Summertime fun in the sun is pure Americana. That’s exactly what you’ll find at our Shores Club, just 30 miles from DC along two miles of Potomac River shoreline. Come discover the riverfront community with award-winning homes, golf, hiking and biking trails, an upcoming VRE train stop, future middle school and a big rec center that families will absolutely love.

Recreation Center with Swimming Pools (Now Open)
On-Site Elementary School (2017)
Future On-Site VRE Train Station
Hiking & Biking Trails
Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf Course & Clubhouse

Homes from the $300s to $800s
703-640-3975

Features and products vary by community. Price, offers, financing and availability are subject to change without notice.
Since the spring, we’ve eagerly awaited a notable anniversary – our 25th. The official service anniversary dates arrived with the summer, as service first began in 1992 on June 22nd on the Manassas line, and soon after on the Fredericksburg line on July 20th.

While our service started in the early nineties, the VRE story dates back to the 1960s. The VRE was only born after decades of negotiations, planning and to put it simply – struggle. Elected officials from what are now the participating jurisdictions relentlessly worked to pass legislation to fund initial capital costs and create a structure to work with host railroads. To honor these individuals who served as champions of bringing our commuter rail to the area, we started a tradition three years ago of placing their names on our locomotives. Page five features an article on this year’s honorees, as well as tribute to a VRE rider who was incredibly active in the system’s development and served as a VRE champion himself for several decades.

Our staff – myself included – enjoyed hearing from riders at this year’s Meet the Management who rode the first train to run on their VRE line. These riders have seen firsthand what impact the process improvements, equipment modernization, and line and facility expansions have had on our service. We make these changes with your interest at heart, as we continue on our path of long-term sustainability. In response to some things we heard at this year’s Meet the Management, please see answers to commonly asked questions on page 4. Likewise, learn about our LOU Facility project on page 6 and how it will allow us take our lifecycle maintenance principles to a higher level.

Thank you for reading this anniversary issue of RIDE magazine, and of course as always – thank you for riding VRE.

Sincerely,

DOUG ALLEN
Chief Executive Officer

Virginia Railway Express

DOUG ALLEN
Chief Executive Officer
Virginia Railway Express

Access RIDE online at www.VRE.org/RIDE
Discussions about the potential for a commuter rail service begin as early as 1964, but it wasn’t until 1988 that the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission and Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission participated in a year-long effort to produce a transportation plan to include identifying commuter rail corridors. The commuter rail project became known as Virginia Railway Express (VRE) with a logo matching the Virginia state flag color scheme. The rest is VRE history.

See a snapshot of how we’ve developed to better serve area commuters, and what we’re planning to accommodate the region’s growth in the years to come.

**PAST**

1992 - VRE began service with 3,000 rides per day in the first month.

1997 - All VRE parking lots became free.

1999 - VRE began to operate bi-level cars.

2007 - The Quantico Bridge was opened for use, providing a double mainline bridge over Quantico Creek and greatly improving operational efficiency.

2015 - The mobile ticketing app was introduced.

**PRESENT**

2017 - VRE currently supports 20,000 riders a day on high demand days — equating to 150 miles of interstate.

2017 - Last month, the Manassas Line celebrated its 25th anniversary on June 22.

2017 - This month, the Fredericksburg Line will celebrate its 25th anniversary on July 20.

**FUTURE**

- **Automatic Passenger Counter**
  By having real-time passenger counts, you will have visibility into each train’s capacity and be able to factor the information into your commuting plan.

- **Longer Trains**
  Longer trains are in the near future. We are currently working to expand our storage while trains are not in service.

- **Station Monitor Updates**
  We’re working to update the monitors at our stations to offer more system news.

- **Platform Extensions and Station Improvements**
  We are working on a number of capital projects. See an overview on page 3, and then visit vre.org/development to learn more.

