



NCDOT Rail Division

The Rail Report



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2018 a Year of Success for N.C. Rail Transportation

2018 was a year of success for the N.C. Department of Transportation's efforts to improve rail infrastructure and provide options for travelers.

With the completion of the Piedmont Improvement Program, North Carolina's largest series of improvements to the state's rail infrastructure, both passenger and freight rail service were improved, providing a boost to the state's economy and improving transportation between Charlotte and Raleigh.

Some notable achievements include the announcement of a new intermodal facility in Rocky Mount, the department being given a national award for the Piedmont Improvement Program and the opening of Raleigh Union Station.

Watch a 2018 recap video: https://youtu.be/Cl4jiw_ffxs



Rocky Mount Intermodal Facility Visualization



New railroad bridge over Coach Deal Road built under Piedmont Improvement Program



The Piedmont waits for first passengers to board on opening day of Raleigh Union Station

Siding Tracks Completed for Borealis Compounds



New tracks at Borealis Compounds

Borealis Compounds, Inc., a supplier of plastic materials for the automotive industry, recently completed a new production facility in Alexander County. The company plans to initially invest \$15 million in the new plant and create 37 jobs in Taylorsville. The NCDOT Rail Division contributed \$175,000 in Freight Rail and Rail Crossing

Safety Improvement Program (FRRCSI) funds towards the construction of a 2,000-foot double siding track for this facility, which was approximately \$500,000.

"North Carolina is known for its vibrant network of automotive industry suppliers, and Borealis is a welcome addition," Governor Cooper said. "These are exactly the kinds of good paying, advanced manufacturing jobs that communities like Taylorsville need, and our skilled workers are ready to get to work."

Borealis AG, with global headquarters in Vienna, Austria, serves a variety of industries including automotive, energy, and consumer products sectors. The company's products in the automotive industry include bumpers, body panels, trims, dashboards and other key components. Borealis Compound's new North Carolina facility will serve automotive industry customers nationwide. Alexander Railroad will serve the industry.

Completed Industrial Tracks Provide Rail Access to Weitron, Inc.

In early 2017, Weitron announced its plans to invest \$15.4 million in a manufacturing facility in Everetts, North Carolina. Weitron, Inc. is a worldwide distributor of refrigerant gases for automotive, residential, commercial, industrial air condition, and cold storage refrigerant applications. The plant will provide the next generation of environmentally friendly refrigerants.

The project received great support by many North Carolina organizations, aiding expansion of Weitron into the state. The One North Carolina Fund provided a performance-based grant of \$90,000. Additionally, the project received support from the North Carolina General Assembly, the North Carolina Community College System, the Golden Leaf Foundation, the North Carolina Railroad Company, CSX Transportation, NCEast Alliance, Edgecombe-Martin Electric Membership Corporation, the Martin County Committee of 100, Martin County, the Martin County Economic Development Corporation, and the N.C. Department of Transportation.

Through the FRRCSI program, NCDOT partnered with Weitron in construction of the \$1.65 million rail access to the facility.



New industrial tracks at Weitron, Inc.

The department provided a \$200,000 grant from the NCDOT Rail Industrial Access Program to aid in construction of the rail spur to serve the Weitron facility. Construction of the facility and rail spur was complete in August 2018. The industry will be served by CSX and is anticipated to create 31 new jobs within the first two years of operations.

NCDOT is pleased to be a partner in transportation projects that support economic development throughout North Carolina.

Groundbreaking Held for New Wilmington Multimodal Facility



Wilmington City leaders along with Rail Division and Public Transportation Division representatives broke ground on Wilmington's multimodal transit center on Nov. 15. The new facility at North Third and Campbell streets will include a Wave bus hub with slips for 11 buses. The



Rail Division has been coordinating with the city on developing this property for some time as it adjoins a preserved rail corridor. It is a first step toward preparing for future passenger rail service.

2018 Santa Train on the *Piedmont*

Two hundred eighty-five kids of all ages enjoyed this year's Raleigh Santa Train. On the roundtrip between Raleigh and Greensboro, Santa and Mrs. Claus visited each child and their families. A special thanks to the NC Train Host Association volunteers for helping the Rail Division and Amtrak staff make this day a success.



Visit [NCDOT Flickr](#) to see more photos of the Santa Train.

