

# The Rail Report

NCDOT Rail Division



October 2014

## NC Rail Projects Get Big Boost Thanks to Federal Grant Awards



Meherrin River Bridge

Rail in North Carolina is getting a big boost thanks to two federal TIGER grants recently awarded to the N.C. Department of Transportation to improve both freight and passenger service

across the state. NCDOT learned last week that it received the grants, following Transportation Secretary Tony Tata's application submittal in April.

The largest grant, for \$5.8 million, will fund a major freight improvement project in northeastern North Carolina to upgrade the North Carolina & Virginia Railroad Company in Bertie, Hertford and Northampton counties currently operated by Genesee and Wyoming. The 52-mile rail line serves Nucor Steel, one of the largest employers in the region.

"This project will improve the railroad track and allow shippers such as Nucor to utilize modern, heavyweight cars that are more efficient in today's railroad operations," said Tata. "The overall

improvements will increase mobility and safety while promoting economic development in the northeast region of North Carolina."

"This grant was possible only through the very strong support of NCDOT, Congressman G.K. Butterfield, and the communities and customers our railroad serves," said Jim Irvin, president of the North Carolina & Virginia Railroad. "It will allow for the modernization of the railroad, helping support existing customers and attract new ones to the communities along our line."

Additionally, NCDOT will invest \$2 million in the project through its Freight Rail and Rail Crossing Safety Initiative, funded through dividends from the North Carolina Railroad Company, as well as \$800,000 from the North Carolina Mobility Fund. The total cost of the project is \$11.6 million, with more than \$3 million in private investment coming from the North Carolina & Virginia Railroad Company.

The second grant for \$200,000 will be used to develop transit options along the Piedmont corridor, including terminal projects such as the Gateway Station project in Charlotte. This money will allow NCDOT to continue moving this project forward with its partners on community-based connections along the route.

## Reducing Railroad Right-of-Way Trespassing Incidents

The safety of passengers, freight and passenger train crews, pedestrians and drivers is a top priority for NCDOT.

A two year research project with NCSU's Institute for Transportation Research and Education (ITRE) kicked off in August to deal with the issue of trespassing on North Carolina's railroads. So far this year, trespasser incidents have resulted in 13 fatalities and 8 injuries.

The trespasser research project has two objectives. The first is to provide a comprehensive assessment of trespassing along the heavily-traveled Charlotte-to-Raleigh Piedmont Passenger and Freight Rail Corridor in terms of locations and frequency of acts. The second is to develop and recommend alternative methods for remotely observing trespass acts and communicating such information in a timely manner to local law enforcement, State Highway Patrol, rail engineers, and/or railroad police such that injury and fatal incidents can be prevented.



ITRE will use GIS land use, population, and transportation information layers to identify potential locations, interview local law enforcement agencies for apprehensions and anecdotal evidence of trespass acts, and make site visits to observe conditions and pedestrian patterns at sites where incidents have occurred.

They will also meet with railroad and law enforcement representatives to develop alternative trespasser reduction methods, and to implement a chosen method to collect data for analysis.

Reductions in trespassing will make our railroads safer for passengers and train crews, and save monetary costs and lost time incurred by delays to passenger trains (including the passengers) and freight trains involved in trespass-related incidents.



Visit the Rail Division display in NCDOT's GHSP Safety City Exhibit at the NC State Fair. October 16-26, 2014

## Charlotte Regional Intermodal Facility receives America's Transportation Awards–Best Use of Innovation honor

NCDOT, Norfolk Southern and the City of Charlotte received the 2014 America's Transportation Awards "Best Use of Innovation" regional award for the Charlotte Regional Intermodal Facility next to Charlotte-Douglas International Airport. This annual competition, hosted by American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), recognizes state DOTs delivering value for transportation and using innovative management techniques and technology.



Photo courtesy Norfolk Southern

The \$92-million facility, 200-acre Charlotte Regional Intermodal Facility opened in December 2013, and is a state-of-the-art hub that links air, rail and trucks to east coast seaports and replaces the previous 40-acre facility in Uptown Charlotte. The facility can load/unload 250,000 containers or trailers from railcars annually – nearly double the capacity of the old facility and features innovative technologies such as an automated gate system and an equipment position determination system to improve efficiency and safety.

The facility's 20-year economic impact is projected at \$300 million, with \$7.6 billion in regional economic development. The facility itself would create 157 new jobs and stimulate the creation of 5,000 jobs regionally.

