



VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS

Update



703-684-1001

www.vre.org

March 20, 2008

CSX to Begin Track Resurfacing Project

Editor's Note:

Look all around, signs of Spring are showing every where. It is a great time to be riding the train, watching as the trees get a little greener and the buds a little bigger every day.

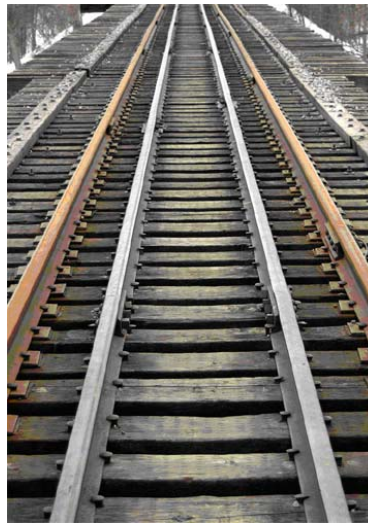
At VRE, Spring means the start of Meet the Management. Norfolk Southern and CSX will be joining us at L'Enfant and Crystal City, respectively, and we will once again provide refreshments for our passengers. Some have mentioned that we could possibly avoid a fare increase if we didn't provide refreshments during these events. To be honest, our Meet the Management refreshment costs break down to about \$2 per rider. For that price, we think a cookie and a drink are well worth the smiles and thanks we get on those days.

So please drop on by and see us when we come to your stations and feel free to let us know how we're doing.

Attention Fredericksburg Line riders: CSX is currently working on resurfacing certain sections of railroad in the Washington, DC, area, and they are scheduled to begin moving into "VRE territory" next week.

Resurfacing basically means that the tracks are realigned and leveled. It is commonly done after tie replacement work, which CSX completed last year, just to ensure that the tracks remain true over the passage of time.

Specifically, CSX will be working south to north from Fredericksburg to Featherstone, which is just south of Woodbridge, focusing only on track #3 (which runs on the other side of VRE platforms). Once crews have completed that section of track, CSX will go further north, working on tracks 2 and 3 from



just south of the Alexandria station to just south of the Crystal City station.

"All of the work is scheduled between VRE service hours—from about 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM—in order to improve efficiencies and avoid major disruptions," explained Sirel Mouchantaf, VRE's director of construction and facilities, "but there may be some minimal delays because as these machines realign the track, they can't run freight or Amtrak on the same lines. Trains can, of course, go around the work by switching tracks, but we do expect some congestion that could slow down all trains."

The work is expected to be finished by the end of March or early April, and VRE will keep riders posted of any changes to the schedule or scope of the work via this newsletter, TrainTalk, and our Web site.

I Received a Summons? Now What?

For a long time, crews on VRE trains would issue a total of four to five summons a month to people who were riding our trains without a valid ticket; however, lately, we're seeing a tremendous increase in the number of summons issued by conductors each month. The new average is 25 summons per month, and during one recent two week period of time, a whopping 33 summons were issued. It's hard to pinpoint the exact reason, but it's likely a mix of three things: Riders thought that conductors were getting lax about checking tickets; conductors

are checking tickets more consistently; and a zero tolerance policy instituted in 2003 was reinstated in the spring of 2007.

Not surprisingly, the upsurge in summons has also resulted in an upsurge in rider complaints to our office, and we'd like to try to explain how to negotiate the process and provide a little background about summons that might help everyone understand why they're issued.

Continued on page 4



Upcoming Dates

Wednesday, April 2
On-Line Forum
12 noon

Meet the Management
Union Station
All Evening Trains

Wednesday, April 9
Meet the Management
L'Enfant – with Norfolk
Southern
All Evening Trains

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

Mocha Mo's Offers Extra Perk to VRE Commuters

Mocha Mo's, a new coffee shop at 400 Princess Anne Street in Fredericksburg, is all about coffee ... but they're also all about making the lives of VRE commuters extra easy.

When café owner Maureen Bartosh opened the shop in December, she knew early on that catering to VRE riders would be high on her list. The shop's location—directly across the street from the VRE station—makes her decision a natural, but she's taken things a step further by instituting a weekly drawing on Fridays whereby the winner gets to park their car in the café parking lot for the entire next week. Given that the parking lot is only about 100 feet from the station, it's an enormous perk.

In order to enter the drawing, commuters simply place a business card in a bowl at the front counter.

