

NCDOT Rail Division

# The Rail Report



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Nov. 2018



*RJ Corman Washout*



*Aberdeen Carolina and Western washout*

## Eastern North Carolina's Short Line Railroads Impacted by Hurricane Florence

North Carolina was hit hard by Hurricane Florence in September. The slow-moving storm brought wind, surge and catastrophic flooding across much of the state, particularly along the Southern Coastal Plain and Southern Piedmont regions. The storm inundated entire communities, knocking out power and damaging homes, businesses, and critical infrastructure. North Carolina's short line rail network was not spared. Approximately 30 percent of the short line railroads experienced significant impacts.

Recovery costs are particularly challenging for short line railroads to absorb. Immediate service delays affect local customer shipments while impairing revenue and the additional cost of clean-up and repairs further strains the financial burden on short lines.

The N.C. Department of Transportation and short line railways have enjoyed a long and mutually beneficial relationship that promotes economic development, job creation and best use of the rail network. NCDOT is committed to this partnership and the well-being of the rail network throughout the state. The Rail Division is maintaining continuous communication with the railroads as they work to recover from Hurricane Florence.

### Short Line Damage Included:

#### Aberdeen Carolina & Western

- Numerous washouts
- Extensive tree and debris removal
- Post-storm subgrade collapses

#### Aberdeen & Rockfish Railroad

- Minor washouts
- Extensive tree and debris removal

#### Atlantic & Western Railway

- Numerous washouts

#### Coastal Carolina Railway

- Flooding in the Wilson office
- Damage to the engine house, office and scale house at Morehead City
- Signal failures, loss of a signal cabinet, twisted rail
- Shifted bents and a submerged operation house at the Pamlico swing bridge
- Numerous washouts
- Extensive tree and debris removal

#### Clinton Terminal Railroad

- Washout

#### Laurinburg & Southern Railway

- Numerous washouts
- Damage to an at-grade rail crossing

#### RJ Corman Railroad Company

- Extensive flooding and submergence of rail network
- Numerous washouts
- Extensive tree and debris removal

*Continued on page 2*





Clinton Terminal Railroad washout



Carolina Coastal Railway Structure Damage in Morehead City



ACWR washout

Class I railroads also experienced significant impacts from the storm. CSX and Norfolk Southern suspended service on Sept. 13 for areas in the path of the hurricane. Significant sections of track and bridges were flooded and covered with debris, plus there were many washouts. Thousands of trees had to be cleared from the tracks.

Service to all CSX lines was restored by Sept. 26 except for the Wilmington Subdivision. CSX service to the Wilmington Port was restored on Oct. 3. Norfolk Southern had to remove boats from the Neuse and Trent river railroad bridges at New Bern. Service was restored to the Port of Morehead City on Sept. 22 and all lines were back in service by Sept. 27.

To protect public safety, NC By Train and Amtrak long-distance service halted Sept. 13 before Hurricane Florence made landfall in North Carolina. The *Carolinian* and *Piedmont* trains between Raleigh and Charlotte resumed service Sept. 18. The *Carolinian* NYC to Charlotte service resumed Sept. 19. The *Crescent* NYC to New Orleans service resumed Sept. 19. Amtrak's *Silver Meteors* service resumed Sept. 23. Amtrak's *Palmetto* service resumed Sept. 25 and *Silver Star* service resumed Sept. 27.

There was no damage to passenger train stations.



Debris piled up against CSX Bridge over the Cape Fear River



Series of photos of Cape Fear River under CSX bridge rising from Hurricane Florence rainfall (taken by Fayetteville Police Department)



Flooding on NS tracks South of Fayetteville



## Rail Division Response – Hurricane Florence



*Customer Service Manager Alison Boswell works in the EOC*

The NCDOT Rail Division is a member of NC Emergency Management's State Emergency Response Team and helped to staff the Emergency Operations Center in Raleigh during Hurricane Florence response efforts. Deputy Director Allan Paul, Rail Safety Consultant Roger Smock, and Alison Boswell and Timothy McHugh from the Operations Branch alternated shifts in the EOC from Sept. 12 - 23.

