

NCDOT Rail Division

# The Rail Report



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May 2019

## Officials Break Ground on Carolina Connector Intermodal Facility



*Gov. Roy Cooper is joined by state, local and business representatives to break ground on the Carolina Connector intermodal transportation facility in Rocky Mount. Left to right: Rep. Shelly Willingham, Edgecombe Co. Commissioner Viola Harris, Transportation Secretary Jim Trogdon, Edgecombe Co. Commission Chair Leonard Wiggins, NC Wesleyan College President Dr. Dewey Clark, Rep. G.K. Butterfield, Gov. Roy Cooper, Carolinas Gateway Partnership President and CEO Norris Tolson, CSX President and CEO James Foote, Rocky Mount Mayor David Combs, N.C. Rep. James Galliard and N.C. Board of Transportation member Gus Tulloss*

Representatives from the N.C. Department of Transportation, CSX Corporation and Carolinas Gateway Partnership held a groundbreaking ceremony on April 26 for the Carolina Connector (CCX) intermodal transportation facility in Edgecombe County.

"This intermodal facility will positively impact Eastern North Carolina and our state as a whole," said Governor Cooper. "CCX will not only bring good paying jobs to our rural areas, but also connect the region to both domestic and international markets."

The 330-acre site will allow trucks to bring cargo containers to a rail yard where they will be transferred to trains for transport. This facility will serve many industries with efficient access to rail, helping get products to customers and spur growth in the region.

"More than five million people live within 120 miles of this terminal," said NCDOT Secretary Jim Trogdon. "The Carolina Connector will spur business development, divert thousands of trucks off highways and provide much-needed jobs in this fast-growing region."

The facility will be built on the CSX mainline and CSX will run it. NCDOT is investing up to \$118.1 million for site development and roadway construction. NCDOT conducted an economic

impact evaluation last year and determined the facility will have an estimated indirect job impact of up to 1,300 jobs.

"CSX appreciates the partnership it has developed with the N.C. Department of Transportation and we commend the state for its leadership in making this project possible. CSX is excited to expand its network in Rocky Mount and believes CCX will be a catalyst for economic growth and development in the eastern North Carolina region," said CSX CEO James Foote.

Construction should take 18-20 months, with an estimated completion date of late 2020.

"The CCX Carolina Connector is a welcome addition to the businesses locating in Rocky Mount and Edgecombe County. This multimodal hub is a great win for this area as it adds a tax base to our books, jobs to our communities and opportunities for our future," commented Norris Tolson, CEO and president of Carolinas Gateway Partnership. "It is truly a game changer for all of North Carolina, especially eastern North Carolina."

The project was scored and evaluated per North Carolina's data-driven process that allows NCDOT to invest available funds more efficiently and effectively to enhance the state's infrastructure, while supporting economic growth, job creation and a higher quality of life.



## Transportation Officials Celebrate Opening of Sugar Creek Road Bridge



*Transportation officials gathered in Charlotte for a ribbon cutting to open the Sugar Creek Road bridge. Left to right: NCRR Board Member Martin Brackett, Rail Division Engineering Coordination and Safety Manager Jahmal Pullen, Rail Division Director Jason Orthner, NCDOT Chief Deputy Secretary David Howard, City of Charlotte Council Member Larken Egleston, NCDOT Board Members Sam Bowles and Anthony Lathrop, NCDOT Division Engineer Scott Cole and NCRR President Scott Saylor*

Transportation officials gathered in Charlotte on Tuesday, May 16 to celebrate the opening of the Sugar Creek Road grade separation, a project designed to improve efficiency, safety and mobility in one of the state's busiest rail corridors. The project was part of a series of upgrades in the Raleigh-to-Charlotte portion of the North Carolina Railroad Company's line. 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. The bridge also crosses over the newly completed CATS Blue Line.

"This project is going to improve safety for drivers and those on foot or bicycle, and also help keep traffic and trains moving efficiently through this busy area," said N.C. Department of

Transportation Chief Deputy Secretary David Howard, "We're grateful to our partners for investing in North Carolina's safety and economy."

The project was funded by the City of Charlotte, the North Carolina Railroad Company, Norfolk Southern, the Federal Railroad Administration and the N.C. Department of Transportation.

"This was the busiest crossing along the 317-mile North Carolina Railroad line, and the positive impact this improvement will have on crossing safety is tremendous," said Scott Saylor, president of the North Carolina Railroad Company. "We are proud to collaborate with NCDOT on this project, which plays such a significant role in the future capacity needs of freight and Amtrak passenger service."

