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Text + -

New ferry proposals could include Boston, Portland

By BRIAN MEDEL Yarmouth Bureau
Tue, Oct 12 - 7:19 AM

YARMOUTH — Friday is the deadline for proposals from companies wanting to operate a ferry next year between Yarmouth and the United States.

"We sent out 15 requests for expressions of interest (and) five came back," said Dave Whiting, Yarmouth's port manager.

The five respondents received requests for proposals from the port, but Whiting said he's not sure how many will reply.

"Some of them may not, depending on their circumstances. I expect to get at least two extremely good ones, maybe three."

The proposals are expected to come from private interests with Canadian, American and European backers, said Whiting, who is also CEO of the Yarmouth Area Industrial Commission.

A conventional ship is expected, he said. No one has talked of running a fast ferry like the Cat.

"We're dealing with some excellent people and they know their business," he said.

Bay Ferries Ltd. said on Dec. 18 it would end high-speed ferry service between Yarmouth and Maine in 2010.

In a news release, Bay Ferries president Mark MacDonald said they were told by the provincial government a few days earlier that financial assistance would not be extended for the 2010 season.

Tourism industry leaders said earlier, that about 75 per cent of Yarmouth's summer hotel rooms were typically rented by Americans using the Yarmouth-to-Maine ferry service.

Whiting said he's confident a ferry will operate again next year.

In fact, Bay Ferries has not ruled out a return to some type of Yarmouth service using a more conventional type of ferry.

"We've always kept all our doors open. . . . We are interested. If there's an opportunity there, we'd love to be back in there operating again," said Danny Bartlett, Bay Ferries' vice-president of finance, three months ago in Digby.

It's possible that some new ferry proposals may include a Yarmouth-to-Boston service, as well as service to Portland and Bar Harbor, Maine, said Whiting.

"Gloucester (Mass.) and Portsmouth (N.H.) aren't completely out of the running," he said.

"We might very well see a year-round service."

A private-sector ferry operator will be obliged to make the runs pay. Freighting heavy trucks during the winter months may be one way of making it work.

The federally owned Yarmouth ferry terminal will soon be in the control of the industrial commission.

"It's a done deal but the lease hasn't been signed," said Whiting.

"We got the environmental study back now that was started in July. They've just finished it. Nothing major there."

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A final inspection report of the terminal property is expected soon from Transport Canada.

"We will be the landlord. We will lease out the terminal facilities to an operator," said Whiting.

He said any prospective operator will indicate what they are willing to pay to lease the Yarmouth terminal.

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Submitted by **mysoapbox** on Tue, 2010-10-12 07:57.

ferry

The government won't let it happen. Its not in Halifax.
Good luck Yarmouth. If you do get someone to run it, the red tape involved by the province, it will be years and years before it will be operational.

Submitted by **hav2b** on Tue, 2010-10-12 08:14.

Will the Cat be back?

So is the Cat (Bay Ferries Ltd.) not permitted to submit a proposal? How ironic would that be, if they were to submit and win the contract? Especially since the NDP forced Nova Scotians to pay out several million dollars by cancelling their taxpayer subsidy.

Submitted by **cabottrail** on Tue, 2010-10-12 08:35.

Lack of Vision for NS

This ferry situation demonstrates that some where in our provincial government there is senior staff that are just not doing their job. This is basically a marine highway, and the three ferries to NS as well as the ferry to NFLD all form part of our economic roadmap. Throw in rail too, but the fact the Province doesn't care about solving the problem they created is symptom of a far larger problem. There is just no sign of any care about rural and coastal Nova Scotia. You'd think a tourism minister would be upset that businesses are closing and employment is dropping, but no, because Halifax is gaining over places like Yarmouth and Cape Breton, why should he care . His job is to help the Nova Scotia business owner first, not some one in Dubai that owns a hotel chain !! Oh, and while we're at it, he wants to add a room tax to everywhere just so the tourist who is not on an expense account will pay more after we add the 2% HST. Small businesses in our tourism regions are being squeezed by our own government . They are small businesses, they can't lobby and they are so seasonal that the province doesn't care about their economics if they slowly fade away one by one . Soon we'll have none of those lovely inns and cottage country experiences left , nor those lovely coastal dining locations. Then what will advertise ?

Submitted by **mgg** on Tue, 2010-10-12 08:57.

