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The Rail Report

NCDOT Rail Division



April 2014

North Carolina's Amtrak Passenger Survey

Passengers on the *Piedmont* and *Carolinian* trains are being surveyed through the end of this month to update passenger demographics and trip purpose information and to help us learn how we are doing in meeting passenger expectations. From this survey we will assess the value that passengers place on support services, such as call center, internet booking, station services, on-board food and Wi-Fi services, and connecting transit services. The survey will also help identify measures to increase awareness of NC's state-supported passenger rail services and determine effective advertising and media outlets.



10% off Mid-Week Travel Promotion begins April 28

The Rail Division is implementing the first phase of a two-year fare strategy plan that provides discounts for travel during off-peak periods and increases fares during peak travel periods. Beginning April 28, fares will be reduced by 10%, Tuesday through Thursday. If the promotion proves effective in increasing ridership and revenue during off-peak days, it will be extended.

Volunteer Train Hosts Meet in Kannapolis

The 2014 annual meeting of the NC Volunteer Train Host Association was held on Saturday, March 1, at the Kannapolis Train Station. In addition to association business updates, fourteen hosts were presented certificates of appreciation for their years of service and dedication. Doug Corriher and Gene Kirkland were recognized for 20 and 15 years of service, respectively. The other hosts were recognized for five and 10 years of service.

The seventy plus hosts in attendance were updated on the Piedmont Improvement Program projects by Rail Division Deputy Director Allan Paul. Hosts are receiving and answering questions from passengers about the work that they are seeing on the railroads. Roger Smock, safety consultant, shared information about NCDOT's BeRailSafe training program that is being taught to first responders across the state.

The NC Volunteer Train Host Association has 130+ active members and has been in existence since 1991. It is one of the oldest train host associations in the country. These volunteers ride daily on the *Piedmont* and *Carolinian* trains to assist passengers and provide information about North Carolina's Amtrak service as well as points of interest along the routes. The hosts also assist the Rail Division in staffing events such as special trains, station openings, festivals, expos and the annual state fair stop.

Ridership & Revenue on NC's Amtrak Service – January 2014 vs. 2013

| Icon | RIDERSHIP | | | REVENUE | | |
|-------------------|-----------|--------|-------|-------------|-------------|--------|
| | 2014 | 2013 | % +/- | 2014 | 2013 | % +/- |
| | | | | | | |
| Piedmont | 12,324 | 11,449 | +7.6% | \$250,102 | \$229,603 | +12.5% |
| Carolinian | 21,662 | 22,062 | -1.8% | \$1,340,915 | \$2,190,352 | +3.9% |

*During January, service was abbreviated or cancelled three days due to snow and icy conditions.

FRRCSI Funding and Project Updates

This month, the Rail Division is recommending projects for consideration and approval by the Board of Transportation that are funded through the Freight Rail & Rail Crossing Safety Improvement Fund. This fund was authorized by the 2013 session of the General Assembly through Senate Bill 402 and utilizes dividends received from the North Carolina Railroad Company.



Project Funding Categories

| Type | Amount |
|--|---------------------|
| Track and Infrastructure Improvements | \$5,821,108 |
| Grade Crossing Protection, Elimination, and Hazard Removal | \$6,792,000 |
| Industrial and Port Access Improvements | \$3,233,000 |
| Total | \$15,846,108 |

- **Track and Infrastructure Improvements** are amounts invested in mainline track for short line railroads. Funds are reimbursed on a 50% match basis. Projects will upgrade lines for operating efficiency and safety on each short line railroad.
- **Grade Crossing Improvements** provide greater safety where roads cross railroads. FRRCSI funds will provide for the closure of seven crossings through the extension of new access roads to these areas and enhanced protection at remaining crossings. Funds will also modernize selected crossings across the state through new standard signage and new LED lighting at crossings equipped with flashers.
- **Industrial and Port Access Improvements** provide matching funds for new customers on railroads and upgrade of rail infrastructure at the Port of Wilmington. Customers will be able

to add thousands of new carloads to the rail network through these improvements rather than shipping by heavy trucks on the highway network.

Remaining funds are reserved for opportunities expected to arise during the year.

In addition, funds are reserved for Rail Industrial Access Program (RIAP) projects this year. One RIAP project will be funded this month, leaving funding available for four additional projects this year.

