



VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS

Update



703-684-1001

www.vre.org

April 16, 2008

Increased Security in Place for Pope's Visit

Editor's Note:

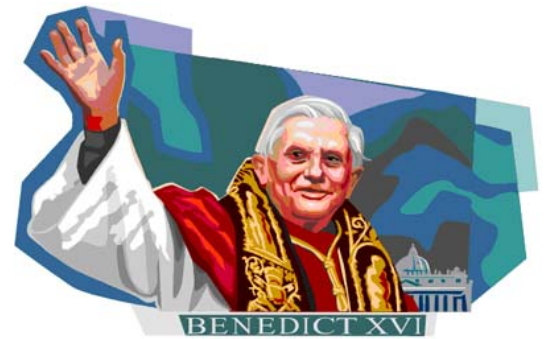
Our Meet the Management season is in full swing. We really enjoyed meeting our Union Station and L'Enfant passengers. Later today, our CEO and other members of our staff will be at Crystal City with members of CSX management. We welcome anyone who can to stop by, grab a snack, and say hello. Not your station? Check out our website at www.vre.org/feedback/mtm.htm for the date when we'll be visiting your station.

Last issue, we made a significant printing error with our crossword puzzle. In this issue, we are re-running the same crossword puzzle with all of the correct elements to give you another chance at testing your cooking knowledge.

It's not every day that the nation's capital prepares for a papal visit, but from April 15 to 18, Pope Benedict XVI will be visiting Washington, D.C. On the morning of April 17, he'll be giving a morning public Mass at the Washington Nationals Stadium, and in anticipation, area transit organizations are making plans to tighten security considerably for that morning's rush hour commute.

Perhaps most notably, the Transportation Security Administration will dispatch TSA Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response (VIPR) Teams—a program in which federal, state and local agencies work together to patrol a specific locale—to both the L'Enfant station and to Union Station. Federal Air Marshals and CSX's SWAT team will also be called into duty at L'Enfant, and Amtrak Police will join TSA at Union Station. Alexandria City Police will patrol VRE's Alexandria station, and Arlington County Police will be patrolling the Crystal City station. The L'Enfant station will see the heaviest security detail since anyone planning to get to the stadium for the Mass via Metro will need to pass through or board a green line train at L'Enfant.

"Everyone at all of these stations—L'Enfant, Union Station, Alexandria and Crystal City—will have arrest authority," said VRE's CEO Dale Zehner, "and we want our passengers to know that they should expect a very heavy security presence during that morning's commute. We hope that by ramping up security to this level, the morning will go smoothly for everyone, but we also hope our riders will set realistic



expectations for the morning's commute. With large crowds expected and heightened security, some delays could be possible."

All 140 of the undercover law enforcement officers have been informed of key details behind the security plans, and they have been asked to pay increased attention while riding VRE trains during this period. The officers are instructed to report any suspicious or unlawful activity to a conductor immediately, so that they can request local law enforcement assistance at the next VRE station in route.

This same request applies to riders, as well: If you see anything amiss on the train, please contact a conductor rather than calling 911, since conductors are better able to communicate the train's exact location to emergency personnel. If you are at a station and you see something suspicious, but the train has not yet arrived, please call 911 directly. Simply put, stay safe by staying alert.



Please Don't Shoot the Messenger

VRE's Variable Message Signs

Upcoming Dates

Wednesday, April 16
Meet the Management
Crystal City – with CSX
All Evening Trains

Wednesday, April 23
Meet the Management
Alexandria
All Evening Trains

Wednesday, April 30
Meet the Management
Franconia/Springfield
All Evening Trains

Wednesday, May 7
On-Line Forum
12:00 noon

Wednesday, May 14
Meet the Management
Fredericksburg
All Morning Trains

Wednesday, May 21
Meet the Management
Broad Run
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.

For 15 years, VRE commuters relied on LED (light emitting diode) message signs to provide the status of oncoming trains and service disruptions, but in a way that was far from ideal.

Last fall, that changed with the installation of new liquid crystal display (LCD) signs at all of VRE's stations (except Union Station). The signs are as clear as any television being made today, and they're large enough that VRE can post an entire message on the screen at once.

On a day-to-day basis, our VMS signs typically cover train arrival times and service disruptions, but the signs' capabilities extend beyond that, allowing VRE to post multiple messages on one sign without interrupting the readability of either message.

But even with this vast improvement, we're still getting comments from some riders that the signs still aren't providing information fast enough.

In their defense we'd like to say, "It's not the signs' fault!" What do we mean by that? Well, basically, if there is a delay or issue on the tracks that riders need to be informed of, the sign is really just the messenger: The process behind determining the cause of the delay and estimating how long the delay will be remains

the same, which means that even with new signs, we can't post information about a prospective delay any faster than we've ever been able to. All that's changed is how you read it once it's posted.

