

## Construction Viewing Event Held for Sugar Creek Road Grade Separation

Transportation agencies gathered in Charlotte on July 11 to celebrate continued construction on the Sugar Creek Road Grade Separation, a project designed to improve efficiency, safety and mobility in one of North Carolina’s busiest rail corridors. NCDOT, NCRR, and City officials were on hand to answer questions about the project from local businesses, citizens and the media.

The Sugar Creek Road Grade Separation is part of a series of upgrades to the Raleigh to Charlotte portion of the North Carolina Railroad Company’s line. This rail corridor currently sees more than 30 Norfolk Southern Railway freight trains and eight Amtrak trains per day.

“As one of the most significant population and economic centers in the Southeast, Charlotte is at the forefront of many of our state’s transportation advances, including rail — and this project is a great demonstration of that,” said NCDOT Transportation Secretary Nick Tennyson, who offered remarks during Monday’s event.

“Investment in rail infrastructure is also a prominent part of Governor McCrory’s 25-Year Vision for transportation investment in our state in recognition of its important role in North Carolina’s future.”

Completion of this project will eliminate the risk of train/vehicle collisions at this location, improve safety for both vehicle and rail passengers, reduce traffic delays in the area, and creates a safe way for pedestrians and motorists to get over the tracks to the future CATS Blue Line Extension Sugar Creek Station. The project is funded by the City of Charlotte, the North Carolina Railroad Company (NCRR), Norfolk Southern, the Federal Railroad Administration and the NCDOT.

“The Sugar Creek Road overpass will have a significant impact on safety – improving the busiest railroad highway crossing on the North Carolina Railroad line,” said NCRR President, Scott Saylor.

“This collaboration represents a \$10 million investment by the North Carolina Railroad Company and we are proud to join with our partners in making it a reality.”



*Sec. Nick Tennyson, BOT Member Tracy Dodson and NCRR President Scott Saylor address event attendees.*

### The Sugar Creek Road Grade Separation project includes:

- Constructing a bridge carrying Sugar Creek Road over the North Carolina Railroad Company corridor – part of Norfolk Southern’s main line;
- Realigning North Davidson Street to the intersection of Sugar Creek Road and Redwood Avenue and construct intersection improvements;
- Extending Bearwood Avenue under the proposed Sugar Creek Road bridge to intersect with the realigned North Davidson Street;
- Constructing a new connector road from the existing Greensboro Street/East Sugar Creek Road intersection to Raleigh Street, east of the proposed Sugar Creek Road bridge;
- Permanently closing the existing Craighead Road railroad crossing; and
- Removing the existing Northmore Street/Sugar Creek intersection.

Construction on the project started this spring. Blythe Development Company of Charlotte is the project contractor.

## FRRCSI Program Expanded by NC General Assembly

As part of the 2016 state budget passed by the North Carolina General Assembly and signed by Governor McCrory, an additional \$13.8 million in state funding has been appropriated to the Freight Rail and Rail Crossing Safety Improvement (FRRCSI) program to improve the safety, efficiency and reliability of the state’s freight rail network. Since its establishment in 2013 the FRRCSI program has provided an annual award of \$3.75 million in funds derived from revenue generated by the North Carolina Railroad Company to enhance industrial access to the freight rail network as well as to rehabilitate or close railroad crossings. The increase in available

funding will facilitate more long-term capital improvement projects including repairing bridges, diverting freight from highways to rail, upgrading rail to allow for heavier carloads rail safety improvements and preserving rail corridors. FRRCSI program funding supports the construction or rehabilitation of industrial spurs to industries locating their facilities in North Carolina and requires a 50 percent match by the company. The expanded program funding could provide competitive incentives that attract private investment employers to the state.