"Our weekly winners are always really happy about it and just love being able to park here," said Ernest Bartosh, "and more than a few have admitted that they have gotten completely spoiled by getting to park so close to the station for a week. This week's winner told me that she was running really late, but then being able to park here meant she could grab a cup of coffee before her commute. It's been a really well received and fun thing we can do for our customers."



Mocha Mo's opens at 4:45 AM (a half-hour before VRE's first train) and closes at 2:30. They

serve regular coffees, espressos, fraps, pastries, smoothies, juices, salads, sandwiches and burritos, and will soon begin offering Italian sodas. There is seating available for those who like to linger, as well as a small meeting room in back. Newspapers are sold in the shop too, and they're currently working on providing secure WiFi access for their laptop-toting customers.



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.

Picture of the Week

A bird's eye view of the Manassas parking garage that is under construction. This is a snapshot from the live webcam provided on the Historic Manassas website at www.visitmanassas.org/camera. The garage is expected to be completed in summer 2008.



Extreme Commuters Take Note!

Commuting long distances has become the norm for thousands of Washingtonians, but for some commuters who regularly travel from Charlestown, WV, Philadelphia, Pa., or Newark, Del., long distance commuting is better known as “extreme commuting.” And Tracy Downs, a MARC rider who has been commuting for the past year from Delaware to D.C.—a three-hour trip one way—has learned that she’s not alone. The more she talks to people, she says, the more she realizes that more and more people are starting to make extreme commuting part of their normal life.

To find out more about the people who choose extreme commuting, why they do it, and how they do it, Downs has set up a Web site—<http://extremecommute.com>—dedicated to exploring the mindsets of those who are willing to travel great lengths to get to work. On the Web site is a 10-question survey that she is urging extreme commuters to complete, in the hopes that she can eventually publish a book about the topic.

“A recent study estimates that 3.4 million Americans travel 90 minutes or more to work one way,” said Downs, “and as I began spending so much of my own time on the train just getting to and from work, I started getting more curious about how many others do this, and why. I decided to write a book that would be partially based in statistics and facts, but that would also be a fun, anecdotal read about the people, their choices, the benefits and the sacrifices.”

Downs herself has been commuting from Newark, Del., since July 2007, when she found a job opportunity that she simply couldn’t pass up. Her dream job paid more, was challenging, and was the perfect fit ... but it was also three hours away.

“Moving wasn’t an option,” she said. “My husband’s job is in Delaware, and our three kids are settled in school and their lives. We’re making this work, and I do telework a few days a week. I know a lot of people think it’s nuts, but it’s working for our family.”

Response to the survey, which was launched in February, has been very positive, with more than two dozen responses already. The survey is



completely anonymous, and Downs’ goal is to get 100 responses. Once that goal is reached, she’d like to do more case histories with individual people before starting in on her book.

“I have an interest in sociology and examining why people do the things they do, and this has just become a fun personal interest of mine. It’s been a great deal of fun talking to people, comparing stories, and just gaining some insights into how and why people are having to make the choices they do.”

Safety Sense

Slips, trips and falls often get comic treatment in movies and cartoons, but in real life there is usually very little that is funny about them. Slips, trips and falls are one of the leading causes of accidents which can often result in painful injuries. They are also one of the most easily preventable. To help prevent these types of accidents, always remember to:

- Wear appropriate footwear and keep shoes fully laced, buckled zipped or otherwise fastened.
- Always wipe your feet on a floor mat if it is available.
- Watch where you are going and use every step on the stairs.
- Walk, don’t run. When walking, keep your hands out of your pockets.
- Pick up dropped items and keep walkways clear.
- Look out for bags that may extend into the aisles of the train.
- Clean up spills and warn others of spills that can’t easily be cleaned up.
- Prevent spills by covering all liquids.

I Received a Summons

Continued from page 1

Courtesy Corner

Help Speed Up Vendor Lines

How many times have you been in a hurry and the person in front of you took 20 minutes to make a transaction simply because they were not prepared?

To avoid becoming this person, here are some easy tips:

1. Have your form of payment in hand when you come up to the counter. Nothing slows a line down more than having someone have to go through their handbag/wallet and dig out Metrocheks, or other form of payment.

2. Know how many Metrocheks you have before you come to the window. Please don't slow everyone else in line down while you count how many Metrocheks you have remaining.

