

NCDOT Rail Division

The Rail Report



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2019 Rail Safety Week Spread the Message to #STOPTrackTragedies

For most of us, buckling up when driving and using sidewalks rather than walking down the center of a road are automatic safety habits. But drivers and pedestrians often overlook another potential safety hazard: driving or walking near train tracks.

Think about this: 95 percent of rail-related incidents in the U.S. involve vehicle-train collisions at railroad crossings or people on the tracks being struck by trains. Government statistics show that a vehicle or person is hit by a train every three hours in this country. Surprising, right?



Since 2009, approximately 20,000 Americans have been killed or seriously injured because they were involved in unsafe behavior at railroad crossings, or were illegally walking, playing or taking photos on train tracks. As you can imagine, these incidents have devastating consequences for families, communities and train crew members – and virtually all of them are preventable.

To raise awareness about the need for caution near tracks and trains, Operation Lifesaver launched a public safety education campaign in the United States and Canada, #STOPTrackTragedies, during Rail Safety Week which was held the last week of September.



This campaign highlighted personal stories of those affected by rail incidents — including victims, friends, family, and local communities from across North America. You can help spread the rail safety message by visiting www.oli.org and sharing the videos with your friends and neighbors.

Along with the #STOPTrackTragedies campaign, Operation Lifesaver programs participated in outreach activities and events each day of Rail Safety Week to increase awareness in their own communities.

NCDOT decorated all NC train stations with banners and posters commemorating Rail Safety Week and the daily events of the seven day campaign. The NCDOT Train Hosts

participated by providing safety messages, statistics and rail safety brochures to *Piedmont* and *Carolinian* passengers throughout the week.

“NCDOT Rail Division and our BeRailSafe program are pleased to partner with Operation Lifesaver and law enforcement agencies across the state to educate our citizens about safety near railroads and trains,” said Jason Orthner, Rail Division Director.



Operation Lifesaver’s top five rail safety tips:

1. Look and listen for trains as you approach any railroad crossing — obey all signs, warning lights and gates.
2. Trains are quieter and faster than you think — never try to beat a train.
3. Because of their size and weight, it can take a mile or more to stop a train.
4. Always expect a train on any track, in any direction. Avoid distractions when you approach a crossing.
5. Rail property is private property. Walking on the tracks is illegal and dangerous.

Operation Lifesaver is dedicated to keeping the public safe by educating people to practice rail safety near train tracks. Let’s work together to #STOPTrackTragedies, and make preventable railroad crossing and trespassing incidents a thing of the past.



North Carolina Law Enforcement Agencies Participate in Operation Clear Track event

Amtrak Police and Operation Lifesaver, Inc., the national railroad safety education organization, partnered with agencies across North America for the third annual



Operation Clear Track event during Rail Safety Week, held Sept. 22-28. **Operation Clear Track**

is the largest railroad safety law enforcement operation in the country and involved more than 600 police and sheriff's departments across the lower 48 states.

During **Operation Clear Track**, police reported to hundreds of railroad grade crossings around the country deemed "high incident" locations by the Federal Railroad Administration. They handed out railroad safety public awareness cards, making the public aware of grade crossing and rail trespassing laws.

No Photos on Tracks SUNDAY, SEPT. 22

This mom talks about the photo shoot that ended in tragedy on the tracks. [Watch John-John's story.](#)

Distracted Driving MONDAY, SEPT. 23

Drivers, stay alert and don't get distracted at crossings or try to beat a train. [Watch Ashley's story](#) to learn the dangers of distracted driving.

Law Enforcement Partnerships TUESDAY, SEPT. 24

Obey the laws at railroad crossings and know what to do if you're stuck. [Tune in](#) to learn how to stay safe on the tracks.

Crossing Safety WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 25

Each year, more than 1,000 North Americans are injured or killed while trespassing on train tracks. [Watch one mother's heartbreaking story.](#)

Transit/Commuter Safety THURSDAY, SEPT. 26

"It was a typical Friday night." [This father talks about the call](#) no parent wants to receive. Always stay alert near light rail and transit systems. No distraction is worth your life.

Trespass/Train Hopping Prevention

FRIDAY, SEPT. 27

"It only takes a second to change your life." [Watch Kennedy's story](#) to find out what happened to her and why she is speaking out.

Trespass Prevention/Bike Safety

SATURDAY, SEPT. 28

Chris thought riding a bike home after an evening with friends would be safer than driving. "The average person does not appreciate how dangerous a train actually is." [Watch his story](#) to find out what happened.



