

E-MAIL:

Date: December 04, 2006
Subject: Why does 324 have to wait for 300?

Quick question. Why does the Manassas train # 324 have to wait on the comparable Fred. Train when it is late? Is there a limit to the number of minutes that the Fred. Train is going to be late, that the Manassas train can go ahead of it? If yes, what is that cutoff?

RESPONSE:

From: Detrius Bolton
Date: December 26, 2006

Thank you for contacting VRE.

As you may know, just south of Alexandria, the Norfolk Southern tracks (Manassas Line) end and merge onto much busier CSX tracks. CSX is responsible for dispatching all trains along their line from Washington to Richmond and beyond, including freight and passenger (Amtrak and VRE) traffic.

CSX dispatchers make decisions while keeping the larger picture of their entire railroad in mind. Thus, when train 300 runs about 10 minutes late into Alexandria, it will probably get priority. Holding an already late train 300 for train 324 may well cause delays to other trains up and down the line.

We hope that this answers your question. Thanks for riding VRE.

Sincerely,
Detrius Bolton

E-MAIL:

Date: December 08, 2006
Subject: Are you kidding me?!

Really, are you kidding me? 30 minutes on a freezing cold platform this morning, ANOTHER lame "sorry boss, the train was late Again" excuse? Really, are you kidding me?!

RESPONSE:

From: Erica Cobb
Date: December 20, 2006

Thank you for contacting VRE.

We apologize for the inconvenience our Manassas Line riders experienced during the week of December 4. Recurring switch and various mechanical problems caused numerous delays during the week. Since then, however, riders have enjoyed nearly 100% on time performance every day but yesterday, December 19, when signal problems south of Alexandria slightly delayed three trains.

We hope that you noticed this improvement in service and thank you for riding VRE.

Sincerely,
Erica Cobb

E-MAIL:

Date: December 13, 2006
Subject: A pat on the back

There is a conductor on the VRE Manassas train, I don't know his last name, but he is a nice black man named "Al". I have observed nothing but patience and kindness to the passengers. He's always helping those who cannot help themselves and I've just noticed that he does everything he can to help people out.

I just wanted to let you know that you that this man is a great credit to your organization.

RESPONSE:

From: E.B. Easter
Date: December 20, 2006

Thank you for contacting VRE.

We very much appreciate your kind words about Conductor Calwise. Our conductors and engineers work hard each day to make sure that you and your

fellow riders get to and from work safely, with courtesy and as much timeliness as we can manage. It was nice of you to share your observations with us.

We will be sure to pass your comments along to Amtrak, from whom VRE contracts its on-board crewmembers, so that Conductor Calwise may get the recognition he deserves.

Thanks again for writing and for riding VRE. Happy holidays!

Sincerely,
E.B. Easter

E-MAIL:

Date: December 14, 2006
Subject: Suggestion and a thank you

Hello!

I have been a VRE Rider for three years now. I am also one of your Burke Centre passengers and I would like to say that having the EZ Bus pick up at St. Mary's is a great alternative to trying to find a parking space in the morning. I used this service for the first time yesterday and I almost missed the bus (so to speak) in the evening because the reader boards on the buses were unreadable. I made the bus but that was only after running and shouting as it started to pull away. That said, maybe in addition to correcting the electronic signs, could the drivers put a placard of some sort in the side windows? It might help in another newbie's case!

I would also like to tell you that the driver of the St. Mary's bus was very thoughtful. I was the only passenger, it was dark and even though the St. Mary's parking lot is well lit, he waited for the extra few seconds it took until I got into and started my car. Gestures like that are well appreciated in this day and age!

Thank you!

RESPONSE:

From: Detrius Bolton
Date: December 20, 2006

Thank you for writing.

We very much appreciate your kind words and support. We are happy to hear that you are enjoying your commute on the shuttle buses. We will forward your

message to Fairfax County, so that the shuttle drivers may know of your appreciation as well.

Usually, the shuttle buses travel with a sign in the window so that passengers may know their destination. We have contacted Fairfax County and asked that destinations are always able to be read. If you don't notice an improvement, please let us know.

Thank you for riding VRE.

Sincerely,
Detrius Bolton

E-MAIL:

Date: November 28, 2006
Subject: Courtesy on the train

More and more I have noticed that folks hog the seats and/or floor space (esp, in the sounder cars) with their briefcases, laptops, back packs, etc. This morning, I had to be pushy to get a fellow to move his back pack out of the leg space -smack in the middle of the small aisle and to move his lap top from the seating area I was trying to access so I could sit down. Even then, I was very cramped in the window seat. In addition, the fellow sitting right next to me on the aisle seat, had an open can of pop and his red plastic cup full of ice/pop with no lid. I frankly was quite tempted when I disembarked to bump the open cup with my briefcase so that the contents would slop all over him. Isn't there some guidance for seat hogs and beverage drinkers being more thoughtful and courteous toward other riders? I looked over the nice brochure on Courtesy but did not see anything that addresses open beverages. Even an open pop can is an accident waiting to happen with ingress/egress, not to mention any sudden or hard stop by the train.

