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I recently attended a meeting in New York City held for leaders of commuter railroads where Federal Railroad Administrator Joseph Szabo discussed the importance of safety as a way of life in all facets of our industry. As I was sitting in the meeting, I was heartened to be surround-
ed by my colleagues who all seemed to understand, as I do, how important safety is in our business how important it is to aggressively pursue a deeply rooted culture of safety.

Although commuter rail boasts an exceptional safety record, we at VRE do not accept that record as an invitation to be complacent about our shared responsibility with you to make your ride as safe as possible. I expect and empower each VRE and Keolis employee to always be mindful of any situation that would affect their or your safety as we work diligently every day to assure you arrive safely to your destination. Your safety, while of utmost importance to us, is still a joint responsibility. In the coming months you’ll notice VRE’s new safety and security campaign which stresses the use of handrails when boarding and deboard-
ing the train, and the use of appropriate shoes when traveling by train. We hope this campaign will convey our position that the safety cultures not only focus on eliminating or preventing large scale hazards, but making sure you prepare and use caution to avoid minor slips and falls on stairs and platforms.

DOUG ALLEN
Chief Executive Officer
Virginia Railway Express
95 EXPRESS LINES EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGN

TRAVELERS ENCOURAGED TO “MAKE A PLAN” TO PREPARE FOR NEW TRANSPORTATION OPTION

The 95 Express Lanes, in partnership with the Virginia Department of Transportation and the Department of Rail and Public Transportation, launched an educational campaign to prepare travelers for the changes coming to I-95 when the existing I-95 HOV system is converted to an Express Lanes system. The 95 Express Lanes project will bring new choices and added capacity on I-95, but will also mean changes for travelers who currently use the HOV facility. The Make a Plan campaign targets those travelers who use the existing HOV lanes and will educate them on how to prepare for the changes coming to I-95.

All drivers – including carpools, sluggers, vanpools and vehicles with clean fuel plates – will need an E-ZPass® or E-ZPass® FlexSM to access the 95 Express Lanes. To learn more about E-ZPass and how the new Express Lanes will work, drivers are encouraged to visit the Make a Plan section of the 95 Express Lanes website – 95ExpressLanes.com/makeplan. The website is tailored to I-95 travelers based on their preferred mode of travel and outlines the steps they need to take to prepare for the changes coming to I-95. Also on the website, travelers can view a video outlining what they need to do to prepare for the new Express Lanes.

While the 95 Express Lanes will extend and improve the performance of the existing HOV system, they will also bring major changes to I-95 including:

- All travelers will need an E-ZPass to access the 95 Express Lanes – travelers may purchase E-ZPass at a variety of local Virginia retailers including AAA Mid-Atlantic locations, select Giant and Wegmans and Tysons Corner Center; at E-ZPass customer service centers; online or by calling E-ZPass Virginia at 1-877-762-7824
- To travel toll-free, travelers will need three or more people in the vehicle and an E-ZPass Flex set to HOV mode – this applies to all travelers including hybrid or clean fuel tag vehicles, vanpools and carpools
- The 95 Express Lanes will end north of Edsall Road on I-395. Standard HOV rules will apply on the I-395 HOV lanes:
  - Carpoolers (HOV-3+) heading north on the 95 Express Lanes will be able to continue on to the I-395 HOV lanes
  - Vehicles that do not meet the HOV requirement when the HOV rules are in effect on I-395 will need to exit from the 95 Express Lanes and reenter the regular I-395 lanes after Edsall Road to continue into Arlington and Washington, D.C.

The 95 Express Lanes are on schedule to open in early 2015. Reversible like the HOV lanes today, the 95 Express Lanes will operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The 95 Express Lanes will use dynamic tolls to keep traffic flowing and provide a more predictable travel pattern.
Manassas Park resident Suhas Naddoni has always had a fascination with trains.

Growing up in India, his family lived by the railroad tracks and he would always look forward to riding the train—something he continued to do while living in places across the world.

Today, Naddoni still enjoys riding the rails and people can find the VRE Operations Board member at the Manassas Park station, boarding the quiet car and settling in for his trip to work in Alexandria.

“When we moved to [Northern Virginia] in 2000, one of the reasons we bought a house in Manassas Park was because of the train station,” Naddoni said. “There are so many things I enjoy about the VRE ride—it is very clean, comfortable and because I am not driving, I can do other things. It is my favorite mode of transportation.”

Naddoni was elected to the Manassas Park City Council in 2008 and, because of his interest in public transportation and trains, he quickly volunteered to serve on VRE’s board, taking over Manassas Park Mayor Frank Jones’ seat in 2009. He also serves as an alternate on the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission board.

