

# Outstanding Government Service



## **HAROLD THOMAS**

Department of  
Transportation,  
Ferry Division

Harold Thomas has served the Department of Transportation's Ferry Division for nearly 30 years. He began as a ferry deckhand on the Cherry Branch-Minnesott Beach route and worked up to oiler and chief engineer. As its current director, Thomas has helped to steer the division into new service areas while serving as a mentor for its staff.

Dedicated not just to his work, but also to his coworkers, Thomas uses his knowledge and experience to solve problems and create a culture where staff members feel valued, recognized and supported at every level of the division by developing an accessible process for submitting employee feedback and prioritizing professional development. He forged partnerships with local community colleges to create affordable training and skill advancement opportunities for his staff. Thomas also created pipelines with the colleges for hiring painters, welders, mechanics and other marine technology students upon graduation, thereby investing in the community and DOT's workforce for years to come.

What truly sets Thomas apart is his contributions to moving ferry services forward to meet the changing needs of North Carolinians. The division launched the first seasonal passenger-only ferry service in May 2019 and welcomed the state's first passenger-only ferry vessel in 2022.

The new service responded to community and visitor needs and supplemented the vehicle ferry, reducing wait times during busy summers and providing a shorter travel time. Over 75,000 passengers have ridden aboard the passenger-only service in its first four seasons. Additionally, under Thomas' leadership, the Ferry Division undertook a ridership survey to implement real-time feedback to reduce wait times during the busy summer season on this passenger-only route.



His leadership has improved transportation for North Carolinians for years to come. Harold Thomas is a role model and a prime example of outstanding government service. The State of North Carolina thanks Thomas for his dedication to the residents of our great state.