Thanks for the consideration.

RESPONSE:

From: Larry Sternbane
Date: December 14, 2006

Thank you for contacting VRE.

We appreciate your taking the time to share with us your observations on the courtesy (or lack thereof) of your fellow passengers. We have, in the past, put out reminders that passengers should not put personal belongings on adjacent seats.

On-board conductors make announcements as well, especially when seating is tight. We are glad that you were able to find a seat on the 28th.

As the weather has turned colder, more heavy coats, hats, gloves and the like are carried on board. When these bulkier items are added to regular items such as purses, computer cases and briefcases, many of our riders become more likely to spread their belongings across adjacent seats. As such, it is definitely time to put out a reminder that each passenger is entitled to one seat only. While open beverage containers are permitted, we will put out a suggestion that those who wish to carry beverages might want to invest in a travel mug.

Look for your suggestions to be incorporated into an upcoming seat notice. Thank you for riding VRE.

Sincerely,
Larry Sternbane

E-MAIL:

Date: December 07, 2006
Subject: Nice note, Nice note

Let me tell you...I was just SHOCKED, SHOCKED I SAID, at how well everyone on the 309 train car I was on acted. Just SHOCKED. We laughed, chatted and made the best of it. Melvin kept us informed of all the happenings. I start at Union Station and get off at Rippon. I was suppose to go home and tend to my animals and get in my car and go to the Caps game last night. My first ever hockey game in person. Well I have still never seen a hockey game in person. It was 8:40pm by the time I walked my dog and fed him and the cats. I called my buds who were at the game and they even said don't bother driving up. I will get to see a game someday. Anyway, thanks for the update on the situation and you have a great holiday season.

RESPONSE:

From: Ryan Lange
Date: December 14, 2006

Thank you for the nice note.

The amount of positive and understanding email that came from the riders on #309 was truly appreciated. We did do our best to keep everyone updated and informed through what was a difficult situation. It helps when our riders have such great attitudes.

We are sorry you missed watching the Caps clobber the Senators 6 to 2. Hopefully you'll get to watch them clobber someone else soon.

Have a great holiday season as well, and thank you for riding VRE.

Sincerely,
Ryan Lange

E-MAIL:

Date: December 01, 2006

Subject: No Subject

This morning my wife dropped me off at the Burke Center Station at 7:40am. Is it still possible to use the Kiss & Ride? Usually, my wife is able to drop me off near the platform, but this morning dump trucks were blocking access to the Kiss & Ride, both coming in and out of the parking lot. The dump trucks were not allowing access and I saw that some cars were sandwiched between dump trucks, waiting to drop off VRE passengers. Fortunately, I was able to turn around and avoid getting stuck behind the dump trucks. My wife let me off at the Metro stop at Burke Center and I walked to the platform (about 250 yards).

I didn't mind walking from the Metro stop to the platform, but what did concern me was the safety issue with the dump trucks. I had to walk along the road to the Kiss & Ride, alongside the dump trucks. The dump truck drivers ability to see what is around him, especially in such a tightly confined area as the parking lot, is limited.

My humble suggestion is that the dump trucks park in another staging area, away from the Kiss & Ride drop off points. Or, if this is not possible, simply modifying where the Kiss & Ride drop-off point is located.

I would appreciate any thoughts you may have.

RESPONSE:

From: Adam Otsuka

Date: December 13, 2006

Thank you for writing and for sharing your concerns regarding Burke Centre station. Our management is aware of the your concerns regarding the dump trucks and our Director of Construction and Facilities is working with Fairfax County, who is in charge of the garage project, to ensure that their construction crews do not block open parts of the station lot area such as the Kiss and Ride. If

you continue to notice dump trucks blocking the Kiss and Ride area, please do not hesitate to contact us.

We hope this addresses your concern. Thank you for riding VRE.

Sincerely,
Adam Otsuka

E-MAIL:

Date: December 02, 2006
Subject: TVMs won't sell

Today (Saturday) I attempted to purchase a monthly ticket at the Manassas station TVMs. Credit/Debit purchases were unavailable. I later tried at Broad Run – same thing. It would be nice to know in advance that TVMs are unavailable. A website update would work wonders. This is not the first time I have encountered this problem.

Thank You

RESPONSE:

From: Adam Otsuka
Date: December 6, 2006

Thank you for writing.

We apologize for the inconvenience you encountered while attempting to purchase tickets over the weekend. Our ticket vending machine system encountered unexpected downtime over the weekend and for parts of Monday's morning service. As a result, when service started Monday we alerted our train conductors and riders via our Train Talk passenger e-mail alert system of the problem. The manufacturer of the ticket vending machines also began working on fixing the problem as soon as we became aware of it. Ticket vending machines were fully restored later Monday morning. You should have no problem purchasing a ticket now.

We hope this addresses your concern. Thank you for riding VRE.

Sincerely,
Adam Otsuka