TEMPERATURES DROP, PARKING COUNTER PROJECT HEATS UP
There’s a place where the love of country runs as deep as the love of family. It’s just 30 miles from DC along two miles of Potomac River shoreline. Come discover award-winning homes, exciting family-friendly amenities, and a genuine, heartfelt sense of community for all—especially the men and women who proudly serve our country.

Recreation Center with Swimming Pools
New On-Site Elementary School
Future On-Site VRE Train Station
Hiking & Biking Trails
Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf Course & Clubhouse

Homes from the $300s to $800s

POTOMAC SHORES

DESTINATION for a LIFETIME

Potomac Shores Parkway, Potomac Shores, VA 22026
PotomacShores.com

Features and products vary by community. Price, offers, financing and availability are subject to change without notice.
The Crystal City station improvement project really exemplifies VRE’s commitment to understanding the needs of our riders and the communities in which we operate. Crystal City is one of our busiest stations, yet it is only served by one track and the platform does not accommodate an 8-car train. We realize this is a major stovepipe in our system, and as such, our development team has been working for several months with riders who board at Crystal City, area businesses, regional transportation partners, local residents, and our host railroad to form a recommendation to relocate the station to best meet the needs of as many parties as possible.

Our goals for the new station were to enhance connectivity to Metrorail and buses, create a future four-track environment, and stay within the existing rail right-of-way -- all while supporting Crystal City’s vision for growth and ensuring continuity of our service during construction. Our team promoted and held several community outreach sessions to collect feedback on three possible new locations for the station, and surveyed riders on the platform. All comments were reviewed and prepared for our Operations Board, along with a summary of how each location option ranked.

VRE staff recommended the location option on the other side of the water park, Option 2, as it provides the overall most favorable outcomes – the best connections to local and regional transportation, and the community and environmental impacts were rated as equal to both Option 1 and Option 3. Our Operations Board member representing Crystal City, Arlington County Supervisor Katie Cristol, participated in many area meetings on the relocation, and our Operations Board was fortunate enough to hear from one area resident first-hand during the public comment portion of our October meeting. After reviewing the various factors and public comments, the Operations Board adopted the centrally-located Option 2 for further analysis and design.

We value the public involvement process in our projects, and ensuring that we are considering the needs of the jurisdictions we serve. We can confidently move into the next phase of our study with the backing of Crystal City and the support of our riders.

Sincerely,

DOUG ALLEN
Chief Executive Officer
Virginia Railway Express
COMMUNITY EVENTS

RESULTS OF CUSTOMER SURVEY
RIDER INPUT HELPING PRIORITIZE INITIATIVES

Each spring we conduct a Customer Survey to determine rider satisfaction with various aspects of our system, ranging from communications to station lighting. Tabulating the data takes several months, so shortly after we complete our fall Master Agreement Survey, we receive the results of the spring survey. The 2017 Customer Satisfaction Survey findings are currently being used by VRE management in planning and prioritizing projects.

Highlights of this year’s May survey include:

- The satisfaction with the ease of buying a ticket is at a 5-year high (87% of riders are satisfied), presumably in-part due to VRE Mobile.

- The level of satisfaction with our station signage is down (81% of riders are satisfied). We are currently working to replace signage in order of station need, starting with Brooke and Lorton.

- We are continuing to work to improve station lighting, but were happy to see a 24 percent increase in satisfaction with evening lighting at stations – with the percentage of satisfied riders increasing from 64% to 88%.

- While the satisfaction with our overall communications remains consistent with the previous four years, the quality of the information on our website is perceived at a 5-year low (only 70% of riders are satisfied). We will begin turning attention to our website early next year, and ask that you provide feedback regarding the site to us at webmaster@vre.org.

- We saw a decline in rider satisfaction with the frequency of ticket inspections. Crews are expected to check tickets in every half of every car on every trip. Passengers may report crews who are not checking tickets to gotrains@vre.org.

