



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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GOVERNOR

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Restoration of Train Service Over NCDOT's Piedmont & Northern Railroad Corridor in Gaston County to Begin Next Month

RALEIGH – The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) today announced reconstruction of its Piedmont & Northern Rail Corridor (P&N) in Gaston County will be significantly completed by February 20, 2012. This will allow operation of trains over the corridor for the first time in more than 20 years. Patriot Rail, a short line railroad and regional freight railroad holding company based in Boca Raton, Fla. will provide freight rail service to customers over the line.

The P&N corridor, located about 20 miles west of Charlotte, extends approximately 12 miles from Mount Holly to Gastonia with a three-mile long spur line to Belmont. Reconstruction of four miles of the western end of the rail corridor was completed in early 2010. Restoration of the remainder of the corridor started back in August 2011. The work is being paid for through a partnership among federal, state and county governments.

Reconstruction work has included installation of new timber ties, installation of new timber bridge ties and other bridge repairs, and new track construction and replacement of crossing surfaces. Work also entailed installation of crossing protection devices at selected locations and other crossing signage installation as safety measures.

NCDOT will use its **BeRailSafe** public awareness campaign to inform the public that trains are operating on the rail line and as a general rail safety initiative.

The P&N corridor was built in 1911 and was scheduled for abandonment by CSX in the late 1980's. It was purchased and preserved by NCDOT for future rail transportation purposes. Since that time, it has been maintained in an inactive state with minimum

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expenditure of funds. The P&N offers strategic connections to mainline tracks of Class I railroads Norfolk Southern Railway at Gastonia and CSX at Mount Holly.

Patriot Rail owns and operates 12 other short line and regional freight rail lines comprising approximately 500 miles in 12 states. The P&N was leased by NCDOT to Patriot Rail after a competitive bidding and selection process and will be operated by them as the Piedmont & Northern Railway.

Along with being responsible for marketing, maintenance, inspection and providing rail service on the rail corridor, Patriot Rail also will provide rental and sharing of rail revenue as part of the lease agreement.

Reactivation of the rail line should also provide jobs and the opportunity to provide more efficient transportation of goods to and from the area. One customer has been secured and several others are in discussions with Patriot Rail to locate on the line.

*****NCDOT*****