

## NC By Train Rolls Into Its Busiest Month in 35 Years

**Turns Out North Carolinians Really Like Letting Someone Else Drive**

NC By Train kept chugging past expectations this fall, celebrating the highest monthly ridership in its 35-year history. October saw 74,400 passengers climb aboard — nearly 10% more than October of 2024 — suggesting that train travel might finally be North Carolina’s favorite way to avoid I-85 traffic and the existential dread that comes with airport security lines.

Ridership for 2025 has been climbing steadily, up 4% from last year. From January through October, NC By Train carried 608,300 passengers, compared to 584,600 during the same time in 2024. For those keeping score at home, that’s a whole lot of people choosing big seats, charging outlets and free Wi-Fi over the joys of parallel parking.

The momentum didn’t start this year. NC By Train has been on a winning streak since 2022, hauling 522,000 riders that year, 641,000 in 2023 and more than 720,000 in 2024. All signs point to 2025 breaking yet another record, proving that the state’s trains are more popular than ever — and probably more punctual than most group chats.

Part of the service’s success comes from how easy it is to use. Affordable fares, simple booking, additional daily trips added in 2023, and special trains to iconic North Carolina events all helped boost ridership. Creative partnerships, including the Ale Trail by Rail (because nothing pairs better with local craft beer than not having to drive home), have also earned enthusiastic support.

Football fans have benefited too. NC By Train adjusts schedules to get passengers to Charlotte in time for 1 p.m. Carolina Panthers home games — a service that combines convenience with the emotional support needed for the fourth quarter. Two game-day trains remain this season: Nov. 30 and Dec. 21.

NCDOT continues to encourage travelers to take advantage of the comfort and convenience of NC By Train’s large seats, free Wi-Fi and charging outlets at every seat. Discounts remain available for children, students, seniors, veterans, active-duty military personnel and anyone who brings along enough friends to use the Share Fare group savings.

More information, trip planning and ticket purchases can be found at [ncbytrain.org](https://ncbytrain.org).

NC By Train can also be followed on Twitter/X and Instagram at @NC\_By\_Train and on Facebook and LinkedIn under NC By Train.

## Recruiting Volunteers for Meals on Wheels

Grace Senior Center is recruiting volunteers to help with their Meals on Wheels by delivering meals.

If you are interested in helping Anson County’s shut-in and elderly citizens with this important program, please call 704-694-6616.

## \$2.6 Million Monopoly Jackpot Won Friday in Davie County

**Proof That Sometimes “Go” Really Does Pay \$2.6 Million**

Someone playing the Monopoly digital instant game on Friday afternoon in Davie County hit the kind of jackpot that makes you look twice at your phone - a whopping \$2.6 million from a single \$3 play. That lucky tap instantly triggered the Grand Fortune jackpot, beating odds of 1 in 16.6 million, which is slightly better than landing on Boardwalk with a hotel and not crying.

With the win, the jackpot reset to \$150,000 and immediately started climbing again, because in Monopoly - and life - it pays to keep rolling.

Monopoly is a multi-state digital instant game, meaning the jackpots climb faster and winners can pop up anywhere, from the mountains to the coast and everywhere Wi-Fi dares to reach. Plays range from 50 cents to \$30, depending on how bold you’re feeling.

The winner has 180 days to claim the prize, which is plenty of time to practice saying, “Oh this old thing? It’s just my jackpot money.”

For details on how millions raised by the lottery made a difference for education programs in Anson County last year, visit [nclottery.com](https://nclottery.com) and click on the Impact section.

## Utility Scam Awareness Day Highlighted Customer Safety

Duke Energy, Piedmont Natural Gas and the Better Business Bureau joined Utilities United Against Scams on November 19 for the 10th annual Utility Scam Awareness Day - marking a decade of urging customers to slow down, verify and stop scams before money or personal information was lost.

The campaign came at a critical time. By late October 2025, Duke Energy had already received nearly 3,000 scam reports in the Carolinas, contributing to more than 5,600 total scam reports across its service areas for the year.

For ten years, Utility Scam Awareness Day helped customers stay a step ahead of scammers. The goal remained the same: keep customers’ money and personal info safe.

**How Customers Were Encouraged to Stay Safe Slow Down. Verify. Stop the Scam.**

- Slow Down: If a payment request felt rushed or suspicious, customers were urged to pause and think.

- Verify: Customers were reminded to use only the official phone numbers or websites listed on their bills.

- Duke Energy’s Scam Reporting Tool: [duke-energy.com](https://duke-energy.com)
- Piedmont Natural Gas Scams & Fraud: [piedmontng.com/ups/portal/piedmontng/home/my-account/fraud](https://piedmontng.com/ups/portal/piedmontng/home/my-account/fraud)
- BBB Scam Tracker: [bbb.org/scamtracker](https://bbb.org/scamtracker)

- Stop the Scam: Suspicious contact was encouraged to be reported to utilities and law enforcement.

- BBB “Find and Report a Scam”: [bbb.org/scamtracker](https://bbb.org/scamtracker)
- FTC Consumer Advice: [consumer.ftc.gov](https://consumer.ftc.gov)

**Common Scam Tactics - and How Utilities Protected Customers** Customers learned the most typical red flags:

- Scammers demanding immediate payment or threatening to cut off service - something Duke Energy and Piedmont never did.

