There are so many reasons life at Potomac Shores is so unique. Our resort-style
destination boasts 2,000 impressive acres. Two miles of shoreline. Ten miles of trails.
Jack Nicklaus Signature golf. A private social and rec center—officially underway.
A planned town center. An upcoming VRE stop. Well-appointed Tidewater homes.
And a prime location only 30 miles from DC. Come feel the love and get mobile.

CALL OR VISIT THE GREETING HOUSE: 855-808-6051
VRE’s Commitment to Security

Comprehensive safety and security measures are extremely important to VRE. We frequently perform safety and security drills to improve our capabilities and enhance our relationships with federal, state and local law enforcement officials and security personnel from our host railroads.

Recently, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Transportation Security Administration (TSA) awarded VRE and four other rail and mass transit agencies with the 2014 “Gold Standard” — the administration’s highest security rating. This was part of TSA’s 2014 Baseline Assessments for Security Enhancement program, which involves a voluntary review of various security measures ranging from security plans and training to public outreach efforts and background check programs.

While this is a great honor to be recognized for our efforts, we continue to be vigilant and focused on the constantly changing security landscape.

As a VRE rider, your participation in the safety and security process is critically important. Staying alert to situations that you haven’t seen before or behavior that makes you uncomfortable should be addressed immediately. Please alert a VRE crewmember or call 911 if you notice:

- Unattended packages
- Suspicious or unreasonably nervous behavior
- People in bulky, seasonally inappropriate clothing
- Exposed wiring or other irregularities on luggage
- Anyone tampering with surveillance cameras or entering unauthorized areas

Also, please keep in mind there are some proactive steps you can take as well, such as keeping your travel bags and belongings with you at all times.

Safety and security is the highest priority at VRE as we value our commitment to creating “A BETTER WAY. A BETTER LIFE.” for our region’s commuters.

DOUG ALLEN
Chief Executive Officer
Virginia Railway Express
CELEBRATE TRAINS

Most children would love to be where you are right now – riding the VRE rails today. Or better yet, being the engineer for their own railroad.

Model railroading is a positive real world in miniature featuring locomotives hauling freight or passenger cars passing by houses, factories, streets and people. For a family assembling their first model railroad it is both an adventure and an adult guided activity. Children learn to master three-dimensional tracks, locomotives, cars and buildings.

The world of model railroading is very welcoming. Model railroad clubs such as the Virginia Train Collectors and the Washington-Baltimore and Annapolis (WB&A) Chapter of the Train Collectors Association love to share their enjoyment and skills with families and their children.

These two train collectors’ clubs team up to celebrate National Train Day and sponsor “North Meets South - Great Train Show & Sale” on Saturday, May 9, 2015, at the Eagles Lodge, 21 Cool Spring Road in Fredericksburg. Learn more at: www.wbachapter.org

Additionally, Amtrak Train Days kicks off at Chicago’s Union Station on May 9, and then will “hit the rails,” traveling to over 20 locations across the country from May through October including Washington’s Union Station. Learn more at: www.amtraktraindays.com
CLEO BRICKHOUSE & JOHNNY HAGAN

Cleo Brickhouse and Johnny Hagan have been working in railroad logistics for more than 40 years in the Washington region. These Amtrak employees, housed at Amtrak's Ivy City coach facility just north of Union Station, serve VRE every workday, as a team, by coordinating VRE's operations at Washington's Union Station.

Not only are they working hard to ensure success on VRE, they are also VRE passengers, getting to Union Station every workday from their homes in Fredericksburg utilizing VRE.

“We are the behind-the-scenes guys that makes things work,” said Hagan. “We work hard to maintain quality service on VRE.”

Hagan started his railroad career with the original Auto-Train in Lorton in 1972 and has been working with VRE since the launch of service in 1992. He previously coordinated operations at VRE's Broad Run Yard, while Brickhouse has been managing traffic flow for all trains in and out of Union Station and other jobs at the Ivy City yard since he started 41 years ago.

“We make a great team,” said Brickhouse. “Even when we are on vacation, we check in to ensure operations are going smoothly.”

They both plan to retire next year and are training and mentoring their staff to take on their roles.

They have seen substantial change in railroad operations, particularly on safety and advancements in technology.

They are also proud that train transportation has become more popular since they began working in the 1970's, but this popularity has led to logistic challenges to accommodate all the Amtrak, MARC and VRE trains utilizing Union Station.

They both noted that there are challenges every day, especially due to weather or rail congestion.

“Everything changes from day to day and we adapt,” said Hagan. “No day is harder or easier, just different.”

Brickhouse commented, “It's like a game of chess. There are lots of challenges, but we make it happen.”

Since Brickhouse and Hagan ride VRE every workday, they are sometimes asked to help out when there is an issue during their commute. One night Hagan was on a VRE train that became disabled and was asked to assist. When he came back after resolving the issues, passengers told him thank you for helping them not be delayed too long in getting home.

When they are not working, Brickhouse and Hagan like to spend time with their families. Brickhouse also uses his mechanical training to fix up muscle cars, while Hagan enjoys traveling.

