Written by Steve Frank
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You've seen the exodus if you try to get out into traffic in Boone on Friday afternoons—traffic backed up to the Holmes Convocation Center on Blowing Rock Road. The volume of traffic is leading out of town on Fridays is leading to another option for App students and others leaving Boone for weekends in the Charlotte direction. The Mountaineer North-South intercity bus route, operated by Horizon Coach Lines, has started additional round-trip run on Fridays. The Mountaineer North-South makes stops in Boone, Lenoir, Newton-Conover, Lincolnton, Gastonia and Charlotte. The new schedule has the Mountaineer North-South running a new Friday schedule during ASU's Spring 2013, Fall 2013 and Spring 2014 semesters:

- Departs Charlotte at 2 p.m.
- Arrives at ASU at 5:35 p.m.
- Departs ASU at 7:15 p.m.
- Arrives in Charlotte at 10:50 p.m.

The route currently operates the following schedule year round, seven days a week:

- Departs Appalachian State University at 9:15 a.m.
- Arrives in Charlotte at 12:50 p.m.
- Departs Charlotte at 6 p.m.
- Arrives at ASU at 9:35 p.m.

By including the additional run on Fridays, students and other riders from the Boone area are able to travel to Charlotte or other points south later in the day. Riders from Charlotte are also able to travel to the Boone area or other points north earlier on Fridays. The N.C. Board of Transportation at their November 2012 meeting approved $235,193 to Horizon Coach Lines for operation of the additional Friday run, as well as continued operation of the route through June 30, 2014. These state funds match $235,193 in federal funds, totaling $470,386. Intercity bus services are fixed-route, scheduled services that provide long-distance transportation between North Carolina cities, as well as connections to the national intercity bus system. More than 10,000 riders have used the Mountaineer North-South since it began in October of 2010. For more information on the Mountaineer North-South, visit www.horizoncoachnc.com.