possible without our dedicated employees. Their commitment, expertise, and hard work keep the Turnpike running safely and efficiently every day. Below, we recognize those who reached significant milestones in their careers at MTA in 2024.

5

Robert J. Barker
Highway Maintenance III
Lance D. Benware

Custodial Worker
Michael G. Beyea
Equipment Body Mechanic
Tyler T. Davidson
Violation Image Review Processor
Samuel P. Gilbert
Violation Image Review Processor
Vanessa E. Haskell
Toll Collector I
Julie A. Howell
E-Zpass Customer Service Representative
Shawn R. Laverdiere
Director of Building Maintenance
Misty L. LePage
Toll Collector I
Jeffrey J. Page
Highway Maintenance III
Jessica K. Page
Toll Collector I
Joseph W. Plante
Automotive Mechanic III
Scott R. Purcell
Electrical System Coordinator
Jonathan S. Reid
Toll Collector I
Roger W. Wedgewood
Toll Collector I
Todd Even Welch
Highway Maintenance III

10

Kelly A. Allen
Toll Collector I
Rebecca H. Barr

Business Account Processor
Benjamin M. Bolduc
Right Of Way Coordinator
David L. Cyr
Highway Maintenance III
Haralabos P. Douzepris
Toll Collector I
David A. McCourt
Carpenter
Mark Gerard Pettey
Highway Maintenance III
Tracy J. Pomerleau
Highway Maintenance III
Paul A. Whitley, Jr.
Highway Maintenance Lead Worker

15

Arlo D. Pike, Jr.
Safety Coordinator

20

Kenneth R. Barnes, Jr.
Highway Maintenance III

Cecile Champagne Thompson
Deputy Director Human Resources
Mark A. Ekholm
Toll Collector I
Joyce M. Martin
Fare Collection Coordinator
Calvin Paquet
Fulfillment/Print Room Coordinator
John P. Sirois
Chief Financial Officer/Board Treasurer

25

Gregory B. Stone
Toll Revenue Auditor

30

Robert H. Hooper
Toll Collector I

35

Timothy E. Harris
Fare Collection Superintendent



York Maintenance crew, Summer 2024



MTA employees at annual Seadogs outing, August, 2024

Executive Staff

Peter S. Merfeld, P.E.
Interim Executive Director

John P. Sirois
*Chief Financial Officer
& Authority Board Treasurer*

Jonathan A. Arey, Esq.
*Staff Attorney & Authority Board
Secretary*

Shawn R. Laverdiere
Director of Building Maintenance

Erin T. Courtney
*Director of Communications
& Government/Public Relations*

Pamela J. Lambert
Director of E-ZPass Operations

Stephen R. Tartre, P.E.
Director of Engineering

Richard R. Barra
Director of Fare Collection

Matthew W. Elliott
Director of Finance

John W. Cannell, P.E.
*Director of Highway & Equipment
Maintenance*

Lauren G. Carrier
Director of Human Resources

William H. Yates, III
Director of Information Services

Eric R. Barnes, P.E.
*Director of Intelligent Transportation
Systems*

Gregory J. Stone
*Director of Security, Traffic Safety &
Motorist Services*

MTA Board of Directors

Michael J. Cianchette - Chair
Falmouth, Maine
Member at Large

Jane L. Lincoln - Vice-Chair
Farmingdale, Maine
Kennebec County

Nina A. Fisher - Member
Farmingdale, Maine
Member at Large

Andrew McLean - Member
Gorham, Maine
Cumberland County

Thomas J. Zuke, CPA - Member
Saco, Maine
York County

Bruce A. Van Note - Commissioner
MaineDOT
Ex-Officio Member

Vacant
Androscoggin County



MTA Headquarters cookout, September 2024



MTA Board meeting, September 2024

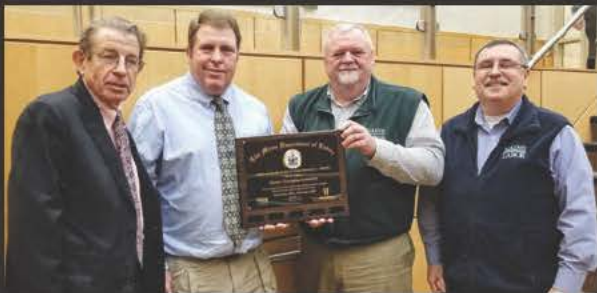


E-ZPASS Customer Service cookout, September, 2024

Tribute to Peter Mills and Dan Wathen



Peter Mills



In September, Peter Mills stepped down as Executive Director of the Maine Turnpike Authority, concluding a distinguished public service career that spanned decades. His contributions included five years in the U.S. Navy, 16 years in the Maine Legislature, and 13 years leading MTA. Under Peter's leadership, the agency completed major projects such as the construction of the open road toll plaza in York and the Portland Area Widening, while also navigating the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In October, long-time Maine Turnpike Authority board chairman, Daniel Wathen stepped down after also serving 13 years on the Maine Turnpike Authority—all of which as chairman. Judge Wathen's term expired March of 2023, yet he told Governor Mills he was willing to serve until she found an appropriate replacement. At his final meeting, Judge Wathen



referred to the Maine Turnpike as “Maine’s front door, that is paid for by those who use it.” He joined the Board at a time of transition and led MTA through changes in management as well as large projects, such as the relocation of the York Toll Plaza and widening to three lanes through the Portland area.

MTA staff and board members thank both Executive Director Mills and Chairman Wathen for their years of service to the MTA and the state of Maine.

Governor Mills appointed Michael Cianchette of Falmouth as Chairman of the Board and Jane Lincoln was selected by the board to serve as vice chair.



Daniel Wathen





To learn more about the MTA and the employees highlighted in this report, scan this QR code

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