"This project is a great example of innovation and partnership on all levels and will help better support commerce and freight movement in our state," said Secretary Tony Tata.



Special thanks to Volunteer Train Hosts Leon Debaer and Bob Warner for staffing our North Carolina's Amtrak booth at the State Employee's Wellness Fair in August. Visitors to the table were nonstop and very complimentary of their experiences on our trains. One person recognized Leon and thanked him for his pleasant travel experience on the Piedmont.

## Maintenance and painting completed on 1911 P&N South Fork Catawba River Bridge



Painting of the P&N South Fork Catawba River bridge was the final element of the P&N Railroad upgrade and reactivation project which began in 2009.



Along with the painting, repairs included some steel bracing replacement and bearing work. The contractor, Adelphi, confirmed (as noted from the thorough

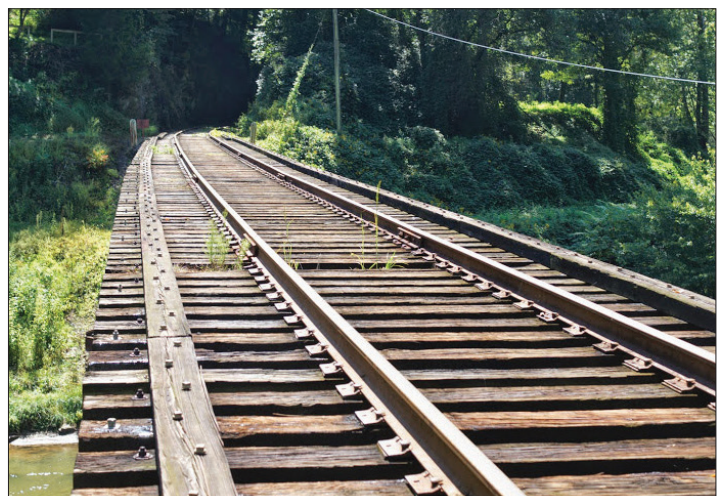
bridge inspection of 2010) that the steel on this bridge, which was built in 1911, is in very good condition with only minor loss of steel section from corrosion. This bridge should last and serve the P&N well for many more years.

The \$911,000 project was paid for by federal enhancement, state, and local (Gaston County) funding.


All work associated with upgrade of the Piedmont & Northern Railroad for reactivation is now complete.

## State Short Line Assistance Program makes improvements to Great Smoky Mountain Railroad bridge deck over Fontana Lake

The GSMR crosstie program began in 2011 and is continuing. The state investment in GSMR since 2006 is over \$850,000, including a yet to begin \$249,000 award from this year's program and some outstanding from 2012 and 2013 projects. In a 2007 study, the fiscal impact of GSMR to the local economy was \$62 million. The railroad supports an estimated 814 full-time jobs.



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

	RIDERSHIP			REVENUE		
	2014	2013	% +/-	2014	2013	% +/-
Piedmont	13,977	13,618	3%	\$276,516	\$259,082	7%
Carolinian	29,583	29,993	-1%	\$2,134,922	\$2,161,466	-1%

### Amtrak's Eastern NC Thruway Bus ridership still growing

July ridership was up 453 & August 519 over the previous year. So far in 2014, the service is up 2,821 riders to date over last year.



## Hop on Board the Carolina Panthers Train

Did you know that North Carolina's Amtrak provides a convenient way to watch the Carolina Panthers play, without the hassle of driving and parking?

The "Panthers train" (*Piedmont* 73) departs the Raleigh Amtrak station at 6:45 a.m. on game days with stops in Cary, Durham, Burlington, Greensboro, High Point, Salisbury and Kannapolis before pulling into the Charlotte Amtrak station at 9:55 a.m.

When you arrive, the CATS (Charlotte Area Transit) #11 bus is waiting at the train station to meet the train and take passengers to the Transportation Center in uptown Charlotte a few blocks from the Bank of America stadium. This arrival time leaves plenty of opportunity for grabbing a bite to eat or checking out the tailgating scene prior to the 1 p.m. game!

To get home from the game, walk a few blocks back to the Transportation Center to catch the #11 bus to North Tryon. Buses run every 15 minutes, cost \$2.20 per passenger (exact change needed), and drop off right in front of the train station. The return train (*Piedmont* 76) departs Charlotte at 5:15 p.m. to head back to Raleigh, arriving at 8:26 p.m.

