

NCDOT Rail Division

The Rail Report



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***Piedmont* Service and Three North Carolina Stations Earn top Customer Service Satisfaction Scores**



Passengers board the Piedmont at Durham Amtrak Station

Each month a percentage of passengers are surveyed on their experience while traveling on one of the 29 Amtrak-operated state supported trains across the country. The *Piedmont* trains took the top score for November and December 2018.

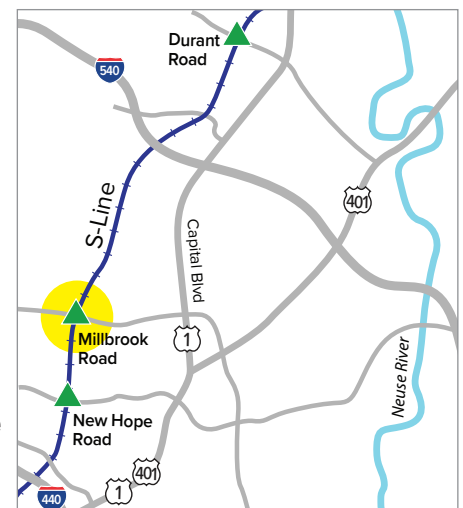
Three North Carolina stations also scored excellent marks for the fourth quarter of 2018, with the Durham Amtrak Station, Raleigh Union Station and Cary Amtrak Station among the highest rated stations in the country.

NCDOT Selected for Grant to Build Railroad Bridge over Millbrook Road

Will help improve safety and reduce emissions

The NCDOT Rail Division submitted the Millbrook Road Grade Separation Sealed Corridor Project in an application for the FRA FY 2017 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement (CRISI) grant program. The project includes three grade separations chosen to be progressed under the Strategic Transportation Investments scoring process along the Southeast Corridor at Millbrook Road, Durant Road and New Hope Church Road in Raleigh. The \$10 million federal CRISI grant will support the construction of the Millbrook Road project and is combined with grade separations at Durant Road and New Hope Church Road.

The completed project will begin efforts to “seal” the rail corridor through the grade separations, enhance safe and efficient movement of goods and people, address travel delays and hazards at the crossings and improve pedestrian access.



Annual Train Host Meeting Held March 2nd in Cary

Each year on the first Saturday of March, members of the Train Host Association gather from across the state for an annual meeting. This year the meeting was held at First United Methodist Church in Cary, across the street from the Cary passenger station.

In addition to association business, recognitions, safety and Amtrak updates, Deputy Secretary for Multi-Modal Transportation Julie White and Rail Division Director Jason Orthner spoke to the group and thanked them for their service to the citizens of North Carolina and to NC By Train. They specifically recognized the hosts' role in helping NC By Train service to receive the highest customer service ranking in the Amtrak system in November and December. In 2018 the hosts volunteered more than 12,000 hours on board the trains traveling between Charlotte and Rocky Mount, and greeting passengers in stations or at events to help educate the public about North Carolina train service.

Roger Smock, Rail Safety Consultant, was on hand to provide a safety update followed by an open question and answer session. Amy Sine, Amtrak Road Foreman, Rick Wilson, Raleigh Train Master and Amtrak Policeman Sean Campbell introduced themselves and spoke to the group about Amtrak before opening the floor to questions. The 38 train hosts who joined the group since the 2018 annual meeting were recognized along with the hosts who reached five, 10, 15 and 20 year milestones were given certificates of appreciation.

20 Years: Gene Kirkland; **15 Years:** William Schultz, Ralph Messera, Pat Johnson, Bruce Wellons, Joe Kusa, Esther Pearson, Bob Warner; **Ten Years:** Jim Kelly, Joe Kusa, Esther Pearson, Bob Warner; **Five Years:** Terry Britt, Steve Chilcote, Norma Glidewell, Keith Bender, John Tredway, John Etheredge, Joel McCurry, Jim Colosanta, and Gayle McCurry.



Annual Meeting 2019

Take the Madness Out of March with NC By Train

If you're looking for a reason to attend the women's and men's ACC basketball tournaments and want to get there without traffic or parking hassles, then look to NC By Train.



NC By Train offers four daily round trips between Raleigh and Charlotte with seven stops in between, including Cary, Durham, Burlington, Greensboro, High Point, Salisbury and Kannapolis. The women's tournament runs from March 6-10 at the Greensboro Coliseum, and the men's tournament is taking place March 12-16 at the Spectrum Center in Charlotte.



To seamlessly get from the train station to the sports arena, fans can request a free transit pass while on the train and present the pass when boarding a participating transit system's bus. The pass is valid for one ride and one transfer.

To view schedules, purchase tickets or learn more, visit NCByTrain.org or call 1-800-BY-TRAIN. Find information regarding game times, printable brackets and more by visiting the [women's tournament](#) and [men's tournament](#) websites.

Above: Host Association archive photos from 1988.

March Trivia Question:

What year was the North Carolina Train Host Association founded and why? From what organization were the founding members recruited? Which NCDOT Division and employee helped found the group?

