

# Carolina Conductor



Volume 2, Number 9

Monthly Newsletter of the Carolina Railroad Heritage Association, Inc.

September 2015

**Preserving the Past.  
Active in the Present.  
Planning for the Future.**

#### Meeting Site:

Woodmen of the World Bldg.  
721 East Poinsett Street  
Greer, SC 29651-6404  
Third Friday of the Month at 7:00 pm

#### Hub City Railroad Museum and SOU Caboose #X3115:

Magnolia Street Station  
298 Magnolia Street  
Spartanburg, SC 29301-2330

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Friday of the month.

## The Southern Railway Depot in Greenville 1905 to 1988

by Jim Sheppard

Photos by the Author



Greenville depot circa 1905.

In the *Greenville News* on February 4, 2009, historian Judy Bainbridge wrote that in 1905 the Southern Railway replaced its old wooden passenger depot on Washington Street in Greenville with a large, elegant new building constructed of stone and brick



The depot on May 14, 1977

and topped with a 65-foot tower. The depot was designed by the architect Frank Milburn and cost \$56,068. The tower was removed in the 1920s but the rest of the depot remained in use until 1988, when a new Amtrak station was built on an ad-

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# Arrivals



## Southeast Passenger Service Study

USDOT Secretary Anthony Foxx announced last month that a federally-led regional study will be conducted to develop a shared, workable vision for a Southeast passenger rail network. Secretary Foxx noted that: "A world-class passenger rail network in our fastest-growing regions is no luxury; it's a necessity."

The USDOT will undertake a planning effort to create a shared, workable vision for a Southeast passenger rail network that connects Washington, DC to Richmond, to Charlotte, to Raleigh, and to Atlanta. These are cities that—like their Northeast Corridor counterparts—are business and population centers between which people need a travel option beyond crowded highways and airplanes."

The planning process will help establish a common, long-term vision for intrastate and regional passenger rail services based upon existing conditions, projections of future travel demand, and the optimal role for the rail network with multi-modal connections.

The study was awarded in response to a Statement of Interest submitted to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) by the N.C. Department of Transportation on behalf of the District of Columbia, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. The study will build upon work already completed by these partners as well as the Virginia-North Carolina Interstate Rail Compact.

The study will be led by FRA and a consultant team with input from multiple stakeholders including state departments of transportation, state and regional economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, Class I, regional, and short line railroad operators, regional and select local planning organizations, select regional and local transit operators, and rail advocacy groups.

Through stakeholder dialogue and engagement, the study will develop an implementable vision for the role of rail in providing transportation options between growing business and population centers, and in promoting economic development in the Southeast.

## The Doodle Trail

The Doodle Rail Trail is now open to hikers and bicycles and connects the towns of Easley and Pickens. The paved trail follows the former Pickens Railroad "Doodle Line" for just over 7 miles and includes two wooden bridges. The railway began pas-

senger and freight service in 1898 and was called the "Doodle" because it ran backwards like a doodlebug between Pickens and Easley due to its inability to turn around.

A trailhead is provided at each end of the trail with parking and portable toilets. In Pickens, the trailhead is located at State 8 and East Cedar Rock Road, just a block from downtown. It sits where the Pickens Depot once stood and, in the future, may include an information center, railroad museum, and plaza. In Easley, the trailhead is located at Fleetwood Drive and Wiulbur Street, about a half mile from downtown. Future plans call for the trailhead to include a park and picnic area.



## Carolina Southern

### SHORT LINE RAILROAD NOW OWNED BY R. J. CORMAN RAILROAD COMPANY

R. J. Corman Railroad Company took possession of the former Carolina Southern on August 17th, but the veteran railroad company didn't even wait for the ink to dry to get started. Rather, R. J. Corman began moving equipment into place and clearing shrubs on the overgrown line two weeks before the deal was sealed in an effort to return the sound of train whistles in the region as quickly as possible.



R. J. Corman Railroad Group President and CEO Craig King said that, while all eyes are on his company, it was local and state officials who provided unparalleled leadership and took the dramatic

steps needed to change the future for North and South Carolina.

"We are grateful to the many community leaders who had the vision and determination to work together, form the interstate railroad committee and make this transition possible. We are especially grateful to Columbus and Horry Counties, which helped fund the project, and Mark Lazarus and Bill Clark who provided guidance and support in that effort," said King. "It truly is an amazing accomplishment."

"We have a lot of work ahead of us to bring this line up to operating standards. But, like your leaders, we also have vision and determination. In addition, we have hard working and talented crews to make that happen," said King. "We are proud railroaders and we can't wait to be part of North and South Carolina's prosperous future."

R. J. Corman expects to begin moving freight on the railway, which stretches from Mullins, South Carolina to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina and connects to lines in North Carolina, within six months.

