



VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS

Update



703-684-1001

www.vre.org

November 7, 2007

Editor's Note:

It seems that the hype for the holidays starts earlier and earlier each year. Snowmen and angels were sitting in the aisle next to the Halloween candy last week. Of course, VRE has its own version of the holiday hype: our annual Operation Lifesaver Santa Trains and our annual Toys for Tots collection. Over the years, these two events have brightened the holiday for thousands of children. We are proud to continue the tradition again this year.

While we look forward to the fun, there are still some serious activities going on at VRE. Those who use the Manassas station have undoubtedly noticed the earth moving where the new garage will be. In addition, we are gearing up for our annual emergency drill. With the help of volunteer "victims," we give area first responders a chance to try out their skills on board one of our trains.

Santa Trains to Run for 11th Year!

Ho ho ho, at VRE, we're ready for the holidays! For some, the true start of the holiday season begins when they first spot decorations at the local malls. But at VRE, it's when we first start talking about Santa Trains ... and that time is now! For the eleventh consecutive year, we'll invite Santa, along with thousands of local families, to board VRE trains to help celebrate the holiday season and to promote rail safety and Operation Lifesaver's "Look, Listen and Live" campaign. Per tradition, we'll also have plenty of Santa's helpers to join



in, along with carolers and other festivity-makers.

The big day will be Saturday, December 8, 2007, and Santa Claus will host several excursion trains (passengers will return to the same station they began from): four will leave from Fredericksburg, two from Leeland Road, four from Manassas, two from Woodbridge, and two from Burke Centre.

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Volunteer Victims Needed for Emergency Drill

On Saturday, December 1, the VRE Broad Run rail yard (adjacent to the Broad Run station) will be the site of VRE's annual emergency drill, and VRE is now seeking approximately 20 volunteers to act as "victims" on the train.

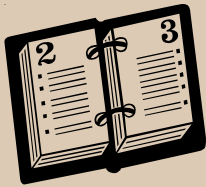
The emergency drill, held in conjunction with regional first responders, will act out criminal activity onboard a train, and "victims" will help para-emergency personnel perform a wide range of emergency response capabilities and learn better ways to mitigate the threat of such activities in the real world.

Volunteers will need to arrive at the rail yard by 9:30 a.m., and the drill will run from 10:00 a.m. to approximately 12:00 p.m. Volunteers will be moulaged by being placed in the

environment of the incident and handled accordingly; as a result, volunteers should wear warm work clothes and expect to get dirty! Each victim will likely be inside the train for about 30 minutes.

"VRE conducts classroom and field training throughout the year for emergency responders," explained VRE's Superintendent of Operations, Safety, and Security Dave Snyder. "Since September 11, 2001, these sessions, and the annual drill, have taken on an increasing element of law enforcement. The tragedy at Virginia Tech focuses this year's exercise on hostage situations. Participants should expect a realistic simulation, as the more closely we

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Upcoming Dates

Mon., November 12
Veterans' Day
No VRE Service

Tue., November 13
Official Santa Train
Announcement

Wed., November 14
On-Line Forum
12:00 Noon

Thu., November 22
Thanksgiving
No VRE Service

Fri., November 23
Day After
Thanksgiving
No VRE Service

Sat., December 8
Operation Lifesaver
Santa Trains

Wed., December 12
Toys for Tots
Collection
All Morning Trains



VRE Update is a publication of Virginia Railway Express. The newsletter is published bi-weekly 24 times per year. Stories included are for the sole use of VRE riders and its supporters. Comments and questions may be directed to VRE Customer Service at gotrains@vre.org or at (703) 684-1001.

VRE to Collect Toys for Tots December 12

For all you eager beavers who have already started your holiday shopping, listen up! VRE will, for the twelfth year, coordinate its annual toy drive for the U.S. Marine Corps' Toys for Tots program. Scheduled for Wednesday, December 12, all riders are invited to bring an unwrapped, new toy with them on the train (morning commute only). Leave it on your seat as you detrain, and VRE "elves" will collect the toys at the end of each run. Marines will then pick up all of the collected toys at the layover yard in Washington.

