The Multimodal Message

The latest news from the Multimodal Divisions of NCDOT

Integrated Mobility•Aviation•Ferry•Rail

When the Road Closed, Our Ferry Team Answered the Call

Deputy Secretary Julie White



When a powerful nor'easter damaged N.C. 12 on Pea Island in late September, our team at the N.C. Department of Transportation faced a familiar challenge: how to keep people and communities connected when Mother Nature disrupts our transportation network.

Our Ferry Division answered that call in a big way.

Within 24 hours of receiving the request, our team activated the emergency ferry route between Stumpy Point and Rodanthe for the first time since 2013. That meant mobilizing boats and crews, setting up temporary facilities and coordinating the logistics needed to operate around the clock.

I had the opportunity to visit the operation and see this incredible work firsthand. From the long lines of vehicles waiting to board to the crews working tirelessly to keep ferries moving, I saw the dedication, teamwork and problem-solving that make

NCDOT special. I also saw the important role our community partners played in supporting the response.

Over four days, our ferries transported 1,048 vehicles and 1,776 people, providing a vital connection until N.C. 12 reopened.

And as I draft this, our ferry team is again working to put North Carolinians first as we are faced with a second nor'easter in as many weeks off our coast. We're hopeful the second storm will not be as bad as the first, but if it is I'm confident our crews across the Ferry Division will continue to provide a service that is second to none.

I'm incredibly proud of our Ferry Division team and everyone who consistently step up when difficult challenges lie ahead. Their work is a powerful reminder of what public service looks like: solving problems, working together and delivering for North Carolinians when they need us most.



Lisa Mathis, vice chairwoman of the North Carolina Board of Transportation and Jason Orthner, director of NCDOT's Rail Division, unveiled and christened a specially designed NC By Train locomotive commemorating the 250th anniversary of the United States in August. The America 250 commemorative locomotive celebrates the

nation’s semiquincentennial and North Carolina’s important role in American railroad history.

NCDOT Mobility Project Finalist for National Award



The N.C. Department of Transportation’s Mobility for Everyone, Everywhere in NC (MEE NC) initiative is a finalist for the 2026 America’s Transportation Awards. Voting is open now for the People’s Choice Award, and winners will be announced in November at the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) annual meeting.

Each year, AASHTO recognizes the projects and programs that make their communities better places to live, work and play. The awards focus on improving safety and driving down traffic fatalities and serious injuries; getting more out of the existing system; implementing new technologies and innovations; and implementing projects that improve the quality of life and enhance community development.

Now in its 19th year, the America’s Transportation Awards helps showcase why properly funded transportation infrastructure is so vital.

MEE NC launched on demand microtransit pilots in 11 communities statewide. Utilizing a federal grant alongside state matching funds, the $21.24 million project addressed mobility gaps in rural and suburban areas. By introducing on demand

microtransit, NCDOT replaced rigid schedules with responsive, user focused service while optimizing operating costs. The initiative reinforces the principle that mobility should be a universal service, regardless of zip code, while strengthening statewide economic connectivity.

Read more.



N.C. Ferry Division Awarded $28.2 Million Grant for Cherry Branch Improvements

The North Carolina Ferry Division has been awarded a $28.2 million federal grant to make critical improvements at the Cherry Branch Ferry Terminal in Craven County.

The funding comes through the Federal Transit Administration's Ferry Service for Rural Communities Program, one of three federal programs that support ferry systems across the country. The program provides competitive funding to states to help ensure that essential ferry service remains available in rural communities.

The Cherry Branch project will replace approximately 2,750 linear feet of severely deteriorated steel bulkhead at the terminal. The bulkhead is an important part of the terminal's infrastructure, helping protect the shoreline and support safe ferry operations.

Read more.

NC By Train Launches Rail & Ride Pass for Free Transit Connections



NC By Train's new Rail & Ride pass is making it easier for passengers traveling between Raleigh and Charlotte to connect to public transit at stops along the state's intercity passenger rail route.

Passengers can enter their trip information at NCByTrain.org to receive a Rail & Ride code by email. The code can be redeemed through participating transit agencies' mobile apps for bus or light-rail connections at no additional cost.

The program includes access to the following participating transit systems along the NC By Train corridor:

- GoTriangle
- GoRaleigh
- Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation (PART)
- Winston-Salem Transit Authority (WSTA)
- High Point Transit System (HPTS)
- LINK Transit
- Greensboro Transit Agency (GTA)
- Charlotte Area Transportation System (CATS)

Read more.



NCDOT's Integrated Mobility Division Director Brennon Fuqua joined Rocky Mount officials in October to celebrate the launch of Tar River's Transit's TRT2GO. The $5 same day booking microtransit service runs each Sunday from 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. and is supported by the Integrated Mobility Division's MEE NC initiative.