Wilson Santa Train Held for Second Year

On Dec. 11, the Wilson Police Department partnered with the NCDOT Rail Division and Amtrak to provide a train ride from Selma to Wilson for 20 children ages 5 to 9. Organized by the police department's Police Athletic/Activities League, Inc. program, the day included breakfast, visits with Santa, the train ride, stories, movies, snacks and a stocking filled with gifts.



Selma Santa Train



On Dec. 15th the City of Selma, NCDOT Rail Division, and Amtrak personnel worked together to provide another successful Selma Santa Train. Over 300 passengers from the Johnston County area were greeted by Santa during a train ride from Selma to Raleigh and back. Cookies, drinks, and other treats were given to children excited to meet Santa.

January Railroad Trivia Question: From the 1840s to the mid-1880s there were two dominant mainline track gauges, the distance between the inside faces of the railheads, in North Carolina. What were those two track gauges? *Answer on page 6.*

New Signs Connect the Kannapolis Station with Downtown Entertainment District



At the Kannapolis Train Station, a new sign and others throughout the downtown district topped by replicas of NC ByTrain locomotives are some of the first and early enhancements to the downtown entertainment district. The goal of the signs are to build a connection between the train station and downtown shops and restaurants. The station sign provides train departure times and a clock showing the current time, and offers a marketing opportunity for potential customers driving by on Main Street. Kannapolis currently serves eight passenger trains a day with plans to add an additional frequency in the next few years..

Model Train Exhibit Adds to Festive Holiday Atmosphere at Raleigh Union Station



Photo: Andrew Futrell



Photo: Andrew Futrell

An N-Scale Model Railroad Show built by the North Raleigh Model Railroad Club was on display at Raleigh Union Station on Saturdays and Sundays between Nov. 24-Dec. 30. More than 500 people visited the exhibit.



Photo: NCDOT

Father and son talk with Santa by his reindeer and sleigh in Raleigh Union Station.

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

	RIDERSHIP			REVENUE		
	2018	2017	% +/-	2018	2017	% +/-
Piedmont	13,773	12,843	7%	\$336,681	\$294,114	14%
Carolinian	14,305	20,347	*-30%	\$931,179	\$1,261,860	*-26%

845



Hours Volunteered by N.C. Train Hosts in September supporting NC By Train onboard and at events

September 2018 service modifications affected 32 *Piedmont* and 22 *Carolinian* trains.

***NS Track Work Projects:** From Sept. 10-12, Trains 79 and 80 operated between Charlotte and Raleigh only due to track work. On Sept. 17 all trains were cancelled due to track work. On Sept. 18 Trains 79 and 80 operated between Charlotte and Raleigh only track work. On Sept. 19 Trains 74 and 75 were cancelled due track work.

***Service Cancellations due to Hurricane.** From Sept 13-16 all trains were cancelled due to Hurricane Florence. On Sept.19 and 20 Trains 79 and 80 operated between Raleigh and Charlotte only due to flooding and other ongoing effects from Hurricane Florence.

Average gasoline prices remained low in Sept. 2018 and were \$0.05 per gallon lower than in Sept. 2017.

NCDOT, the Carolina Coastal Railroad and the Laurinburg and Southern Railroad Make Crossing Safety Improvements

NCDOT Division 2, the Carolina Coastal Railroad, and the NCDOT Rail Division partnered to improve a crossing at W.H. Smith Boulevard, a busy four-lane street in Greenville. The deteriorated rubber crossing surface was replaced with a concrete tub surface and an asphalt underlayment below the concrete tub to eliminate any subsidence in the crossing. This now provides motorists with a much improved crossing surface.

Additionally, Division 8, the Laurinburg and Southern Railroad and the NCDOT Rail Division upgraded a crossing on Rocky Ford Road near Laurinburg. This

deteriorated crossing was replaced with a wider concrete tub surface. There is considerable truck traffic on Rocky Ford Road, so the tub was installed to provide a long lasting solution for this crossing surface.



W.H. Smith Boulevard before improvements



Rocky Ford Road before improvements



W.H. Smith Boulevard after improvements



Rocky Ford Road after improvements

January Railroad Trivia Answer: 4'8.5" and 5'0". 4'8.5" also known as "Standard Gauge" became widely adopted throughout the USA following the Civil War as interchange requirements between railroads increased and railroad "systems" became more regionally based. Over a two day period, May 31 – June 1, 1886, all 5'0" gauge track remaining in North Carolina was converted to 4'8" gauge. Hundreds of railroad workers worked around the clock for two days to accomplish this huge task.