A good age range to keep in mind when selecting gifts for Toys for Tots is in the two year to 16 year range, but many people tend to gravitate toward toys for the youngest children first; please keep children 10 to 16 years old in mind, too, as pre-teens and teenagers are often not as well covered.

Don't have time to shop for your own family let alone pick up something for Toys for Tots? No problem—you can still participate! Conductors will also be collecting checks and cash on December 12; checks should be made out to Toys for Tots. Alternatively, if you know you won't be riding VRE on December 12, please plan to drop a toy at one of the stations participating in the Santa Trains on Saturday, December 8, as VRE will be holding a separate Toys for Tots collection that day. Participating stations in the Santa Trains include Woodbridge,

Leeland Road, Fredericksburg, Manassas and Burke Centre.

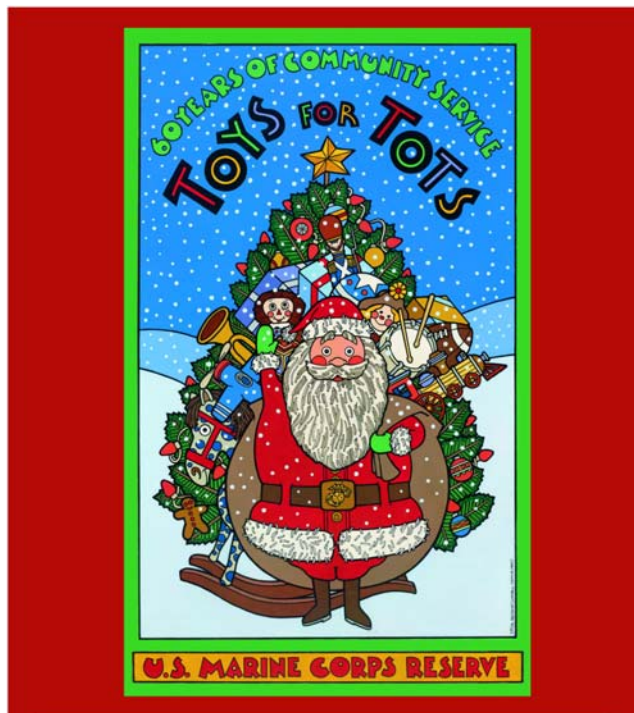
"This is the twelfth year we've participated in the Toys for Tots program," said VRE's Chief Executive Officer Dale Zehner, "and every year we do it, I'm reminded of our passengers' unbelievable generosity and spirit. So many thousands of families in Virginia have benefited directly from our donations, and I look forward

to another outstanding event. Every donation sends the message that we care about our community's kids, and that's a message I don't think we'll ever tire of sending."

Over the past 11 years, VRE's Toys for Tots drive has resulted, on average, in 1,000 toys every year and between \$6,000 and \$10,000 every year.

Created in 1947 and expanded

nationwide in 1948, the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program is an official activity of the U.S. Marine Corps, an official mission of Marine Forces Reserve and the Marine Corps' premier community action program. From 1947 to 2002, U.S. Marines distributed over 298 million toys to over 145 million needy children. Today, Toys for Tots is one of the nation's flagship and most visible Christmas charitable causes with local Toys for Tots campaigns conducted from October through December each year in 456 communities nationwide.



Santa Trains

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Veteran Santa Train riders know, though, that the Really Big Day is actually the day tickets go on sale, as they tend to fly out the door as quickly as Santa's reindeer. So, mark your calendars for Tuesday, November 13, which is the day that all details about ticket sales and the Santa Trains will be posted on our Web site (www.vre.org). No need to set the alarm to check the site; tickets will NOT be sold on that day ... it's just the day that we'll release all of the pertinent information you'll need to know to get your munchkins on a Santa Train. (Why can't we just spill the beans right now, you ask? Well, mostly because we need to work out the final details before we can officially say it's a go.)

Some things we do know right now: Net proceeds from the Santa Trains will benefit Operation Lifesaver, and we'll use the



opportunity to continue supporting the Marine Corps' Toys for Tots campaign. Drop-off boxes will be posted at all of the participating stations the morning of the Santa Trains, and we encourage passengers to help make other kids' holidays extra special by bringing a new, unwrapped toy for the campaign.