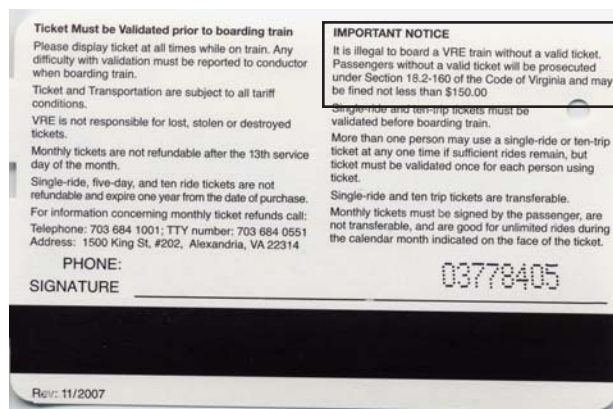
3. Don't wait until the last minute to purchase a monthly ticket. If you do, please don't expect other riders to step out of line to allow you to do so.

The real basics are this: you must have a valid ticket to ride VRE, and if you're found without a valid ticket, the conductor can issue a summons. With our zero tolerance policy, that means that the conductors have been asked to not serve as an onboard judge. It's unfair to expect the conductors to know who truly forgot to validate their ticket and who purposely boarded the train without the proper fare. As a result, they are under instructions to issue a summons to anyone who is onboard without a valid ticket.

What happens next is out of VRE's hands, because once a ticket is written, it is similar to a traffic ticket ... it must either be paid by the recipient of the summons (the fine is \$150 and current court costs are \$71), or

it must go to court for adjudication. If the recipient of a summons does decide to go to court, the judge can dismiss it, decrease the fine, or even increase the fine, all depending upon the circumstances that brought about the issuance of the summons. And if the rider fails to do anything—they don't pay the fine and they ignore the court summons—then they open themselves up to the possibility of seeing their driver's license suspended after 30 days and possibly have a lien placed on their future tax refunds by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The only "exception" to all of this is for those people who own a monthly ticket or TLC pass but did not have it in their possession when the summons was written. In that case, they have three days to submit proof of purchase, along with a copy of the ticket-front and back (and we will later require them to show us the original monthly ticket), at which time we can submit a request that the summons be dismissed. But the proof of purchase and producing the original, actual monthly ticket is non-negotiable: we've had riders say they are the owner of a monthly ticket that they faxed in to us, but then found that they made a copy of a friend's monthly ticket as "proof", not expecting us to require further verification that the monthly ticket was, in fact, theirs.

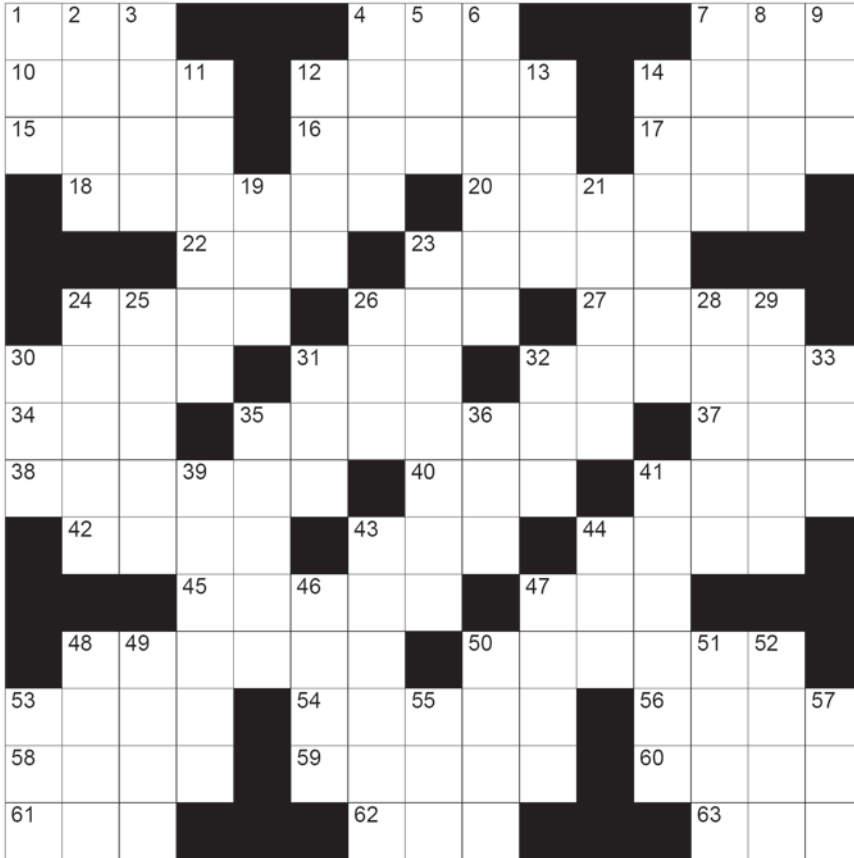


A constant warning is printed on the back of every ticket in the upper right hand column.

