



VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS UPDATE

703-684-1001

www.vre.org

June 25, 2009

Editor's Note

June: it marks the beginning of summer, it is the month that VRE began on the Manassas line, and it is the month to recognize safety.

This month's VRE Update addresses all of the above.

Inside are also articles on the new fare increase, an update on the construction of the Broad Run Maintenance Facility, an explanation of various feedback forms as well as sidebars of courtesy and random railroad information.

So enjoy the latest VRE Update, the beginnings of what we hope will be a beautiful summer and remember...always stay safe!

It's National Safety Month! (Do You Know How to Stay Safe on VRE?)

June is National Safety Month, and as the weather becomes warmer and many of us change our seasonal routines, it's important for all of our passengers to review several prudent safety practices while riding VRE.

Trespassing

As the weather continues to warm up, many of our passengers are choosing to walk to their station. Please remember that you should only cross the railroad tracks at designated railroad crossing locations. Do NOT walk on the railroad at any time. It is illegal, and if you are cited, you might be responsible for a fine up to \$250. Railroad tracks are not only inherently dangerous because of passenger and freight trains traveling as fast as 60 to 80 miles per hour, but also because the ballast and the oil residue from diesel locomotives make it a prime environment for slips and falls.

SAY SOMETHING if you SEE SOMETHING

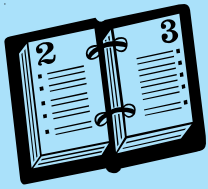
VRE continues to be proactive in improving security onboard our trains, on our station platforms, and at adjacent

parking facilities. Many of you have noticed Department of Homeland Security's VIPR (Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response) teams. These teams continue to conduct random, multiple, and regular operations on VRE trains and at VRE stations every month. These teams have been trained by VRE to ensure their familiarity with our trains, locomotives, onboard safety features, and on-railroad practices during emergency response activities.

The local jurisdictional police agencies also continue to provide invaluable service to VRE, with several of these police departments receiving training on VRE train equipment, safety features, and safety and security practices on the railroad. VRE continues to build on this partnership by training many of our member jurisdictions' first responders, as well, to help them prepare for any incident responses on the VRE system.

Continued on page 2





It's National Safety...

Continued from page 1

Upcoming Dates

Mon. June 29
New Fares Take Effect

Wed. July 1
Meet the Management,
All Morning Trains
Burke Centre

On-Line Forum at Noon

Fri. July 3
Independence Day
Holiday Observed
No VRE Service

Wed. July 8
Meet the Management,
All Morning Trains
Rippon

Wed. July 15
Meet the Management,
All Morning Trains
Rolling Road

But our most pervasive security resource is our passengers: On an average day, there are close to 8,000 passengers riding VRE trains, which means 8,000 sets of "eyes and ears" who know our trains, know many of the train crew, and even know fellow passengers who regularly ride with them each day. We request that you continue to be conscious of people around you while on VRE trains and on VRE platforms. Promptly call attention to a train conductor if you think there is a suspicious person or suspicious item onboard the train. Remember, always trust your instincts!

Passenger Emergency Intercom (PEI)

All of VRE's new train cars are equipped with passenger emergency intercoms (PEIs) in the event that a passenger needs to reach a train crew member immediately. The PEIs can be found on each end of every train car, in the aisle adjacent to the stairwell. To alert and speak with a train crew, push the red button. In order to identify the exact train car in which you are riding so that the train crew will know where you're located, look above the red button for an identifying number, i.e., "V863, A-End."

New Safety Brochure

Many of you might have noticed the new safety brochures that have made their debut on our trains. These brochures provide information on navigating through the new equipment. Please take a copy for yourself and take a few moments to familiarize yourself with the various features and recommended safety and security practices while on VRE.

Manassas Line Incidents

VRE has received comments from several of our riders regarding the ongoing incidents between our Rolling Road and Burke Centre stations on the Manassas line. As noted, individuals have



been throwing various projectiles at our trains, including rocks, bricks, fire extinguishers and paintballs. Over the course of more than 10 incidents VRE has had to replace cracked windows and repair dented car bodies and has so far cost VRE approximately \$10,000. Please continue to alert the train crew if you see any unauthorized individuals standing on the railroad. Our train crews are very aware of this recurring problem, as are the local law enforcement agencies, Norfolk Southern Police and TSA VIPRs, all of whom continue to partner with VRE to bring this problem to a resolution.



VRE Update is a publication of Virginia Railway Express. The newsletter is published monthly 12 times per year. Stories included are for the sole use of VRE riders. Comments and questions may be directed to VRE at gotrains@vre.org or at (703) 684-1001.