Full survey results can be found online at vre.org/passenger-survey

VRE REPORT CARD

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<th>Year-to-Year Ridership Survey Comparison</th>
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<td>% of Riders Satisfied</td>
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<tr>
<td>Train Crew Members</td>
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<td>Are Knowledgeable About VRE Operations</td>
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<td>92% 93% 94% 93% 95%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are Helpful and Courteous</td>
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<td>90% 92% 93% 91% 93%</td>
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<td>Make Regular Station Announcements</td>
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<td>84% 85% 87% 85% 89%</td>
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<td>Make Timely Delay Announcements</td>
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<td>78% 81% 83% 78% 82%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Check Tickets Regularly</td>
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<tr>
<td>81% 86% 87% 85% 82%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Present a Professional Appearance</td>
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<tr>
<td>93% 94% 96% 95% 95%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall Crew Performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>90% 92% 94% 92% 94%</td>
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A Brass Christmas
December 15, 2017, 7:30 PM - 9:30 PM
$15 (children 5 yrs and younger free)
Dr. Oswald Durant Memorial Center:
1605 Cameron St, Alexandria, VA
The Symphony Orchestra of Northern Virginia (SONOVA) in collaboration with the Office of the Arts will host a series of Friday Evening Chamber Concerts beginning at 7:30 PM. Treat yourself to some of the best chamber music the region has to offer, at an affordable price, in a convenient location. The Brass Quintet will play all your holiday favorites in an exciting concert perfect for your entire family! To purchase online, visit: http://bit.ly/2vSKXRd. Tickets are also available at the door.

Burke Farmers Market
Saturdays through December 16, 2017, 8:00 AM -12:00 PM
VRE Parking Lot: 5671 Roberts Pkwy, Burke, VA 22015

Carriage Rides Around Downtown Manassas
December 10 and 17, 2017; 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Admission: Free
Manassas Train Depot: 9431 West St, Manassas VA
Contact: David Rhodes. Phone: 703-361-6599, Email: david@historicmanassasinc.org

History in Your Hands
December 17, 2017; 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM
Marine Corps Museum
HIYH is a program for visitors of all ages who are blind or have low vision. HIYH is an opportunity to interact with the collections through tactile exploration of selected objects, and through verbal description, tactile graphics, and other materials for artifacts that cannot be touched. Trained Museum volunteers and Visitor Services staff lead these events. There is no fee for this program, but pre-registration is required. Registration for the monthly program closes 1 week prior to the event. To register for the monthly program, contact Jack Oblein at 703-432-2622 email jack.oblein@usmcu.edu.

Synetic Theater Presents: Hansel and Gretel
Through December 23, 2017
Synetic Theater: 1800 S Bell St, Arlington, VA 22202
"Why do you come here in the dark of the forest?" Follow the trail of white pebbles and breadcrumbs to Synetic Theater for this magical production of the Brothers Grimm well-known fairytale, Hansel and Gretel. In this wordless production, viewers young and old will be transported to the house in the woods built of bread and cakes with windowpanes of sugar. It is here where Hansel and Gretel must outsmart the half-blind and hungry Witch in order to return to their family. This wordless Synetic Family Theater production is suitable for all ages.

Holiday Decorations: Home for the Holidays
Through January 5, 2018
Gari Melchers Home and Studio:
224 Washington St, Falmouth, VA 22405
The House and Studio will be decorated for the season in the tasteful and natural style of its artist homeowners, Gari and Corinne Melchers. Included with museum admission.

HOLIDAY CALENDAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEC. 25</td>
<td>CHRISTMAS DAY OBSERVED</td>
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<td>NO VRE SERVICE</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEC. 26-29</td>
<td>WINTER HOLIDAYS &quot;S&quot; SCHEDULE</td>
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<td>JAN. 1</td>
<td>NEW YEAR’S DAY OBSERVED</td>
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<td>NO VRE SERVICE</td>
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<td>JAN. 15</td>
<td>MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY</td>
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<td>NO SERVICE</td>
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<td>FEB. 19</td>
<td>PRESIDENT’S DAY</td>
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<td>NO VRE SERVICE</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**VRE UPDATE**

**COLD WEATHER POLICY**

**WINTER WEATHER & VRE SERVICE**

When a winter storm is projected to affect our region, VRE begins preparations for hazard mitigation, or to cancel service if passenger safety would be jeopardized.

**Working with Area Partners**

VRE works with host railroads, the National Weather Service and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to help determine if conditions will allow for the safe operation of our trains and if riders will be able to reach our stations safely. While we do take the decision by the Office of Personnel Management into consideration regarding the operation of the Federal Government, it does not necessarily dictate whether or not VRE trains operate. We realize many of our riders are not employed by the Federal Government, or are considered essential personnel who need to get to work. As such, we make every effort to offer at least an “S” schedule operation.

**Clearing and Treating Platforms & Parking Lots**

When we have service during and after winter weather, we want to make sure the lots and platforms at our stations are clear of snow and ice. We utilize a combination of our facilities contractor, VDOT, jurisdiction crews and third party private contractors to clear the lots, depending on who has responsibility for the specific facility. Our facilities crews begin clearing and treating the platforms the day before weather is expected, and continue through the night if necessary to keep everything clear. If you do arrive at a parking lot or platform and notice patches of ice or snow, please contact us at gotrails@vre.org and we’ll get it addressed.