I'm all for it as long as it's run without my money

I wish the Yarmouth area the best of luck in securing a ferry service. They only thing I want is for the government to stop spending tax dollars on it. If it is viable then let the private sector at it. If not we go without.

Submitted by **KayTeeGee** on Tue, 2010-10-12 11:17.

Let's cancel taxes altogether

Let's cancel taxes altogether eh? Then we will have to pay for everything, and full price... then 'mgg' you can pay tolls on every road you go on, pay for your own healthcare, full price on medications, education, leisure, and anything else the government subsidizes... which is a lot. Good luck! I bet you wouldn't complain if that was what we had to do.....

Submitted by **ohwell** on Tue, 2010-10-12 08:57.

Just one reality

A ferry from Halifax to Boston is really the only way to go.

Submitted by **KayTeeGee** on Tue, 2010-10-12 11:12.

Selfish much???

Yes, because the only part of Nova Scotia is Halifax... congrats 'ohwell;' you have been urbanized... care to elaborate why Halifax to Boston is the only way to go? Try to not be so narrow minded with your answer please, it makes me sick to my stomach.

Submitted by **bro tim** on Tue, 2010-10-12 11:57.

It Has Nothing To Do

with selfishness, it has to economics and population. The vast majority who would use it would be in the metro area, both private and commercial traffic, including pedestrian traffic. My only concern would be the cost to the consumer. Will it be a viable option to say either flying or driving through. One of the reasons I wouldn't take the ferry from Yarmouth is that it is cheaper (and takes about the same time) driving from Halifax to Saint John or Bar Harbor.

Submitted by **munky** on Tue, 2010-10-12 15:35.

idiotic

Considering the crossing from Yarmouth to Portland is 12 hours, a trip from Boston to Halifax would be probably 24 hours. You can drive to boston from Halifax in less then 12 hours, so where's the sense in that?

Submitted by **truestory** on Tue, 2010-10-12 09:28.

customs

Oh good! Now the miserable customs folks can be moved back to Yarmouth. When reading about them yesterday I thought, gee they must have moved the GUYS from Yarmouth to Hfx. What a welcome they gave there!

Submitted by **daveburris** on Tue, 2010-10-12 13:19.

No Tax Dollars

Interesting, the story says "A private-sector ferry operator will be obliged to make the runs pay." Let's just see what the proposals say, because more than likely they will attempt to get gov't involvement again. KayTeeGee, we, as citizens, already pay for everything you mentioned and everything else besides. The gov't has no money except what it takes out of our pockets or borrows from our children, and the taxes that corporations pay have to first come from their customers, that is you and me. There is no free lunch. Each family of four is now paying about \$11,000 per year for our "free" health care, and about \$8,000 per year to service federal and provincial debt. If we had that money in our own pockets we would have no trouble paying for those things you mentioned, or any other reasonable goods or services.

Submitted by **chuckles** on Tue, 2010-10-12 14:09.

good on ya

For God's sake DO NOT let any politician anywhere near the Photo opp's when you folks land the big fish!!

Submitted by **Adamant** on Tue, 2010-10-12 15:20.

Subsidy?

There is no logical reason to subsidize this service. If it's going to make money it should be a private company with private funding that operates the service. If it does make money the profits are theirs to keep. The CAT was both expensive and not designed to carry transport trucks. I think someone from Yarmouth should seriously look at getting into the business themselves. The town owns the facilities. A quick look on the internet will show you a hundred used ferries all capable of making the crossing. If it can turn a profit it would add much needed income to the town. But you need private investors, not public money.

Submitted by **CapeHalifax** on Tue, 2010-10-12 15:32.

NDP mean Business

It is good to finally have a government in office that knows how to do business. I imagine South-West Nova will be very grateful that the province got rid of the losing venture of the Cat and turned to a more economically sustainable transportation infrastructure. It probably won be pretty but the bottom line is that it will pay its own way without yearly escalating costs in the millions of taxpayers dollars.

Submitted by **eaglethorne** on Tue, 2010-10-12 17:15.

traffic

I believe it takes 5 or 6 hours to cross from Yarmouth to the USA. Than again its where it lands Portland or Bar Harbour not Boston that would take longer. Thought I throw that in. It has to be year round service and cost kept low like the NL run not the Digby run or the cost on the old Cat. That was to way to much Bay Ferries suck the money out of people and government on those two runs. Than again talking to people that work on the ferries they seem to think it will never be profitable O well life stinks. Guess that why I go north. I like my fery ride to NL.


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