A Short History of the Manassas Line

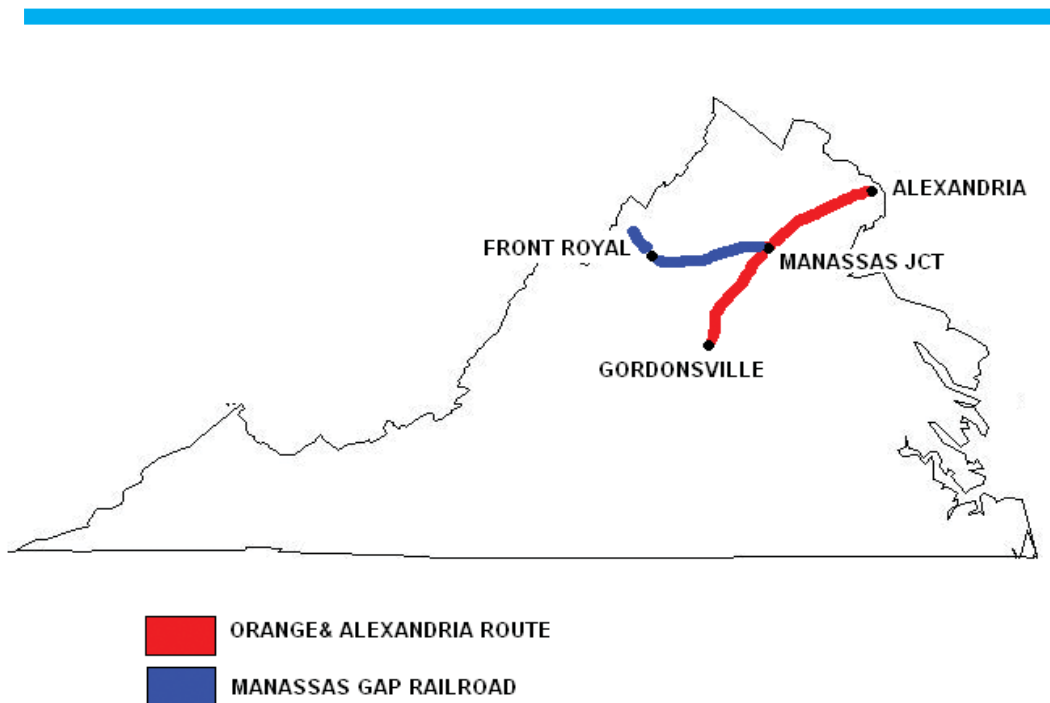
The month of June commemorates the inception of VRE service on the Manassas Line. For 17 years, VRE trains loaded with commuters have plied the rails between Alexandria and Bristow, each contributing to the long and important history of this stretch of railroad.

The beginnings of this railroad lie in 1848, when the Orange and Alexandria Railroad was commissioned for construction to connect farmers in Virginia with other developing railroads in the south and west and the busy trade center of Alexandria. The railroad was completed in 1854 and was an immediate success. One of its valuable connections was its interchange junction with the Manassas Gap Railroad. The prosperity that developed around this connection formed a center of trade

named Manassas, after the name of the connection point.

The successful connection of this railroad to points south from Washington also allowed this stretch of track to serve as a strategic asset for the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia. During the Civil War, battles raged as the Confederacy worked to protect this strategic asset intact.

As time progressed, changes in transportation methods and the development of competing railroads forced the line to change hands several times. It was eventually acquired by the Southern Railway, which has since merged with the Norfolk and Western to become Norfolk Southern, our current host railroad on the Manassas Line.



1-800-RIDE-VRE

Need schedules or fare information? How about station information, or information about delays, or information on the Guaranteed Ride Home program? You can call 1-800-RIDE-VRE (1-800-743-3873) to access it all.

1-800-RIDE-VRE has general VRE information as well as Customer Service information. Need schedules or fare information faxed to you? Simply call the 1-800 telephone number and enter your fax number at the prompt to receive your fax on demand!

Remember: 1-800-743-3873, that's 1-800-RIDE-VRE!

July Brings New Fares

Ticket Law Modification

The Virginia General Assembly recently changed the law that enables VRE to issue summons for invalid tickets. The changes, which take effect on Wednesday, July 1, create a stricter penalty for those who board without a valid ticket.

Starting July 1, 2009, riders issued a summons will be charged with a Class 2 Misdemeanor and must go to court. Pre-payment of a fine is no longer an option. Failure to validate your ticket is a serious issue to keeping fares as low as possible. Now the penalty for not validating is equally serious.

Be sure to validate your ticket every time you ride!

It's no secret that the economic crisis, combined with fluctuating fuel bills, has had an impact on VRE and our budget. And last fall, we faced a choice: cut service, or raise fares. After a series of public meetings, our riders made it clear that a fare increase would be preferable over service cuts. The budget required, historically speaking, fairly steep proposed increases in January 2009 and in July.