They are not thinking much about their retirement plans, as they are very focused on their responsibilities to VRE's passengers having a smooth commute to ensure VRE's success.

“Customer service is very important and we try hard to keep up good service,” noted Hagan.

“We are the behind-the-scenes guys that makes things work. We work hard to maintain quality service on VRE.” – Johnny Hagan

“We make a great team. Even when we are on vacation, we check in to ensure operations are going smoothly.” – Cleo Brickhouse
VRE SUPPORTS INCREASING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMUTER BENEFITS

In the U.S., 2.7 million commuters rely on the transit commuter benefit to reduce their out of pocket costs.

Public transportation provides an affordable, and for many, a necessary alternative to driving while reducing traffic congestion, improving air quality, saving energy; all while decreasing the need to spend more tax dollars on building highways.

From 2009 until 2013, federal commuter transit and parking benefits were set at the same amount of $245 a month. The amount for transit has now been reduced to $130 per month while the parking benefit has increased to $250 per month which promotes driving and more traffic congestion instead of using public transportation.

Many employers, including government agencies, encourage the use of public transportation and offer their employees the ability to pay for transit expenses on a pre-tax basis or subsidize up to the maximum IRS allowed amount of $130 monthly. Additionally, if an employer does not offer transit benefits, an employee can deduct up to the maximum amount each month from their federal taxes.

This year, the “Commuter Parity Act of 2015” has been introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives with bipartisan support. The legislation would establish parity between the parking and transit benefit by setting the monthly caps for both at $235 per month that could be given as an employer subsidy, pre-tax benefit, or tax deduction creating sound transportation policy and fair tax policy at the same time.

“The Commuter Parity Act ensures that commuters receive the same level of tax relief regardless of whether they drive or use public transportation,” said Rep. Peter King (R-NY), sponsor of the bill in a statement. “This legislation is a common-sense solution to ensuring that public transportation is a cost-effective choice.”

VRE is working with members of Congress to support this legislation and we hope to permanently make transit benefits equal to parking benefits so transit riders can enjoy the same benefit as automobile users for their commute to work. We know this is an important issue to VRE riders and we’ll keep you apprised of future developments.
VRE UPDATE

VRE LAUNCHES GAINESVILLE-HAYMARKET EXTENSION STUDY

VRE is initiating a study for an 11-mile extension of its Manassas Line through Gainesville to the general vicinity of VA Route 15 near Haymarket.

Prior studies looked at the opportunities and benefits of extending commuter rail service to the Gainesville-Haymarket area and the I-66 Corridor. The extensive growth in housing in western Prince William County, coupled with emerging employment centers such as the Innovation Technology Center, VA Gateway and George Mason University’s Prince William Campus make the Gainesville-Haymarket area an exciting prospect for new service. This was illustrated in the VRE System Plan 2040, which identified Gainesville-Haymarket Extension as a priority to expand regional mobility.

VRE, working in conjunction with the Norfolk Southern Railway (NS), the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, Prince William County and other stakeholders, is launching this analysis to advance the extension building on previous studies of the corridor. It will investigate service plans and station locations, assess possible environmental effects and result in defining a locally preferred alternative for the extension.

The study area for the Gainesville-Haymarket extension is defined by the alignment of NS’s “B-Line” in western Prince William County. Study limits extend from Manassas Junction to the general vicinity of VA Route 15 west of Haymarket. Station sites have not been identified. The prior study looked at general areas where stations might be needed, as shown on the adjoining map.

The current Gainesville-Haymarket Extension Study is anticipated to require up to 30 months to complete and is the first step on the road to starting commuter rail service to Gainesville-Haymarket. If the analysis warrants moving forward, final design and construction would follow with a start of passenger service after 2020.

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and DRPT are also studying multimodal improvements in the areas as part of the Outside the Beltway Study for the I-66 Corridor. While both studies lead to the Gainesville-Haymarket area, they follow different paths and address different intermediate markets. Multifaceted problems have multifaceted solutions, so VRE and VDOT are working together to identify complementary services to improve mobility for western Prince William County. Learn more at www.transform66.org.

VRE will be conducting a series of public meetings and workshops throughout the course of current study. Your opinion matters to us and is important to guide decisions regarding the Gainesville-Haymarket extension and how it might fit into your community. Please visit www.vre.org for the latest study updates and to find out about opportunities to get involved.
JOIN VRE FOR BIKE TO WORK DAY 2015

Help the environment, alleviate traffic congestion and get fit by biking to a VRE station on Bike to Work Day on Friday, May 15, 2015.

With more than 50 percent of VRE riders living within five miles of the VRE station they use to get to work, biking is an option for many VRE riders.

VRE’s Burke, Manassas, Rippon and Woodbridge stations will serve as pit stops for Bike to Work Day, so bike to one of these stations in the morning, lock up your bike and then ride on VRE to your final destination. Additionally, there will be more than 80 other pit spots throughout the DC metro area.