# Departures

## Charlotte Streetcars



The Charlotte Streetcar Project is a key recommendation of the 2025 Corridor System Plan. The alignment will serve the central business district (CBD) and provide connectivity to surrounding communities and institutions. The proposed streetcar line will run 10 miles along Beatties Ford Road near I-85 through the CBD along Trade Street, traveling up Elizabeth Avenue by Central Piedmont Community College and out to Central Avenue at Eastland Mall.

The streetcar is also a key component to implementing the Center City 2010 Vision Plan, helping to create "a livable and memorable Center City." Further, the streetcar will be critical in creating a transit focused and pedestrian oriented center city through developing an integrated transportation system of pedestrians, bikes, motor vehicles, transit, parking, and land development.

## Lancaster & Chester Museum

Once upon an occasion, a trip to the Springs Recreation Park would allow for a ride on the only miniature steam driven railway



in the world. On any given weekend, the Lancaster and Chester crew could be found operating the Lilliputian Branch of the railroad. In those days, the branch consisted of three locomotives, four passenger cars, two flat cars, and a caboose. There was more

than one mile of rail with a turntable, a round house, a station, two sidetracks, a water tank and a tunnel. Thousands of children visited the park annually to ride the train. A portion of this train is already on display at the L&C Museum with the remaining portion undergoing renovations.

The highlight of the museum is a scale model replica of the original 29-mile route of the L&C. The railroad enthusiasts have taken on the responsibility of making exact replicas of every building and facility on the route, plus shrubs, trees and bodies of water.

Due to the diligence and hard work of several railroad buffs, including several L&C employees, the museum was established in the summer of 1995. Countless hours were spent preparing the site for the exhibition of hundreds of photographs depicting the railroad from the beginning to the present, railroad memorabilia, with information on the shortlines of the Palmetto state that have disappeared, and other relative artifacts. The museum opened for visitation in the fall of 1996.

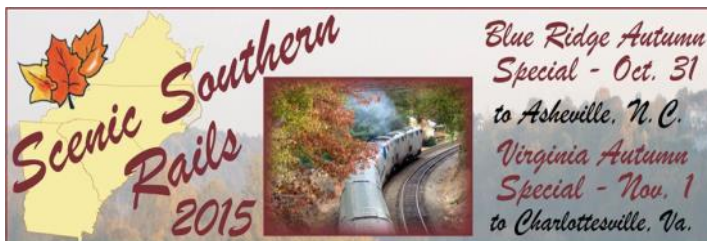
Those responsible for founding the Museum include: Travis Berry, Manning Suttle, James Beckham, Ed Sharpe, and Walter Craig.

The museum's current hours of operation are: 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Open on the first and third Saturdays of the month with some exceptions for holidays. Please call for details at 803-286-2100 when planning a visit. The museum is located on the second floor of the station at 512 South Main Street, Lancaster, SC 29721. Admission is free with all donations appreciated.

## Autumn Train To Asheville

One passenger train a year still reaches Asheville: The NC Transportation Museum's Blue Ridge Autumn Special, set for Oct. 31 this fall. The train departs Spencer at 7 a.m. and rolls through Statesville, Hickory, Morganton, Marion, Black Mountain and Swannanoa, climbing the famed loops of the Blue Ridge Mountains and passing through several tunnels.

The train reaches Biltmore Village at about noon, then departs for the return trip at 3 p.m., arriving in Spencer at about 8 p.m. Tickets are \$160-\$270 a person, plus taxes and fees, with some levels including meals. To learn more, visit [www.nctrans.org](http://www.nctrans.org).



# Rare Mileage

## Historic Greenville Depot Photos by Jim Sheppard

Freight activity around the depot on August 12, 1978.



Southern Crescent crew going over their orders July 15, 1978.

On December 16, 1978, the passenger shed is being torn down.



N&W #611 in excursion service on May 1, 1983.

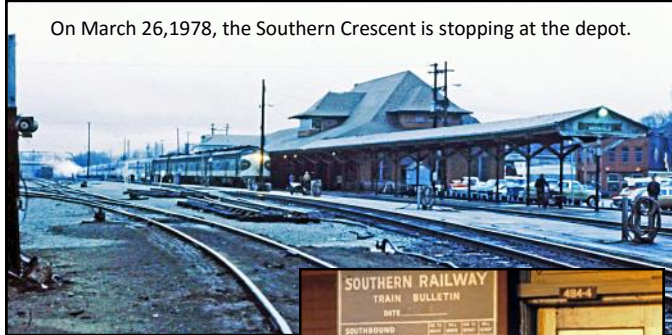


Looking north from the second story yardmasters office of the old depot.

# Manifest

## Continued from Page 1 - Greenville Depot

joining parcel of land and the old station was demolished.



On March 26, 1978, the Southern Crescent is stopping at the depot.

For many years the station was busy. In 1907, six northbound and six southbound passenger trains daily (or daily except Sunday) were scheduled, along with some trains to and from Columbia. In 1961, six daily trains north and south each way were still run-



Waiting room of the old depot.

