



SC AMTRAK RIDERSHIP SHOWS STEADY GROWTH, WHILE NC PIEDMONT RIDERSHIP TRIPLES OVER 3 YEARS

Since FY 2021, the four Amtrak trains that cross through the Palmetto State have experienced a doubling in ridership growth through FY 2024. The chart below shows ridership improvement for the *Silver Star*, the *Crescent*, the *Palmetto*, and the *Silver Meteor*. Meanwhile, in North Carolina, the *Carolinian*, the *Piedmont*, the *Crescent*, and the *Silver Star* (second chart) have tripled ridership from FY 2021 to FY 2024. Ridership activity at the nine stations for FY 2024 was 1,188,839 passengers.

SC STATIONS	Silver Star	Crescent	Palmetto	Silver Meteor	Ridership FY 2021	CHANGE E 21-22	Ridership FY 2022	CHANGE 22-23	Ridership FY 2023	CHANGE 23-24	Ridership p FY 21-24	CHANGE 21-24
Camden	2	-	-	-	1,600	77%	2,824	1%	2,862	11%	3,191	99%
Charleston	-	-	2	2	31,831	21%	38,557	37%	52,675	26%	66,597	109%
Clemson	-	2	-	-	1,679	75%	2,934	47%	4,317	5%	4533	170%
Columbia	2	-	-	-	13,148	97%	25,859	-2%	25,328	12%	28,277	115%
Denmark	2	-	-	-	1,702	67%	2,845	-6%	2,681	12%	2,990	76%
Dillon	-	-	2	-	3,071	34%	4,130	43%	5,907	13%	6,663	117%
Florence	-	-	2	2	20,475	14%	23,260	47%	34,165	15%	39,264	92%
Greenville	-	2	-	-	4,555	53%	6,987	27%	8,851	2%	9,013	98%
Kingstree	-	-	2	2	5,520	-1%	5,485	45%	7,926	18%	9,333	69%
Spartanburg	-	2	-	-	1,802	40%	2,521	41%	3,548	4%	3,683	104%
Yemassee	-	-	2	2	5,085	2%	5,171	35%	6,960	24%	8,664	70%
TOTAL					90,468	33%	120,573	29%	155,220	17%	182,208	101%
NOTES												
SILVER STAR*	Miami – New York City – Miami											
CRESCENT	New Orleans – New York City – New Orleans											
PALMETTO	Savannah – New York City – Savannah											
SILVER METEOR	Miami – New York City – Miami											
* replaced by FLORIDIAN, 11/10/24 (FY 2025), now Miami – Chicago – Miami												

Note: Throughout this newsletter, we have included web links that you might want to follow for more information. **They are not live links.** To use a link safely, it is recommended that copy the text and paste it into your web browser, and click <ENTER>.

ALL ABOARD CAROLINAS - FROM THE CAB - APRIL 2025

NC PIEDMONT CORRIDOR STATIONS	Carolinian	Piedmont	Crescent	Silver Star	Ridership FY 2021	CHANGE 21-22	Ridership FY 2022	CHANGE 22-23	Ridership FY 2023	CHANGE 23-24	Ridership FY 2024	CHANGE 21-24
Burlington	2	6	-	-	12,573	68%	21,070	27%	26,767	7%	28,753	129%
Cary	2	8	-	2	33,569	131%	77,521	24%	96,312	34%	128,875	284%
Charlotte	2	8	2	-	104,735	93%	202,386	29%	261,510	25%	328,008	213%
Durham	2	8	-	-	42,927	94%	83,173	35%	112,383	25%	140,523	227%
Greensboro	2	8	2	-	66,808	76%	117,854	34%	157,429	25%	197,052	195%
High Point	2	6	2	-	16,442	70%	28,001	36%	37,966	12%	42,401	158%
Kannapolis	2	6	-	-	11,072	96%	21,666	43%	31,071	20%	37,187	236%
Raleigh	2	8	-	2	93,417	89%	176,364	24%	219,538	19%	261,008	179%
Salisbury	2	6	2	-	10,189	81%	18,408	23%	22,666	10%	25,032	146%
TOTAL					391,732	91%	746,443	29%	965,642	23%	1,188,839	203%
NOTES												
CAROLINIAN	Charlotte-New York City-Charlotte											
PIEDMONT *	Raleigh-Charlotte-Raleigh											
CRESCENT	New Orleans-New York City-New Orleans											
SILVER STAR **	Miami-New York City-Miami											
* On July 10, 2023, two PIEDMONT trains began skipping stops at Burlington, High Point, Salisbury, and Kannapolis (last three months of FY 2023)												
** SILVER STAR was replaced by FLORIDIAN, 11/10/24 (FY 2025), now Miami – Chicago – Miami												