“Over the next 25 years, there will be 1.6 million people moving into our region and they will need to commute,” Naddoni said, adding that VRE must continue to expand to address the influx of residents and growing need for public transportation.

While growth is important, it must be planned, he said, which is why the VRE Operations Board adopted the organization’s System Plan at its January meeting.

“We’re not an island and the majority of people have jobs outside of their hometown,” he said. “All these people can’t just drive...”

As VRE expands and grows, it will spur economic development throughout Northern Virginia, Naddoni said. Manassas Park has a technology zone, which provides incentives to tech companies that locate in the designated area—something Naddoni hopes more businesses can take advantage of as public transit options expand.

The planned extension to Gainesville—Haymarket would also be very beneficial, particularly for his Manassas Park riders, Naddoni said. Rail officials have proposed to extend VRE 11 miles on Norfolk Southern’s B line and into these western Prince William counties. The project would add another track along the B line within an existing right-of-way. The Manassas Park station could then be served by two VRE lines, Naddoni said.

“I want to continue serving on the VRE board to make sure this happens,” Naddoni said. “People have already discovered there is a comfortable alternative [to the roadways] and once others get a taste of VRE, they won’t go back. It is one of the great assets we have.”
IN THE KNOW

QR CODES—WHERE DID THEY COME FROM?

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE QUICK RESPONSE BARCODE (QR CODE) TECHNOLOGY

Back in the 1960s many Japanese cashiers suffered from numbness in the wrist and carpal tunnel syndrome, as a result, the scanned barcode was invented to help alleviate this issue. In 1994, Denso Wave Incorporated were asked, since the barcode only held a limited amount of information, to develop a new two-dimensional code for the Japanese auto industry that could be read easily as well as being capable of holding a great deal of information.

The Quick Response Barcode, or QR code, was originally designed to track vehicles during manufacture, but, because of its quick readability, its use has spread—especially since it could be easily scanned through an app by the camera of a basic smart-phone. The QR code’s square pattern was chosen because it was the pattern least likely to appear where QR codes were used. If there was a similar-looking mark nearby, the code reader could mistake it for the pattern. Therefore, the position detection patterns had to be unique.

Although Denso Wave would retain the patent rights to the QR Code, it declared that it would not exercise them and they allowed the specifications of the QR Code to be publicly available so that anyone could use it freely. Because of this, QR codes are able to be used by Google’s Android, BlackBerry OS, Nokia Symbian Belle and Apple iOS devices (iPhone/iPod/iPad), as well as Microsoft’s Windows Phone operating system, Google Goggles, 3rd party barcode scanners, and the Nintendo 3DS.

In 2012, the QR Code won a prize in the Media for Industry category of the Good Design Award.

VRE has embraced the QR code in many of its publications due to its ease of use. Instead of carrying a RIDE Magazine or a pocket schedule, a rider can scan the code found on these items and download a PDF version onto their phone so that they can readily carry it with them and view at a later date.

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Operation Lifesaver (OLI) is a national non-profit organization dedicated to educating citizens about the dangers of trespassing on railroad tracks and failing to stop, look and listen for approaching trains at crossings where roadways and railways intersect.

In response to a rising number of fatalities, injuries and property damage at railroad crossings and involving those walking along or across tracks, OLI has partnered with a number of railroad organizations across the country, the Federal Railroad Administration and the Federal Transit Administration to launch a “See Tracks, Think Train” awareness campaign. VRE, whose headquarters are based across the street from those of OLI has long been committed to the mission of Operation Lifesaver.

Recently, OLI President and CEO Joyce Rose reached out to us for some assistance in scouting a good location to film the video that would carry the core message of their campaign. We jumped at the chance to help out and immediately offered up our Quantico station on the Fredericksburg Line. With its vehicle and pedestrian grade crossing, frequency of rail traffic and classic small-town USA appeal, the location was ideal for filming.

The video shows the actor delivering the rail safety message while safely and carefully navigating the pedestrian crossings and standing back from the yellow tactile platform edge and being keenly aware of his surroundings – issues that are important to us at VRE as well. The video will be unveiled at Operation Lifesaver’s National Leadership Conference mid-May and will then be made available to the public, on the OLI website at www.OLI.org.

Operation Lifesaver has partnered with a number of railroad organizations across the country, the Federal Railroad Administration and the Federal Transit Administration to launch a “See Tracks, Think Train” awareness campaign.