Each pit stop will provide registered attendees with refreshments plus free T-shirts and chances to win bicycles and other great prizes. Please be sure to register with your pit stop location to be eligible for the free T-shirts and prize raffle. T-shirts are available to the first 14,000 participants who register and attend. Feel free to visit multiple pit stops on Bike to Work Day but remember your free Bike to Work Day T-shirt can only be picked up at the pit stop you choose while registering.

To register and learn more about Bike to Work Day, go to www.biketoworkmetrodcc.org.

If you wish to bring your bike onto VRE, collapsible bicycles are permitted on all cars, on all trains. These bicycles must be completely folded and safely stored in overhead luggage racks, under seats or in some other place that is not an inconvenience to other passengers. Full size bicycles are only allowed on selected trains. Go to www.vre.org/bikepolicy to review VRE’s complete bike policy.

NATIONAL DAY OF ADVOCACY FOCUSES ON TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

Join VRE on Thursday, April 9, 2015 for Stand Up for Transportation Day!

Sponsored by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), Stand Up for Transportation Day is an opportunity to call attention to the importance of transportation infrastructure investment.

Despite the importance of transportation infrastructure, the only time we generally think about infrastructure is when it fails or is absent – the collapse of a bridge, frustrating traffic congestion or overcrowded buses, subways and trains.

“Stand Up for Transportation Day is a single day when all transportation organizations and their coalition partners unite in common purpose with a unified message,” said APTA Chair Phillip Washington, who serves as general manager and chief executive officer of Denver’s Regional Transportation District. “It’s time to set aside partisanship and once again act in the best interest of our country to repair, strengthen and build transportation infrastructure.”

A major issue APTA is advocating on this year is for the U.S. Congress to reauthorize the federal Highway Trust Fund. The fund supports public transportation and highway programs and expires on May 31, 2015. APTA is encouraging Congress to enact a new multi-year authorization bill that provides dedicated funding for the Highway Trust Fund, to pay for the current federal transit program and the growth of that program for transit and highway infrastructure needs.

The economic benefits that come with transportation infrastructure investment are indisputable. For every $1 invested, there is $4 in economic benefits. While passenger fares, combined with state and local funding, pay for more than 80 percent of the $61 billion in public transportation expenditures each year, federal spending is a critical part of paying for capital and operating expenses at public transportation systems nationally.

Get involved! On April 9 post messages on social media to support Stand Up for Transportation Day by using the hashtags of #StandUp4Transportation, #SU4T and #PublicTransportation.

Learn more about Stand Up for Transportation Day at www.apta.com/standup4transportation.
SPOTLIGHT ON KEOLIS

MEET LAMAR BATES

The goal of every VRE employee is to provide a safe and enjoyable service to their passengers, and perhaps nobody embodies that mission more than Lamar Bates. A locomotive engineer, Lamar has spent more than 10 years riding the rails and, as of last year, became a designated supervisor of locomotive engineers for the VRE.

“We pursue excellence not for the glorification of the service, but to satisfy our passengers...to make sure they feel gratified each day,” he says. “It’s all about the passengers.”

“We pursue excellence not for the glorification of the service, but to satisfy our passengers ... to make sure they feel gratified each day. It’s all about the passengers.”

Lamar began his career in 2005, working as a freight conductor for CSX out of his hometown of Richmond, Virginia. In 2010, he joined the VRE team, seeking a new and more exciting job as a passenger rail engineer. He’s never looked back.

“I never thought I’d be working on the railroad,” said Lamar. “My father has been an Amtrak employee for more than 30 years, but I never talked with him much about entering the railroad business.”

In fact, Lamar didn’t tell his father until after he had already entered training with CSX.

During his free time, Lamar enjoys playing golf and watching his beloved Dallas Cowboys - a risky proposition in this part of the country! But above all, he enjoys serving his passengers.

“I want to fulfill the needs of the passengers. We work for them,” he says. “Passengers should feel at home when they ride, just like when Dorothy clicks her heels in The Wizard of Oz. There’s no place like home... that’s what I want them to feel like.”

Lamar certainly feels at home with VRE, where he says he’s honored to work with diligent managers and co-workers that strive for excellence. So keep an eye out for Lamar. He’s working hard to make your day, and your commute, an enjoyable one.

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WHEN RIDING ON THE VRE we ask that you make every effort to be courteous to your fellow passengers. Below are a few courtesy reminders:

- Please be quiet in the Quiet Car. Refrain from rustling newspapers, making noise with any type of electronic devices, etc. If you are constantly coughing please find a seat in another car.

- If you are not in the Quiet Car, you are allowed to talk out loud, but please keep in mind your surroundings. Please refrain from swearing and shouting to others from opposite ends of the car or the opposite sides of the train.

Note: Quiet Car is a registered service mark of Amtrak.
STAYING SAFE

Wear sensible, non-slip shoes

Always use the handrails

Be alert stepping on or off the train

Don’t rush

HEAD TO TOE

VRE.ORG/SAFETY
SAFE TRAVELS
ICE TRACKS? THINK TRAIN.