Additional transportation options for traveling between the Charlotte Amtrak station and Bank of America stadium include car services such as Uber and Lyft, as well as local taxi service.

**North Carolina's Amtrak train schedules coincide with home games that start at 1 p.m. on the following dates:**

September 14, October 5, October 26, November 16, December 14, December 21.

**To get on board the "Panthers train," book early at [ncbytrain.org](http://ncbytrain.org).**

## North Carolina's Amtrak Makes Special Stops at N.C. State Fair Oct. 17-26 and the Lexington BBQ Festival Oct. 25

North Carolina's Amtrak makes a special stop right in front of the **North Carolina State Fair** Oct. 17-26. To get there, simply take the morning *Carolinian* 80 train that departs Charlotte at 7 a.m. The train stops in Kannapolis, Salisbury, High Point, Greensboro, Burlington, Durham and Cary before reaching the State Fairgrounds at 10:08 a.m. To get home, take the return train *Carolinian* 79 departing the State Fairgrounds at 4:56 p.m. with stops in Cary, Durham, Burlington, Greensboro, High Point, Salisbury and Kannapolis, arriving in Charlotte at 8:12 p.m.

The special train stop is wheelchair accessible. Book tickets online using Station Code NSF, and prepare to enjoy all the fair has to offer this year!

There are also special stops in Lexington for the city's renowned **31st Annual Barbecue Festival** on Saturday, Oct. 25.

As part of the free festival, the streets of Historic Uptown Lexington are transformed into a playground with food, entertainment, shopping and lots of family fun. It all begins at 8:30 a.m. and runs

until 6 p.m. The *Piedmont* and *Carolinian* trains running between Raleigh and Charlotte will stop in Lexington in the morning and afternoon. The temporary train stop is not wheelchair accessible.

North Carolina's  
**AMTRAK**<sup>®</sup>  
[ncbytrain.org](http://ncbytrain.org)

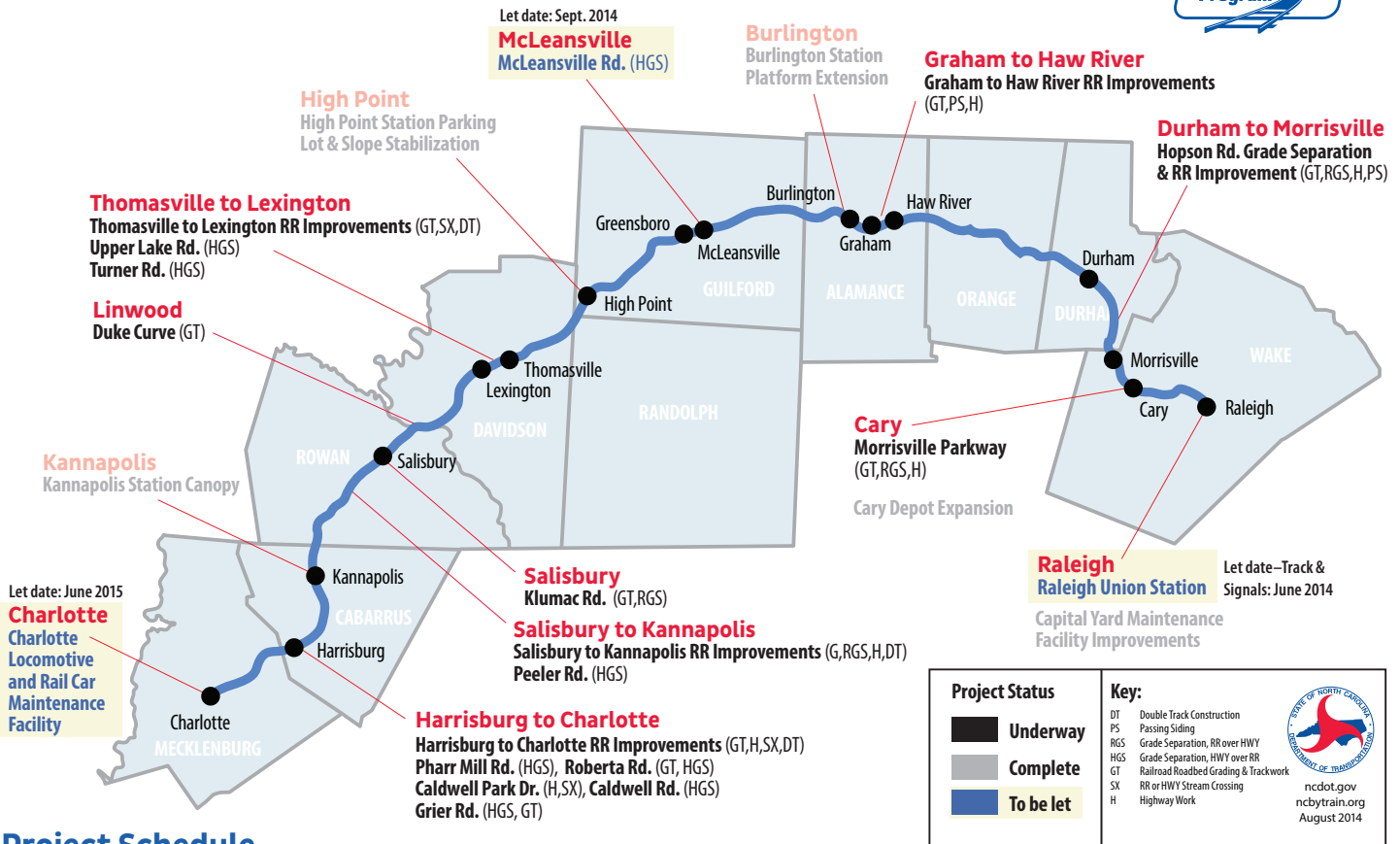
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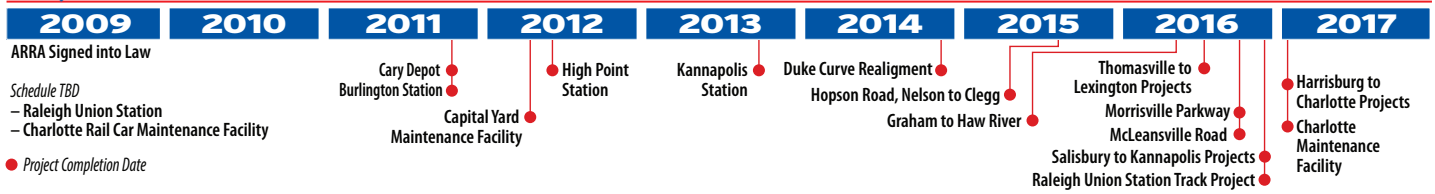

