



**2003 Hall of Fame Inductee
Presented in December 2002 Sturbridge, Massachusetts**

John Tibbetts

John Tibbetts was involved in transit in northern New England for 30 years. He had, at various times during his career, been Greater Portland Transit District (GPTD) representative on the NEPTA Board of Directors. Mr. Tibbetts was always a levelheaded voice on the Board. Clearly, he had through his dedication to service, skill in operations, labor issues, and human resource skills made the GPTD one of the best operated transit systems in the Northeast.

Mr. Tibbetts was never afraid to try new approaches for transit in his position as Assistance General Manager. While outside influences may have stopped or slowed other people in the quest to try new and innovative operational services, they never affected John in his search for better transit for the GPTD member towns of Portland and Westbrook, Maine. Over the years, working with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Regional 1 office, several programs were initiated, driven largely by his enthusiasm and knowledge. The following are some of John's accomplishments.

Forest Avenue Smart Travel (FAST.) Doubling frequency, new user-friendly buses, and major promotion resulted in a 40 percent increase in ridership. Prior to FAST, he put together the components of the ZIP shuttle that encouraged remote parking and quick, frequent, electric bus shuttles to get workers to work on clean electric buses to points on the Portland peninsula. While other transits walked away from electric bus operation, John, while working with both the past and present General Managers, expanded the electric bus fleet through acquisition of used electric buses. His timing was excellent since this electric fleet, after in-house upgrades, became the core of the new service: Route 8A Cruise ship service.

Cruise Ship Service. Portland has become a cruise ship destination: the electric buses meet the ships and transport passengers to points of interest on the Portland Peninsula. To date over 70,000 people have visited Portland and used this service. John was instrumental in getting the service up and running, what is even more remarkable; he accomplished this in little more than 24 hours advance notice from the City of Portland, Transportation Director. It has been a win for visitors, the city, and the GPTD.

OPSAIL 2000. In 2000 John put together all of the operating plans GPTD's involvement in Operation Sail 2000 (OPSAIL.) Buses were key to the movement of people, over 250,000 during the 3 day event, and John's scheduling and operational skills made it all work. For his efforts, GPTD was awarded a certificate of excellence from the city leadership.

Downeaster Rail Service. More recently, John was involved in providing transit connections for the arrival of passenger rail service from Boston to Portland after a 37-year absence. Working with the city of Portland and Amtrak, he redid GPTD's route 4 to serve the new Portland Transportation center (PTC.) This allowed for frequent bus connection for rail passengers and Concord Trailways bus passengers at the PTC. Since the service was started on 18 March 2002, over 9,500 arriving rail and bus passengers have taken advantage of METRO's expanded service.

Falmouth Crossing Service. Never one to rest on past accomplishments, John put in many of the components of a new service, that of the route 6 bus providing service into Falmouth, Maine. This required new scheduling, union agreement, innovative funding sources, and promotion. John was key to seeing these requirements were met in a timely manner to allow for a 1 November 2002 start date.

John Tibbetts was nominated by Peter Hefler, in 2002 current General Manager of the GPTD. To quote Mr. Hefler "Our nominee is a bit different. For lack of a better phrase, he is one of the many who have labored "in the trenches" for many years and those actions are what makes top quality, reliable, and innovative transportation work. Our nominee fits those criteria very well. In addition to his day-to-day work, he has been the "corporate memory" for the METRO and this has served as a key reason why METRO today is growing since he can be the voice that can look back, access the proposal in historical terms, then move forward. Recognition of these middle managers, I feel is important. It shows that NEPTA values the contributions of all the people that make transportation work in the region, not just the top leadership."

Nomination from Ed Gallagher

John Tibbetts is a local supporter of NEPTA, serving as a Board of Director member and attended meetings over the last fifteen years on a regular bases.

John never rested. He was always looking for new challenges and was involved in many new projects such as the Cruise Ship Service and service to Falmouth, Maine.

Mr. Tibbetts passed away in October 2003 and is missed by his friends and colleagues in the transportation industry. NEPTA is proud to have honored John in 2002 as a well deserved NEPTA Hall of Fame Inductee.



December 2002 Peter Hefler presenting John Tibbetts with the NEPTA Hall of Fame Award Sturbridge, Massachusetts. John is surrounded by family and friends.

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