## Passenger Surveys Conducted this Spring


The Rail Division's Operations Branch with the assistance of WSP and the NC Volunteer Train Host Association conducted surveys onboard the *Piedmont* and *Carolinian* trains in April and May. "Passengers are surveyed on a regular basis in an effort to provide the best possible service to our customers," said Allan Paul, Rail Division Deputy Director. "The feedback we receive from passengers is very helpful in fine tuning our programs and insuring the *Piedmonts* and *Carolinians* are delivering a good consistent travel experiences."

The *Piedmont* trains have been rated number one in Amtrak customer satisfaction for four consecutive months, December 2018 through March 2019. Three North Carolina stations, Raleigh, Cary and Durham, were rated among the ten best Amtrak stations in the country for customer satisfaction in FFY 2018.





## Ridership & Revenue on NC By Train Service – Jan. 2019 vs. 2018

	RIDERSHIP			REVENUE		
	2019	2018	% +/-	2019	2018	% +/-
<i>Piedmont</i>	14,535	10,453	39%	\$71,680	55,904	28%
<i>Carolinian</i>	16,313	18,006	-9%	84,475	90,803	-7%

**953**



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

In January 2019 six *Carolinian* trains were impacted by service modifications. On Jan. 15, 16 and 17, Trains 79 and 80 operated between Charlotte and Raleigh only due to CSX track work. All *Piedmont* trains ran as scheduled this month. Average gasoline prices remained low in January and were 42¢ a gallon lower than January 2018.

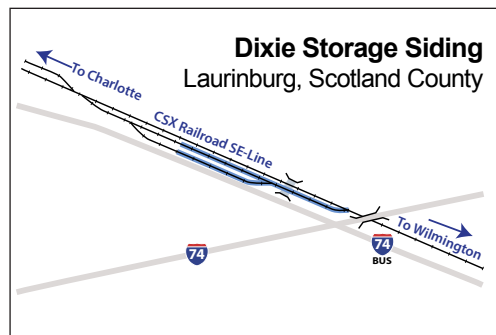
### May Trivia Question:

What is a grade separation?  
Answer on page 4

## Dixie Storage Siding Construction Update



CSX's contractor has completed the siding portion of the railroad bridge as they await track construction.



The Dixie Storage Siding project increases 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.



CSX forces are constructing track heading towards the bridge.



## May Railroad Trivia Answer:

A grade separation project replaces a railroad crossing with a bridge. The benefits of a grade separation are improved safety by eliminating the possibility of collisions between vehicles and trains, and improved mobility in the area through the uninterrupted flow of vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

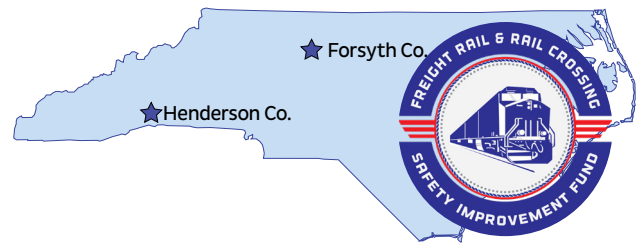


## NCDOT and Blue Ridge Southern and Yadkin Valley Railroads Improve Crossing in Henderson and Forsyth Counties

This month's featured crossing improvements are located in Henderson and Forsyth Counties. Assisting the NCDOT Rail Division with these crossings was the Blue Ridge Southern Railroad, NCDOT Division 14 in Henderson County, the Yadkin Valley Railroad and NCDOT Division 9 in Forsyth County.

The Henderson County crossing on Industrial Park Road in Balfour is a busy two-lane road with car and truck traffic accessing nearby manufacturing sites. The crossing's asphalt surface had deteriorated, was below the top of the rails and had no flangeway material. The new asphalt and rubber rail seal surface provides a much improved crossing surface for motorists.

The crossing on Hidden Ridge Trail near Tobaccoville consisted of a timber and asphalt surface that was in very poor condition. This required the residents living on this road to cross the track at a very slow speed due to the roughness of the crossing. This surface was also replaced with asphalt and rubber rail seal, allowing residents to cross the track and clear the crossing in a much safer manner.



*Industrial Park Road before improvements*



*Hidden Ridge Trail before improvements*



*Industrial Park Road after improvements*



*Hidden Ridge Trail after improvements*



# Charlotte Gateway Station – Phase I Construction



*Pouring piers, Trade to 5th Street*



*Pouring piers, Trade to 5th Street*



*Retaining wall construction, Trade to 4th Street*



*6th Street bridge construction*