**SYSTEM START**

- **PRESEN T SYSTEM**
  - Through first 25 years (1992-2016)
  - 3,000 riders per day when service began
  - 20,000 riders per day in high demand

**FUTURE SYSTEM**

- **RIDERSHIP EQUIVALENT IN INTERSTATE LANE MILES**
  - 22 MILES of interstate
  - 150 MILES of interstate
  - 375 MILES of interstate

**NUMBER OF CARS TO SUPPORT CAPACITY NEEDS**

- **3-CAR CONSIST**
  - Average when service began
  - Completed, select highlights

- **6-CAR CONSIST**
  - Average
  - In-progress, select highlights

- **10-CAR CONSIST**
  - Average at 2040 goal
  - Future, select highlights

**DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS TO SUPPORT CAPACITY & IMPROVE EFFICIENCY**

- **- Bi-Level Cars**
- **- New Quantico Bridge**
- **- Spotsylvania Station & Storage Yard**
- **- Acquiring More Cars**
- **- Lengthening Platforms**
- **- Increasing Train Storage**

**COMMUNICATION ADVANCES**

- **TRAIN TALK**
  - First version in late 1990s

- **MOBILE APP**
  - Introduced in 2015

- **SOCIAL MEDIA**
  - Service Updates

- **AUTOMATIC PASSENGER COUNTER**
  - Realtime capacity information

For more, visit vre.org/development.
Our development team handles a number of projects related to both new construction as well the expansion of existing structures — all with the shared goals of improving system efficiency and increasing rider satisfaction.

So, what’s currently under construction and expected to soon reach completion? Projects at Union Station, Lorton and L’Enfant are in home stretch. See anticipated completion dates below.

Our capital development program is funded through Regional, State and Federal Grants, as our system plays an important role in the area’s congestion relief.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>PHASE</th>
<th>COMPLETION</th>
<th>COMPLETION DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Union Station Improvements (Amtrak/VRE Joint Recapitalization)</td>
<td>Reconstruction of platform canopies</td>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>4th QTR 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorton Station Improvements</td>
<td>Extend existing platform</td>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>4th QTR 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L’Enfant North Storage Track</td>
<td>Conversion of an existing siding into a midday storage track with layover power for one train</td>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>3rd QTR 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L’Enfant South Storage Track</td>
<td>Conversion of an existing siding into a midday storage track with layover power for one train</td>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>4th QTR 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learn more: vre.org/development
MEET THE MANAGEMENT FAQS

Q: Why is speaker volume too low in the cars? Or why is the speaker volume too loud?

A: Our speaker volume is set at 22 dBA. If there seems to be a technical problem with a speaker in a particular car, please let us know by submitting the issue through our website at: vre.org/about/contact/train-info-form

Q: Was the Gainesville–Haymarket Extension project officially put to rest?

A: Yes. The decision was made to expand operations at the current Broad Run site. A design effort has begun. Look for details on that effort in next month’s RIDE.

Q: Why are there organized solicitors at some stations?

A: We do permit select small groups at our stations as long as they stay within the parameters we’ve set for them. They are not authorized to speak to riders unless addressed first, and similarly they are not allowed to approach riders as riders must approach them.

Q: What can be done to improve the safety in the Broad Run lot?

A: We have shared the concerns with Prince William County, and we are working with the county on ways to have a positive impact on the driving behavior. On July 12, we were at the Broad Run platform for a pop-up event, similar to Meet the Management. Prince William County PD joined us at the event to observe tendencies in the parking lot.

Q: Will the Rolling Road parking lot be expanded?

A: Fairfax County is looking at possible solutions. For now, we suggest trying the Burke Centre station which has ample parking availability in the garage.

Q: When will the lighting be addressed at my station?