New customer siding projects were solicited from the state's railroads for improvements that would add new business to their networks.

For port improvements, \$833,000 is recommended to match Port funds on a dollar for dollar basis to improve tracks and provide additional rail capacity at the State Port at Wilmington .

Short line railroads were asked to submit requests through the Short Line Infrastructure Assistance Program (SIAP), for projects of immediate benefit where matching dollars were available and work could be completed in the next 24 months. Requests were evaluated and funding recommendations are in this month's Board of Transportation agenda.

Railroad Day on the Hill

The American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association sponsored **Railroad Day on the Hill** on March 13. Three hundred fifty railroad, Department of Transportation and shipper representatives attended meetings with senators and representatives from their states to discuss railroad related bills before the congress and issues of significance. Shirley Williams, Rail Division's Manager of Planning and Development represented the NCDOT.

The three issues that were most important to the railroads include efforts to increase truck size and weight, extending short line tax credits, and not increasing regulation. We met with 7 representatives and all were very supportive of rail transportation and safety. All but one NC representative is a sponsor of the short line tax credit bill.



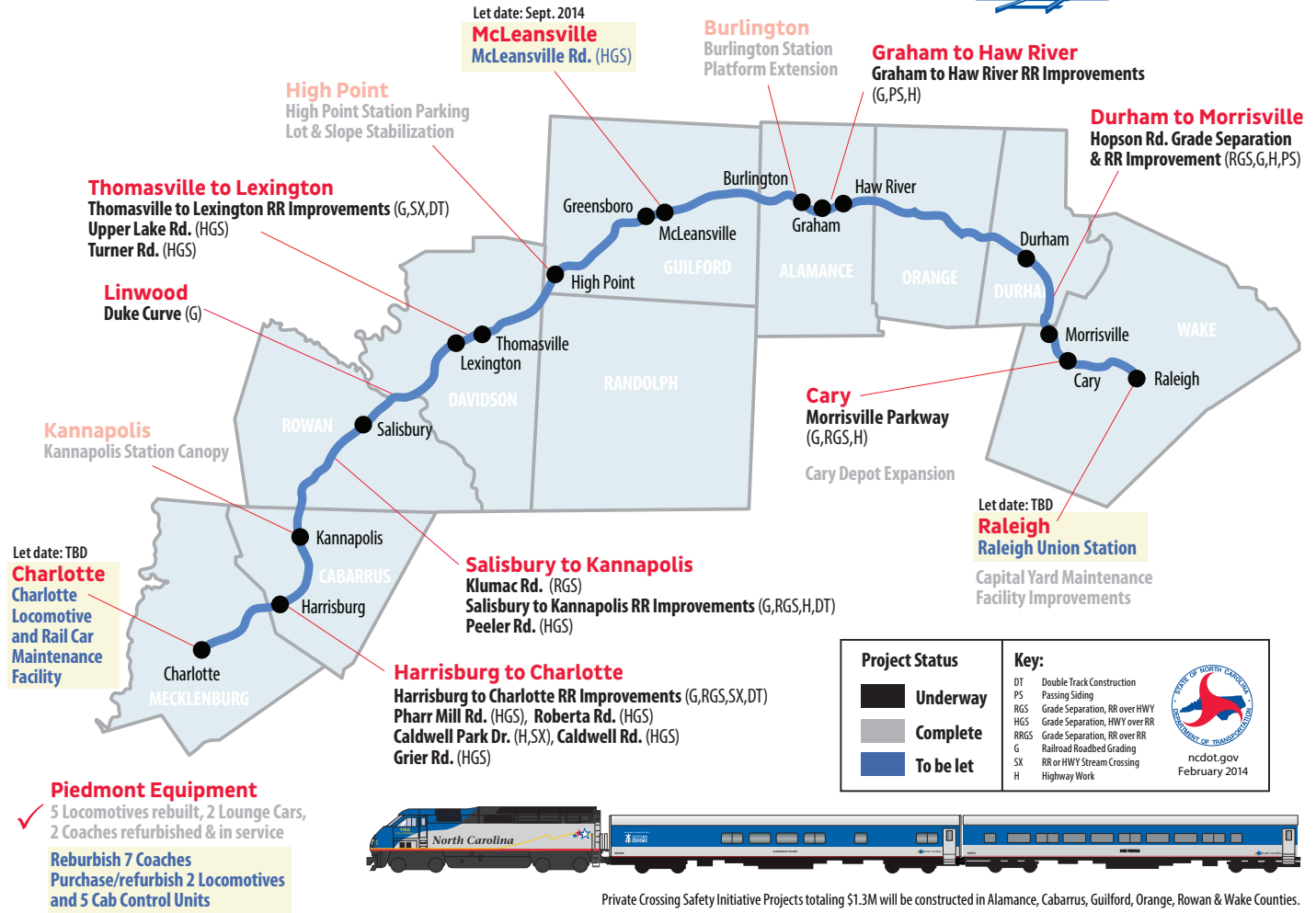
L to R: Shirley Williams-NCDOT Rail Division, Garland Horton-A&R, Carl Hollowell-ACWR, Congressman Coble and Cathy LeFevers-Duke Energy