The Rail Division also acted as point of contact and facilitator with North Carolina railroads before, during and after the hurricane by coordinating passenger service suspensions and issuing daily Rail Status Reports for Class I and Short Line railroads. The Division also coordinated with railroads on restoration of service after the hurricane.

## Raleigh Union Station Wins 2018 Sir Walter Raleigh Award



Raleigh Union Station was awarded the 2018 Sir Walter Raleigh Award for Community Appearance – Public Facilities on Oct. 16 at the Raleigh Appearance Commission's annual awards ceremony.

Awards in this category are given for local, state and federal projects including office, education and transportation-related facilities exhibiting a new standard of excellence and that contribute to the character, environment and appearance of the City of Raleigh.



*Left to Right: Rail Deputy Director Allan Paul, Chief Deputy Secretary David Howard, Assistant Director of City Planning and Principal Urban Designer Roberta Fox (City of Raleigh), Rail Director Jason Orthner and Facilities Engineer Craig Newton with the Sir Walter Raleigh Award.*



## Out and About with NC By Train



NC By Train was a sponsor for the Youth Stage during the 2018 annual Wide Open Bluegrass held in downtown Raleigh Sept. 28-29.



Customer Service Manager Alison Boswell shares train schedule information during the bluegrass festival.

### Score a Touchdown by Riding NC By Train to Carolina Panther Games

Passengers headed to the 1 p.m. Sunday home games on Nov. 4, Nov. 25 and Dec. 23 can take *Piedmont* Train 73 from any of the eight stations along the corridor to arrive in Charlotte at 9:40 a.m. *Piedmont* Train 78 departs Charlotte at 7 p.m.

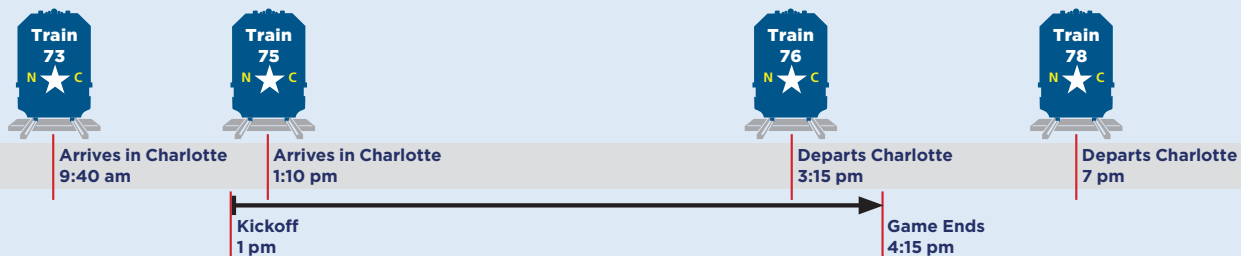
While Trains 75 and 76 also make trips to and from Charlotte, please be aware that train Train 75 arrives in Charlotte shortly after the game starts and Train 76 departs before the game is finished.

**Train tickets can be purchased at [NCByTrain.org](http://NCByTrain.org).**

NC BY Train passengers can request a Transit Pass from the conductor to travel by CATS bus from the Charlotte Amtrak Station to the Charlotte Transportation Center in Uptown near the football stadium. The pass is valid for one ride and one transfer. For the trip back to the train station, bus fare is \$2.20. Please bring exact fare as drivers do not have change. Or, you can download the CATS Pass mobile app to purchase bus and LYNX tickets online. **Visit [RideTransit.org](http://RideTransit.org) for more info about CATS.**



**Timeline for train arrivals and departures compared to game time:**



### Ridership & Revenue on NC By Train Service – July 2018 vs. 2017

	RIDERSHIP			REVENUE		
	2018	2017	% +/-	2018	2017	% +/-
<i>Piedmont</i>	17,103	12,839	33%	\$382,646	\$261,209	46%
<i>Carolinian</i>	25,208	27,833	-9%	\$1,795,659	\$1,914,171	-6%

**1,271**   
Hours Volunteered by N.C. Train Hosts in July supporting NC By Train onboard and at events

July 2018 service modifications affected two *Carolinian* trains. On July 17, Trains 79 and 80 operated between Charlotte and Raleigh only due to NS track work. All *Piedmont* trains operated as scheduled. Average gasoline prices remained low in July 2018 but were 45¢ per gallon higher than in July 2017.