A: We are currently updating the lighting across our stations. Look for the lighting at your station to be updated soon. To submit a lighting issue through our website, please visit: vre.org/about/contact/station-concerns-form

OPERATIONS BOARD MEMBER GARY SKINNER RECOGNIZED BY VTA

On Wednesday, May 24, the Virginia Transit Association (VTA) named The Honorable Gary Skinner, Spotsylvania County Board of Supervisors, as the 2017 winner of the Outstanding Contributions by an Individual Award. The award presentation was held at the VTA’s Awards Luncheon during their Annual Conference in Crystal City.

The Outstanding Contributions by an Individual Award recognizes extraordinary efforts to improve public transportation in the Commonwealth of Virginia. As a member of the VRE Operations Board, Supervisor Skinner was a long-time advocate for expanding commuter rail into Spotsylvania County, and under his leadership, the VRE Spotsylvania Station opened for service in 2015. Mr. Skinner’s contributions have made a lasting impact on commuters across Virginia, as VRE experienced historic growth during his tenure as the 2016 VRE Operations Board Chairman.

Prior to joining the Board of Supervisors in 2008, Supervisor Skinner served on the Spotsylvania County School Board. He served in the US Marine Corps for 20 years and is a decorated veteran of Desert Storm.
The May ceremony started however not by honoring a VRE board member, but by recognizing an incredible rider: Dick Peacock. Dick joined the Virginia Association of Railway Patrons (VARP) to help get the VRE established and was their secretary until his passing in May 2016. He rode VRE from Manassas to Arlington, and actively supported system initiatives. One of the projects he helped promote before his passing was the construction of a safety fence at the Burke VRE–Amtrak station to prevent trespassers from taking a shortcut into harm’s way. VRE CEO Doug Allen presented a bench dedicated to Dick, recognizing Mr. Peacock as a champion of VRE.

Dan Peacock, spoke on his brother Dick’s behalf, saying, “For over a quarter of a century, I watched Dick pour his heart, soul, and body in promoting VRE in the written word, in the spoken word, and in attending countless VRE Board Meetings.” He went on to say, “This bench will be a constant reminder of his efforts, and those of many others, who have made VRE one of the best commuter rail systems in the country.” Dan ended with, “Long live VRE!”

Following Dan’s remarks, the Honorable Maureen Caddigan was called to the podium to see her name on the large metal plate that would soon be secured to the front of a locomotive. Supervisor Caddigan, who has served on the board for over 18 years, spoke fondly of when she led a VRE delegation to Japan to evaluate the new generation of railcars. She was selected for this year’s Board Recognition Program for her advocacy in many projects including the Quantico Bridge, Quantico Station renovation, and the Woodbridge Station parking deck.

The next recognized at the event was Joe Alexander. Mr. Alexander’s 30+ years of vision and commitment to the public transportation industry resulted in many lasting contributions to the Washington area. He not only served on Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority’s board for 23 years, but was also a founding member of the VRE Operations Board. He helped to coordinate financing for VRE, and he was instrumental in getting the Franconia–Springfield Metrorail and VRE stations built. When offering his remarks, he lovingly joked that he had a realization that morning – “Joe Alexander” will continue to have a presence on the rails for years to come.

Finally, David Brickley was called to the podium for recognition. Mr. Brickley was an early believer in establishing VRE. In 1985, he chaired the General Assembly’s commuter rail Subcommittee, and was the chief sponsor of state legislation creating the VRE and the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission. His legislation also resolved insurance issues and provided a revenue source (gasoline tax) to jurisdictions joining the VRE. This incentive helped the Counties of Stafford and Prince William, plus the cities of Manassas and Fredericksburg to be able to afford the future operation of the rail service. He was one of the founding members of the VRE Operations Board back when commuter rail service was just a dream. He served as Vice-Chairman in 1991, and was Chairman when the VRE officially went into operation in 1992. Mr. Brickley offered interesting facts on VRE’s history that was unknown even to current staff, particularly why the VRE logo is modeled after the historic Railway Express Agency design.
LIFECYCLE OVERHAUL AND UPGRADE FACILITY

In 2014, the VRE Operations Board adopted a lifecycle maintenance strategy for VRE rolling stock. The basis of this strategy is to maintain VRE locomotives and passenger cars at the highest level of reliability throughout the life of the equipment.

