



NCDOT Rail Division

The Rail Report



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American Railway Engineering and Maintenance-of-Way Association Technical Committees Hold Spring Meeting in North Carolina



Committee members tour Raleigh Union Station

Jim Kessler, AREMA President and North Carolina Railroad Company Vice President of Planning and Engineering, and Jason Orthner, Rail Division Director, hosted the annual spring meeting for AREMA Committees 11 and 17 in North Carolina on March 23-25. With members from across the country, these committees are responsible for the development and update of railway-related technical material in their area of specialty for the *Manual for Railway Engineering*. This publication serves as a guide for railway engineers in the United States.



AREMA President and North Carolina Railroad Company Vice President of Engineering Jim Kessler addresses committee members during a work session.

These committees also are responsible for providing information and technical direction for the development and

maintenance of passenger systems operating on the general railroad network of North America. This includes specialized track systems, yard facilities, support buildings, stations, maintenance techniques and data systems necessary for passenger rail system development. Committee 11, Commuter and Intercity Rail Systems, also examines and makes recommendations for

optimizing the dual use of railroad facilities by both freight and passenger operations on the general railroad network.



Raleigh Capital Yard tour

In addition to the work sessions, the groups toured Raleigh Union Station, NCDOT's rail maintenance facilities in Raleigh and Charlotte, Phase I construction of the future Charlotte Gateway Station, the Sugar Creek Road grade separation project, and the Charlotte Blue Line system and maintenance facilities. Amtrak provided the observation car American View on the rear of the *Piedmont* for the group to see the completed Piedmont Improvement Program projects between Raleigh and Charlotte.



On board the American View

First Mobi Awards Ceremony held in Raleigh April 3



In April, the N.C. Department of Transportation announced the winners of its inaugural Mobi Awards to honor towns, cities and counties for completing game-changing projects that used different modes of transportation to make travel easier and more efficient.

Winners were chosen in five categories – Rural, Suburban, Urban, Tourism and Innovation. All projects were eligible to apply for the Innovation category.

Judges from across the state chose the winners based on a project's success at leveraging public and private investment, spurring economic development, creating long-term jobs, improving health, benefiting the community and contributing to the community or state in other significant ways.

NCDOT Secretary Jim Trogdon and Julie White, the NCDOT's Deputy Secretary for Multimodal Transportation, presented the awards.

"Our transportation system must be designed to meet the complex needs of the rapidly growing population of North Carolina," Trogdon said. "The North Carolina Department

of Transportation is committed to designing and delivering projects communities want, need and will use. The NCDOT Mobi Awards celebrate communities that are at the forefront of delivering multimodal projects. We are proud to partner with these communities to deliver these projects."

To qualify, a project must have been completed within the last five years and had to include two or more modes of transportation involving aviation, bicycle/pedestrian, ferry, public transportation, rail or roadway.

The ceremony, hosted by the NCDOT, Women Transportation Seminars, N.C. Go! and N.C. State University Institute for Transportation Research and Education, was held at N.C. State's Centennial Campus.



To view videos of the first place winners, visit [MOBI AWARDS](#)

2019 MOBI WINNERS

Rural–Winner: City of Sanford (Downtown Sanford Streetscape)

Honorable Mentions: Western Piedmont Council of Governments (Burke Flex Bus Services), Goldsboro-Wayne Transportation Authority (GWTA Transfer Center) and Northwest Piedmont Rural Planning Organization (Granite City Greenway Phase 3)

Urban–Winner: Charlotte Area Transit System (LYNX Blue Line Extension Light Rail Project)

Honorable Mentions: City of Charlotte (Charlotte Intermodal Facility), French Broad River MPO (Craven Street Transportation Improvements) and City of Raleigh (Raleigh Union Station)

Suburban–Winner: Currituck County (Corolla Greenway Phase III)

Tourism–Winner: City of Greenville/Greenville Urban Area MPO (GK Butterfield Transportation Center)

Honorable Mentions: Concord Kannapolis Area Transit (Concord Charlotte Express), Onslow County – Albert J. Ellis Airport (Albert J. Ellis Redevelopment Project) and Hyde County (Ocracoke Island Tram System)

Innovation–Winners: City of Raleigh (GoRaleigh Station Renovations) and Currituck County (Corolla Village Road Sidewalk Extension Project)

Honorable Mentions: City of Winston-Salem (Long Branch Trail) and Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation (Howard Coble Intermodal Transportation Center)

Rail Division Customer Service Staff Attended Visit NC 365 Tourism Conference in Wilmington



Tim McHugh staffs the NC By Train booth at Visit NC 365

NCDOT Rail Division Customer Service staff attended the **Visit NC 365** conference March 31–April 2 to discuss rail travel opportunities, and with the goal of building new partnerships with other North Carolina travel and tourism entities. The annual conference is the state's premier travel industry event and brought together hundreds of the state's tourism industry leaders. The conference provided opportunities to catch up on the latest trends and issues facing the travel industry, hear insights from industry experts and network with other travel and tourism professionals.

This year's conference was held at the convention center in downtown Wilmington located next to the old Seaboard Wilmington Depot. The State's tourism marketing plan was discussed, focusing on creating and offering experiences which are "firsts that last."

During the conference, NCDOT Rail staff met with over 100 stakeholders both from the private and public sectors, shared NC By Train travel information and answered many questions about taking the train.