## New Lead Track Capital Yard Maintenance Facility Improves Train Operations

The Rail Division Design and Construction Branch has constructed a new 0.6 mile track to connect the Capital Yard Maintenance Facility to CSX's main line in Raleigh. The new track has reduced the conflicts between passenger trains and CSX freight trains while providing improved railroad fluidity. The completion of this project has resulted in more efficient mechanical and maintenance operations within Capital Yard and will continue to improve reliability of on-time *Piedmont* train departures from Raleigh Union Station by reducing delays in passenger trains exiting Capital Yard.



## Rail Division Enhances Safety by Providing Signage and Pavement Markings at 157 Highway-Rail Grade Crossings

*Traffic signs and pavement markings convey vitally important information to vehicle operators and pedestrians about road conditions, potential hazards and other obstructions. This is especially true at highway-rail grade crossings.*



Lenoir



Chadbourn



Bryson City

Using \$320,000 in State Freight Rail and Rail Crossing Safety Initiative funding, the Rail Division has completed a multi-year effort to install improved signage and pavement markings at 157 highway-rail grade crossings on municipal-owned streets for municipalities in economically distressed counties.

Each year, the NC Department of Commerce ranks each of the state's 100 counties based on economic well-being. Using this list, the Rail Division identified highway-rail grade crossings in 18 of the state's most economically distressed counties which needed signing and pavement marking enhancements to bring them up to current standards and practices. Working with 33 communities throughout these counties, the Rail Division developed the necessary engineering documents, selected

contractors to perform the work and provided construction inspection and oversight of the work. This consisted primarily of installing stop lines, yield signs and advanced railroad crossing warning signs along municipal-owned streets to meet or exceed Federal standards specified in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

**November Railroad Trivia Question:** NCDOT has a unique numbering and naming system for its *Piedmont* locomotives and railcars. What is the criteria for numbering and naming the state-owned locomotives and railcars? See answer on page 6.



# NCDOT and the Carolina Coastal Railroad Make Crossing Safety Improvements

NCDOT Division 1, the Carolina Coastal Railroad and the NCDOT Rail Division worked together to improve a crossing on Hollis Road in Washington County near Plymouth. The crossing surface consisted of timber and asphalt, most of which was severely deteriorated, creating rough and potentially unsafe travel conditions. The new surface is rubber rail seal and asphalt, providing a smooth and safe crossing surface for motorists. Additionally the Rail Division and Division 5 improved a crossing on Smithfield Road in Wake County near Knightdale, made of rubber rail seal and asphalt. Potholes were forming in the asphalt around the rails, and the asphalt was worn down below

the top of the rail, creating a rough crossing. The asphalt and rubber rail seal were replaced, creating a much better ride for the traveling public.



Hollis Road before improvements



Smithfield Road before improvements



Hollis Road after improvements



Smithfield Road after improvements

## November Railroad Trivia Answer:

NCDOT locomotives are named for cities in North Carolina. The locomotive number is the incorporation date of the city it is named for such as the "City of Durham 1869." At the beginning of the Piedmont program in 1995, Amtrak assigned NCDOT owned railcars the exclusive use of the 400000 number series. All NCDOT railcars are also named. For example, Piedmont coaches numbers 400001 – 400016 are named for North Carolina state symbols such as the "Dogwood" and "Long Leaf Pine." Piedmont baggage/lounge car numbers 400201 – 400205 are named for the state's largest bodies of water—its coastal sounds, such as the "Albemarle Sound" and "Pamlico Sound."