"We monitor our trains constantly," said April Maguigad, VRE's manager of customer communications, "and whenever we see a train starting to run behind, we have programs in place that will help us understand and predict how late that train is likely to be at any given point along a track. But it takes some time for us to get the information together and determine exactly what's happening; we need to confirm what's going on before we can post



New VMS signs make communicating easier, but it still takes time to gather the information. In the meanwhile, we are looking into adding Rail Time to the station signs.

it to the signs."

Sometimes it's a relatively simply matter of calling a dispatcher to find out the crux of the problem; other times, it may require communicating with crew out in the field, and that can take a little longer. In the case of mechanical delays, it's tough to predict if it will be a 10-minute delay or a 30-minute delay without gathering as much information as we can upfront. Our preference, therefore, is to take the time to verify the situation first and then

VMS Signs

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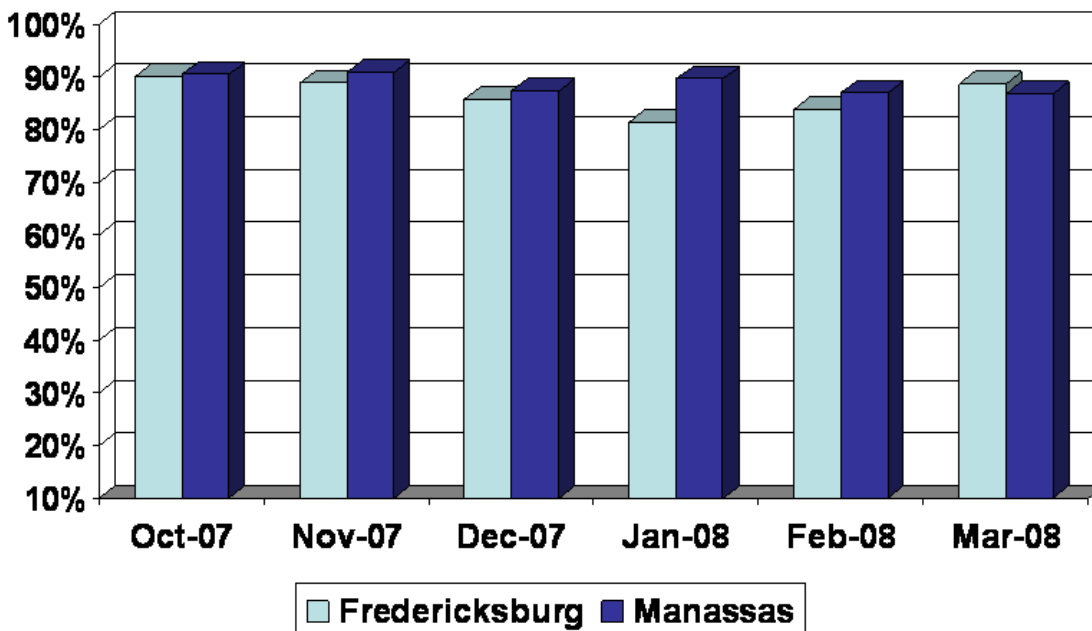
post it to the VMS signs once we're confident that the information is as accurate as possible. That way, we don't get in the position of optimistically promising something before all the facts are in, and then having to retract it minutes later. We'd rather get it right the first time.

One other important thing to recognize is that we generally don't post delay announcements until a train is (or is going to be) 10 or more minutes late. So for stations that are spaced very closely together, such as Leeland and Fredericksburg or Manassas and Broad Run in the mornings; or L'Enfant and Union Station in the evenings, it's hard to get effective notifications posted in time, since by the time

we've had the chance to verify a delay situation, the train's arrival at the next close-by station may already be delayed.

All in all, it's a vastly improved communications systems that still has to rely on human calculations and information gathering ... but in the end, we still think the benefits are worth celebrating: all of our riders—not just those with speed reading awards and 20/20 vision—can read the whole message, all at once, on the same screen. No more squinting at scrolling messages that you only catch half of the first time around. No more deciphering cryptic abbreviations. And no more digging for your glasses to help sharpen the screen's image.

