

CAPT All Aboard in the Carolinas

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NORTH & SOUTH CAROLINA

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The Last Mile

We all enjoy travel by train and it is indeed the best way to get from point A to point B. But what do you do to finish your trip and you arrive at you the station. How do you get from there to your final destination? Get a Taxi! Rent a car! Get a ride with a family member or friend. Well, the NCDOT has a solution for you.

Beginning on March 18th, 2017 you can get a bus ride to your final destination as part of your rail ticket price. Before you get off of the train at any destination between Raleigh and Charlotte you can get a transfer ticket for the local transit system. Only the Burlington system is not using this process yet and is not part of this program. All you have to do is as the conductor on board for a transfer ticket.

These transfer tickets are good on all systems between Raleigh and Charlotte (except Burlington) for a one way trip on the local system.

When you board the local system, you may request a transfer that may be required for a change to your final destination. In Charlotte, for example, you can request this transfer as you board the bus and ride to the light rail to finish your trip.

This program will be active with 12 different transit agencies. It is the first anywhere in the US for such a large group of transit agencies and includes such systems as Go Raleigh, CATS, Go Durham, Go Triangle, PART, and the systems in Kannapolis and Salisbury.

The Transfers are good for one ride each and will get you from the station to your final destination.

You can not get the transfers at the station where you depart or as part of your ticket purchase. They are not good either on the systems in Wilson or Rocky Mount. You can only obtain them during your trip on the Piedmont or Carolinian.

Once again the NCDOT's Rail Division is making travel by train the best and most convenient way to travel.

As you all know, the Amtrak National Schedules in the print version ended with the Winter Spring edition of 2016. CAPT has learned that the schedules or the

Carolinian's New Start

Almost all of our members have ridden the Carolinian or at least familiar with it. For many years it has been a train of choice between New York City and Charlotte with many stops in North Carolina.

NCDOT's Rail Division pays all costs for this train between Washington, DC and Charlotte. Many of its passenger's board on detrain in Virginia. The sad thing is that Virginia has not paid for any of its costs.

There have also been discussions with South Carolina to such points as Columbia but as we all know South Carolina is not in a position yet to operate these trains up until now.

In a recent meeting, I was very surprised to hear that there are on going discussions with the Connecticut DOT to extend the Carolinian to New Haven.

There is an opening in the Amtrak schedule for an early morning train out of New Haven. The first train out in the morning is Acela Express No. 2151 at 7:05 with an arrival in NYC at 8:44 and Northeast Direct No. 141 at 7:37 arriving in NYC at 9:21.

If the Carolinian departed New Haven at 5:33 it would arrive into NYC in time for passengers to make business meetings at 8:00. There is definitely a market here.

Doing this would also add 75 route miles to the Carolinian's trip putting it into the category of a long distance train. The train's trip would cover 779 miles. This would free up state funds for other trains in the state.

Once again it shows the out of the box of the thinking at the NCDOT. The Carolinian has the second fare to cost ratio second only to the Auto Train. I think that there are also a lot of people who would like to go beyond NYC on the Carolinian. Making this change would add the four additional stations to the Carolinian's trip to include New Rochelle, NY and Stamford, Bridgeport, and New Haven Connecticut.

March Meeting Notice Inside

Printed Schedules Disappearing

As you all know, the Amtrak National Schedules in the print version ended with the Winter Spring edition of 2016. CAPT has learned that the schedules for the individual trains will also end in the very near future. The schedules will be available on the Amtrak webpage but will no longer be available in printed version.

The schedules that have been made available by the NCDOT will continue to be available for the Carolinian and the Piedmont. I have not made a trip personally by rail that I have not carried a timetable with me. This will be a learning process for me on my next trip after the next CAPT meeting in Wilson.

Gene Kirkland

Work Continues on Amtrak Station

Raleigh's new Union Station continues to rise from the dust. As stated in the last news letter construction is well under way and on schedule opening early in 2018.

In an article in the Raleigh News and Observer, the city is now working on the new occupants of the station other than Amtrak. On the top of the list is a restaurant on the second floor (or top) that will attract the local people but will also be in a price range that the rail passengers will use the service.

According to the article, the station will have rental space on three floors. The first floor will have two areas on the ground floor of 2,100 and 1,700 square feet. The second floor will have 6,200 square feet on the second floor and 2,700 square feet on the third floor.

The city is planning on an operational budget for the station of \$425,000 annually. The cost of the station to the city of Raleigh has been set at \$54.7 million. They are now working to develop a lease agent contract to begin to market the station to perspective tenants. The spaces will either be for retail or office use. They are trying to get as far down this road as possible as it is much easier to accommodate a tenant before construction is completed than afterward. I for one cannot wait to see what the final station will look like.

Gene Kirkland

Durham Orange Light Rail Project

For those of you that attended the CAPT meeting in January, we had an excellent opportunity to learn first hand of the plans for the Durham Orange County Light Rail System. Mr. Jeffrey Sullivan, a public involvement associate with the GoTriangle system talked with us and gave many of us our first look at the proposed system.

