

NCDOT Rail Division

The Rail Report



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November 2019

Completion of NCVA Railroad Project Improves Safety and Efficiency



NCDOT Rail Division Director Jason Orthner, Ahoskie Mayor Jimmie Rowe, NCVA and Genessee & Wyoming Senior Vice President Andy Chunko, Genessee & Wyoming President Michael Miller, Nucor General Manager and VP Bob McCracken, Congressman G.K. Butterfield, Northampton County Commissioner Joyce Buffaloe, Representative Howard Hunter, House Speaker Tim Moore and Representative Ed Goodwin prepare to cut the ribbon to mark NCVA project completion.

The N.C. Department of Transportation hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony on Nov. 1 for the completion of the Northeastern Railroad Improvement Project, celebrating a significant investment in railway and railroad crossing improvements.

With the work now complete, the North Carolina & Virginia Railroad's (NCVA) operating speed will increase from 10 mph to 25 mph, allowing for faster shipments of products to the market. The railroad can also now ship rail cars loaded to 286,000 pounds gross weight. Additional improvements included significant upgrades to the Meherrin River Bridge, new crossties, switch replacements and safer railroad crossings.

"This is an exciting day as we celebrate the conclusion of this project that has improved the railroad's safety and efficiency," said Jason Orthner, director of NCDOT's Rail Division. "The department is pleased to have been a partner in delivering these improvements."

The \$11.6 million project was completed on time and within budget. Half of the funding was provided through a federal grant from the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program. The balance of the cost was covered by an investment of \$3 million from NCVA and \$2.8 million of state funds.

"This award is the culmination of dedicated advocacy and calculated efforts to fund investment in North Carolina's rural area freight transportation network," said Congressman G.K. Butterfield, who wrote a letter of support for the project.

"This investment in the Northeastern North Carolina Rail Improvement Project will provide a much-needed economic boost and help to improve the quality of life for the residents of this eastern North Carolina region. In a region that has faced the hardships of chronic underemployment, I am excited about the prospects of job growth and employment opportunities with area companies that use rail freight services. This transportation improvement allows for continuous growth and sustainable success for the community and generations to

come. I am thankful to all those who have worked hard to advocate for these improvements and to the leadership that recognized the importance of these projects and awarded this grant."

The North Carolina & Virginia Railroad serves multiple customers in Northampton, Bertie and Hertford counties, as well as Southampton County, Va. The railroad runs 52 miles to its largest customer, the Nucor Steel plate mill in Cofield, N.C.

"In addition to the increased freight loadings the TIGER project provides our shippers, this public-private partnership helps make North Carolina more attractive to new businesses and industries looking to set up operations," said NCVA Railroad President Andrew T. Chunko.





The Piedmont awaits passengers at Raleigh Union Station

Get to Bank of America Stadium with a Transit Pass

Request your pass from conductors while on the train.
Good for one ride and in-route bus transfer the day of travel.



Take NC By Train to the Panthers Games

Arrive in Charlotte on train 73 at 9:40 a.m. with plenty of time to enjoy the area around Bank of America Stadium before the 1 p.m. kickoff.

Take your time and enjoy some post-game fun as you make your way back to the Amtrak station for a 7 p.m. departure on train 78. Get tickets at ncbytrain.org.

Nov. 17: Atlanta Falcons
Dec. 1: Washington Redskins
Dec. 15: Seattle Seahawks
Dec. 29: New Orleans Saints

Keep Pounding! Tunnel Minimizes Construction Impact for Players and Fans



As Charlotte Gateway Station Phase 1 construction continues, the Rail Division is working with stakeholders in and around the project to minimize the impacts of construction. A good example of stakeholder coordination is the construction of a temporary tunnel at the Wesley Heights Connector greenway to connect the Carolina Panthers' practice fields with Bank of America Stadium. The tunnel allows 24-hour access for players, staff and the public while NCDOT's contractor, Crowder Construction, demolish an old bridge and install a new railroad bridge to connect the NCDOT Charlotte yard tracks with the Charlotte Gateway Station tracks. NCDOT and the City of Charlotte doubled the width of the sidewalk and temporary tunnel from its original width while Crowder Construction built it and installed the lights. The Panthers painted and installed the banners at the tunnel to make it a welcoming place for Panthers players, staff and visitors.

Construction of the new bridge and removal of the temporary tunnel is expected to be completed by 2021.

Amtrak Expands Share Fares Deal to NC By Train services

Get carried away with up to 45 percent off travel when booking six passengers

To inspire customers to explore with friends and family, Amtrak is making Share Fares deals available on routes that serve North Carolina, including the *Carolinian* and *Piedmont*. With the Share Fares discount, Amtrak makes it easier to bring the whole crew by helping customers save with each plus one.

How the fare structure works:

- Customer one – full price ticket
- Customer two – 15 percent discount
- Customer three – 60 percent discount
- Customer four – 70 percent discount
- Customer five – 70 percent discount
- Customer six – 70 percent discount

The offer is available for up to six customers traveling together on the same itinerary. Reservations are required at least two days prior to travel. The companion and full fare passengers must travel together on the same itinerary and have tickets issued together.

This offer is valid for coach seats only; no upgrades are allowed. This offer is not combinable with any other discount offer. Sale prices are not available at all times and on all routes. This deal is also subject to any restrictions, blackouts and refund rules that apply to the type of fare purchased, a 25 percent cancellation fee may apply.

Tickets can be purchased at [Amtrak.com](https://www.amtrak.com).
Refer to **discount code V291** when purchasing tickets.

