

NCDOT Rail Division

# The Rail Report



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## FRRCSI Project Expands Connectivity for Charlotte Inland Port



Unloading container from a train at Charlotte Inland Port

The Freight Rail & Rail Crossing Safety Improvement program provided \$1.62M in matching funds toward the total project costs of \$3.24M for upgrades to the North Carolina Ports Charlotte Inland Port (CIP).

The project installed new surface of paving and gravel, which was completed in February 2020. This was the second phase of a project that is part of an intermodal rail strategy between NC Ports and NCDOT's Rail Division. The improvements doubled the container capacity of the facility by enabling the grounding of loaded and empty containers in the entire yard. It also improved cargo velocity and enhancing trucker experience with improved traffic flow and signage.

North Carolina Ports intermodal rail service, the Queen City Express, started in July 2017. It provides convenient access to the entire Southeast with next-day transit service between the Port of Wilmington and Charlotte via the use of Charlotte Inland Port. This is a hub with direct access to major distribution corridors in the Southeastern United States.

Aside from being the destination for Charlotte-bound rail cargo from the port, CIP connects customers to distribution corridors, services and opportunity. Strategically located in the heart of the region's manufacturing and distribution centers, the port serves the I-85 and I-77 corridors. It also

provides container yard operations to ocean carriers and is as a staging area for empty and loaded containers with maintenance and repair service from an onsite vendor.

Intermodal rail enables ports to reach further compared to the limited reach of transportation via trucks. Major East Coast ports have successfully leveraged the inland port concept to their advantage, which were envisioned as a means to expand market reach to more customers. Today, inland ports help reduce congestion around urban port facilities and provide truckers with a variety of locations to pick up and drop off containers, thereby minimizing truck driving miles at a time

of Electronic Logging Device mandate and truck driver shortages. Improved inland port facilities in North Carolina provide similar benefits.

*The Charlotte Inland Terminal pavement rehabilitation complements phase one, Track 1 and 18 upgrades, at the Wilmington Terminal. Both phases are part of a project that provides vital support to Queen City Express operations.*





## 2020 Annual Train Host Meeting Held in Kannapolis



### Annual Meeting 2020

Train Host Association members from across the state gathered on March 7 at the Kannapolis train station for their annual business meeting for updates, elections and program safety and Amtrak news. Kannapolis Mayor Darrell Hinnant, Chief Deputy Secretary David Howard and Rail Division Director Jason Orthner spoke to the group and thanked them for their service to the citizens of North Carolina and NC By Train. The group, more than 150 strong, volunteered 13,256 hours on board the trains traveling between Charlotte and Rocky Mount, plus assisting passengers in stations.

Alison Boswell, Customer Service Manager, and Tim McHugh, Customer Service Agent, updated the hosts on

Rail Division activities. Roger Smock, BeRailSafe Rail Safety Consultant, was on hand to provide a safety update. Gary Israelson, Rick Wilson and Clay Daniels of Amtrak also shared information.

Association officers were elected: Terry Britt, President; Chuck Graham, VP of Train Operations; Chip Hicks, VP of Station Operations; Bob Brandt, Treasurer; and Jeanette Beaudry, Secretary.

Hosts who reached five, 10, 15 and 20-year milestones were recognized and given certificates of appreciation. **25 Years:** Doug Corriher; **20 Years:** Tom Lynch; **Five Years:** Annie Bynum, David Sanders and Marcella Kaye Sullivan.

**Learn how to become a train host at [ncbytrain.org](http://ncbytrain.org).**



### Burlington Station Agent Honored for Heroic Actions

On March 11, Olyvia Ellis, a Burlington station attendant, was honored by the Burlington Police Department for her quick actions in assisting a woman trying to escape an abusive home situation. Ms. Ellis helped the woman purchase a ticket, load her luggage and alerted the conductors to keep an eye on her until she reached her destination safely.



# Charlotte Gateway Station – Phase I Construction Update



*7th Street looking south*

The Charlotte Gateway Station Phase 1 project is targeted for completion in 2023. The scope includes bridges to support passenger tracks, a center island level-boarding platform, and railroad track and signals. Proposals from private developers who are involved in the City's selection process for building the station and multi-use development in Phase 2 are due on March 27. The chosen team is anticipated to be announced this spring.



*5th Street bridge deck construction*



*Retaining wall construction between 4th and Trade Streets*



*Preparing to set girders on 6th Street bridge*





*Aerial view of terminal site looking west*

Construction continues on the Carolina Connector (CCX) intermodal terminal in Rocky Mount, NC. Significant grading, utility and drainage operations are underway, while construction of the south lead track and building foundations have begun.



*South lead track construction*



*Terminal building foundation construction*



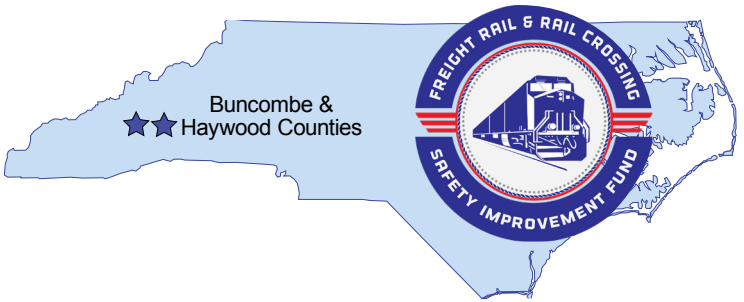
# NCDOT and the Blue Ridge Southern Railroad Improve Crossings

Our crossings this month are both located on the Blue Ridge Southern Railroad in Buncombe and the Haywood counties.

Division 13 Buncombe County maintenance and the Rail Division partnered with the Blue Ridge Southern Railroad to upgrade the Buck Shoals Road crossing near Asheville. The asphalt crossing had no flangeway material and was deteriorating, rising up in the gauge of the track and creating a very rough crossing. It was replaced with asphalt and rubber rail seal, providing a much improved ride.

The second crossing, Edwards Cove Road, near Lake Junaluska was rubber rail seal and asphalt. A portion of the rail seal and asphalt had been removed and patched,

but was sinking below the top of the rail, creating a bumpy crossing that required motorists to slow down. This surface was replaced with new rail seal and asphalt which made the crossing smoother for drivers.



Buck Shoals Road crossing before improvements



Edwards Cove Road crossing before improvements



Buck Shoals Road crossing after improvements



Edwards Cove Farm Road after improvements

Ridership & Revenue on NC By Train Service – January 2020 vs. 2019						
	RIDERSHIP			REVENUE		
	2020	2019	% +/-	2020	2019	% +/-
Piedmont	16,666	14,535	15%	\$420,504	\$341,271	23%
Carolinian	16,484	16,313	1%	\$1,121,574	\$1,076,019	4%

1,031

Train Host Association

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

January 2020 – Service modifications affected two *Piedmont* trains.