Volunteer Victims Needed

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can mirror an actual situation, the more effective these drills are. We've found over the years that these drills go a long way in teaching emergency responders across jurisdictional boundaries how to best handle emergencies onboard commuter trains, and by varying the location and the incident, the drills continue to be extremely beneficial to us and to participating emergency responders."

Thinking about participating? Send an e-mail to gotrains@vre.org indicating your interest, and be sure to include your name, e-mail address and daytime telephone number. Additional details will be sent to all volunteers a few days prior to the drill.



First responders rescue a "victim" during a previous drill.

Courtesy Corner

Quit the Queuing

We know, it's just a bad habit. Like many bad habits, this one is worth breaking. Queuing well in advance of your station is not only unnecessary, but it can be frustrating for someone who is trapped on the train and trying to get off. It can be even more frustrating to get carried by their station because the line in front of them simply would not move.

We've heard all of the excuses. We know that there can be long waits getting out of parking lots. We know that getting off the train first means getting to the traffic light/stop sign first and less time spent during your commute.

Think of this: There are many who ride our trains who are not able to stand while the train is moving. For them, the best thing to do is to remain seated until they are at their station. Which means the best thing for everyone is to remain seated until the train has physically departed the station prior to yours.

Manassas Parking Garage Underway

Safety Sense

*Remember: all railroad tracks, all trestles, all yards and all railroad equipment are private property and trespassers are subject to either fine or arrest (or worse).

*Since 1994, according to the Federal Railroad Administration, almost 6,500 people have been killed while trespassing on railroad rights-of-way and property.

*A typical locomotive weighs approximately 400,000 pounds. When 10 railcars are added to the locomotive, the train can weigh around 1,200,000 pounds. (How much do you weigh?)

*Trains overhang the tracks by at least three feet in both directions and loose straps hanging from rail cars may extend even further. A freight train traveling 50 miles an hour with a loose, hanging metal strap can really ruin somebody's day. Always stand well back from the tracks.

Manassas commuters had reason to celebrate on October 18, with the long-anticipated groundbreaking of a five-story, \$12 million parking garage set to take place that day just east of the Manassas rail station.

VRE awarded the contract to Costello Construction, based in Columbia, Md., and by late September, site preparation was already underway.

"The first step has involved preparing the one-acre site," explained Eric Johnson, a VRE project manager. "Costello has been focusing up to now on demolition work—taking down the existing buildings on the property—mitigating a small quantity of asbestos, and removing a small amount of contaminated soil. Upcoming activities include site grading, utility work and foundation excavation.

VRE is also working closely with Norfolk Southern (NS) Railroad with respect to work that will occur on railroad property behind the existing platform, such as excavation for the garage footings.

Site preparation and grading is expected to continue over the next few weeks.

The project should be completed by Fall 2008, and commuters using the Manassas station in the interim will be pleased to know that construction disruptions should be minimal: Sidewalks surrounding the site will need to be

closed in order for utility relocation and sidewalk reconstruction to occur.

"We've made it very clear to the contractors that access to the platform must be maintained at all times," added Johnson.

The garage will be jointly owned by the City of Manassas and VRE, resulting in shared cost and shared use upon completion: The City will retain the top two levels of the garage for public use (totaling 209 spaces), while the bottom three levels will be reserved for VRE commuters

(totaling 322 spaces), with 10 of the total spaces being handicapped accessible. On nights and weekends when VRE is not operating, all five levels will be open to the public.

