WELCOME TO THE FAST TRACK,
SPOTSYLVANIA
Reason #48
A community to grow on.

There’s a lot to love about our well-appointed Tidewater homes—welcoming families to Potomac Shores. Choose from five new neighborhoods by Ryan Homes and NVHomes. Traditional and main-level living with indoor/outdoor floorplans. Over a dozen home designs with two to seven bedrooms. And golf or forest views. It’s riverfront living only 30 miles from DC. Where every home comes with an exquisite community. Upcoming VRE stop—now under construction.

CALL OR VISIT THE GREETING HOUSE: 855-808-6051

* Mention this ad to receive an additional $10,000 towards options or closing costs. Offer ends 12/31/15. Promotion subject to change at any time.
CELEBRATE THE SEASON AT VRE

The holiday season is time to share in joy, generosity and festivities. For VRE, there is much to celebrate with our annual traditions plus the opening of a new station!

Work is nearly complete on the Spotsylvania Station – the new end-of-the-line station on the Fredericksburg Line and the first extension of VRE service since we launched in 1992. Commencement of service is scheduled for the morning of Monday, November 16, with an official ribbon-cutting ceremony taking place at 10 a.m.

Located off of U.S. 17 on Crossroads Parkway, six miles south of downtown Fredericksburg, the station will have 1,500 parking spaces and should considerably ease parking congestion at the Fredericksburg Station. Also, to provide more capacity on the Fredericksburg Line, an additional morning and evening train is planned for later this year.

This new station would not have been possible without the vision, dedication and leadership of Gary Skinner, VRE’s current Vice-Chairman and Spotsylvania County Supervisor. Read more about our new station and Spotsylvania County on page 4.

Additionally, we are extremely proud to continue our holiday tradition of hosting Operation Lifesaver Santa Trains and our U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program. Santa Train tickets will go on sale Monday, November 23 at 9 a.m. and the event will occur on Saturday, December 12. These tickets sell out quickly, so be prepared to purchase your tickets online or at select vendor locations.

Toys for Tots is an annual event where VRE partners with the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve to collect toys and donations for those who cannot afford a holiday gift. The collection of toys and donations will occur on Wednesday, December 9 on all morning VRE trains and at VRE participating stations the day of the Santa Trains. For the last two years, VRE riders were the largest contributor to the Toys for Tots Fredericksburg distribution center.

We appreciate your continued generosity during the holiday season. Please see more information on Santa Trains and Toys for Tots on page 2. As Thanksgiving approaches, we at VRE are thankful to have you riding along with us.

DOUG ALLEN
Chief Executive Officer
MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR SANTA TRAINS AND TOYS FOR TOTS

Every December, VRE gives children, their families and their friends a chance to do something magical – ride a train with Santa, Mrs. Claus and Santa’s helpers, who are all on board VRE trains to promote rail safety with Operation Lifesaver!

This year’s Operation Lifesaver Santa Trains will take place on Saturday, December 12, with ticket sales starting Monday, November 23 at 9 a.m. Tickets are $5 each at the ticket outlets and $6 each online with net proceeds benefiting Operation Lifesaver. Payments at the ticket outlets may be made with cash or check payable to “VRE.” Online purchases can be made with a credit card. Please note that regular VRE tickets will not be honored for Santa Trains. All passengers, regardless of age, must have tickets, and tickets must be purchased in advance, as they will not be sold at the station the day of the event.

During the Santa Trains, you can participate in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program by bringing an unwrapped toy, a donation or gift card.

On Wednesday, December 9, you can also participate in Toys for Tots on your morning train by leaving an unwrapped toy on your seat. The VRE “elves” will collect and deliver them to Toys for Tots. If you would like to give a gift card or make a monetary donation (using cash or checks payable to “Toys for Tots”), please see your conductor that same morning. The conductors will be competing to see who can collect the most Toys for Tots donations.

The toys and donations by VRE riders will go towards making the holidays for underprivileged children in our region a more special and exciting time. VRE riders have always been very generous in the past and we would like to continue this tradition by helping make this holiday season special for children who may not be as fortunate as others.

