



# Amtrak Comparison: Michigan vs North Carolina

## Annual Ridership and Frequency, Selected Years

Year	Michigan (Wolverine)			North Carolina (Piedmont)*		
	Annual Ridership	Daily Round Trips	Change (%)	Annual Ridership	Daily Round Trips	Change (%)
2005	438,529	3		48,138	1	
2009	479,782	3	9%	65,989	1	37%
2011	503,290	3	5%	142,619	2	116%
2017	459,000	3	-9%	151,250	2	6%
2019	501,124	3	9%	220,787	3	46%
2022	367,254	3	-26%	238,807	3	8%
2023	420,569	3*	15%	289,955	4	21%
Change (FY05-FY23)	-17,960	0	-4%	241,817	+3	502%

\* 2023 ridership negatively impacted by loss of a daily round trip for major track work from May to October.

North Carolina showed no interest in state supported trains until 1984, when Governor Jim Hunt established the Public Transportation Division within NCDOT. This led to a trial operation of the Charlotte-Raleigh-NYC Carolinian October 1984-September 1995.

Hunt's successor, Jim Martin created a Passenger Task Force which recommended passenger rail service between Charlotte, the state's largest city, and Raleigh, the state capitol. This led to:

- 1990- Successful launch of the Charlotte-Raleigh-NYC Carolinian.
- 1995-First Charlotte-Raleigh Piedmont
- 2010-Second frequency of Piedmont
- 2018- Third Piedmont frequency
- 2023- Fourth Piedmont frequency

Including the Carolinian, there are now five frequencies daily Charlotte-Raleigh. It is staffed by Amtrak and uses Amtrak equipment.

Because Amtrak said it didn't have equipment for more frequencies, NCDOT purchased coaches and leased locomotives for the Piedmont trains. Piedmont trains are staffed by Amtrak crews, but all equipment is owned by NCDOT which determines schedules, handles publicity, publishes timetables, and has its own toll free number for information staffed by NCDOT. NCDOT offers free passes to detraining passengers connecting to 13 local transit agencies.

NCDOT picks up all the costs of the Piedmonts and the Carolinian from Charlotte to Washington DC.

**STEVE VAGNOZZI**

*Government Affairs Coordinator*

**Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers**

517-927-1118