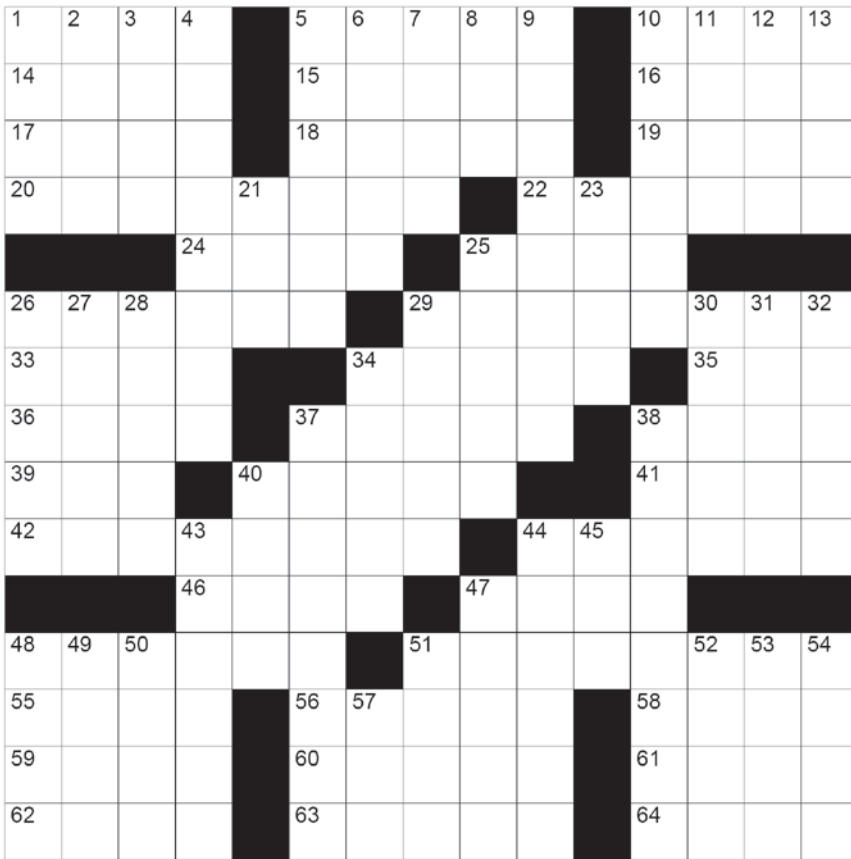
The garage will be located

across Battle Street from the Manassas station and bounded by Main and Prince William Streets, with one side of it adjoining one of the Manassas station's three platforms. Access will therefore be extremely easy; commuters who park on the second level can access the platform immediately (due to site characteristics, the second level of the garage is actually the one that will be level with the platform, while the first level of the garage, where the vehicle entrance is located, will be level with Prince William Street). Those parked on the third level can just take the elevator or stairs down to the platform.

As with the majority of our other capital projects, VRE is managing the project with close coordination with the City of Manassas.



Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS

- 01. Dry, as in champagne
- 05. Religionist
- 10. A contest of speed
- 14. Not hard
- 15. A negatively charged atom
- 16. Esprit
- 17. Assert
- 18. A place for shooting (firing or driving) projectiles of various kinds

- 19. Cowboy friend
- 20. Combustible material
- 22. Perches
- 24. Identical
- 25. Undergarments
- 26. Starts
- 29. Hung out
- 33. Reclined
- 34. Farm buildings
- 35. Hatchet
- 36. Eye
- 37. Event
- 38. Related

- 39. Aged
- 40. A distinctive class or category of literary composition
- 41. Actress Mae ___
- 42. Communications
- 44. Bakes
- 46. Pooches
- 47. Eight quarts
- 48. African country
- 51. Sprinkled
- 55. A jump upwards or forwards
- 56. Honeybee

DOWN

- 01. Bill of a bird
- 02. Rant
- 03. Exploiter
- 04. Amino acid
- 05. Women in a Muslim household
- 06. Silly
- 07. On cloud ___
- 08. Family pet
- 09. Accurate
- 10. Rest
- 11. Woe is me!
- 12. Grocery vehicle
- 13. Finishes
- 21. ___ Diego, CA.
- 23. Cereal grasses
- 25. Carried
- 26. Flower of a plant
- 27. Endangered species
- 28. Coats with gold

- 29. Hideaways
- 30. Uses a lawn tool
- 31. Be
- 32. Fender benders
- 34. Ulna and femur
- 37. Lowered in value
- 38. Got up
- 40. A person of French descent
- 43. Extends
- 44. Say again
- 45. Fall mo.
- 47. Cover with wood
- 48. Too
- 49. Bright light
- 50. A strong wind moving 45-90 knots
- 51. Pretend
- 52. Traveled in a car
- 53. Level
- 54. French for in
- 57. Not cooked

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