

## Umo!

As PART kicks off our new fiscal year, 2023/24, we continue to work diligently to onboard Umo users. Umo is the fare payment system that PART, Davidson County, and High Point Transit utilize. One of the features is that it allows tracking so users can participate in Fare Capping, a value-added option offering riders REWARDS for riding!

With our current system, users create an account with the providers they are utilizing services through. Because PART *Connects Communities*, we are working to encourage other providers in our regional network to tie in with this payment system. It sounds simple, but it is not. With the current network of individual payment systems, working to build a regional payment system is a huge undertaking and requires cooperation across networks. Something we are positive can happen! For more information, go to [www.partnc.org/371/PART-Rewards-Program](http://www.partnc.org/371/PART-Rewards-Program).



## What Is VERA?

The Vehicle Emissions Reduction Activities, or VERA for short, supports a program that provides supplemental curricula and education materials for Driver's Education programs in North Carolina. These educational materials focus on drivers' responsibility to protect their environment when making choices involving their vehicles. N.C. Air Awareness is partnering with Driving Schools across North Carolina to become VERA partners and facilitators of the VERA program. All privately owned and school district driver's education programs in North Carolina are eligible to become a partner.

VERA focuses on educating young drivers about personal driving choices that can protect air quality. This includes teaching about car choice, vehicle maintenance, driving strategies, and utilizing alternative modes of transportation. When addressing alternative modes of transportation, the program focuses on choosing alternatives to driving alone and how that can reduce air pollution. They discuss using public transit, carpooling, and combining trips, walking, and biking as sustainable ways to reduce vehicle emissions and save money.

PART is proud to partner with Forsyth County Office of Environmental Assistance and Protection to work towards efforts that help connect our community with alternative modes of transportation. For more information, go to [www.deq.nc.gov](http://www.deq.nc.gov).



## NC By Train Service Improvements

NC By Train, North Carolina's intercity passenger rail service, implemented service expansions on July 10th. This service expansion is a result of record ridership the state experienced during the last year. In 2022, ridership aboard NC By Train was the highest in its 32-year history.

Track capacity for the additional service was completed under the federally funded Piedmont Improvement Program. The state's Rail Division worked with Norfolk Southern, CSX, N.C. Railroad Company and Amtrak to create a schedule allowing a fifth daily roundtrip on NC By Train. The service expansion also required evaluating equipment availability and use, train travel times and passing locations, ridership data and trends, and the time necessary to clean and prepare trains for the return trip at the end of routes. New and additional Amtrak staff with approved work schedules also had to be considered.

These improvements underscore the North Carolina Department of Transportation's vision of a multimodal transportation system that works well for everyone. Their purpose is to provide new options for NC By Train's intercity rail operation that focuses on service throughout the day, with most customers choosing midday schedule options. The new schedule should encourage increased use of NC By Train and allows for future service expansions. Some riders will be affected by the specific schedule changes to Train 73 from Raleigh to Charlotte in the morning and Train 76 from Charlotte to Raleigh in the afternoon.

Burlington, High Point, Salisbury, and Kannapolis will maintain four NC By Train stops in each direction. Still, schedule times have been adjusted to account for time constraints and accommodate the new daily round trip. The Carolinian, which travels north to Washington, D.C., and New York, will still serve Burlington, High Point, Salisbury, and Kannapolis riders. Salisbury and High Point will continue to be served by five trains daily, including the Amtrak Crescent that travels to Washington D.C., New York, Atlanta, and New Orleans.

[www.ncbytrain.org](http://www.ncbytrain.org)

Source: United States, Congress, Rail Division. *NC By Train Service Improvements*.



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