VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS

Press Release

For Immediate Release
November 20, 2026

Office of Public Affairs
Contact: Lindsey Martin
703-838-5434 (office)
571-684-1793 (mobile)
lmartin@vre.org

VRE cuts ribbon on newly named "Independence Yard"

Formerly known as Seminary Yard, renaming of rail yard marks new era of VRE rail operations

Alexandria, Va. – Virginia Railway Express (VRE) and its partners today celebrated the renaming of the rail yard formerly known as Seminary Yard to "Independence Yard" with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. In addition to the renaming, the event also marked the completion of the first phase of site improvements and rehabilitation efforts that activate the site for substantial VRE rail operations.

VRE acquired the rail yard located in the City of Alexandria earlier this year through a purchase agreement with the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority for $35.8 million, as part of a five-year, $155 million dollar agreement between the two parties for the transfer of four separate property interests. The facility fills a crucial operational need by providing midday storage for VRE trains, supporting more enhanced and efficient rail operations across the system. VRE has previously relied upon Amtrak's Ivy City Coach Yard in Washington, D.C., for midday train storage, requiring significant schedule coordination.

The renaming is a nod to the 250th anniversary of our nation's independence. For VRE, the name reflects both that milestone and the significance of independent ownership of a strategically located facility during a moment of rebirth for passenger rail in Virginia.

"Independence Yard is more than a new name. It demonstrates what this facility means for VRE and the riders we serve," said VRE CEO Katie Choe. "Owning this strategically located yard gives us the independence to store, maintain, and position our trains where and when they're

needed. That means more efficient operations today and a stronger foundation for the service our riders will count on in the years ahead."

"This celebration reflects what our jurisdictions and partners can accomplish when they work together to accomplish our shared vision for passenger rail," said VRE Operations Board Chair Andrea Bailey. "In the year we mark 250 years of American independence, it is fitting that VRE takes this step toward greater independence for our own operations. On behalf of the Operations Board, I thank everyone who helped bring this first phase of improvements to completion."

The increased resiliency in VRE operations offered by Independence Yard was demonstrated earlier this fall during a ten-day outage at Union Station as Amtrak conducted critical infrastructure work that also eliminated access into the Ivy City Rail Yard, just north of Union Station and previously VRE's sole location for midday storage. Independence Yard provided an alternative midday storage option for all VRE trains, allowing VRE to preserve service at all stations south of Union Station during the work.

VRE will continue phased improvements to Independence Yard, further preparing the site for operational readiness as VRE looks to introduce first-ever weekend service and weekday bi-directional trips upon the Commonwealth of Virginia's completion of the new Long Bridge and additional rail infrastructure upgrades as part of the Transforming Rail in Virginia initiative.

VRE, Virginia's premier regional rail service, connects Central and Northern Virginia with the District of Columbia. VRE is recognized for its provision of safe, reliable, convenient, and comfortable transportation. Its two lines, Manassas and Fredericksburg, serve 19 stations, including two – L'Enfant and Union Station – in D.C. VRE is co-owned and co-operated by the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission and the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission. Additional information, including fares and schedules, is available at www.vre.org.

###