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# BUSINESS MAINE

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## **Tourist train planned for Ellsworth**

ELLSWORTH — A local non-profit organization recently reached an agreement with the Maine Department of Transportation to reuse a portion of the Calais Branch rail line to bring an excursion train to the area within three years.

The Downeast Scenic Rail Heritage Preservation Trust of Bar Harbor signed a 15-year lease with the MDOT to use a 29-mile stretch of the railway that once moved passengers and freight between Calais and Brewer. The Downeast Scenic Railroad would offer 24-mile, 90-minute roundtrip sightseeing and dinner train tours from Washington Junction in Ellsworth to Green Lake in Dedham.

Rehabilitation of the tracks, which have been out of service since 1985, will cost an estimated \$2.3 million, with the money coming from donations and grants, according to the *Bangor Daily News*. An economic impact study indicated the train would have 45,000 riders its first year and 72,000 riders its second year, according to the paper. The trust's executive director, Crystal Pace, told the paper she hoped to begin operations in 2008.