"Approximately 30 law enforcement agencies across North Carolina participated in Operation Clear Track," said Margaret Cannell, Executive Director of North Carolina Operation Lifesaver. "The first year we had five participating agencies, then eight the second year, so this is a tremendous increase."

"Operation Clear Track is a wonderful tool for distributing rail safety information," Cannell continued. "Officers remind drivers to never stop on tracks, and that any time is train time."

Participating agencies and police departments included: Raleigh, Ahoskie, Fuquay-Varina, Granite Falls, Burlington, Wilmington, Gibsonville, Morrsville, Mint Hill, Bailey, Catawba, Wilson, Navassa, Kannapolis, New Hanover County, Mocksville, Mooresville, McDowell County, Nash County, Garner, Apex, Thomasville, Kings Mountain and Morehead City. NC State Capitol Police, NCDMV License and Theft, several NC Highway Patrol Districts and NC Operation Lifesaver also participated.

"Not only during Rail Safety Week, but every week of the year, we ask that you obey grade crossing and trespassing laws as too many lives depend on it," said Roger Smock, NCDOT Rail Safety Consultant.

October Trivia Question: Q: What is the difference between a railroad trestle and a railroad bridge?

See answer on page 6.



Photo by Andrew Bryant Futrell

Get on Board for Fall Fun!

With seven stations between Charlotte and Raleigh, plus four daily round trips, it's easier than ever to take the train to your next adventure!



Ride the Train to the State Fair!

Trains 80 and 77 will make special stops (station code NSF) on Blue Ridge Road across from Gate 1 at the fairgrounds. Purchase tickets at NCByTrain.org.

BeRailSafe and Operation Lifesaver are at the N.C. State Fair

Stop by Safety City to learn more about rail safety, Oct. 17-27.



NC By Train will stop in Lexington on Oct. 26 for the BBQ Festival. All eight trains will make the stop. Use station code LEX when purchasing tickets.

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

Passengers headed to the 1 p.m. Sunday home games 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.

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 for more info about CATS.



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

	RIDERSHIP			REVENUE		
	2019	2018	% +/-	2019	2018	% +/-
Piedmont	15,030	14,294	5%	\$351,998	\$326,655	8%
Carolinian	23,736	21,368	11%	\$1,600,221	\$1,458,825	10%

1,098 
Hours Volunteered by N.C. Train Hosts in June supporting NC By Train onboard and at events

In June 2019 service modifications affected 17 *Piedmont* trains. All other *Piedmont* and *Carolinian* trains ran as scheduled.



Trainees Gather at Capital Yard for Fall Host Training

On Saturday, Sept. 14, a group of 21 people attended the North Carolina Train Host training session at Capital Yard. The session began with an introduction to the North Carolina Train Host Association. Roger Smock, BeRailSafe Consultant followed with a presentation on railroad safety, focusing on the blue sign and how to properly respond should a vehicle stall at a railroad crossing. Roger also discussed taking necessary precautions when engaging in any railroad activity.

Deputy Director Allan Paul then guided the trainees through a *Piedmont* train set, explaining proper safety guidelines inside a rail car and how to respond in an emergency. Mr. Paul also shared history and facts about the *Piedmont* rail cars for trainees to pass along to passengers interested in learning about North Carolina's train equipment.

Finally, Customer Service Manager Alison Boswell reviewed the official train host manual and guidelines, and how to prepare for the qualifying runs with active Train Hosts. The trainees will have 90 days to complete two qualifying runs and then the Executive Train Host Officers will decide to offer an invitation to become an official North Carolina Volunteer Train Host.

Susan Lambeth Joins the NCTHA and Becomes a Second Generation Train Host



Susan Lambeth's father, Gifford Moore, was an early member of the North Carolina Volunteer Train Host Association. Before joining the NCTHA, he had a wonderful railroad career, rising through the ranks of the B&O and Chessie railroads to Vice President of Transportation. He then became president of the Leigh & Hudson Railroad in New York. After retirement, he moved to Raleigh to join his daughters and grandchildren. Soon after his move, Mr. Moore discovered the North Carolina Volunteer Train Host Association. He served the organization faithfully for many years. We are happy to have Susan onboard and we know that she has railroading in her DNA.