On-Time Performance Over the Last Six Months



On-Time Performance by Train for the month of March 2008

Fredericksburg Line

300 – 100%
302 – 90%
304 – 95%
306 – 86%
308 – 76%
310 – 90%

301 – 100%
303 – 76%
305 – 90%
307 – 86%
309 – 90%
311 – 90%
313 – 81%

Overall – 89%

Manassas Line

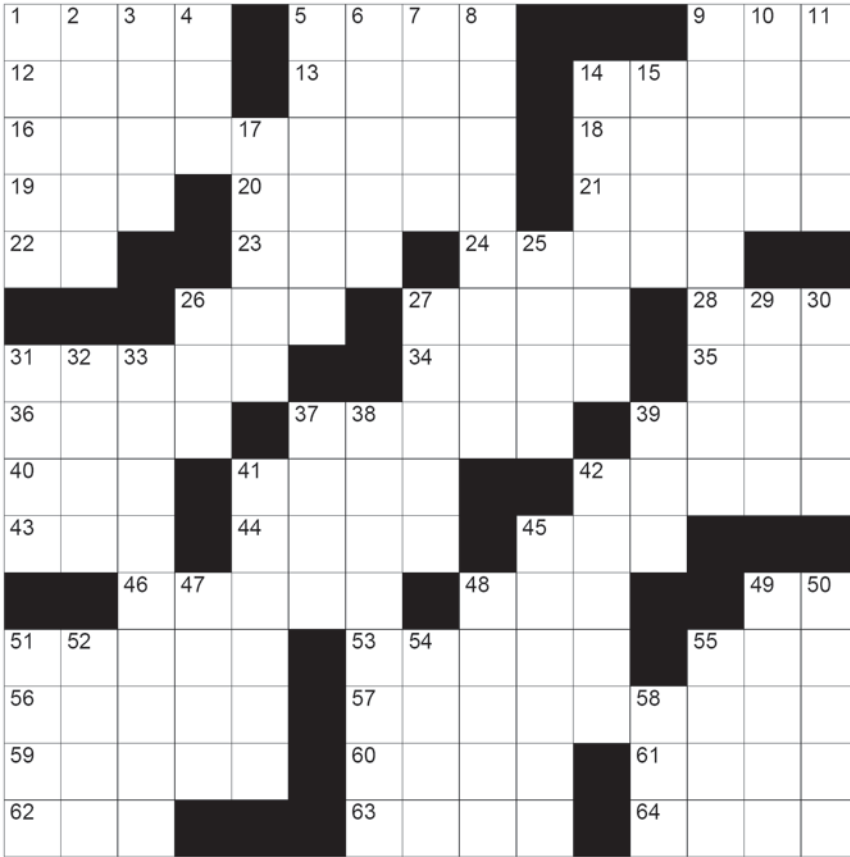
322 – 100%
324 – 95%
326 – 86%
328 – 90%
330 – 81%
332 – 95%

325 – 90%
327 – 52%
329 – 95%
331 – 95%
333 – 95%
335 – 90%
337 – 67%

Overall – 87%

*A train is considered delayed if it is more than 5 minutes later than the posted schedule into its final destination.

Cajun Cooking - Once More, With Feeling



DOWN

- 01. Silly
- 02. Unnatural
- 03. Rake
- 04. Moreover
- 05. Summer wear
- 06. Cougars
- 07. Money given to charity
- 08. Some train cars
- 09. Cajun dish
- 10. Jai ___
- 11. Took off
- 14. Duelling weapons
- 15. Bottle stopper
- 17. Descendants
- 25. Flying: lead-in
- 26. Have a debt
- 27. Southwestern flattops
- 29. The same
- 30. Mike Schmidt's was third
- 31. Quarrel
- 32. Venice resort
- 33. Sausage used in Cajun cooking
- 37. Roman wear
- 38. Agreeable
- 39. Type of martini
- 41. Suspension bridge need
- 42. Frolic
- 45. ___ and balances
- 47. Gush
- 48. Leafy vegetable, Swiss ___
- 49. Firearm
- 50. Finger
- 51. The thing here
- 52. Foolhardy
- 54. Highland family
- 55. Break suddenly
- 58. Pitcher's stat

ACROSS

- 01. Que ____, what will be will be
- 05. Bath and Saratoga
- 09. Skull feature
- 12. Geological time period
- 13. Bobby of the NHL
- 14. Weighing machine
- 16. Famous New Orleans chef
- 18. The ___ in White, by Collins
- 19. Type of chart
- 20. Clear the slate
- 21. Fly around the moon
- 22. You: Arch.
- 23. ___ a boy!
- 24. Winter jacket
- 26. Hospital rooms: Abbr.
- 27. Reward: Arch.
- 28. Ad ___
- 31. Cabbage salads
- 34. Makes a mistake
- 35. Novel by Nabokov
- 36. Long for
- 37. Ham used in Cajun cooking
- 39. Tints
- 40. Total
- 41. Novel by Robin Cook
- 42. Beer ____, in bowling
- 43. Me __: ditto
- 44. Middle ___
- 45. Weep
- 46. City-like
- 48. Greek letter
- 49. 3.14159265358979323846...
- 51. Tryout
- 53. Is sore
- 55. Transgression
- 56. Cut in two
- 57. Way to cook fish, in New Orleans
- 59. ___ of the Blessed, paradise
- 60. Carefree adventure
- 61. Contest of speed
- 62. ___ Stoops To Conquer, play
- 63. Loose, at times
- 64. Acme

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