NATIONAL TRAIN DAY – SATURDAY, MAY 10

On May 10th, NCDOT's Rail Division will join Amtrak and train enthusiasts and supporters from around the nation to celebrate National Train Day. Events will be held at all North Carolina Stations and a Kids Ride for \$5 promotion is available for travel within North Carolina. Learn more at ncbytrain.org and nationaltrainday.com.

Piedmont Improvement Program Projects

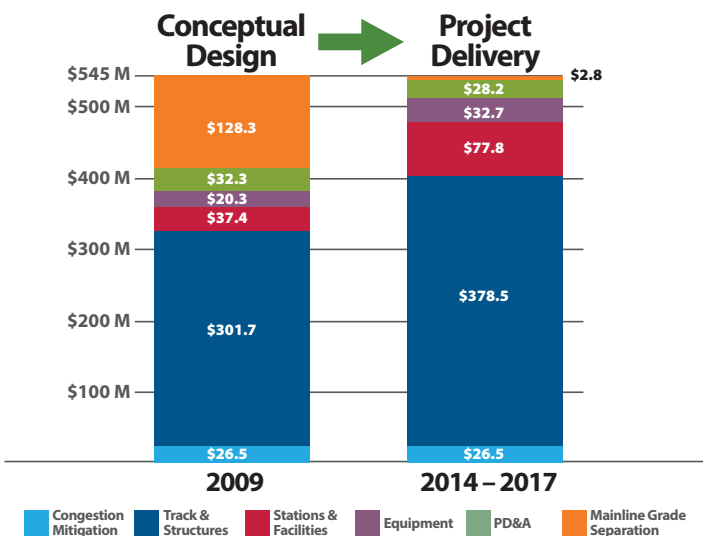


ARRA Funds Spent to Date (effective 2/28/2014)

| Component | Amount |
|---------------------------------|--|
| PD&A | \$ 34,111,184 |
| Equipment Procurement & Rebuild | \$22,552,187 |
| Stations & Facilities | \$10,414,030 |
| Track & Structures | \$56,079,547 |
| CRISP | \$ 2,174,274 |
| Program Totals | \$125,331,223 of \$520M awarded FRA Grant Funds |

Cooperative Agreement to reallocate PIP funding finalized

This agreement, signed by Secretary Tony Tata and the FRA, adjusts the scope of the PIP program from the 2009 conceptual phase to a more refined and developed 2013 design phase.



Piedmont Improvement Program Project Photos – late February through March, 2014



U-4716 Hopson Rd./Nelson-Clegg - Signal work



U-4716 Hopson Rd./Nelson-Clegg - Utility work



U-4716 Hopson Rd./Nelson-Clegg - Grading



U-4716 Hopson Rd./Nelson-Clegg - Sub-ballast



I-2304 Duke Curve Realignment - Complete Roadbed



I-2304 Duke Curve Realignment - Ballast Pad

Piedmont Improvement Program Project Photos – late February through March, 2014



C-4901 Bowers to Lake - Grading



C-4901 Upper Lake Road - Overpass Substructure



C-4901 Turner Road - Overpass Substructure



P-5205 Haw River Passing Siding - Erosion Control



P-5208 Haydock to Junker - Bridge Structure



P-5208 Haydock to Junker - Column Construction