The NCDOT Rail Division was also a sponsor for the event.



First Friday at Raleigh Union Station

Raleigh Union Station joined the April First Friday celebration by hosting multiple vendors in the Grand Hall, including NC By Train. A few hundred people checked out the evening festivities at the station where folks were greeted with free beer, a Raleigh Union Station poster and performances from the Capital City Steppers, Hank & Pattie and DJ SPCLGST.



April Trivia Question:

Which railroad intersection was the busiest in Charlotte?
What is being done to make this crossing safer and reduce delays for motorists?

Answer on page 6

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

	RIDERSHIP			REVENUE		
	2018	2017	% +/-	2018	2017	% +/-
Piedmont	17,166	15,813	9%	\$416,025	\$416,025	17%
Carolinian	22,369	24,857	-10%	\$1,582,099	\$1,705,018	-7%

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

December 2018 service modifications affected 14 Piedmont and 2 Carolinian trains. On Dec. 9 and 10, all *Piedmont* and *Carolinian* trains were cancelled due to snow and ice from Winter Storm Diego. On Dec. 13, Trains 77 and 78 were cancelled due to a crossing collision. Average gasoline prices remained low in Dec. 2018 and were \$0.23 per gallon lower than in December 2017.

Trespassing on Railroads Can Have Deadly Consequences



That's what the N.C. Department of Transportation's BeRailSafe program is asking people to consider, especially during prom season. Standing on or near railroad tracks is trespassing.

"You put your life at risk by walking, playing or taking pictures on railroad tracks. It's not only dangerous, it is illegal," said Jason Orthner, director of NCDOT's Rail Division. "We need photographers, school administrators and parents to educate students about the real dangers of taking photos on railroad tracks."

Spring is the season for graduations and prom portraits. NCDOT is working with the state Department of Public Instruction by asking high school yearbook staff advisers to alert students and photographers of how dangerous it is to take photos on or near railroad tracks.

Last year, 18 people were killed, and 13 others injured, while trespassing on North Carolina railroad tracks.

"Those are 18 people who will not be returning home to their families," added Orthner. "We want to remind everyone that these types of accidents are avoidable if you stay off and away from the tracks."

Some important safety information for photographers and students to remember are:

- Railroad tracks, trestles, yards and rights-of-way are private property, and using them as photo backdrops is trespassing.
- Trains cannot stop quickly to avoid people or vehicles on the railroad tracks.
- It is difficult to determine a train's speed from a distance. Trains typically overhang the track by at least three feet.
- Never assume railroad tracks are abandoned or inactive.
- Due to new technology, approaching trains are much quieter than you'd expect, so don't assume you'll hear one coming.

BeRailSafe works with North Carolina Operation Lifesaver, railroads and other safety stakeholders to educate children, teens and adults on the dangers of trespassing on railroad tracks, property and equipment. BeRailSafe provides free rail safety information through presentations at elementary schools, civic groups and businesses, and distributes safety materials.



Raleigh Union Station Wins NC Chapter NAIOP Award

At the Commercial Real Estate Development Association of North Carolina Annual Conference held in Pinehurst on March 21-22, Raleigh Union Station received the Redevelopment/ Adaptive Reuse Project of the Year award. This award is determined by a selection committee of industry peers from each NAIOP chapter in North Carolina.

Submitted by Clancy & Theys, projects competing for this award had to contribute to the economic growth and vitality of a region or community and demonstrate unique design or innovation.



Testifying on the Hill

NCDOT Rail Division Director Jason Orthner was invited to testify before a Congressional committee by North Carolina Congressman David Price. He discussed North Carolina's efforts to improve safety and mobility of rail service while spurring economic development.

Watch Orthner's remarks at <https://youtu.be/PbrWFYOcqH8>.

Charlotte Gateway Station – Phase I Construction



Trade Street bridge foundation pier construction



Canopy Pier concrete pour



Retaining wall construction, Martin Luther King to 4th Street



6th Street bridge pier column construction

April Railroad Trivia Answer:

The Sugar Creek Road railroad crossing was the busiest in Charlotte prior its closing in 2015 for construction to begin work on a bridge to carry the road over the railroad and CATS light rail tracks. More than 15,000 cars and 40 trains traveled across this crossing daily.

The new bridge will eliminate the risk of train-vehicle collisions, improve safety for both vehicle and rail passengers and reduce traffic delays in the area.



NCDOT and RJ Corman Railroad Carolina Lines Make Crossing Safety Improvements in Columbus County

This month we travel to Columbus County to view two crossings on RJ Corman Railroad Carolina Lines. Participating in these crossing improvements was NCDOT Division 6, Columbus County Maintenance, RJ Corman Railroad Carolina Lines and the NCDOT Rail Division.

The first crossing is on Rough and Ready Road near Chadbourn. This crossing was quite rough due to deteriorating asphalt being below the top of the rail and no flangeway material. This was upgraded with an asphalt and rail seal surface, providing a much smoother crossing for vehicles.

The second crossing is located on Williams Road near Clarendon. This crossing, like Rough and Ready Road, had deteriorating asphalt that was below the top of the rail, with no flangeway material. This crossing was also replaced with an asphalt and rail seal surface, improving the ride for local motorists.



Rough and Ready Road before improvements



Williams Road before improvements



Rough and Ready Road after improvements



Williams Road after improvements