PIEDMONT AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Proposed by the NCDOT Rail Division for May 2025 (watch for email alerts from President Wheeler), the Piedmont Awareness Campaign will include public open house meetings in the four “skipped-stop” cities of Burlington, High Point, Salisbury and Kannapolis during the month of May. Specific locations will be announced when confirmed.

A video explaining the public engagement effort by the NC Department of Transportation Rail Division will precede the May meetings, and will be accompanied by an electronic survey on www.ncbytrain.org The campaign will be part of the Rail Division's planning efforts to review and consider input on current operations, and prepare for implementation of an additional Charlotte-Raleigh frequency with the next two years.

SIEMENS MOBILITY PLANT, LEXINGTON, NC

Siemens Airo equipment is planned for the Carolinian and Piedmont services between 2027 and 2032, with the “Carolinian” equipped first. The cars are expected to be built at the new Siemens Mobility Plant being completed in Lexington, NC and beginning operations by the end of 2025. The plant is a manufacturing and rail services facility that will provide 500 new jobs, and will cost \$220 million. It is considered a high tech operation "to build the trains of the future."

CHARLOTTE GATEWAY STATION

The NCDOT Rail Division is engaged with the Charlotte Area Transit System in an attempt to speed up location of Charlotte's Amtrak station stop adjacent to the proposed Gateway Multi-modal Transportation Center site. Discussions have centered on building a temporary station before completion of the entire transportation center development. More recently the idea of

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building the permanent station ahead of the other multi-use components has surfaced. Charlotte has the highest ridership of all 16 Amtrak stations in North Carolina.

S-LINE: RALEIGH, NC TO RICHMOND, VA

The S Line higher speed project between Richmond and Raleigh also has seen quite a bit of activity. A \$1.2 billion federal grant is funding improvement of the 18-mile line between Raleigh and Wake Forest with completion expected by 2030. Preliminary engineering for Wake Forest to Richmond is funded, and Virginia hopes to evaluate various propulsion modes when the design phase reaches 50 percent. The economic impact of the project by 2033 is expected to reach \$1.38 billion, with over eight thousand jobs created, resulting in \$42.5 million in local and state tax revenues.

Eleven grade separations will be constructed, along with 2 miles of track realignment north of Raleigh to avoid freight conflicts with CSX. Wake Forest's S-line station was awarded a \$13.2 million federal grant for station mobility study, design and construction. The money for the project is expected to flow with FRA grant obligations being awarded in the second quarter of 2025. Other possible S-line stations will get mobility studies also, and include Norlina, Henderson, Franklinton, and Youngsville north of Raleigh, and Apex and Sanford south of Raleigh. The line south of Raleigh is being considered for additional rail passenger services in the future.

CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS

Another major construction project getting underway soon is the improvement of the Carolinian/Piedmont passenger rail corridor between Greensboro and Raleigh. The work is expected to be funded by \$105.9 million federal grant, \$17.8 million from the North Carolina Railroad, \$13 million from Norfolk Southern, and \$34 million from the NC DOT Rail Division.

The improvements will allow improved passenger movements in the segment, better coordination with freight, and enable the extension of Piedmont service north of Raleigh to Wake Forest possibly by 2032. Additional sidings will go in between Elon and Burlington, and in Hillsborough. The line between Cary and Morrisville will be double tracked.

CORRIDOR ID STUDIES UPDATE

Phase 1 of the Raleigh-to-Wilmington Corridor ID Study will be completed by November 2025. The design and construction cost of the passenger line is projected to be \$810 million, with the local/state share of \$162 million.

