VRE is planning to operate special excursion trains on Friday, July 4, 2014 to give passengers an opportunity to travel into Washington D.C and experience the concert and fireworks on the National Mall.

One train will operate on each line consisting of eight (8) Gallery IV Coaches and two (2) locomotives. Each train will carry approximately 1,000 passengers.

This will be a special ticket event, similar to Santa Trains, with ticket sales being conducted online. In an effort to operate at or near a breakeven point, the ticket price will be $10 each. This allows, for example, a family of 4 to travel to and from Washington, DC for the fireworks for just $40.

On the Fredericksburg Line, the train will start from the Leeland Road station and travel to Union Station with stops at Quantico, Woodbridge, and Lorton. These stations were chosen because of ample parking on the day of the event and to help keep our passengers out of areas, like Fredericksburg, which will already have crowds for their own celebration and fireworks display.

The Manassas Line train will start from Broad Run and travel to Union Station with stops at Burke Centre and Backlick Road. Once again, it is our goal to not add traffic to areas like Manassas and Manassas Park which also have their own fireworks displays. Both trains will arrive at Union Station between 5:30 and 6:00 pm with ample time for passengers to make their way to the National Mall.

The concert and fireworks display will conclude at approximately 9:30 pm, giving passengers approximately an hour and a half to return to Union Station.
The origination stations will be staffed by a combination of volunteer VRE salaried personnel and paid hourly personnel. A portion of that staff will ride the trains into Union Station and handle crowd control for the return trip.

To help avoid congestion and crowd control issues resulting from the limited capacity of the L’Enfant Station, the decision has been made to operate to and from Union Station. On the return trip, however, each train will make a short (unpublished) stop at the L’Enfant Station. Each train will also make a short stop at the Alexandria station, in case passengers accidentally board the wrong train.

VRE staff will spend time during this event observing conditions at and around the L’Enfant Station to determine the potential for augmented service in coming years at that station.

The Operating Plan for the Firecracker Trains has been submitted to our partner railroads for consideration and approval. Once that approval is received, we will begin communicating the plan to our passengers and the general public. Ticket sales could begin shortly after approval is received.