As VRE continues to acquire new vehicles to extend the train sets, the ongoing maintenance will become increasingly important. A new building at the Crossroads Maintenance and Storage Facility will be constructed to specifically perform this work and will be fully dedicated to these activities.

This new building, appropriately named the Lifecycle Overhaul and Upgrade (LOU) building, will be almost twice as large as the existing Service and Inspection building at about 33,000 square feet. The new Track 0 will be added. Tracks 2 and 3 will be reconfigured, with Track 3 ending as a stub track providing additional storage.

Environmental coordination is complete with approval by FTA of a Categorical Exclusion showing no impacts to the environment, including historic and archaeological features.

Underfloor Wheel Truing Machine

Purpose: A wheel truing machine is used to keep the train wheels perfectly round and eliminate flat spots, resulting in a smoother ride and reduced wear on the rails. The underfloor wheel truing machine will re-machine wheels without requiring removing them from the truck or vehicle. The highly specialized machine will restore the profile and roundness in accordance with VRE and AAR standards. VRE currently does not have the capability to perform this maintenance function at any VRE facility. Consequently, wheelsets must be removed from locomotives and coaches and transported to an offsite facility/vendor for re-machining.

Machine Description: The wheel truing machine will be located on a shop maintenance track and is comprised of a pit mounted C-Frame milling machine and dual cutting heads with multiple cutters. The machine has retracting rails that permit the cutters to contact the vehicle’s wheels and be re-machined. The machine also includes a conveyor system to collect and transport the steel scrap chips that are generated by the machining operation to a storage container. Vehicles will be moved on and off the wheel truing machine with a floor-mounted powered winch system.

LOU PROJECT BENEFITS

- Supports VRE’s lifecycle maintenance strategy
- Facilitates higher levels of maintenance, upgrades & overhauls in-house
- Greatly decreases the need to move equipment offsite for service
- Reduces equipment downtime
- Minimizes the need to purchase additional spare equipment
Drop Table System

**Purpose:** The drop table system will be located on a shop maintenance track and will permit VRE to remove and replace trucks, combos, and single axles from locomotives and coaches without lifting the vehicles. This equipment reduces the amount of time required to change out the noted components and provides a method that enhances safety. The drop table system is needed to accommodate the increased truck change out requirements of VRE’s growing fleet.

**Machine Description:** The drop table system equipment consists of a 100-ton capacity service top, pit-mounted transfer table, bascule-type release top, load beams, and body supports. It will also include a progression system to move trucks or HEP extraction equipment from the transfer table into a below ground storage area.

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**NEXT IN THE LOU PROJECT**

Advertisement for construction of the LOU building is on hold pending adjacent property acquisition to replace the two tracks that will be taken out of storage for use in the LOU facility. The new drop table and wheel truing machine manufacturers have been selected although the award of the contracts is on hold also pending the property acquisition. Funding is being provided by FTA, State Mass Transit funds and VRE.

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Music on Mill Free Summer Concert Series
River Mill Park, 458 Mill Street, Occoquan
July 7-September 16, from 6pm to 8pm
Concerts are held on 1st Friday and 3rd Saturday evenings.

Historic Manassas Thursday Farmers Market
Harris Pavilion, 9201 Center St, Manassas
August 3, from 7:30am to 1pm
Free parking available in the parking garage. SNAP is accepted.

Alexandria Summer Restaurant Week
More than 50 restaurants in Old Town, Del Ray & the West End
August 18-27, 2017
For 10 days and two weekends, enjoy dining specials throughout Alexandria: $35 three-course dinner for one, $35 dinner for two, and several restaurants will also offer $10-$20 lunch specials.

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