Phase 1 of the Asheville-to-Salisbury Corridor ID Study is expected to be completed by October. The proposed passenger line is projected to cost \$665 million with a local/state share of \$130 million for design and construction. There is still no definitive word on whether Norfolk Southern will rebuild the Old Fort Loops needed for the route. Repair costs are projected at \$60

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million. However, NS has opened up the AS line between Morristown, TN and Swannanoa, NC for freight service. The line was severely damaged by Hurricane Helene last year.

NCDOT'S OFFER FOR WILMINGTON LEAD RIGHT OF WAY ACCEPTED BY THE NEW HANOVER BOARD OF EDUCATION

At its meeting on April 1, 2025, the New Hanover County Board of Education voted unanimously (7-0) to accept NCDOT's offer of \$1.7 million for 13.84 acres of land that is needed to complete the right-of-way for the Wilmington Lead rail corridor between McRae Street and the Wilmington Beltline Railroad.

This property was once part of the original Wilmington & Weldon Railroad (dating to 1835) but was included in the sale of a 40+ acre tract that was sold by CSX to the Board of Education in the 1980s for the site of Dorothy B. Johnson Elementary (now Pre-K) School.

This acquisition will not only allow the Wilmington Lead to serve as the Gateway to Downtown Wilmington for future Amtrak passenger service, but, when the Lead is extended northward as part of the restoration of the Wallace-to-Castle Hayne W&W segment, will also allow freight traffic from the Port of Wilmington to take the direct route to the Carolina Connector Intermodal Terminal in Rocky Mount.

(Contributed by Tommy Thomas, CAPT Vice President-NC, who attended the meeting.)

NC SENATE CONSIDERING TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY IN MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NC

Bills are now filed in the North Carolina House and Senate that would allow Mecklenburg County residents to vote on a one-cent sales tax increase to spend billions of dollars for transit and road projects. House Bill 948 filed by State Representative Tricia Cotham would allow the Silver Line light rail project (Charlotte to Matthews) to be built in it's entirety, in addition to the Red Line commuter rail project (Charlotte to Davidson). This would be accomplished by allowing more flexibility in funding shares for road and transit projects. Under HB 948, 40 percent would be spent on roads, but the remaining 60 percent could be spent any transit project, including light rail or commuter rail in addition to buses.

{<https://webservices.ncleg.gov/ViewBillDocument/2025/4269/0/DRH30366-MCxf-150>}

Proposed legislation creating a Regional Public Transportation Authority for Mecklenburg County is now in committee in the North Carolina Senate. Senate Bill 584

{<https://webservices.ncleg.gov/ViewBillDocument/2025/2483/0/DRS15200-MCxf-100>}

filed by State Senator Vickie Sawyer creates the authority which would oversee all public transportation, and would complement Senate Bill 145

{<https://webservices.ncleg.gov/ViewBillDocument/2025/709/0/DRS45067-MCxf-78>}

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which would allow a sales tax referendum to fund public transportation and some municipal road projects. 40 percent of the revenues would go to rail transit projects, 40 percent to road projects in the county's municipalities, and 20 percent for bus transit. The one cent sales tax must pass for the authority to be created. A local referendum could take place as early as November 2025. The existing one-half cent tax for transit in Mecklenburg will not be affected, and will continue. Due to the differences in the sales tax bills (H948 and S145), a reconciliation would have to occur before the measure could pass. The 2025 legislative session is expected to end this summer.

Sawyer's authority bill (S584) provides for a board constituted of 27 members, and the proposed size has drawn skepticism about possibly being too large and cumbersome. The bill does provide for expansion into other counties surrounding Mecklenburg County. If so, additional authority members would have to be added for representation for the affected county or counties. A decision would have to be made at that time about possible addition and/or restructuring of the board membership.

CHARLOTTE CHAPTER PROPONENTS HOLD ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

On Friday April 11, over and after lunch at the “Big Ben British Pub & Restaurant”, the kick-off meeting of “**ALL ABOARD CHARLOTTE**” was held to discuss overall issues, such as an advisory board (reporting to the CAPT Board of Directors), mission as it fits in with CAPT’s mission, membership in the chapter vis-a-vis CAPT membership, and other items – all to be fully reported to CAPT’s board in May in Charleston, SC. More news will be included in the May 2025 edition of FROM THE CAB.



Pictured from L to R: Martin Wheeler, Bob Bischoff, David Thomas, Ralph Messera, Evan Schultheis, Chris Wallace, and Jim Fetchero. Photograph by David Robinson.