## Yadkin Valley Railroad continues Capital Improvements

This June members of the NCDOT Rail Planning met with the Yadkin Valley Railroad's Chief Operating Officer Maury Coulthard to review recent track infrastructure improvement projects. Operated



*Worn rail to be replaced.*

by the shortline railroad holding company Gulf & Ohio Railways Inc., the 93-mile-long Yadkin Valley Railroad (YVRR) has two lines originating in Rural Hall that terminate in North Wilkesboro and in Mount Airy. Since 2014, NCDOT Rail Division has invested more than \$800,000 in 50 percent matching Freight

Rail and Rail Crossing Safety Improvement (FRRCSI) funds to replace crossties and install heavier rail. YVRR's 2016 Short Line Infrastructure Assistance Program grant will be used to replace worn rail on a curved bridge spanning Big Bugaboo Creek just west of Ronda in Wilkes County. The Yadkin Valley Railroad hauls more than 12,000 carloads of freight per year including poultry feed, forestry products, steel, plastics, propane, and ethanol. Yadkin Valley Railroad intends to maintain their partnership with NCDOT and apply for future FRRCSI funding to continue the replacement of heavily used and aging rail. Gulf and Ohio's commitment to safe and reliable service for their customers is evidenced by their robust capital improvements program.



## Greenville Distribution Center expands through FRRCSI program

The Greenville Transload Project was originally opened in 2014 to provide bulk agricultural limestone and gypsum by rail for use by local Greenville area farmers. Funded through the Freight Rail and Rail Crossing Safety Improvement (FRRCSI) program, this 2,000-foot siding track allows Tennessee Valley Resources to divert heavy trucks from the 400-mile trip between their mining operations in Jefferson City, Tennessee and customers in Greenville. Utilizing \$50,000 in matching 2014 FRRCSI funds, the facility has been expanded with the addition of a 600-foot spur and bottom-dump pit that uses a conveyor belt system to load trucks more efficiently. In less than two years, the Carolina Coastal Railway has delivered more than 1,400 carloads of bulk agricultural products to this busy regional distribution center.



## BeRailSafe Crossing Blitz held in Mebane, NC



On Friday June 10, NCDOT's BeRailSafe Program, with the enthusiastic support of the Mebane Police Department, the Burlington Police Department, the Orange County

Sheriffs' Department, the North Carolina Highway Patrol, and NC Operation Lifesaver, conducted a highly successful 'Crossing Blitz' in Mebane. The event was held in conjunction with other 2016 International Level Crossing Awareness Day activities being conducted in 45 countries around the world

In a pre-blitz briefing, law enforcement personnel heard from Amtrak Engineer JD Thomas, who conveyed the urgency of the rail safety problem from the train engineer's perspective, and from BeRailSafe's Roger Smock who outlined the blitz procedures and showed the recently distributed ["Blue Sign" educational](#)

[video](#) produced by BeRailSafe. North Carolina Operation Lifesaver Executive Director Margaret Cannell spoke and television and print media covered the story and extended the rail safety message through TV, print and radio.

During the blitz, law enforcement personnel stopped and handed out safety messages to over 1,100 motorists in two hours at two very busy grade crossings at 3rd and 5th Streets. The rail safety campaign was well received by motorists and the local community.





### Student Discount

NC By Train and Amtrak is offering an everyday 15% discount to students ages 17 – 25. Students must provide valid ID and reservations must be made three days prior to planned travel. Please visit [www.ncbytrain.org](http://www.ncbytrain.org) for more information. Some restrictions may apply.

### Kids \$5 Discount

This summer, NC By Train is offering a one-way \$5 Kids Discount for up to two children ages 2 – 12 with the purchase of a regular priced ticket. This promotion is available now through Aug. 31, 2016, for travel on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Visit [www.ncbytrain.org](http://www.ncbytrain.org) for more information or to make reservations. Some restrictions may apply.



### NC By Train Night at the Durham Bulls



On June 23 NC By Train was the official game sponsor at the Durham Bulls baseball game with the rival Charlotte Knights. During the game, Rail Director Paul Worley and his son, Adam, were presented a Durham Bulls baseball on the field (left). NC By Train tabled the event and provided lots of new items with the NC By Train logo. Many fans stopped by to learn more about our passenger train service in North Carolina and were provided schedules and information on the stations along the corridor.