For more information on Operation Lifesaver, visit www.OLI.org.
T he National Zoo, Washington DC’s 163-acre zoological park set within the Rock Creek National Park, features more than 400 different species of animals. The National Zoo is a part of the Smithsonian Institution and admission is free. There is a fee however, for parking in Zoo lots. Closest Metro Station: Woodley Park/Zoo/Adams Morgan and Cleveland Park.

The main entrance to the National Zoo is along Connecticut Avenue. There are also two entrances at the east side of the Zoo, near Rock Creek Park. One is off Rock Creek Parkway, the other is at the intersection of Harvard Street and Adams Mill Road.

To see all of the animals and exhibits at the National Zoo takes several hours. Among some of the favorites are giant pandas, other bears, lions, giraffes, tigers, monkeys, sea lions, and much more.

Giant Panda Cub, Bao Bao, Now On Exhibit

The panda house is open to the public from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Please arrive early. Long lines require earlier cut-off times to ensure those waiting can enter the panda house before it closes. If crowds are heavy, the line may close as early as 2 p.m. Visitors will be allowed into the panda house on a first-come-first-served basis.

Although the panda house will be open from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Mei Xiang and Bao Bao may not always be visible during that time. They will have access to the den where Bao Bao has spent much of the past few months and may choose to spend time in there instead of on exhibit. Due to bear behavior, we can’t guarantee that all visitors will see Bao Bao. She is still young and sleeps a lot.
Celebrate the 20th Annual Manassas Heritage Railway Festival on Saturday, June 7th, from 10 am to 4 pm in Historic Downtown Manassas. This year’s event will feature elaborate railroad displays, kid’s rides, and local and professional entertainment. Vendors will be onsite selling model trains, toys, railroad books, train photography and other train paraphernalia.

The much anticipated VRE excursion train rides are back, with a special live appearance from a Frozen Princess! The VRE excursions will run at 10 am, 11 am, 12 pm and 1 pm from the Manassas Train Depot to Clifton and back. Each trip will last around 40 minutes. Tickets are $5.00 and must be purchased in person at the train depot at 9431 West Street in Old Town between 9 am and 5 pm, seven days a week.

In addition to all of the activities happening outside, the Manassas Train Depot will also be celebrating its Centennial Anniversary. To celebrate, the James & Marion Payne Railroad Heritage Gallery will undergo a renovation. The revamp will include new graphics showcasing the rich railway history of Manassas. In 1997, the historic depot was rehabilitated and turned into a Visitor Center and Museum. The “ticket room” was turned into a gallery, housing historical exhibits on our region’s railway history. After nearly 18 years and over 100,000 visitors, the gallery remains unchanged. A very special rededication of the building will take place Friday, June 6, 2014 at 6 pm, to wrap up the anniversary celebration.

The Manassas Heritage Railway Festival kicks off a summer season of exciting festivals and activities in Historic Downtown Manassas. Sunday, June 15th is the 10th Annual Manassas Wine and Jazz Festival with over 20 Virginia wineries; Celebrate America on July 4th with one of the largest fireworks displays in Northern Virginia, and Civil War Weekend August 23-25 bringing the history of Manassas to life with civil war demonstrations, a military parade and much more. For more information about our events go to www.visitmanassas.org or www.facebook.com/manassas.

**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

**TRAIN RIDES**
10am, 11am, 12pm, 1pm
Excursion train rides to Clifton and back from the Manassas Train Depot

**KID STAGE**
10-10:45am – Magician Drew Owen
11am-12:45pm – Premier Martial Arts
1-1:45pm – Bull Run Cloggers & Calico Cloggers
2-2:45pm – Magnificent Belly Dancers

**ADULT STAGE**
10-11:45am – Cabin Raiders
12-1:45pm – Smokey Winsted & Bull Run Grass
2-3pm – Swamp Candy

**Keolis Rail Services of Virginia Will Continue to Operate Virginia Railway Express Trains**
The VRE Operations Board approved the final year of a five-year contract with Keolis Rail Services of Virginia. VRE will pay Keolis $20.1 million to operate its trains through July 2015. Keolis replaced Amtrak as VRE’s train operator in 2010. The total five-year contract agreement amounts to $95.6 million.

**VRE Smoking Policy to Cover E-Cigarettes**
Last month, VRE announced that e-cigarettes would be restricted on VRE property. While smoking isn’t allowed on trains, it is allowed on the 100 northern-most feet of the platform. VRE clarified the policy following a recent on-line forum. The question was raised by our riders, so that was the impetus for including e-cigarettes in the existing VRE smoking policy.