NC TRAIN HOST ASSOCIATION HOLDS ANNUAL MEETING IN KANNAPOLIS, MARCH 1, 2025



The annual meeting was called to order by NCTHA President, Susan Lambeth, who thanked immediate past president (and CAPT member) Chuck Graham for his presidential work on behalf of NCTHA over several years, including Recruiting, Training, Leadership during Covid, Board Meetings via Zoom, Insurance Premiums paid, maintaining a Positive Attitude throughout, spearheaded Refresher Training, Dedicated to NCTHA, being an Excellent Host, and a Friend to all. Guest speakers were Ain

Flowers of Be Rail Safe, and Jason Myers and Alison Boswell of the Rail Division. CAPT's treasurer Ralph Messara spoke briefly about CAPT and was later especially recognized for having served as a Train Host for 20 years. CAPT-member John Bobinyec is also a Train Host. For more information about the NC Train Hosts Association (and even how to become a Train Host), you can either talk to Ralph or John, or go to: <https://www.ncbytrain.org/passenger-services/nc-train-hosts>. Next year's Annual Meeting will be held in Cary on Saturday March 7, 2026.

MICHIGAN PASSENGER RAIL ADVOCATES JOIN CAPT/ALL ABOARD CAROLINAS AS NEW AFFILIATE ORGANIZATION

CAPT welcomes the addition of the Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers (MARF) as an Affiliate Organization Member. Ted Wojcik is the primary contact person for MARF and their Facebook page is: <https://www.facebook.com/michiganpassengers/>



MARF is the largest and oldest passenger train advocacy group in Michigan. We have been working for a viable and balanced approach to transportation since 1973. Like CAPT, MARF is not affiliated with Amtrak, the railroads, governments or any political party. MARF is incorporated as a Michigan non-profit organization. MARF is an all-volunteer organization. Its membership consists of passengers and

citizens who want a viable, balanced transportation system in Michigan. Ted Wojcik said "MARF is currently in the process of aligning our vision and structure, so this is a good opportunity to learn from each other. We look forward to a working relationship with CAPT."

**NEXT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING:
THE CITADEL, CHARLESTON, SC
SATURDAY, MAY 17, 2025**

“TRAINS MAGAZINE” COLUMNIST ADVOCATES FOR PASSENGER TRAINS FOR TRIPS UNDER 500 MILES

“Instead of decimating Amtrak, why not provide the funding and proper oversight required to **Make Passenger Rail Great Again?** Flying is a hassle. Driving gridlocked interstates is a nightmare. On trips under 500 miles, there’s no better way to travel than on a passenger train,” wrote *Trains’* Bill Stephens last month following the resignation of Amtrak CEO Stephen Gardner. For more reading, go to:

<https://www.trains.com/trn/news-reviews/news-wire/ceos-dismissal-signals-the-beginning-of-the-end-for-amtrak-analysis>

PASSENGER RAIL PRIVATIZATION FAILS MOST OF THE TIME

Writing to members of the **Rail Passengers Association (RPA)**, the organization’s president and CEO **Jim Mathews** strongly reminds people advocating to privatize Amtrak not to do it. “Privatization advocates refuse to look evidence in the face that privatization fails most of the time,” Mathews says.

“Dusty old arguments about privatizing Amtrak are resurfacing within the Trump Administration and making their way around social and mainstream media. ... It fails railroads, it fails passengers, it fails government, and it fails communities,” the RPA leader continued.

“Amtrak is a prosperity engine in communities all across the United States, supporting local economies by bringing passengers who spend on tourism, shopping, restaurants, lodging, and myriad other categories.

“Those communities are recouping their ‘return on taxpayers’ equity for decades of funding passenger rail. The money we spend to have an Amtrak generally produces three, four, or even five times what is invested in the form of gross domestic product.

“Privatization would degrade that return without any clear benefit; that is, if it could be done at all,” Mathews said.

Listed below are five reasons that Mathews offers as to why why privatization won’t work.