**Updating our Riders**

In the event that we do need to cancel service, or operate on a modified schedule, we will get that information out as early as possible, usually no later than 4:15 AM on the affected service day. The following channels will reflect service modification or cancellation:

- www.vre.org
- VRE Twitter and Facebook pages
- Train Talk text and email alerts
- Digital station signs
- VRE information hotline: 1-800-RIDE-VRE

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**Baltimore Christmas Train Gardens**

The terms “Holiday Garden” and “Christmas Garden” are unknown to most of us in Virginia, despite prevalence throughout near-by Baltimore. What now are celebrated elaborate model train displays at Maryland venues, evolved from holiday decorating traditions originating across the Atlantic. German immigrants in the late 1800s placed model trains around their Christmas trees in their new homes in Baltimore as they had done in Europe, and Czech settlers started moving their nativity scenes under their trees soon after arriving in Maryland. Model trains grew in popularity in the 1930s, leading more and more people to adopt model trains as part of their seasonal decorations.

Baltimore locals continue staging holiday gardens in their own homes and expect to see displays in stores while shopping for the season, often citing a connection to childhood memories. In fact, over 8,000 visitors are anticipated each November and December at the Arbutus Volunteer Fire Department in Halethorpe to see an intricate holiday garden display with various parts measuring around 6-feet by 24-feet.
As many of you know, our conductors count passengers onboard the train for each trip. The ridership counts are very important for service planning to make sure we have the longest trains in the slots where there is the heaviest demand, but ridership information is also used for budgeting purposes, and to help VRE attain funding through grants. While ridership is one of our key metrics, we cannot increase ridership without also making sure we have ample parking at the stations.

VRE has entered into a contract with Parking Logix of Montreal, Canada to install an automated parking count system at our parking lots. The system uses embedded sensors in the entrance and exit lanes to count the cars coming in and out. The data is then transmitted using a solar powered repeater to a cloud based back end. The data provided will detail how many cars enter to or leave the lot at any specific time, or window of time. We will also be able to see, in real time, the remaining spaces available in the lot.

This information is important for planning purposes, but will also be provided through the VRE Mobile app and on our website at VRE.org for passenger use. For example, if you live between Brooke and Leeland Road, you could check the parking availability at each and determine which station to utilize that day. Providing real time parking data is just one more enhancement VRE is making to improve the overall passenger experience.

The Spotsylvania station will be utilized as the proof of concept location, and installation there should take place in the next few weeks. Stay tuned to RIDE magazine, Train Talk, and our social media accounts for progress updates.
SMARTBENEFITS ALLOCATION FOR VRE MOBILE

SmartBenefits as Payment Method in VRE Mobile App

Like the idea of switching to VRE Mobile, but has the thought of the changes that might entail for your SmartBenefits detoured you? A few minutes spent learning how to manage your SmartBenefits account will ultimately allow you to enjoy the many benefits of going Mobile, including: easy validation of tickets including Amtrak Step Up tickets, never worrying about lost tickets in the mail, real-time ability to rate VRE service, and more.

If you haven’t entered the SmartBenefits portal before, the online interface can seem a little intimidating. However, the reallocation process is actually fairly simple if you follow our steps below.

Determine your SmartBenefits account login

1. All SmartBenefits accounts are tied to a SmarTrip® card serial number. If you do not have the SmarTrip card associated with your account, contact your vendor for the information.

2. Visit smartrip.com/sbftp/vplpat.login and click the “Forgot your password or user ID” link to reset your account password.

Allocate your benefits to VRE Mobile

1. After you’ve logged in at smartrip.com/sbftp/vplpat.login, click “Bill Payment” at the top of the screen.

2. Click “Make Payments” in the column on the left. Click “Add Payment” and then “Continue” on the Employer/Administrator page that follows.

3. In the “Transit Provider” drop-down menu, choose “VRE Mobile Ticketing,” then click “Continue.”

4. Enter the amount of money you will spend on VRE tickets each month in the “Payment Amount” box, enter “100%” in the “Payment Percentage” box, and then click “Save” / “Update.” If completed by the 16th, the funds will be available on the 1st of the following month.

5. Download the free VRE Mobile app, and create an account for VRE Mobile. Add your SmartBenefits account number to the app as a form of payment (between the 1st and the 9th of the month), and store the information for future purchases. Then, your funds will automatically be available in VRE Mobile on the first day of each month! Note all changes must be made by the 21st of the month prior to go into effect for the following month.

New to SmartBenefits and need to set up allocation for the first time?

Visit vre.org/benefits to learn more.