GET ON BOARD!

Special train stops at the  
**2014 North Carolina State Fair** in Raleigh and the  
**31st Annual Barbecue Festival** in Lexington.  
Book your ticket at [ncbytrain.org](http://ncbytrain.org) today.

# Piedmont Improvement Program – August 2014 Status Report



## Project Schedule



## ARRA Funds Spent to Date (effective 8/31/2014)

Component	Expenditure
PD&A	\$41,679,159.13
Equipment Procurement & Rebuild	\$24,924,267.56
Stations & Facilities	\$10,512,534.64
Track & Structures	\$93,529,014.58
CRISP	\$2,180,376.32
<b>Program Totals</b>	<b>\$172,825,352.23</b> of \$520M awarded FRA Grant Funds
<b>New ARRA Contracts Awarded in August: 19 contracts worth \$9,585,043</b>	

## South End Main Line Forum meeting held September 25th at Salisbury Depot



The NCDOT Rail Division held a forum at the Train Depot in Salisbury to update local governments, legislators and business leaders about the Piedmont Improvement Program projects from Salisbury to Charlotte. Meeting included welcoming remarks from Mayor Pro Tem Maggie Blackwell and NCDOT Board member Jake Alexander. Rail Division staff provided updates on the status of current projects and fielded questions about PIP activities.

Piedmont Improvement Program Project Photos – August to Mid-September 2014



P-5201 Morrisville Parkway grading



P-5201 Morrisville Parkway, west approach to bridge



U-4716 Hopson Road bridge construction



U-4716 Nelson to Clegg, Church Street Extension



P-5205 Graham to Haw River, signal installation



P-5205 Graham to Haw River Grading

Piedmont Improvement Program Project Photos – August to Mid-September 2014



C-4901 Bowers to Lake - View from Upper Lake Bridge



C-4901 Bowers to Lake - Bridge over Abbotts Creek



P-5206 Reid to N. Kannapolis - Ditching



P-5206 Peeler Road Bridge Construction



P-5208 Haydock to Junker - Pharr Mill Road Bridge



P-5208 Haydock to Junker - Roberta Road Grade Separation