North Carolina's Aviation Excellence Highlighted at NCDOT eLIFT-NC Showcase



In September, Governor Josh Stein joined the N.C. Department of Transportation at the eLIFT-NC Showcase to celebrate North Carolina's first electric air taxi flights through the Federal Aviation Administration's Advanced Air Mobility and Electric Vertical Takeoff and Landing Integration Pilot Program (eIPP). NCDOT's eLIFT-NC initiative aims to create a network connecting airports and hospitals using air taxis to improve rural health care access and disaster response efforts.

At the eLIFT-NC Showcase, attendees toured the aircraft, experienced flight simulators, and watched demonstrations by Joby Aviation and BETA Technologies. Governor Stein and State Transportation Secretary Daniel Johnson also had the opportunity to ride in the aircraft during the event.

The first eLIFT-NC flights took place in September, with manufacturing partners Joby Aviation remotely piloting and BETA Technologies using electric flights between the Triangle and the Outer Banks. These flights mark a major milestone in phase one of the eLIFT-NC program, where NCDOT will establish flight routes, expand to additional airport pairs, build safety cases, engage local communities, and gather data needed to inform future operations.

Read more.



NCDOT's Rail Division Director Jason Orthner joined Aberdeen Carolina & Western Railway and regional partners in September to celebrate the opening of the Candor Logistics Park in Montgomery County. With connections to Norfolk Southern in Charlotte and CSX in Aberdeen, ACWR provides North Carolina businesses with access to markets across the country and demonstrates why investing in short line infrastructure is an investment in our communities.



NCDOT Walks to School with Students, Families, State and Local Leaders

Staff from the N.C. Department of Transportation joined students, families, and state and local leaders in October for National Walk & Roll to School Day, a national event highlighting the importance of safe, active and accessible routes to school.

A group of students and families gathered at Lakemont Swim and Tennis Club in Raleigh, formed a bike bus to ride to school together, with walkers joining at various points along the route before making their way to Douglas Magnet Elementary School. The school's annual walk encouraged healthy habits and highlighted the importance of mobility.

National Walk & Roll to School Day is celebrated in communities nationwide to encourage pedestrian safety, support healthy lifestyles and build connections among families, schools and local leaders.

Read more.



In September, officials with NCDOT's Division of Aviation traveled to North Dakota for the National Association of State Aviation Officials annual convention. NCDOT delivered a presentation on eLIFT-NC, highlighting how we plan to use the future of aviation to transform healthcare.

Ferry Toll Rate Recommendations Presented to N.C. Board of Transportation



Officials with the N.C. Department of Transportation's Ferry Division presented their toll rate recommendations to the North Carolina Board of Transportation in October, as the agency prepares to implement a law requiring tolls on all state ferry routes.

Starting Jan. 1, 2027, state law requires NCDOT's Ferry Division to start collecting tolls on the system's ferry routes that are currently free: Currituck-Knotts Island,

Aurora-Bayview, Hatteras-Ocracoke and Cherry Branch-Minnesott Beach. Ferry Division Director Jed Dixon made the Oct. 8 presentation to the board.

Dixon presented the following recommended base toll rates for one-way routes:

- $10 each way for Hatteras-Ocracoke
- $7 each way for Currituck-Knotts Island, Aurora-Bayview and Cherry Branch-Minnesott Beach

The law requires a $150 annual commuter pass for active-duty military and eligible permanent residents of the state's 20 coastal counties. Each pass pays for one vehicle a year on all ferry routes. The commuter passes will be available for purchase online and in person in November, Dixon said.

After the presentation, the board passed a resolution to request that the state legislature delay the implementation of ferry tolling. Board members applauded the efforts of the Ferry Division to complete the large task in a short timeframe but said the agency should have more time for additional analysis and to execute the many tasks needed for toll collection. NCDOT Secretary Daniel Johnson agreed to share the board's resolution with the state legislature.

Read more.



NCDOT's Division of Aviation leadership visited Johnston Regional Airport and the North Carolina Global TransPark as part of the Airport Vision and Partnership initiative.

Rail Safety Top of Mind During See Tracks? Think Train Week



In September BeRailSafe, the N.C. Department of Transportation Rail Division's railroad safety program, promoted National See Tracks? Think Train Week through education and outreach.

BeRailSafe and partner organizations, including the Clayton Police Department, N.C. Operation Lifesaver and Amtrak Police, conducted crossing blitzes to teach motorists and pedestrians about safe behaviors at railroad crossings and how to contact the railroads in case of emergency.

For safety tips or to request a BeRailSafe presentation, visit BeRailSafe.org.

Read more.

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