We have staff available to not only help you with the allocation process to go Mobile, but also available to provide guided webinars to groups of employees through your HR department.
Celebrate the Holiday in Stafford!
Sat., Dec. 16 – Jeff Rouse Swim & Sports Center/Embrey Mill Park

Frosty 5K & Reindeer Run
Fun for the whole family!
1 pm & 1:30 pm start
Visit website for registration and race details!
Santa’s Village—Starts 2:30 pm—Free Pictures with Santa
Christmas Train Rides for Kids
Thomas the Tank Engine Train rides
Snowglobe Live
Holiday Vendors

Stafford Christmas Parade
New Parade Route!
5 pm—Visit website for details

www.ChristmasinStafford.com
Get Noticed With VRE Advertising

VRE carries 20,000 passengers every workday and 70 percent of passengers have an annual household income of more than $100,000.

Reach our passengers with advertising opportunities on our platforms, in our trains and through our award-winning RIDE Magazine.

For more information go to www.vre.org/advertising or contact advertising@vre.org or (703) 838-5425.
RAIL TIME PUZZLES

ACROSS
1 Taters
6 Gather bit by bit
11 S&L amenity
14 Big Brother
17 Portraitist’s prop
18 Transitional state
19 Tangible
21 Two-purpose
22 Boot sole material
24 Singer Del Rey
25 Dagwood’s young neighbor
26 Eire
27 Number-aligning mark
29 Stun gun
30 Street vendor’s vehicle
31 Friend in the hood
35 Ukraine’s capital
37 Turf Builder seller
41 Unbooked slot
45 Soprano-range
49 Drummer’s cymbal pair
50 Thomas Hardy heroine
51 Blue-haired Simpson
53 Hoist
55 Ratton (out)
56 Slice of history
57 Firefighter listing
60 Fourth one counted, perhaps
61 Cabinet department
62 Pedometer reset reading
64 BOGO event
65 Walaa’s homeland
67 —proof (easy to operate)
69 Undercover worker
70 Dietist Nin
71 Fireplace adjunct
73 Italian wine city
75 Good bud
77 Warehouse
80 “Just as I thought!”
81 Thermometer
85 Make known
86 Brown shades
88 Navigation device
89 Small fry
90 Roofing piece
91 Prime-time hour
93 Sneezin’ reason, perhaps
95 Shaved-ice treats
97 Unhappy looks
99 Nest eggs, briefly
101 Takes, as advice
102 Go-betweens
106 Italian cheese city
110 Old West train robbers
113 Combat supplies
116 Keystone State port
117 Vogue rival
118 Alternate title for the puzzle
121 Untrustworthy one
122 Horse hue
123 Built for speed
124 Alternative to texting
125 Hasty escape
126 Peculiar
127 Gulf cousins
128 Overly sentimental
129 Sock part
130 Threesome
131 EMTs’ destinations
132 Ebenazer’s creator
134 Smoother tool
135 Smothing tool
136 Cry from a crib
137 Break quickly
138 Only president from Mo.
139 Ballroom dance move
140 Full of guile

DOWN
1 Dry, as vermouth
2 Up to __ (adequate)
3 Takes off the shelf
4 Captain Sparrow
5 Portrayer
6 Overfill
7 Cuba __ (cocktail)
8 Board a ship
9 Genesis shepherd
10 Likewise not
11 Van Gogh hangout
12 Show the ropes to
13 Fanatical
14 Fringe group
15 Ole Miss rival
16 Unkempt one
20 Asian priests
21 Shoulder muscle
23 Elvis record label
27 Ave who directed Selma
28 Structure with a keystone
30 diem worker
31 Red Monopoly piece
32 Puccini genre
33 Minnesota’s iron source
34 Helpful connections
36 News story
38 “Common Sense” pamphleteer
39 Raptor’s gripper
40 Knight’s mount
42 Physicians’ org.
43 Seer’s deck
44 Thus
46 Leave quickly, so to speak
47 Vivacity
48 Language suffix
52 Sticky stuff
54 NFL Live channel
55 Hollered
56 Jelled garnish
59 Watty creatures
62 “To a...” work
66 Fairway position
68 Small bills
69 Fine silver
70 Sci-fi visitor
71 Overfills
72 Island group
73 Florence’s river
74 Shut tightly
75 Tissue layer
76 Seeks info
78 Stopped from squeaking
79 Lock of hair
82 RNC’s group
83 Volcano near Palermo
84 GI-enteraining org.
87 Bus-stop structure
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“I’m going to refer you to a cardiologist.”

REZOLUTION LLC
BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN GENERATIONS
Generational Family Counseling • Executive Coaching • Leadership Training

Baby Boomers
- Flip Phones
- Savers/Pension
- Married
- Homeowners

Millennials
- Smartphones
- Less Affluent
- Less Likely to Marry
- Renters/Live w/ Parents

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