Bull Run Festival of Lights
Wednesday, Nov. 18 – Sunday, Jan. 3
Mondays – Thursdays: 5:30–9:30 p.m.
Fridays – Sundays plus Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year’s Eve and New Year’s Day: 5:30–10 p.m.
Bull Run Regional Park
7700 Bull Run Dr., Centreville, VA
The Bull Run Festival of Lights is a drive-through holiday light show featuring 40,000 beautiful light displays set to music. There is also a Holiday Village featuring holiday gifts and children’s activities.
www.bullrunfestivaloflights.com

Wolf Trap Holiday Sing-a-Long
Saturday, Dec. 5, 4 p.m.
Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts’ Filene Center
1551 Trap Rd., Vienna, VA
Kick off the holiday season with family and friends at Wolf Trap’s 2015 Holiday Sing-A-Long. This annual musical celebration hosts a performance by the United States Marine Band and a sing-a-long of Christmas carols and Hanukkah songs with choir and vocal groups from the Washington area.
Admission is free and no tickets are required.
Parking is free, but limited, so plan on arriving early.
www.wolftrap.org

Spotsylvania County Christmas Parade
Saturday, Dec. 5, 1 p.m.
Spotsylvania Courthouse Area
The Spotsylvania Parks and Recreation Department presents the 38th Annual Christmas Parade. Join in this tradition with the 2015 theme of “Gingerbread Jamboree.”
www.spotsylvania.va.us
VRE MOBILE TIPS:
HOW TO UPDATE YOUR VRE MOBILE ACCOUNT WHEN GETTING A NEW PHONE OR UPGRADING YOUR OPERATING SYSTEM

Are you upgrading your operating system to Apple iOS 9 or Android Marshmallow? If so, your VRE Mobile app should continue working just fine. But if you plan on buying a new device, restoring your device from a backup or deleting and reinstalling the app, be sure to follow the instructions in this article first!

If you bought a new iPhone or other smartphone, you must make sure you transfer your tickets from your phone to your online account first, so that you don’t accidentally lose any tickets.

Your tickets are stored on your phone (which makes it possible to use them without an internet connection), so you need to transfer your tickets from your phone to your online account before activating your new device.

Here’s how to transfer your tickets:
**Step 1:** Login to your account at http://vre.transitsherpa.com from a computer.
**Step 2:** On the website, navigate to the “My Tickets” section and then click on the “Transfer Tickets” button.
**Step 3:** In the app on your old device, refresh your tickets – they will be removed from your old device and sent back to your web account.

**Step 4:** To download the tickets on your new device, reinstall the app, sign into your account and refresh your tickets.

To refresh the passes on an Android phone, touch the refresh icon in the top right hand corner of the app. The icon looks like a circle with an arrow on it. To refresh the passes on an iPhone drag your finger from the top of the app to the bottom of the app.

As always, please let us know your thoughts on VRE Mobile by emailing feedback@vre.org or calling 844-353-3408.
SPOTSYLVANIA UPDATE

WELCOME TO THE FAST TRACK, SPOTSYLVANIA

VRE LAUNCHES THE SPOTSYLVANIA STATION

Work is nearly completed on the VRE Spotsylvania Station. When the station opens for service on Monday, November 16, it will be the new end-of-the-line station on the Fredericksburg Line and the first station located in Spotsylvania County. This is the first extension of VRE service since VRE launched in 1992.

The station consists of a 1,500-space parking lot, waiting area with bathroom facilities and a 700-foot platform with canopy capable of supporting a train up to seven cars long.

Similar to the Fredericksburg Station, the new Spotsylvania Station will be included in Fare Zone 9. To provide more capacity on the Fredericksburg Line, an additional morning and evening train is planned for later this year.

VRE and Spotsylvania County will host a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Spotsylvania Station on Monday, November 16 at 10 a.m. Local, state and federal elected officials will be in attendance to commemorate the event. The public is invited to attend.

Station address is: 9442 Crossroads Parkway, Fredericksburg, VA.

GET TO KNOW SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY

Spotsylvania County’s 407 square miles contains a mix of beautiful rural landscape alongside an energetic, growing community. Spotsylvania is one of Virginia’s fastest-growing counties, largely because of its desirable location along I-95, midway between metropolitan Washington and Richmond. 2010 U.S. Census figures indicate an estimated County population of 122,397.

Known as the “Crossroads of the Civil War,” Spotsylvania County is rich in historical resources. The County welcomes visitors to Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania County Battlefields National Military Park – including Chancellorsville, Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania Courthouse and Wilderness battlefields. In the Spotsylvania Courthouse area, the Historic Courthouse, Old Jail and Spotsylvania Museum are among the scenic attractions.

Lake Anna offers 13,000 acres of swimming, sailing, waterskiing and sport fishing. At the Lake Anna State Park, visitors can enjoy picnicking, horseback riding, bicycling, hiking trails and camping. Other natural attractions include the Ni River Reservoir and the Hunting Run Reservoir. Community gathering places for sports, music and other outdoor activities include the County’s award-winning Patriot Park and the popular Loriella Park, with its lighted sports fields and swimming pool. The growing Spotsylvania community has attracted many dynamic commercial and retail businesses that serve area residents and visitors.