*Below: The Rail Customer Service Team – Tracey Creech, Tim McHugh and Alison Boswell*



### Springmoor Residents impressed with NC By Train Service

On June 14, a group of over 50 senior residents of Springmoor Life Care Retirement Community (Raleigh) took a short round-trip from Cary to Burlington by train - the first outing of that kind offered by Springmoor. They spent just over an hour at the Burlington Station at the NC Railroad Company's Whistlestop Exhibit. The four-hour excursion was judged by all to be a tremendous success. Some passengers had not ridden a train since steam days (really!); others had, but were very impressed by the layout and amenities of the Piedmont coaches. The help of Amtrak station and on-board staff as well as Volunteer Train Host Gayle McCurry was appreciated by all. Members of the group (and jealous fellow residents who were unable to take the trip this time) have requested more train trips of this kind. NC By Train is looking forward to serving them and other group excursions in the future.



### NC By Train Staff speaks at NC Senior Tar Heel Legislature and Council on Aging

In continuation of reaching our target audiences, NC By Train was invited to speak at the quarterly North Carolina Senior Tar Heel Legislature and Council on Aging in Chapel Hill. Information about passenger rail, along with Piedmont and Carolinian train schedules, was provided to nearly 200 delegates and alternates from across North Carolina.

This organization strives to improve the quality of life of senior citizens and are advocates for the aging before the North Carolina General Assembly.

### Ridership & Revenue on NC's Amtrak Service – \*May 2016 vs. 2015

Icon	RIDERSHIP			REVENUE		
	2016	2015	% +/-	2016	2015	% +/-
	11,979	12,282	-2%	\$252,368	\$246,124	3%
	25,278	24,196	4%	\$1,574,435	\$1,500,889	5%

**1,046**



Hours Volunteered by N.C. Train Hosts in May, supporting NC ByTrain onboard and at events.

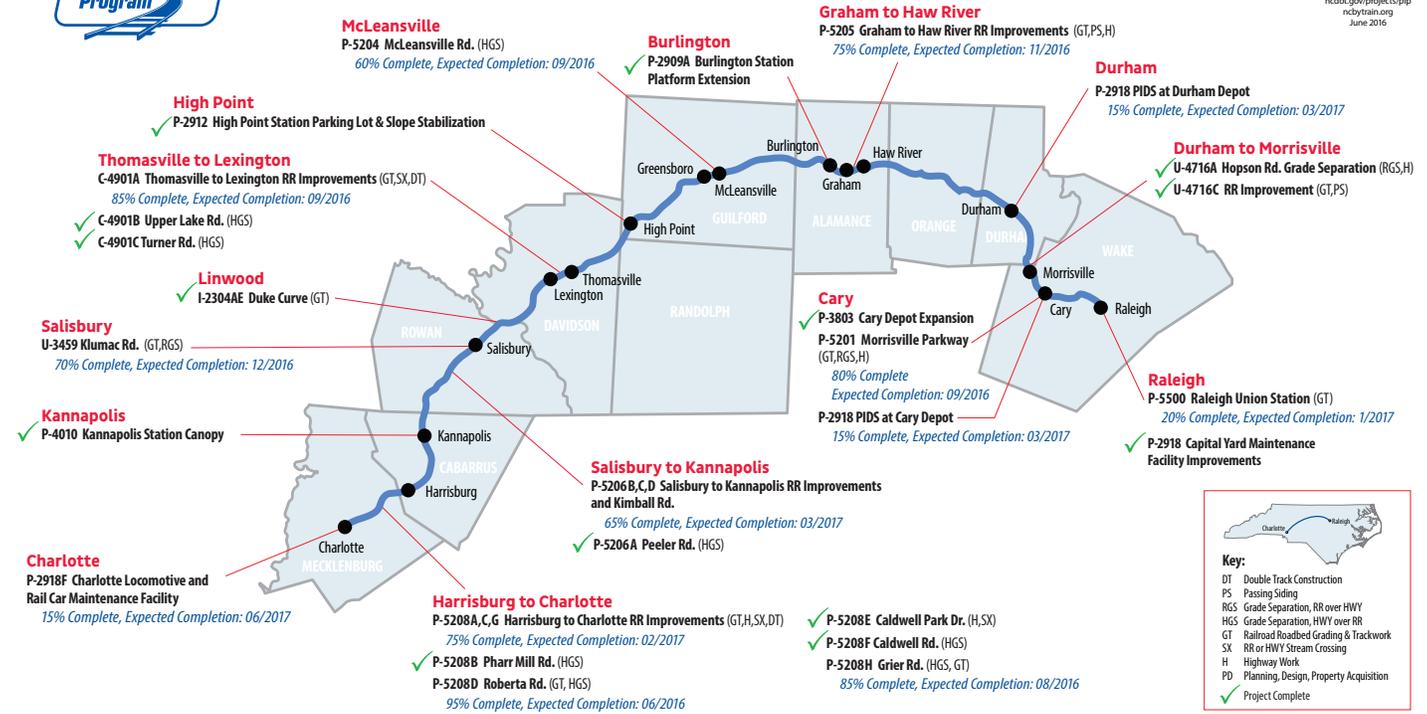
**May 2016 service modifications and annulments impacted four Piedmont trains and two Carolinian trains.** On May 2, all Piedmont trains were annulled and Carolinian trains operated only between Raleigh and New York to accommodate PIP project structure and track work at Morrisville Parkway. Additional disruptions for PIP project work will continue to occur as necessary through completion of the project. Average gasoline prices were \$0.34/gallon lower in May 2016 than in May 2015 (EIA Weekly Retail Gasoline for Lower Atlantic region).