1. No Form Of Transportation Makes Money Just Selling Tickets

There’s not a single example anywhere in the world of an airline, a transit agency, or a railroad making enough money from tickets to pay for all the infrastructure it needs to run. High-speed lines in Japan, Spain, France, and Italy all enjoy government-funded infrastructure. Brightline in Florida is using real estate returns to power its development – a classic, and very smart, “transit-oriented development” technique that is tried and true. China has spent \$1.5 trillion in government money to build a 23,000-mile high-speed network that is the envy of the world. Just selling tickets doesn’t get you there.

2. Private or Not, Heavy Infrastructure Subsidies Are Still Needed

We're faced with nearly seven decades of neglect and under-investment in track upgrades, station maintenance, rolling stock, bridges, and tunnels. A private operator would still have to rely on public subsidies to get everything built, which defeats the purpose of privatization and might actually reduce public accountability.

3. So-Called "Unprofitable" Long Distance Routes Generate Gross Domestic Product...Lots Of It.

We pay about \$3 billion each year to operate Amtrak between big cities and small towns all across heartland America. And heartland America gets more than \$7 billion in economic benefits because it exists. That's people eating in restaurants, staying in hotels, buying in stores, traveling to and from job sites and schools. A "private" Amtrak would not operate those routes, dropping a \$7 Billion bomb on heartland America's economies.

4. Only Wealthy Folks Would Have Safe, Reliable Rail

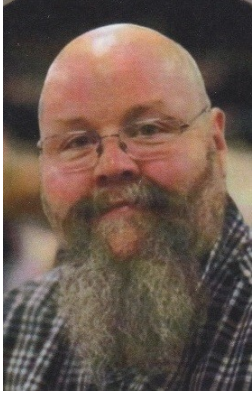
By necessity, private operators would have to cherry-pick high-ridership, high-revenue corridors (like the Northeast Corridor). They'll still charge Philadelphia lawyers \$300 to take a fast express train to New York, but Grandma in Marks, Mississippi, will just have to stay home instead of seeing her grandkids in Memphis. Bad enough, but this cherry-picking would leave the government still responsible for the most expensive parts of the network — wiping out any illusion of "savings" from privatizing Amtrak.

5. History Shows It Already Failed

Amtrak was created in 1971 because private railroads couldn't make intercity passenger rail work financially. Passenger service was unprofitable and a burden on freight railroads. Re-privatizing would be repeating a failed model that led to Amtrak's creation in the first place. We're all for bringing more private operators into the mix. But none of them are doing, or will do, the job that Amtrak has done since 1971 — bringing regular passenger rail service to communities that need it and where private capital cannot profitably provide it.

**ONE WAY TO INCREASE CAPT's MEMBER BASE IS TO
FORWARD A COPY OF THIS NEWSLETTER TO A
FRIEND OR CO-WORKER.
TRY IT FOR CAPT!**

CELEBRATION OF LIFE OF RETIRED AMTRAK EMPLOYEE TIMOTHY EARL CARROLL HELD MARCH 23, 2025



As reported in **FROM THE CAB** March 2025, **Tim Carroll** passed away on February 12, 2025, after working for Amtrak for more than 35 years. While not a member of CAPT, Tim was well-known by many Amtrak-traveling members and worked in many North Carolina stations including Raleigh and Fayetteville. The MC of the event was current Amtrak engineer JD Thomas, who gave the eulogy, sang a song, said a prayer, then gave up the microphone to Tim's family, former co-workers, and friends for them to relate their cherished life moments and experiences with Tim. The following pictures show the attendees, and the current and former Amtrak and NCDOT employees who attended the event at the New Hope Valley Railway on a

glorious sunny day.



CAPT's AFFILIATE ORGANIZATION AND CORPORATE MEMBERS

	
<p>MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION FOR RAIL PASSENGERS marp.org and on Facebook</p>	<p>THIS SPACE RESERVED IN EVERY ISSUE FOR YOUR CORPORATE LOGO & URL</p>
<p>FOR-PROFIT CORPORATIONS' ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE = \$200</p>	<p>SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE CAROLINAS!</p>
<p>JOIN AND PAY ONLINE AT https://captrail.org/membership.htm</p>	<p>NON-PROFIT CORPORATIONS' ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE = \$100</p>
<p>THIS SPACE CAN BE YOURS!</p>	<p>CAPT: THE ONLY PASSENGER RAIL ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION IN THE CAROLINAS WITH MEMBERS</p>
<p>=====</p> <p>MEMBERSHIP DRIVE 2025</p> <p>=====</p>	<p>CAPT'S MEMBERSHIP IS IT'S STRENGTH..... JOIN NOW, AND HELP US GET STRONGER</p>