Learn more, or plan a visit to Spotsylvania County now, at www.spotsylvaniaeda.com and www.visitspotsy.com.
COMMENTS FROM VRE’S 2015 CUSTOMER SERVICE SURVEY

In October’s RIDE magazine, we published some facts and figures from our 2015 Customer Service Survey. In this month’s issue, we address the survey’s “written comments” section!

WI-FI:
One of the most common requests we received was to add Wi-Fi service to our trains. Unfortunately, existing wireless coverage along our rail lines is extremely inconsistent, so using it to provide Wi-Fi would lead to a frustrating experience for our customers. For now, we are working with service providers like Verizon, AT&T and others to enhance current tower signal-strengths so that those who already have their own hotspots will be better able to utilize them.

SURVEY:
Some riders felt that the survey itself was too long. While this year’s survey was shorter than last year’s, we will work to make future surveys even more concise, while still being able to obtain useful information. Others commented that the last page of the survey was too personal. This page was included at the request of the Federal Transit Administration to show that VRE does not violate diversity or Title VI laws, and to help us receive grants and funds used to improve our service. While we are grateful when riders fill this page out, please know that it is optional!

SMOKING:
Eight people requested a smoking ban on all our platforms. In 2012, our Operations Board considered banning smoking on VRE platforms, yet ultimately decided to postpone any such ban. Given your input on the survey, we will revisit this issue.

COLD TRAINS:
Forty-one passengers commented that our trains are too cold. Five years ago, we adjusted our cars’ thermostats from a 68 to 72 degree range to the current 70 to 74 degree range. We are looking into increasing the temperature range again. But remember that there will most likely never be a perfect temperature for everyone. Some passengers will always feel too cold, while others may feel too warm. By adjusting the train a couple of degrees, we hope to find a happy medium. Also, please note that the fresh air blowers in the upper level cannot be adjusted — so if you are too cold upstairs, you might try sitting downstairs where the airflow is less pronounced.

TWO REQUESTS:
Sixty-nine riders asked for a train to run between the 1 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. trains, and 14 riders requested that we show the time on our station monitors. We are happy to report that both of these requests are planned to be completed! The additional train will be a Fredericksburg Line train leaving Union Station at around 3 p.m.

We still have more survey feedback to go through, and we will continue to respond to this feedback in upcoming issues of RIDE. Thank you for all your questions and comments!
**SPOTLIGHT ON KEOLIS**

**MEET KEN PECKA**

Ken Pecka went from hanging out on the beaches of Jacksonville, FL to becoming the “jack of all trades” when he began working on the railroad. For Ken, working in the rail industry is a family tradition. His fascination with the industry started when he saw his father hard at work for CSX. He would often tag along with his dad on the weekends and during the summer months. Ken instantly knew he wanted to be a conductor one day just like his father.

With more than 15 years of experience under his belt, Ken followed in his father’s footsteps by working as a freight conductor for CSX for two and a half years. Ken was later promoted to a locomotive engineer where he served for nine years. He first joined the VRE family as an assistant conductor back in 2011. He made the transition to Keolis’s Assistant Conductor Engineering Program in September of 2014, allowing him to work as both a qualified engineer and conductor. This was the chance for him to do what he loved most: operate trains.

“I like dealing with different people and doing my job safely. I have been on the railroad for 15 plus years and have never been injured. That’s saying a lot for the railroad industry,” Ken said.

There is never a dull moment for Ken. He welcomes the spontaneous nature of his work and attributes the accommodating hours as a major reason he loves coming into work.

Ken feels that the most important and rewarding part of his job as conductor is protecting the safety of passengers and guaranteeing the trains are ready for an on-time departure. Surprisingly, what he finds to be the most difficult tasks within his day have also become the most rewarding.

His talents and work ethic continue to be recognized by the company. In 2012, he received a safety award from Keolis Rail Services, the operator of the VRE. Instead of the usual wooden plaque, he received a 46-inch TV.

When Ken ends his day, he heads home to his family and its newest member, a Giant Schnauzer puppy. Ken enjoys traveling and loves to take his family on vacation to the beaches of Florida and Nags Head, NC.

Keolis is VRE’s contractor that maintains and operates VRE trains.

**JOIN VRE FOR THE GAINESVILLE-HAYMARKET EXTENSION COMMUNITY MEETING**

The first community meeting for the VRE Gainesville-Haymarket Extension (VRE GHX) study will be held on Tuesday, November 10 from 6–8 p.m. at Gainesville Middle School (8001 Limestone Drive, Gainesville, VA). Please join us for this important kick-off event to learn more about a potential 11-mile extension of the Manassas Line from Manassas to Gainesville and Haymarket. Come ask questions, share your comments and meet the study team.