- Requests for payment via prepaid cards or cryptocurrency — methods never accepted.

- Impersonation of utility representatives or offers of refunds in exchange for personal information.

**More safety tips were available at:**

- Duke Energy Scams & Fraud: [duke-energy.com/customer-service/billing/smart-meter/scams](https://duke-energy.com/customer-service/billing/smart-meter/scams)
- BBB Scam Tracker: [bbb.org/scamtracker](https://bbb.org/scamtracker)

**Commitment From Utility Leaders**

“Scammers change scripts; our guidance doesn’t,” said Jessica Bishop, Duke Energy senior vice president of Customer Services Operations. “We didn’t threaten instant shut-off, and we didn’t dictate how customers paid. If they heard either, they were urged to stop and verify with us directly.”

Brian Weisker, senior vice president and president of Piedmont Natural Gas, emphasized simplicity and security: “Clear natural gas bills, secure payment channels and support when something felt off. We urged everyone to stay vigilant, verify before paying and contact us right away with concerns.”

Juliana O’Rork, Better Business Bureau vice president of marketing, communications and business development, added, “Scammers tried anything to steal money or identity. Pressure, secrecy and odd payment methods were the tells. BBB worked to provide as much information as possible through BBB Scam Tracker.”

**Staying Connected**

- Utilities United Against Scams on Facebook: [facebook.com/UtilitiesUnitedAgainstScams](https://facebook.com/UtilitiesUnitedAgainstScams)
- Utilities United Against Scams on X: [x.com/U\\_U\\_A\\_S](https://x.com/U_U_A_S)

**About the Organizations**

- Utilities United Against Scams (UUAS). A coalition of more than 150 U.S. and Canadian utilities sharing information to protect customers.

- Duke Energy [duke-energy.com](https://duke-energy.com) & [news.duke-energy.com](https://news.duke-energy.com). Follow on X, LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook.

- Piedmont Natural Gas [piedmontng.com](https://piedmontng.com). Follow on X and Facebook.

- Better Business Bureau Trusted for over 110 years. Info & business profiles: [bbb.org](https://bbb.org)

With scam activity remaining high in 2025, the November 19 awareness effort once again reminded customers throughout Anson County and beyond that the safest response to anything suspicious was simple: slow down, verify and stop the scam.

# Church

**NOVEMBER 22**

**Senior Citizen**

**Thanksgiving Meal**

At Harmony Community Church at 12 noon. Free, and all are welcome. Info 704-272-7127. Located at 1984 Pulpwood Yard Rd in Peachland.

**NOVEMBER 25**

**Community Giveaway** Co-sponsored by Divine Unity House of Restoration Ministries & Faith-Based Center of Hope, 12 noon-4pm at Divine Unity Fellowship Hall, 3760 Hwy 109 S, Wadesboro.

**Free clothes, food & games for everyone!**

**DECEMBER 6**

**Celebrating Members’ Birthdays** At Henry Grove Missionary Baptist Church, 5pm. Everyone is welcome.

**DECEMBER 7**

**Building Fund Program** At Johnson Chapel Holiness Church, 3pm with Pastor Eddie Maye of Pee Dee MBC. Everyone is invited.

**Church Anniversary** At New Grove Missionary Baptist Church, 11am with Pastor Sharon Lockhart.

**DECEMBER 12**

**Christmas Play** At Bethany Freewill Baptist Church on Old Lilesville Rd in Wadesboro, 7pm.

**ONGOING**

**Community Bible Study** Monday nights 6-7pm at Henderson Grove Missionary Baptist Church, 1574 W. Wall St. in Lilesville. Everyone is invited.

**Service Schedule** At Abundance Grace Ministry of Morven. Sunday School 10am, praise & worship 11am. Discipleship class Thur at 6:30pm. All are welcome

**Addiction Recovery**

Support group meets every Sunday, 6pm at Harmony Community Church, located at 1984 Pulpwood Yard Rd in Peachland. 704-272-7410.

**NOVEMBER 20**

**Free Food Anson Mobile Food Market** 4:00 p.m. at Lilesville Baptist Church, 118 Camden Street in Lilesville. Fresh veggies, fruit & bread if available. Blood pressure checks, along with healthy living topics & booths. Nothing required to receive

**NOVEMBER 24**

**NAACP Meeting** They invite you to attend. 6:30pm at Ebenezer Baptist Church, located at 612 Salisbury Street in Wadesboro. They welcome everyone. Meetings are held the fourth Monday of each month. For info: [mrshs6@yahoo.com](mailto:mrshs6@yahoo.com) or 704-254-0630.

**ONGOING EVENTS**

**Alcoholics Anonymous** Regular meetings on Mondays & Thursdays at 6:30pm and Wednesdays at 12 noon. AA welcomes all who are seeking help, as well those wanting to help another person. The AA building is located at 2177 Country Club Rd. in Wadesboro, across from the Anson EMS building.