West entrance to the old depot.



ning. By 1965 the number was only four. In 1970 only two trains were operating: the Piedmont and the Southern Crescent. By 1978 only the Southern Crescent remained. Amtrak took over the Southern Crescent in 1979.



Agents booth in the old depot.

In 1987 Norfolk Southern announced plans to build a new \$700,000 building, to include space for a new Amtrak station, next to the old passenger depot, which would be demolished to provide

a 25-space parking lot for the new building. For a year various groups made proposals to save the old depot but these efforts were futile. By July 1988 construction of the new building had begun.



November 11, 1988, the old depot is at the left and the new depot is at the right.



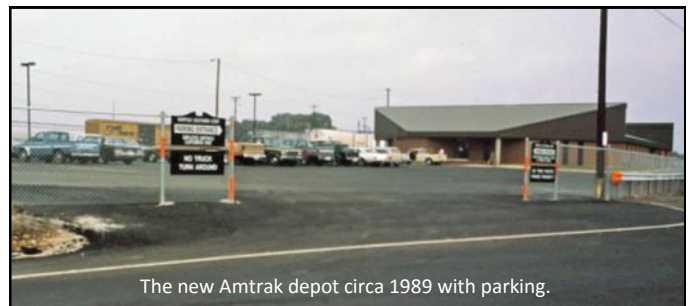
December 13, 1988.



The wrecking ball in action on December 16, 1988.

On December 13, 1988, with the new building now complete, and with Amtrak's ticket office and waiting room now in the new building, demolition of the old structure got underway. Several months later the site of the former depot was converted into a parking lot for the use of Amtrak passengers and Norfolk Southern employees.

By July 1988 construction of the new building had begun.



The new Amtrak depot circa 1989 with parking.

# Marker Lights



## Locomotive Classification Lights

**Classification Signals** - colored flags by day, lights by night - were once used throughout North American railroading. U.S. railroads used a single light and outer lens, with colored lenses in between that could be changed as needed. Canadian roads used three separate lights; on diesels these were often located near the number boards on the front of locomotives. The purpose of classification lights was to help identify the train on which they were displayed. The three colors and their meanings were as follows:

**White** - Indicated an "extra" train not shown in the timetable. For much of railroad history, train-movement authority was granted by timetables. If a train was listed in the timetable, it had the authority to operate according to its printed schedule. Deviations from the timetable, such as a train running late, were handled with train orders from the dispatcher. Under this "timetable-and-train-order" system, it was important that trains kept as close to schedule as possible, and that any special trains not shown in the timetable be clearly identified as such with a white light. Many freight trains operated as extras, and thus carried a white classification signal.

**Green** - Indicated that, while the train displaying the lights was a regularly scheduled one, a second section was following behind it. This was done, for example, when ridership demand exceeded the capacity of a single passenger train. If there were too many passengers for a single section of, say, New York Central's 20th Century Limited, a second section was operated, and, if needed, a third, fourth, fifth, and even sixth. The engine of each section except the last would display green lights. While each section was a separate entity, the timetable's "train 25" would not be considered to have passed a given point until the last section of the train had gone by. For operational convenience, special trains that otherwise might have carried white "extra" signals were sometimes operated as advance or second sections of regular, but unrelated, trains.

**Red** - Indicated the end of a train. A train, be it a single engine, a group of engines, or an engine(s) with cars, must have a marker on the rear end. In the (relatively rare) situations when the

last element in a train would be a locomotive, the red lights would be lit. Classification lights phased out. The timetable-and-train-order system has been replaced by other forms of movement authority, and classification lights are no longer used, although older locomotives still have them. Some railroads (including Amtrak, and New Jersey Transit) still use red marker lights, but most have done away with the extra items and just use the headlight on a trailing locomotive as a marker.



**Emergency Lights** - Several railroads over the years have elected to equip their locomotives with emergency lights, which activate when an emergency brake application is made. The Milwaukee Road, for example, had gyrating red lights which the engineer manually activated in the event of an emergency stop. Amtrak's F40PH-2s sported a small red lens front and center of the engine between the number boards that activated automatically in a flashing mode when put into emergency.

On Amtrak's modern 800-series P40 Genesis diesels, the middle of the three small openings in the car body above the windshield houses the red light; the outer two house strobe lights that flash when the bell is rung. (On older power, the strobes are separate elements located on the roof.) Most Amtrak units also have two red marker lights, which are lit when the unit is on the trailing end of a train; twin-beam headlights and two ditch lights are also provided. The F59PHI's used on West Coast corridor trains sport a unique emergency flasher/marker arrangement: Of the two red lights found just inboard of the ditch lights, one is the emergency flasher, the other is a marker light. Amtrak's newest GE power, the 100-series P42s and 700-series P32AC-DMs, lack both the red emergency light and the twin strobes. *Trains Mag*, May 1, 2006



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