# Piedmont Improvement Program – June 2016 Status Report



ncdot.gov/projects/PIP  
ncbytrain.org  
June 2016



**Key:**

- DT Double Track Construction
- PS Passing Siding
- HGS Grade Separation, RR over HWY
- HGS Grade Separation, HWY over RR
- GT Railroad Roadbed Grading & Trackwork
- SX RR or HWY Stream Crossing
- H Highway Work
- PD Planning, Design, Property Acquisition
- ✓ Project Complete

2 Locomotives 25% Complete Expected Completion Date: 11 & 12/2016

NC By Train – Piedmont Equipment ✓ 5 Locomotives ✓ 11 Railcars

2 Cab Control Units 25% Complete Expected Completion Date: 11 & 12/2016  
2 Additional Cab Control Units from non-ARRA funding\*

## Spent to Date of \$520M (eff. 6/30/2016)

Component	Expenditure
PD&A/ROW	\$51,838,583
Equipment Procurement & Rebuild	\$30,864,902
Stations & Facilities	\$45,330,253
Track & Structures	\$278,493,984
CRISP	\$2,180,376
<b>Program Totals</b>	<b>\$408,708,098</b>

Eight new contracts totaling \$715,373 were awarded in June.

## Commitments to Date of \$520M (eff. 6/30/2016)

Current Commitments		\$471M
Pending Commitments	Anticipated Date	\$42.7M
Charlotte Maintenance Facility Construction	8/16	\$33M
PIDS Construction	8/16	\$1.5M
PD&A	Through '16	\$8.2M
<b>Balance</b>		<b>\$6.3M</b>

## PIP Milestones



Grier Road Bridge

**Charlotte:** Grier Road Bridge opened to traffic on July 1. Opening of the bridge allows for remaining track construction and roadway work to be completed as part of the Haydock to Junker double track project in Charlotte.

**Lexington:** A major track cut-over was completed on June 27 on the Bowers to Lake double track project. This cut-over placed two miles of the new west track in service across Abbots and Rich Fork Creek bridges and sets the project for the final trackwork completion.

**Weldon:** The last of three new universal crossovers on the CSX A-line mainline was put into service on June 6 at South Weldon. The new crossover provides an additional location for trains to access both main tracks, allowing more opportunities for trains to pass each other and increasing track capacity and passenger train reliability.

## Piedmont Improvement Program – Project Photos – June 2016



P-5500 Raleigh Union Station construction



P-5201 Morrisville Parkway, roadway grading



P-5201 Morrisville Parkway, retaining wall



P-5205 Graham to Haw River Passing Siding, siding track construction



P-5204 McLeansville Road, road and bridge construction

## Piedmont Improvement Program – Project Photos – June 2016



C-4901 Bowers to Lake, track construction



U-3459 Klumac Road, roadway construction



P-5206 Reid to North Kannapolis, ballast on new track construction



P-5206 Reid to North Kannapolis, track construction on bridge over Kimball Road



P-5208 Haydock to Junker, Coddle Creek, setting bridge girders



P-5208 Haydock to Junker, Roberta Road bridge construction