We began the current study in July 2015. Key priorities of this study include investigating feasible train schedules and station locations. Potential station locations include the Sudley Manor, Gainesville and Haymarket areas. The study will assess the environmental effects of station construction and track enhancements. We will also conduct preliminary engineering, and develop designs for stations and track improvements. The study will conclude with the selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative and development of a project funding plan.

The VRE GHX study will take approximately two years to complete. The implementation process for a project such as this is dependent on future federal, state, and local funding availability as well as approval from Norfolk Southern to operate VRE service on the B-Line rail corridor.

Service on the extension could begin within eight to ten years, subject to funding and approvals.

As a VRE passenger, your comments and suggestions about this important regional transportation initiative are very important to us. There are many ways to get involved, such as sending comments or asking questions online, joining our project e-mail list and following us on Twitter and Facebook. Please visit www.vre.org/ghx for the latest information. We hope to see you at the November 10th community meeting, and we look forward to hearing from you soon.

Map denotes study area and meeting location for the November 10th community meeting.
BEST OF OUR REGION AND VRE

Thanks to all who completed our 2015 RIDE’s Readership Survey! Here are the results of what you love about our region and VRE:

FAVORITE DINNER-TIME RESTAURANT
Texas de Brazil

FAVORITE LUNCH-TIME RESTAURANT
Chick-fil-A

FAVORITE PLACE TO GET COFFEE
Starbucks

FAVORITE SPORTS TEAM
Washington Redskins

FAVORITE FARMERS’ MARKET
Farmers’ Market at VRE Burke Centre Station

FAVORITE SHOPPING DESTINATION
Potomac Mills Mall

FAVORITE WEEKEND GETAWAY
Virginia Beach

FAVORITE VRE CONDUCTOR
Ellen

BEST PART OF RIDING VRE
Avoiding traffic

BEST VIEW RIDING VRE
Washington monuments

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE ON FUTURE RIDE COVERS?
VRE stations

WHAT TYPE OF CONTENT WOULD YOU LIKE
TO SEE MORE OF IN RIDE?
VRE station improvement updates and future plans

Love the city? But miss fresh air & open fields?

THEN DON’T MISS YOUR CHANCE AT THESE RARE 1-8 ACRE HOMESITES, ONLY 15 MILES FROM THE HEART OF OUR NATION’S CAPITAL!

WINDSONG in Upper Marlboro, MD
Luxury single family homes from the $500s
(301) 627-2196 • CarusoHomes.com/Windsong

OAKMONT ESTATES in Upper Marlboro, MD
Luxury single family homes from the $470s
(301) 627-2196 • CarusoHomes.com/Oakmont-Estates

BOTH OF THESE STUNNING CARUSO HOMES COMMUNITIES OFFER:
• Convenience to Andrews Air Force Base & downtown Washington, D.C.
• Easy commuting on nearby Green & Blue Metro Lines or Rt. 4, Rt. 50, Rt. 301 & I-495
• A short drive to New Westphalia Town Center & other shopping, dining & entertainment
Both communities are sold from our Regional Sales Center at: 12001 Weathervane Lane, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

Open Daily: Monday, 1pm - 5pm. Tuesday - Sunday, 10am - 5pm. CarusoHomes.com

Proud to be the only local builder to guarantee lower utility bills and energy consumption. Ask about the Caruso Homes Energy Elite Program!* Prices, features, and incentives subject to change without notice.
*See Sales Manager for Utility Bill Guarantee Program details. MHBR #7056.
Live Music...Spirits...Food...Dancing

November-December Shows
Secure space for your small office party at one of these events with Dinner & Show all included

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28
The Fabulous
Night & Day Orchestra
Swing, Big Band, Pop

*THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3
To Be Announced

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10
Rick Whitehead Quartet

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12
The Fabulous
Sharon Clark “A Wintry Mix”

Cabaret Supper Club Website
www.cabaretatthesquare.com or fburgsquare@msn.com
540-310-0063

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) 838-5417.
WHICH BAG LOOKS SUSPICIOUS?

DIFFICULT CHOICE, RIGHT?
(The answer is ALL OF THE ABOVE)

REPORT ALL UNATTENDED BAGS AND UNUSUAL BEHAVIOR TO POLICE OR TRANSIT PERSONNEL.

1-877-4VA-TIPS

IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING.
securetransit.org

Purchased with funds provided by the US Department of Homeland Security