To/From	Ticket 1	Ticket 2	Ticket 3	Ticket 4, 5 & 6	Total	Price per Customer*
Raleigh – Washington, DC	\$86	\$73.10	\$34.40	\$25.80	\$270.90	\$45.15
Charlotte – New York	\$123	\$104.55	\$49.20	\$36.90	\$387.45	\$64.58
Charlotte – Durham	\$30	\$25.50	\$12	\$9	\$94.50	\$15.75

**Price per customer is only when purchasing six tickets*

BeRailSafe and Operation Lifesaver Share Rail Safety Information at the N.C. State Fair

Rail Division and Operation Lifesaver volunteers shared information to fairgoers of all ages at Safety City. Children were greeted with an opportunity to take photographs while operating the BeRailSafe train, sign a pledge to never trespass on railroad tracks and take a rail safety quiz. The State Fair has proven to be a great venue to share the rail safety message face-to-face with thousands of people.



Fairgoers take the Rail Safety quiz with Rail Director Jason Orthner



Muddy, mascot of the Carolina Mudcats, takes the pledge to BeRailSafe



State fair attendees enjoyed the convenience of the special NC By Train State Fair stops again this year

November Trivia Question: Which North Carolina train station built in 1926 was recently restored and what purpose does the station now serve? *See answer on page 7.*



Memorial Decals installed on Piedmont Locomotive 1984 in Memory of Engineer Bud Marlin

The Rail Division recently installed memorial decals on NCDOT locomotive #1984 "City of Kannapolis" honoring longtime *Piedmont* engineer Bud Marlin who passed away on Nov. 28, 2018.

Bud's favorite *Piedmont* locomotive to run was the 1984. His favorite greeting when communicating on the radio with other trains was "WOW." He was one of the most enthusiastic promoters and supporters of NCDOT's passenger rail program and one of the most senior engineers on the North Carolina engineer roster. He was a true professional and had an impeccable safety record. Bud is greatly missed by all of his NCDOT friends and we are pleased to honor his memory with the new decals.

On Sept. 28 Bud's wife, Cheryl, his daughter, Ashley, and son-in-law, Joshua, made a commemorative trip on Bud's favorite locomotive, the #1984 City of Kannapolis, along with some of Bud's coworkers and friends. Many fond memories of Bud were shared and framed photos were presented to his family, as well a framed drawing of the locomotive by renowned railroad artist Andrew Fletcher.



Looking for Holiday Gift Ideas?

NC Multi-Ride passes are an excellent gift for frequent riders on your gift list. Visit ncbytrain.org to learn more or purchase tickets! These are great stocking stuffers for college students!



Give the Gift of a Multi-Ride Pass and **SAVE 15%!**

❄️ **GOOD FOR 10 RIDES**
(5 ROUND TRIPS)

❄️ **NO RESERVATIONS NEEDED**




➔ **NCBYTRAIN.ORG**
Go. Connect.





L to R: Ashley M. Morse, Cheryl Marling, Joshua Morse

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

	RIDERSHIP			REVENUE		
	2019	2018	% +/-	2019	2018	% +/-
<i>Piedmont</i>	18,372	17,155	7%	\$418,987	\$398,653	5%
<i>Carolinian</i>	13,722	25,029	-45%*	\$864,095	\$1,823,999	-53%*

865



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

August 2019 – CSX major track work on the A-line affected 34 Carolinian trains. For all Mondays through Thursdays in August (17 days total), Trains 79 and 80 operated between Raleigh and Charlotte only. All *Piedmont* trains operated as scheduled in August.

CCX Construction Update

The Rocky Mount CCX Intermodal Terminal Site preparation and surveying is ongoing. Significant grading operations are underway for the wheeled parking area, transfer staging area, and the south lead tracks.



Aerial view of north half of site



Aerial view of south lead track



Terminal site looking west - HPDE Pipe Installation

Charlotte Gateway Station – Phase I Construction Update



Bridge construction at Trade Street



4th Street bridge piles



P&N bridgework



4th Street bridge foundation pour



6th Street bridge pour

NCDOT and the Clinton Terminal Railroad Improve Crossings

The NCDOT Rail Division worked with the Clinton Terminal Railroad and NCDOT Division 3 Sampson County maintenance to improve two crossings on the Clinton Terminal Railroad.

The first crossing improved was West Morisey Blvd. This crossing had two tracks, one of which had not been used in many years. The crossing surface was deteriorating asphalt with no flangeway material. The track that was no longer used was removed. On the active track rubber flangeway material was installed, ties and rail were replaced and the crossing surface was repaved. This has greatly improved the appearance and ride of this crossing.

The second crossing improved was on Rackley Road just outside the city of Clinton. The timbers were in very poor

condition with potholes forming due to voids in the timbers, making this a rough crossing for drivers. This crossing also received new rail, ties and asphalt, and the crossing timbers were replaced with rubber rail seal. These improvements will provide the community a long lasting and smoother crossing surface.



West Morisey Boulevard crossing before improvements



Rackley Road crossing before improvements



West Morisey Boulevard crossing after improvements



Rackley Road crossing after improvements



November Railroad Trivia Answer:

Historic Union Station in Winston-Salem's grand opening was held on Sept. 7, 2019. The newly restored station, owned by the City, houses transportation offices on the ground floor. The middle floor will become WSSU offices and classrooms in the coming months. There is also space for start up/incubator companies. The main floor will be used for special events, meetings etc. Union Station was completed in 1926 and served as a passenger station until 1970 when passenger service to Winston-Salem ended. For the next 30 years it housed an auto repair garage.