



VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS
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PRESS RELEASE

Office of Public Affairs

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Images: www.vre.org/about/pr/high-resolution-image-gallery (scroll to bottom of page)

Video: Available upon request.
View at <https://twitter.com/VaRailXpress/status/1308069702976102400>

VRE and Partners Promote Safety at Rail Crossings *Participation in Rail Safety Week Designed to Help Stop Track Tragedies*

Alexandria, Va. – In an effort to stop track tragedies, the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) is partnering with its host railroads and Operation Lifesaver, Inc. to remind drivers and pedestrians to exercise caution at rail crossings, as part of Rail Safety Week, September 21-27. VRE has installed solar-powered variable messaging boards at seven crossings along its Fredericksburg and Manassas Lines, which display succinct messages that will rotate during the week.

“While the pandemic is preventing VRE staff from interacting with drivers and pedestrians at rail crossings as we have done in the past, it is not deterring us from sharing important rail safety messages with them,” said Rich Dalton, VRE’s CEO. “We are reminding people that unsafe decisions – whether it’s using tracks as a shortcut, glancing at a cellphone near a crossing, or attempting to beat a train across the tracks – can have devastating consequences. Safety has always been and remains VRE’s priority.”

VRE is also joining Operation Lifesaver and its host railroads, CSX Transportation and Norfolk Southern, in a rail-safety social media blitz. VRE’s campaign includes a public service video that Operation Lifesaver produced in collaboration with VRE last year. The video, which shows a teenager wearing earbuds and walking down the middle of the tracks, vividly illustrates the dangers of trespassing on privately owned tracks.

“Rail Safety Week is a culmination of our collective work across the country to share the rail safety message,” said Rachel Maleh, executive director of Operation Lifesaver, Inc. “Virginia Operation Lifesaver and VRE are part of the wonderful partnerships that multiply our efforts to keep communities safe in Virginia and across North America. Join us during rail safety week and beyond sharing the rail safety message in Virginia and across the country.”

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“Rail Safety Week is an important time for the rail industry to work together to communicate safety messages to the public,” said William Miller, public safety director for Norfolk Southern. “While these messages are often simple, it is our hope that the importance is understood and resonates beyond Rail Safety Week throughout the year. Whether on foot, a bike, in a sedan or a tractor-trailer – when you approach a highway-rail grade crossing, your decisions should be centered on your own personal safety, each and every time you cross.”

“Crossings are where people most frequently interact with trains and, unfortunately, accidents between trains and motorists or pedestrians are all too common,” said Sean Douris, chief of police for CSX. “Crossing accidents can be deadly, so one collision involving a vehicle or pedestrian around our railroad tracks is one too many. That’s why we are proud to collaborate with VRE and Operation Lifesaver to bring attention to this lifesaving public safety campaign.”

The 13th largest commuter rail service in the U.S., VRE is a transportation partnership of the Northern Virginia and the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commissions. The 4.5 million rides the railroad provides annually remove some 100 million vehicle miles from Northern Virginia’s interstates. Learn more at www.vre.org.

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