



NORTH CAROLINA RAILROAD C O M P A N Y

Embargoed for Release
May 11, 2010: 12 pm

Contact: Charles Hodges
O: (919) 882-1969/ M: (919) 609-6772
chodges@capstrat.com

Study Shows Demand for Commuter Rail in North Carolina

Commuter Rail could add mobility options along the NC Railroad from Greensboro to Goldsboro

Raleigh, NC – At today's *Progress in Motion* forum, the NC Railroad Company (NCRR) unveiled results of its recent study on commuter rail ridership on its line between Goldsboro and Greensboro, NC. The study – conducted by Steer Davies Gleave – projects annual ridership increasing to nearly three million by 2022. The study also follows NCRR's earlier *Shared Corridor Commuter Rail Capacity Study*, which determined the cost of necessary capital improvements for shared freight and commuter operations on the corridor.

"This study ties in with a major concern in our state – how to address future population growth," said John Atkins, chairman of the NCRR Board of Directors. "The study tell us how improving the existing rail corridor might contribute to solutions for commuters as the state grows, while not diminishing the freight rail value that carries thousands of jobs for our citizens. The study shows there is substantial ridership potential along the NCRR line – especially between downtown Greensboro and Burlington and in the greater Triangle from Princeton to Durham."

Commuter Rail carries people from suburban areas to nearby cities. Forecasts show that proposed service along the NCRR line would rank 16th in ridership among the 23 commuter rail systems in the nation. That level of capacity means more people choosing rail travel and getting out from behind the wheel of a car.

"We see great potential in commuter rail service," said Atkins. "The study projections tell us that communities have the opportunity to increase mobility options for citizens along the corridor, which contains about 18 colleges and universities. And if people opt for commuter rail that frees capacity for businesses to use our roads and reduces congestion which benefits air quality.

"The effectiveness of any passenger rail transportation lies in its ability to connect users to buses, cars, and sidewalks," said Atkins. "Commuter rail, to be successful, requires connectivity to proposed light rail, expanded bus service or the existing road network. Developing partnerships in planning, funding, and execution is key."

The Commuter Rail Ridership study also gives insight to where additional track investment needs to be made. The study indicates where demand will be highest and where congestion might occur between passenger and freight rail. NCRR is committed to safety along its corridor while ensuring passenger and freight rail runs on time.

“North Carolina is unique in having a privately-owned rail corridor whose shareholders are the citizens of the state,” said Atkins. “The fact that we already have the rail corridor is a tremendous advantage.”

“These are exciting times for rail in North Carolina,” said Atkins. “We have the opportunity to expand passenger and freight rail operations in our state, attract economic development and create jobs. Given the excitement and new funding for high-speed rail in our state, this is the perfect time to look at systems like commuter rail that can create cost beneficial connections.”

“This study highlights the potential of commuter rail in our region, and we look forward to working with the people in the cities and counties along the line, NCDOT, land use planners and developers, and all of the stakeholders to make this idea a reality,” said Atkins.

The North Carolina Railroad Company owns and manages the 317-mile rail corridor extending from Morehead City to Charlotte. The railroad carries 60 freight trains and eight passenger trains daily. NCRR is the state’s oldest corporation and remains at the forefront of rail improvements and partnership development to promote jobs and rail-served industry across the state. It touches nearly a quarter of the state’s economy.

To view more information about the Commuter Rail Ridership Study, including a summary of the report and presentation, visit www.ncrr.com.

###