

Feds float \$4.5 million into Lynn for ferry

FILE PHOTO

Passengers enjoy the view as they ride the Lynn ferry to Boston.

By **THOR JOURGENSEN**

LYNN — A \$4.5 million federal grant will pay for a new 149-passenger ferry, **U.S. Rep. Seth Moulton's** office said Thursday.

Meanwhile, state officials are continuing to search for money to operate a ferry beginning this spring through the summer. The federal document outlining the grant said the money will pay for a city ferry's construction "to provide year-round commuter ferry service."

"Full-time ferry service in Lynn will help unleash the tremendous potential for the city's underdeveloped waterfront," said Moulton. "I am grateful to the local and state partners, especially **Senator (Thomas M.) McGee** and the **Lynn EDIC (Economic Development and Industrial Corporation)**, for their leadership on this effort."

McGee said there is no timeline yet for acquiring the ferry but said the boat probably will not be available this year. He said acquiring a ferry is the key to Lynn running year-round ferry service. "It's very exciting news. It allows us to run service that works for Lynn," McGee said.

Moulton said a meeting with **U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx** set the stage for the grant award. But he credited state and local officials who have met for the last several months, focusing on ways to fuel Lynn's economic resurgence.

"This is a team effort and an example of how we are progressing for Lynn," Moulton said. The award cites the city's success in increasing ferry ridership to 14,557, up from 13,136 passengers over the last two years, but the federal money only slightly overshadows city and state efforts to find cash to operate a commuter ferry from Blossom Street extension for a third year.

Operated for the city by **Boston Harbor Cruises**, the ferry Cetacea made three times daily between May and September from a dock at the end of Blossom Street extension off the Lynnway to Central Wharf bordering downtown Boston.

Each trip took about 30 minutes and cost \$7.

State Rep. Brendan Crighton has filed an amendment to the **Massachusetts House** budget to provide \$650,000 in state money to run the ferry for another season. McGee said legislators continue working with state officials to find money to operate a ferry this summer.

"We have some ideas – I'm optimistic," he said.

McGee, Crighton and other legislators and city officials, including **Economic Development and**

Industrial Corp. director James Cowdell, successfully sought out \$1.5 million to operate the ferry from May to September in 2014 and 2015.

Uncertainty hung over the ferry's future last September when the Cetacea made its last trip of the season from Blossom Street extension. The city applied for federal money to buy a ferry or have one built. But the hunt for additional state money, as of last Friday, continued with state **Transportation Secretary Stephanie Pollack** saying, "We need to find out if there are any other sources."

Cowdell on Thursday called the federal grant announcement "excellent news for commuters from Lynn and the North Shore." "This grant will allow us to purchase our own ferry and help us move toward our goal of providing year-round ferry service," said Cowdell. *Thor Jourgensen can be reached at tjourgensen@itemlive.com.*