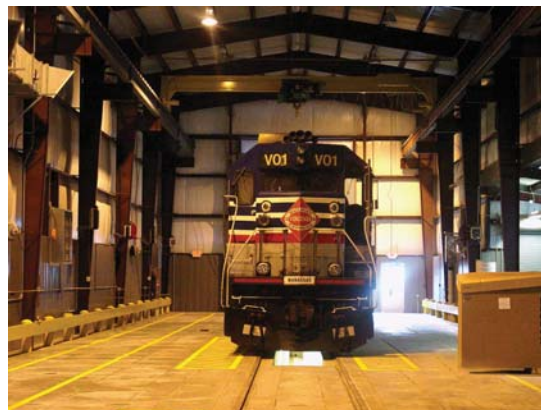
We recognize that in an ideal world, we wouldn't have to raise fares or cut service, but we are pleased that our increases didn't need to be quite as big as we initially feared.

The new fares for July will take effect on June 28 (with the July monthly ticket available at the new price starting June 10). For the full fare schedule, please visit our Web site at <http://www.vre.org/service/increase/fy10fares.html>.

Phase One of Broad Run Maintenance Facility Completed

Since late last year, the Fredericksburg line cars have had the royal treatment with the opening of the Crossroads service & inspection (S&I) building, which can handle a whole host of maintenance and service requirements, including 180-day inspections mandated by the Federal Railroad Administration.

project expected by Spring 2010. The projected completion date is currently running approximately one month ahead of schedule.



Once completed, the S&I building will, as at Crossroads, be approximately 230 feet long and big enough for any combination of two vehicles to be worked on at the same time, and will feature an 95-foot inspection pit, with universal jacking pads and a 10-ton

Now, it's Manassas' turn, with construction on VRE's second S&I building now underway at Broad Run. Construction crews began construction in mid-May 2009, with completion of the entire

overhead crane so that any size vehicle can be raised from two locations within the building. There will also be draining and storage devices

Continued on page 5

Phase One...

Continued from page 4

for used locomotive lube oil, which is then pumped to above ground tanks for removal by a contractor. The buildings will house air compressors and an air storage tank that will supply compressed air to tools at the engine house, and which will also allow us to keep our trains' air brake system supplied without having to idle the engines, significantly saving on fuel usage.

Once it is completed, every train set in VRE's fleet will get washed once a week (they are currently being washed every two weeks at Crossroads), an important aspect of maintenance as built-up grime and dirt can cause equipment to corrode.

"Right now, we're doing some maintenance for these cars at our Crossroads facility," Poe said, "but



Outlets powerful enough to power electric welders and four 35-ton equipment jacks will also be featured. The buildings will be staffed during weekdays and weekends in order to maintain and repair VRE's fleet without disrupting the morning and evening commuting schedule.

Mike Poe, project manager for VRE, added that once the S&I building is completed, construction of a train wash system will begin for the Broad Run yard, as well.

it's very inconvenient since we have to get all the equipment there. Having an S&I building for each line will be a huge improvement and will save us significantly in operations and maintenance costs."

The Broad Run facility, costing just over \$4 million, has been on VRE's strategic plan for the last three years and is being funded through the same grants that enabled the construction of the Crossroads facility.

EZ Bus Last Day is Friday

This is just a reminder that the Burke VRE EZ Bus system will be eliminated at the end of June, with the last day of service on Friday, June 26th. This change is part of a larger Fairfax Connector bus service adjustment to help balance against a reduction in Fairfax County revenue.

While it serves VRE riders going to the Burke Centre station, the EZ Bus has been operated and funded by Fairfax Connector.

Route Your Feedback Faster

Courtesy Corner

We recently sent out a courtesy Train Talk about asking passengers to keep their cell phone communications short and hushed. We received a great deal of positive feedback in regards to this issue and apparently many people feel the same way so we thought we would reiterate it.

Conversation, whether on a phone or with the person next to you is fine (unless you are in the Quiet Car), but please remember that you are surrounded by people in a crowded stainless steel box, and loud one-sided conversations tend to get on people's nerves...especially if it is for long periods of time.

So please remember: inside voices please. This way everybody can enjoy their commute. Thanks!

As most of our passengers know, we have several nifty ways to communicate feedback, questions and complaints, and given the avalanche of email and online forms we receive most days, a lot of people are using them.

But, we're finding that a lot of our passengers are either sending all of their comments to our email address, gotrains@vre.org, or they're just clicking on the first form available on our feedback site, located at <http://www.vre.org/feedback/index.htm>, which means that a message about graffiti may end up being sent to the staff person who handles personnel complaints, and therefore slows down the process of getting it fixed.