The system will run seventeen miles from the UNC Hospitals at Chapel Hill to North Carolina Central University (UCCU). The system will stop at significant stations to include the South Square Mall, Duke, and Durham station just across the street from the Amtrak Station in Durham. The system will also serve major regional hospitals at UND-Chapel Hill, Duke, and the VA medical center in Durham.

The system will operate light rail vehicles every ten minutes during peak frequency and 20 minute frequencies off peak times. The system as proposed is 17.7 miles long and with feature 18 stations. The system will serve UNC Chapel Hill, Duke, and NCCU. The system is expected to carry 26,880 passengers per day in 2040.

The system is estimated to cost \$1.87 billion in 2015 dollars. The funding for the system will come from a ½ cent sales tax in Durham and Orange counties. I do know that Wake County also passed this tax in last November's election but am not sure if this will be used in any way for the system especially since the system does not serve Wake County. Also included in the funding is a rental car tax in Durham and Orange counties.

They are also planning to use some funding from Local, State and Federal sources. Originally, the system had planned on the state funding 25% of the work but the state legislature has capped any light rail project funding at 10%. Durham and Orange counties are working to make up the lost funds.

There has been a lot of work in the Triangle area and all of the bus systems now have a coordinated system. Each of the systems have a similar image on their vehicles with the Durham system now known as GoDurham, the Triangle Transit system as GoTriangle, and the Raleigh system as GoRaleigh. I have not been able to confirm information on the other systems but know that the Raleigh system has added more frequencies to make the local bus systems much more convenient for their riders. I do know that in Raleigh, they have had a significant increase in ridership.

Gene Kirkland

CAPT Board Meeting

**March 18, 2017
Wilson, N.C.**

The Carolinas Association for Passenger Trains will meet in Wilson on Saturday **March 18, 2017**. The meeting location is 224 Nash Street East at the Imagination Station History and Science Museum, and we will begin at **1:00 pm** in the historic third floor court room. The meeting will conclude at **3:30 pm** to allow those leaving by train to be at the Amtrak station nearby for the southbound departure of the Carolinian at 3:55 pm. The Amtrak station is a block and a half east of the meeting location. If you are interested in ice cream if the train is late there is a shop across the street from the train station.

For those interested in lunch join us at **Big Harold's Diner #1** at 126 Tarboro Street , 3 blocks west of the Amtrak station and one-half block south at 11:45 am. This should be an easy walk for those arriving by the northbound Carolinian at 11:30 am.

Meeting Agenda

Welcome

Secretary's report

Treasurer's report

Update on the resolution drive in South Carolina in support of expanded rail passenger service

Update on CAPT fostering creation of an association similar to Virginians for High Speed Rail

Update on news in North Carolina and South Carolina affecting transit and rail passenger service

Update on CAPT newsletter and website issues

Amtrak update

Reports by Officers and Directors

Planning for future meetings

Adjournment

**CAROLINAS ASSOCIATION FOR PASSENGER TRAINS
Officers and Directors**

President	Martin L. Wheeler, Jr.	7117 kilcullen Drive, Charlotte, NC 28270	980-216-1509
NC Vice President	Art Peterson	3200 Gordon Drive, Greenville, NC 27834-4926	252-756-7380
SC Vice President	Jim Frierson	955 Park Street, Room 516, Columbia, SC 29202-0191	803-737-3601
Secretary	Phil Astwood	1318 Main Street, Newberry, SC 29108	803-405-0396
Treasurer	Robert E. Kirkland, Jr.	2108 Bellaire Ave., Raleigh NC 27608-1806	919-832-2113
Directors	Bob Bischoff	10225 Old Ardrey Road \$202, Charlotte, NC 28277-4474	980-299-2553
	John Bobinyec	104 Cunningham Court, Cary, NC 27511-5591	919-460-0811
	Bill Cole	4719 Water Oak Road, Charlotte NC 28211-2425	704-364-9821
	Leon DeBaer	1013 Stone Landings, Knightdale, NC 27545	919-266-6872
	Ed Locklin	10812 Balbriggan Ct., Charlotte NC 28262	704-549-1407
	Ralph Messera	410 South Freemont Street, Matthews, NC 28105	704 845-2482
	John Stein	3701 Holly Lane #204, Raleigh, NC 27612	919-783-0410

Upcoming CAPT Meetings

March 18, 2017 – Wilson, NC.
Board Meeting

May 20, 2017 - Landrum, NC
Board Meeting

July 15, 2017 – Greensboro, NC
Board Meeting

September 16, 2017 – Columbia, SC
Board Meeting

November 18th Charlotte, NC
Annual Membership Meeting

Keep Up To Date

John Bobinyec continues to assist CAPT as our webmaster. He continues to keep the web page updated and has made it a key tool for CAPT. We recommend that you review the page weekly. Much of this information is only available with short notice. Our web page URL is www.Captrail.org.

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Association For Passenger
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Mail with check to: **Gene Kirkland, CAPT Treasurer, 2108 Bellaire Ave., Raleigh, NC 27608-1806**
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