Answer on page 6

Ridership & Revenue on NC By Train Service – Nov. 2018 vs. 2017						
	RIDERSHIP			REVENUE		
	2018	2017	% +/-	2018	2017	% +/-
Piedmont	19,499	14,735	32%	\$487,206	\$345,379	41%
Carolinian	23,058	23,457	-2%	\$1,582,535	\$1,401,906	2%

446

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

November 2018 service modifications affected 36 Piedmont and 3 Carolinian trains. Service adjustments due to NS track work were planned for Nov. 1, 5-8, and 12-15; these were expected to result in Trains 75 and 76 being cancelled on those days and Trains 74 and 77 operating between Charlotte and Burlington only, with buses provided for missed stops. However, several additional service adjustments occurred due to various incidents during this period. Outside of this period, on Nov. 28, Trains 79 and 80 operated between Charlotte and Raleigh only due to CSX track work. Average gasoline prices remained low in Nov. 2018 and were \$0.02 per gallon lower than in Nov. 2017.

Dixie Storage Siding Construction Progresses in Laurinburg

Construction is progressing on the Dixie Storage Siding Track project located on CSX's SE-Line in Scotland County near Laurinburg. The improvements will increase rail efficiency for the Queen City Express intermodal service between the Port of Wilmington and Charlotte while accommodating future rail freight growth, increasing truck to rail conversions, and improving air quality. Extending the siding length facilitates moving switching operations off the main line and improving corridor

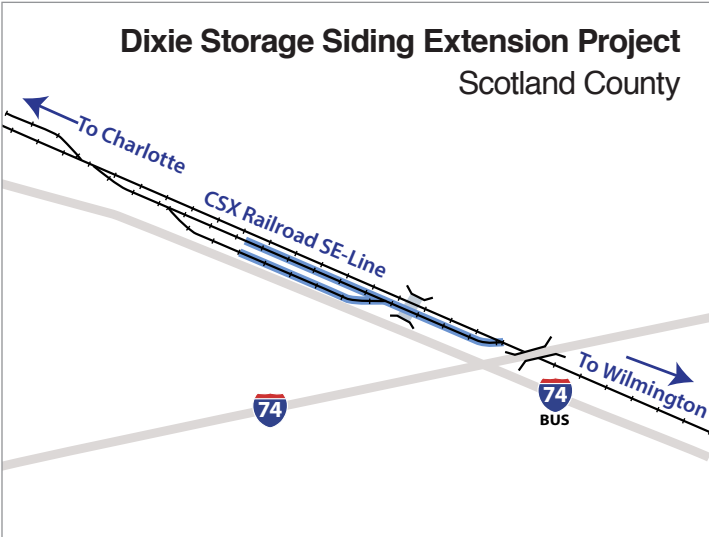
capacity. Manual switches are being replaced with self-restoring switches to reduce the time trains must occupy mainline track. The construction of a new railroad bridge is included in the project. Grading work is nearing completion and bridge work ongoing. A ballast pad has been installed. The track contractor is tentatively set to begin track construction this spring.



Bridge work and ballast pad construction



Ballast pad for siding tracks



Charlotte Gateway Station – Phase I



Drilling and setting of piles for new retaining wall between 5th Street and Trade Street



Forming work for cap on new bridge pier at Trade Street



Completion of concrete work on railroad retaining wall north of 6th Street



Fifth Street bridge pier that will support the new tracks serving the station

NCDOT, the Carolina Coastal Railway and Yadkin Valley Railroad Make Crossing Safety Improvements in Nash and Surry Counties

This month we're showcasing two crossings, one in Nash County on the Carolina Coastal Railway and one in Surry County on the Yadkin Valley Railroad. Assisting in the rehabilitation of these crossings was NCDOT Division 4, Nash County Maintenance, NCDOT Division 11, Surry County Maintenance, and the NCDOT Rail Division.

The Nash County crossing is on NC 58, First Street in Nashville. This is a heavily traveled two-lane road. Prior to the upgrade, the crossing surface was asphalt which was beginning to degrade with holes forming around the rails. The uneven surface was replaced with concrete panels manufactured from a high-stress concrete designed to last longer than typical concrete panels. This will provide for a long-lasting smooth surface.

The Surry County crossing is located on SR 2110, Nelson Street in Pilot Mountain. This crossing had a timber and asphalt surface, but the timbers were in poor condition and in need of replacement. The surface was replaced with rubber rail seal and asphalt, providing a much improved crossing surface for motorists and improved track conditions for the Yadkin Valley Railroad.



First Street before improvements



Nelson Street before improvements



First Street after improvements



Nelson Street after improvements

March Railroad Trivia Answer: The North Carolina Train Host Association was founded by the NCDOT Rail Division and then Director Robert Grabarek (shown right) in 1991 to serve the *Carolinian*. The original members were drafted from the Piedmont Carolinas and Greensboro Chapters of the National Railway Historical Society. They already had a lot of experience hosting on Southern Railway and Norfolk Southern steam excursions. The Association is the oldest volunteer train host association in the United States and has been the model for other similar groups that have formed.