Please note, the seven different online forms we have for a variety of different issues:

- Personnel complaints/concerns (comments about any VRE staff person, an onboard conductor or engineer)
- Lost tickets
- Train information concerns (i.e., temperature issues, doors not working correctly, etc.)

- Vandalism form (i.e., graffiti, broken glass)
- Lost items (other than tickets)
- Station concerns (i.e., parking lot issues, platform cleanliness or maintenance issues)



- TVM concerns (i.e., not validating properly)

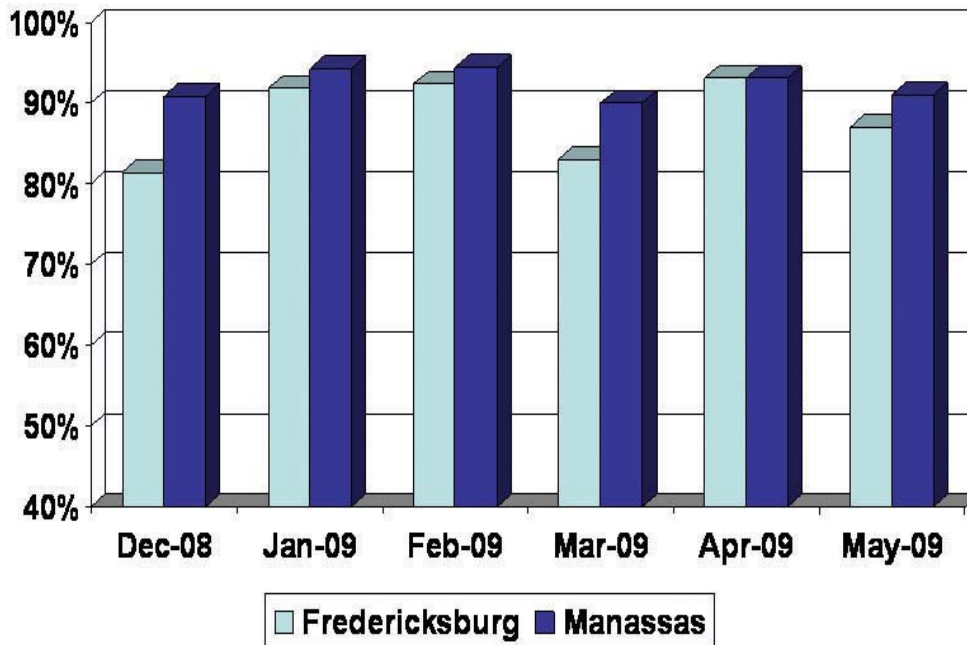
If none of those apply to your particular issue, then by all means use the more generic gotrains@vre.org

email address, but please keep in mind that the more precisely you direct your comment, the more quickly the issue can be handled, and the more quickly we can provide feedback to you. Another important point is that the dedicated forms include specific questions about the various issues, ensuring that we can gather the most complete information possible on the first attempt, which also speeds up our ability to respond appropriately.

Finally, we thank all of our passengers for being our extra "eyes and ears." There are a lot more of you than us, and without your constant feedback, we'd have a much harder job keeping our service running smoothly and efficiently. So, thank you, and we look forward to hearing from you!

On-Time Performance

Over The Last Six Months



On-Time Performance by Train for the month of April 2009

Fredericksburg Line

300 – 100%
 302 – 95%
 304 – 100%
 306 – 95%
 308 – 90%
 310 – 85%

301 – 80%
 303 – 60%
 305 – 70%
 307 – 85%
 309 – 80%
 311 – 95%
 313 – 100%

Overall – 87%

Manassas Line

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

325 – 100%
 327 – 95%
 329 – 95%
 331 – 95%
 333 – 85%
 335 – 100%
 337 – 85%

Overall – 91%

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

Locomotive Bell Versus Horn

Two very symbolic and perhaps widely known components of the locomotive are the bell and the horn. Both are vital safety features, however the bell's use predates the locomotive to the days of horse-drawn street cars and carriages. Quite simply, it alerts those nearby to the fact that the vehicle in which it is affixed is moving.

As the horn is very loud and used for widespread alert, the bell, being quieter is more practical for a constant reminder when the locomotive is nearby.

Originally, locomotives in America were very primitive. As they were steam powered, the horn was generally a brass whistle activated by steam releasing from the boiler and the bell was mounted on the top of the

locomotive and connected to a long rope that allowed locomotive engineer or fireman to pull on it to ring it manually.

These days, the technology has advanced significantly, such as the ones on our equipment. The bells are sounded by activating a pneumatic valve fed by the locomotive's compressed air reservoir. Another significant development in the locomotive bell completely eliminates the bell altogether. New generation locomotives such as the new ones coming to VRE have begun to use electronic recordings of a ringing bell that projects from a high volume sound projector affixed to the locomotive.

PATIENT'S NAME _____

LAST

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