If you are reading this newsletter on our website – captrail.org – but would still like to have a PDF copy emailed to you, please contact Martin Wheeler at mwheeler3@att.net

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ALL ABOARD CAROLINAS CAROLINAS ASSOCIATION FOR PASSENGER TRAINS

OFFICERS

OFFICE	INDIVIDUAL	TERM	HOME TOWN	EMAIL
President	Martin L. Wheeler, Jr.	11/24 – 11/25	Charlotte, NC	mwheeler3@att.net
Vice President – NC	Tommy Thomas	11/24 – 11/25	Castle Hayne, NC	tommyt56@twc.com
Vice President - SC	Charles D. Gossett	11/24 – 11/25	Columbia, SC	gossettc64@gmail.com
Secretary	VACANT	11/24 – 11/25		
Treasurer	Ralph Messera	11/24 – 11/25	Matthews, NC	ralphselden@gmail.com

DIRECTORS

DIRECTOR	INDIVIDUAL	TERM	HOME TOWN	EMAIL
North Carolina	Robert H. Bischoff	11/24 – 11/26	Charlotte, NC	cemt200@gmail.com
North Carolina	John Bobinyec	11/23 – 11/25	Cary, NC	jgb@dbd01.com
North Carolina	Jim Fetchero	11/24 – 11/26	Charlotte, NC	jfetch@aol.com
North Carolina	Ed Locklin	11/24 – 11/26	Charlotte, NC	edlocklin@carolina.rr.com
North Carolina	Ralph Messera	11/24 – 11/26	Matthews, NC	ralphselden@gmail.com
North Carolina	Tommy Thomas	11/24 – 11/26	Castle Hayne, NC	tommyt56@twc.com
North Carolina	Martin L. Wheeler	11/23 – 11/25	Charlotte, NC	mwheeler3@att.net
North Carolina	Chris Wallace	11/24 – 11/25	Charlotte, NC	cmwallace105@gmail.com
North Carolina	David Thomas	11/24 – 11/25	Charlotte, NC	daydaydude@gmail.com
North Carolina	Andy Zou	11/24 – 11/25	Charlotte, NC	zouandy8@gmail.com
South Carolina	Charles D. Gossett	11/23 – 11/25	Columbia, SC	gossettc64@gmail.com
South Carolina	VACANT			
South Carolina	VACANT			

APPOINTED POSITIONS

POSITION	INDIVIDUAL	TERM	HOME TOWN	EMAIL
Newsletter Editor	Donald Yehle	11/24 – 11/25	Bluffton, SC	dyehle@gmail.com
Membership Chair	David Robinson	11/24 – 11/25	Raleigh, NC	dr.david.robinson@gmail.com

BI-MONTHLY MEETINGS IN 2025

MONTH	LOCATION	DATE
January	Columbia, SC	January 24 (Friday)
March	Raleigh, NC	March 21 (Friday)
May	Charleston, SC	May 17 (Saturday)
July	Kannapolis, NC	TBD in 3 rd week
September	Florence, SC	TBD in 3 rd week
November	Goldsboro, NC	TBD in 3 rd week

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES STRUCTURE

A. Individuals up to age 64	\$30
B. Individuals 65 and older (retired)	\$20
C. Degree students up to age 25	\$20
D. Not-for-profit corporation *	\$100
E. For profit corporation *	\$200

* Newsletter & website recognition

CAPT is an IRS 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation.

FROM THE CAB is published monthly by CAPT.

All Aboard Carolinas is a DBA (doing business as) name.

NEW MEMBER APPLICATION

(copy or include info separately when mailing check)

Name					
Category (circle)	A	B	C	D	E
Address					
City					
State					
Zip Code					
Phone					
Email					
Your Amtrak Station					

Make check to "CAPT" & mail to Ralph Messera, Treasurer
401 S. Freemont St, Matthews, NC 28105

To join or renew and pay dues online:

<https://www.captrail.org/membership.htm>

Membership in All Aboard Carolinas (CAPT) includes participation in regional chapters such as the newly formed All Aboard Charlotte.