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## New Maine-Nova Scotia ferry could sail in 2011

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**By The Associated Press**

PORTLAND, Maine — A Canadian executive says ferry service could be crossing the Gulf of Maine as soon as next spring carrying passengers and vehicles between Portland and Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.

Dave Whiting of the Yarmouth Area Industrial Commission says five operators have expressed interest in running such a ferry.

Their proposals are due Oct 15. And he tells the Portland Press Herald that if, as expected, an operator is chosen, year-round ferry service could resume next spring.

Bruce McNeil, spokesman for Scotia Cruises, said a group of investors met two weeks ago and decided that it was too late in the season to properly market Halifax-to-Portland service and make arrangements with tour operators and hotels for 2011.

Scotia Cruises has not ruled out starting the service in 2012, McNeil said.

"People are creatures of habit. They book their summer vacations the year before," he said. "You need at least 12 months in advance to market a service. It's a matter of economics. In our professional opinion, it would be business suicide to try to do this in six months."

Ferry service between Portland and Yarmouth ended last year after Bay Ferries Ltd. stopped running the high-speed Cat. Bay Ferries cited falling ridership and the loss of an operating subsidy from the province.

The Scotia Prince, the cruise ferry that operated between Portland and Yarmouth for years, ended its run in 2004.

The latest proposals for Yarmouth do not involve high-speed ferries. The ships that are being considered would carry passengers and vehicles and provide such amenities as spas, casino gambling and shows.