CCX Construction Update

Clearing of the CCX Intermodal Terminal Site is 60 percent complete and surveying is ongoing. Erosion control fencing is being installed and several sediment basins are complete

Right: Terminal site looking northwest



Charlotte Gateway Station – Phase I Construction Update



Bridge construction at Trade Street



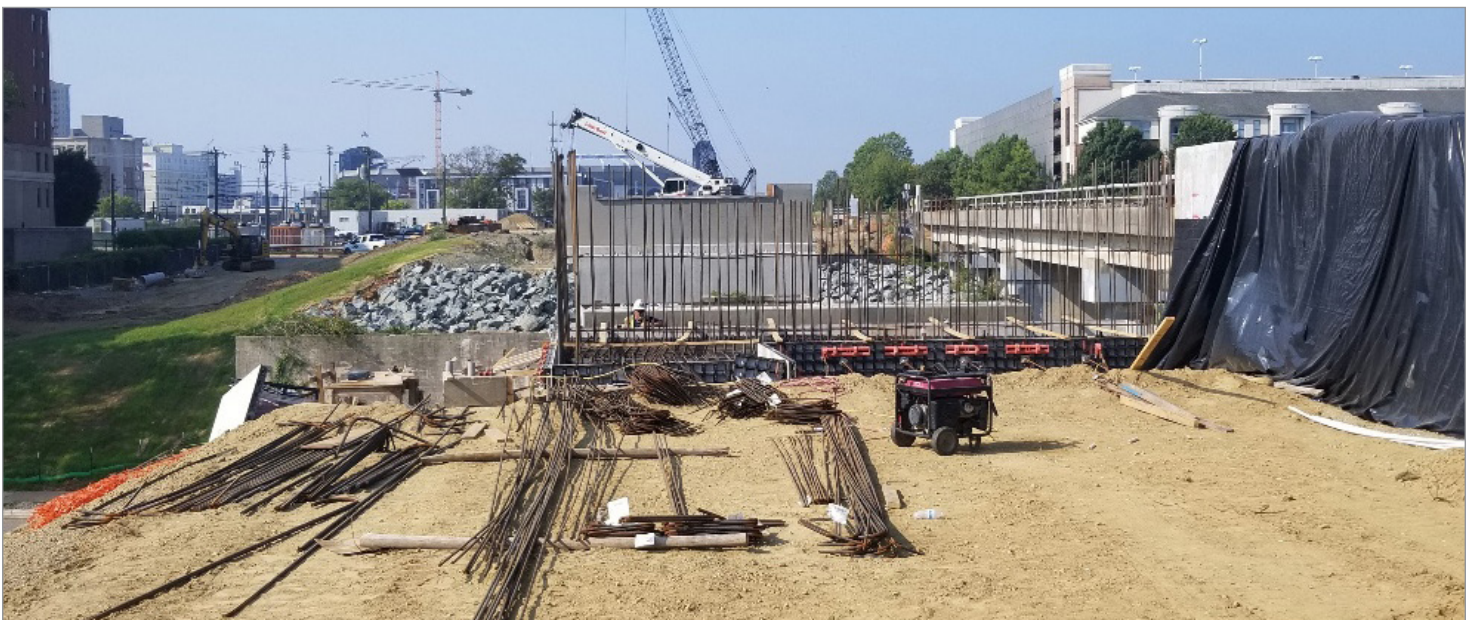
Grading between 6th and 7th Street



Subballast installation



Bridge construction at 6th Street



Bridge construction at 6th Street

NCDOT, Carolina & Western Railway and Carolina Coastal Railroads Improve Crossings

The NCDOT Rail Division partnered with the Aberdeen Carolina & Western Railway to upgrade two crossings on their railroad.

In Mecklenburg County, the Aberdeen, Carolina & Western Railway, assisted by Division 10 Stanly County Maintenance and the NCDOT Rail Division improved the crossing on Anson Avenue in Norwood. This crossing consisted of an asphalt surface with no flangeway material and a large pothole was forming around one of the rails due to a track joint in the crossing. The surface was replaced with a rubber rail seal and asphalt surface, providing a much smoother crossing for the residents of Norwood.

In Montgomery County, the Aberdeen, Carolina & Western Railway was assisted by Division 8 Montgomery County Maintenance and the NCDOT Rail Division to improve the crossing on Morris Farm Road near Candor. This crossing

sees considerable truck traffic to and from a nearby feed mill. As with the previous crossing, this crossing was an asphalt surface with no flangeway material. Potholes were forming around both rails near the center of the crossing. This crossing surface was replaced with an asphalt and rail seal eliminating the potholes and providing a smooth crossing surface.



Anson Avenue crossing before improvements



Morris Road crossing before improvements



Anson Avenue crossing after improvements



Morris Road crossing after improvements

October Railroad Trivia Answer:

A bridge is a structure that connects two or more points across railways, roads, rivers, ravines, etc. A trestle is a framework built with of vertical, slanted and cross pieces supported by bents or pilings that are used to support the bridge.



Photo: Wikimedia Commons