**FRC’s Expire June 30th**
Just a reminder that the red, white and blue FRC’s expire on June 30, 2014. They have no trade-in value so they must be used before they expire.
After he heard there were openings within the operations contract for the Virginia Railway Express commuter line into D.C., Gerald Smith was eager to join the team. So eager, that he and a friend were the first two people in line to apply the day hiring began, and within two weeks he was on the rails as a Keolis employee. After beginning his career as a telephone technician, he was drawn to the railroad because of the career opportunities. He originally began at CSX where he remained for nearly four years, working the southern Mid-Atlantic region from Norfolk to Newport News, and in Rocky Mountain, North Carolina.

CSX provided him a solid foundation, but Gerald was enamored with the possibilities that the VRE offered when he heard about the opportunity from a friend. “If I like it I will pursue it and do the best I can.” The transition to working with passengers after being on freight was a new experience. “Working on freight you don’t have to worry about passengers, and working on the VRE was a welcome challenge.”

Gerald revels in his time with the passengers, and appreciates that he gets to work alongside them every day. “You become friends with them as you get to know them. Especially if you are doing what you are supposed to.”

Gerald excelled at his job as a conductor and was soon promoted to be the Fredericksburg transportation manager, a position he held in interim until it was made official in January of 2014. Now Gerald runs the entire Fredericksburg yard, ensuring trains run on time, making certain the crew and trains are properly prepared for the day and taking care of the everyday duties that come with the position. “Being in charge of the yard is like being a conductor, manager and friend to everyone—passengers and crew.”
**RAIL TIME PUZZLES**

**ACROSS**
1. Mythical strongman
2. Bubble-wrap sound
3. Splinter group
4. Optimistic comment
5. Baley
6. Hotel Freebie
7. Arthur...Stadium (US Open venue)
8. Not impressed
9. Hetting setting
10. Hinge (on)
11. Savings acct. posting
12. Ursa Minor’s brightest
13. Across
14. Paranormal ability
15. Goal of some forces
16. Antagonize
17. Possible sneaker
18. Fabric
19. Weigh heavily on
20. Extended story
21. Far from fresh
22. Where a hole begins
23. Throb
24. Scratch up
25. Data entry clerk
26. Betting setting
27. Large quantity
28. Nea. on maps
29. Washroom, for short
30. Sponsored messages
31. Metaphysical study
32. Juan’s water
33. Yellow crayon color
34. Dancer’s click
35. One-strand molecule
36. Come to shore
37. Getting setting
38. Light at night
39. Word preceding “boost” or “trip”
40. “Encore performances”
41. Open. as luggage
42. Protagonist
43. Magazine-bit category
44. Hypercritics
45. Thus far
46. South Park kid
47. Gatsby portrayed
48. Before Redford and DeCaprio
49. Leaves the stage
50. Sweating setting
51. The Phillies’ div.
52. See 108 Across
53. Reach
54. Telephonic trio
55. Unchallenging course
56. With 102 Across, savings vehicle
57. Un observer state
58. Sleepwear
59. Claney novel staple
60. Comply with
61. Setting setting
62. Frozen-feed giant
63. Removes a seam from
64. Old saying
65. Victor at Thermopylae
66. OR order
67. Clancy novel staple
68. Cardboard recycler’s machine
69. Focus on
70. Celebration in motion
71. Unbeatable toes
72. Haloes
73. Carrot color
74. Mandolin skin
75. Floral necklace
76. Suitable for all
77. Opposite of “knot”
78. Well-versed
79. Hardwood tree
80. Fulfills a mind order
81. Pal of Pooh
82. Gas-pump number
83. Evil rival
84. Old sayings
85. Night school course
86. Gloomy
87. Least long-winded
88. Cabinet dept.
89. Bills not in ATMs
90. Dads
91. Young female sheep
92. What many a nation
93. Most likely...
94. Assent silently
95. Purpose
96. HS exam
97. Yale students
98. Homebrew
99. Brilliantly done
100. Dutch illusionary artist
101. Chis short
102. LAX screen posting
103. Confucian ideal
104. Spellbinding speaker
105. Arthurian paradise
106. Second childhood
107. Exactly right
108. Buggy-riding people
109. “Supreme Poet” of Italy
110. Old saying
111. “Out of ___ (testy)
112. In a dilemma
113. Walk onstage
114. UN observer state
115. Sleepwear
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183. Focus on
184. Celebration in motion
185. Unbeatable toes
186. Haloes
187. Carrot color
188. Mandolin skin
189. Floral necklace
190. Suitable for all
191. Opposite of “knot”
192. Well-versed

**SUDOKU**

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   6  8  3
  1  5  2
  4  2  5
  5  6  1
  3  6  5
  8  7  4
  5  2  6
  9  4  7
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