**Free Food Distributed by Anson Crisis Ministries** Every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday, 8am-1pm. It is located at 117 North Rutherford Street in uptown Wadesboro. Telephone is 704-694-2445.

**Free Food Distribution** at Feed My Lambs every Tuesday, Thursday & Friday, 1-4pm. Located at 2290 Hwy 74 West, Wadesboro. 704-695-1820.

**Lions Club Welcomes New Members** The Wadesboro Lions Club meets at Papa Joes Restaurant the 2nd & 4th Thursday each month at 6:30pm For more info or to purchase a broom please call Jim Chandler 910-571-1448.

## NC AgVentures Offers Grant Opportunity for Family Farms

**Up to \$10,000 for diversification projects; applications due Dec. 19, 2025**

NC AgVentures, a NC State Extension program, provides grants to NC farmers and nonprofit community groups that work with family farms, for agricultural project ideas that will increase farm profits. The program, which is sponsored by the NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission, will award a minimum of 50 grants to independent family farms. This is a great opportunity for any producer who is thinking of diversifying, improving, or expanding their farm operation.

This is a competitive grant program. Applications will be accepted from family farms in the following counties: Alamance, Alexander, Alleghany, Anson, Ashe, Cabarrus, Caswell, Catawba, Chatham, Davidson, Davie, Durham, Edgecombe, Franklin, Forsyth, Gaston, Granville, Greene, Guilford, Halifax, Harnett, Iredell, Johnston, Lincoln, Martin, Mecklenburg, Nash, Northampton, Orange, Person, Pitt, Randolph, Rockingham, Rowan, Sampson, Stanly, Stokes, Surry, Union, Vance, Wake, Wayne, Wilson, Wilkes, Warren, and Yadkin.

NC AgVentures will award grants up to \$10,000. Application submission began October 15. The deadline to apply is 6 p.m. on December 19, 2025. For additional information contact your NC Cooperative Extension Agent, or visit the program webpage at [ncagventures.org](https://ncagventures.org).

- Grant amount: up to \$10,000
- Who can apply: independent family farms and non-profits working with family farms (eligible counties listed above)
- Application window: opens October 15, 2025; closes December 19, 2025 at 6 p.m.
- Learn more and apply: [ncagventures.org](https://ncagventures.org)

## You Decide: Will AI Be a Net Plus?

**A Technology Reshaping Work, Business and Daily Life**

AI - short for “artificial intelligence” - appeared to be on a path to becoming an even bigger part of modern life. Once confined to research labs and a few companies, AI moved into the investment world, stirred international competition - particularly between the U.S. and China - and sent both excitement and unease throughout the labor market.

Every major part of the economy, including businesses, consumers and workers, had a stake in AI’s evolution. The central question became whether the technology’s impacts on each group would ultimately be a net plus or a net minus.

Before tackling that question, it was important to review what AI actually was. AI combined three features of the modern world: access to vast amounts of data, the creation of computer programs capable of analyzing that data, and powerful, high-speed computers able to deliver results almost instantly.

Consider a simple example. In the 1950s, when the author was a child, his family doctor — Dr. McClellan — relied on what he learned in medical school, training that was likely many years old. He might have tried to keep up by reading journals, but limited time made it difficult to stay current.

AI offered a solution. In the future, a doctor could enter a patient’s symptoms and characteristics into an AI program. Within seconds, the system could return a diagnosis and recommended treatment based on vast data from patients with similar profiles across the country or even around the world.

This same approach could be used to improve service and outcomes in many consumer settings. Businesses, too, were poised to use AI to boost efficiency, reduce waste and get more value from their labor and resources. Increased efficiency often translated to lower prices for consumers.

AI might even help revitalize traditional industries. Take textiles — once a dominant force in North Carolina. The industry declined as international competition grew, especially from countries with lower labor costs. Yet many textile experts believed AI could reduce waste, raise worker productivity and improve competitiveness enough for domestic mills to see renewed growth. While the industry might not regain its former dominance, it could experience a meaningful recovery.

Up to this point, AI’s benefits for businesses and consumers appeared strong. Still, concerns emerged about harmful uses of AI, particularly involving young people. The challenge became finding ways to manage risks while preserving advantages.

Workers formed the most complicated group to evaluate, as AI promised both benefits and drawbacks. On the positive side, salaries could rise for workers whose productivity increased with AI, as well as for those with specialized AI training. Schools were already expanding such programs, and AI-skilled workers could expect promising career prospects.

However, the downside was significant. AI could reduce or eliminate many existing jobs, including some with strong salaries. Any field heavily dependent on data analysis — such as bookkeeping, investing or management — faced vulnerability. One recent study showed declines in engineering, financial analysis, computer science and architecture jobs due to AI adoption.

This trend led to an unexpected prediction: AI could reduce income inequality. The reasoning was that many high-paying analytical jobs might be replaced by AI, shrinking the salary gap. Meanwhile, workers without advanced training could use AI tools to perform tasks previously reserved for specialists, increasing their own value and earnings.

AI was clearly here to stay, and its influence on daily life would only grow. Whether the technology would be a net benefit to society remained a complex question — one that each individual would ultimately need to decide for themselves.

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