Perhaps the most important point is that we take no joy in seeing our riders get a summons. We don't get any money out of the deal. All fines paid by VRE riders go to the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the court costs go to the court where the case was heard.

So *please*, don't board a VRE train without a valid ticket.

Tenpins



ACROSS

- 01. Strange
- 04. Turf
- 07. — mitzvah
- 10. Formerly Persia
- 12. Bowling mark
- 14. Cab
- 15. Bowling alley
- 16. Forest creature of Greek mythology
- 17. Computer group

DOWN

- 18. Teases
- 20. Innate
- 22. Tape operating system: Abbr.
- 23. Thief
- 24. Raced
- 26. Bowling need, rosin —
- 27. Bowling jackpots
- 30. Egg on
- 31. Doublemint, for one

- 32. Type of cactus
- 34. Every
- 35. Bowling needs for tots
- 37. 2000 lbs.
- 38. Zodiac sign
- 40. Put down
- 41. Man
- 42. Rip
- 43. Gel
- 44. Vapor

DOWN

- 01. Alley necessity
- 02. Confound it!
- 03. Actor Andrews
- 04. Health resorts
- 05. Grain
- 06. Becoming less wet
- 07. Foundation
- 08. Chopped
- 09. Knight
- 11. Spay
- 12. Fast planes
- 13. Sea eagle
- 14. Bowling term
- 19. Winken, Blinken and —
- 21. “— in Toyland”
- 23. Tries out
- 24. Bowling term
- 25. Heart beat
- 26. Tramp
- 28. Indian pole

- 29. Actress Sharon —
- 30. Weaken
- 31. Catcher Triandos
- 32. Snoop
- 33. Type of Dr.
- 35. French cap
- 36. Dine
- 39. Of the body
- 41. Next to an alley
- 43. Bowling mark
- 44. Underwater need
- 46. New Jersey team
- 47. Crazes
- 48. Summoned
- 49. “Maids all in —”
- 50. Fur
- 51. Eye part
- 52. Location
- 53. Bowling target
- 55. Wire measure
- 57. Bird cry

- 45. Leases
- 47. In shape
- 48. Badinage
- 50. Praying —
- 53. Yugoslavian money
- 54. Shy
- 56. Author Ambler
- 58. Hero
- 59. — game, in golf
- 60. Actress Hayworth
- 61. Most recent
- 62. Moose
- 63. Baste



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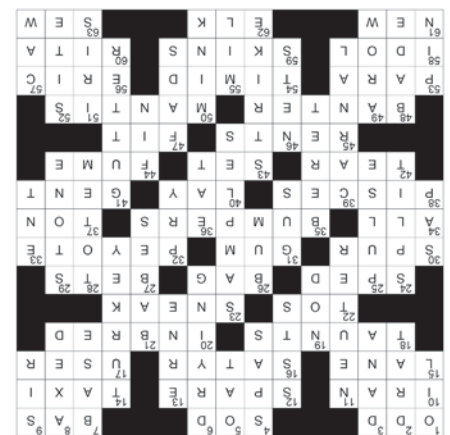
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VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS

INTERNSHIP RECRUITMENT

CUSTOMER COMMUNICATIONS

POSITION:	Intern-Customer Communications
CLASSIFICATION:	Temporary Full-Time (37.5 hours per week)
SALARY:	Hourly rate depending upon experience and education
BASIC FUNCTIONS:	This position reports to the Manager of Customer Communications to assist in a variety of related tasks and activities.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS/GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

POSITION:	Intern-Public Affairs and Government Relations
CLASSIFICATION:	Temporary Full-Time (37.5 hours per week)
SALARY:	Hourly rate depending upon experience and education
BASIC FUNCTIONS:	This position reports to the Manager of Public Affairs/Government Relations to assist in a variety of related tasks and activities.

Consistent with the VRE Management philosophy, these internships are designed as an opportunity for personal enrichment and education in the fields of transportation, communications, customer service, public affairs, and government relations.

For more detailed job descriptions and information on how to apply, visit VRE's website at www.vre.org/about/vrejobs.htm.