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Features and products vary by community. Price, offers, financing and availability are subject to change without notice. See a Sales and Marketing Representative for details.
In December, we held our annual Toys-For-Tots On-Board Toy Drive in association with the Marine Corps Reserves and collected 25 large bags of toys and over $17,000. We also held our 17th annual Operation Lifesaver Santa Trains event which netted us an additional 86 bags of toys and too many smiles to count. We thank all who contributed to these worthy events. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

2013 is behind us now and we are hard at work to make 2014 a banner year for VRE. This year won’t be without its challenges though. One of the most immediate issues is the change in the amount of commuter benefits many of you will receive. Because Congress did not act before the end of the year, starting January 1st the maximum commuter benefit reverts from $245 back to $130 per month. Whether you receive this as a pre-tax benefit from your private employer, as a direct subsidy for Federal employees, or don’t currently receive commuter benefits, we know transportation expenses are an important item in everyone’s budget. We continue to strive to make VRE an efficient, economical, and enjoyable commuting option.
**VRE VENDOR UPDATE**

The Mobile Commuter Store (MCS) is a retail store that drives to various parts of the Northern Virginia and District of Columbia region to help promote the use of public transit, biking and walking. The MCS is only one part of the larger Commuter Store network. This network has physical stores located in Crystal City, Rosslyn, Ballston, and Shirlington in Northern Virginia. The MCS spends 3 days each week inside the District of Columbia to assist VRE, MARC, MTA Commuter Bus and Metro riders with their transit ticketing needs. They are conveniently located at the intersection of 7th and D Streets in the L’Enfant Plaza part of town on Mondays and Tuesdays between 9:30am and 3:30pm. The other Stop within the District is located at the corner of New Jersey Ave and M Streets adjacent to the Navy Yard Metrorail station. This occurs on Thursdays from 7:30am until 1:00pm. The remainder of the MCS schedule can be found at the following link http://www.commuterpage.com/pages/tools-resources/commuter-store-commuter-direct/mobile-store-schedule.

The Mobile Commuter Store provides access to all of the various VRE tickets, including 10 trips, monthly, single rides, Step Ups and TLC passes. They accept all major credit cards, Electronic SmartBenefits (account set up required prior to use) and all of the various company sponsored debit cards. With their unique point of sale system, customers are able to split payments between multiple credit cards if needed. With the recent decrease in the Federal Transit Subsidy, this split payment capability is very useful for those employees receiving $130 on the TRANServe debit card and needing to purchase VRE passes that exceed that price.

Please stop by and say hello to our friendly staff members.

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**BIRD WATCHING**

February 8th, 2014 at 9:30 a.m. Fort CF Smith Park, Arlington VA.

Join us for a bird walk at Fort CF Smith Park geared especially for beginning birders. Our walk will teach the basics of using binoculars, looking at birds, identifying field marks and using guides. For information call 703-228-3403.

**STAR GAZING**

FEBRUARY 22nd, 2014 at 5:00 p.m.
C.M. Crockett Park, Midland, VA.

Expect to see constellations, planets, star clusters, galaxies, nebula, and possibly a few meteors and satellites. Phone: 540-788-4867.

**VRE Holiday Calendar**

- Friday, July 4th. Independence Day. No VRE Service.
- Tuesday, Nov. 11th. Veterans’ Day. Possible “S” schedule service.
- Thursday, Nov. 27th. Thanksgiving Day. No VRE service.

“If carrots are so good for vision, how come we use them for noses?”
It's been more than 30 years since Virginia resident Kelley Coyner took her first job in the transportation industry. And while the business has taken her to places across the country, it was a job offer last spring that reunited Coyner's passion with the place she calls home.

In April, the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission unanimously appointed Coyner as its new executive director. Coyner is the first woman to hold this position and took over for Rick Taube who stepped down after 29 years of service.

"Taking this job is kind of like coming back home," Coyner said. "It brings me full circle to Virginia, to transit and making sure that people can move safely and reliably wherever they need to go."

A native of Texas, Coyner moved to Virginia while in college. She got her start in transportation working for a member of the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority Board and then for the Texas Highway Commission. From serving as an agency head at the US Department of Transportation to serving on boards of dozens of nonprofits and government commissions, Coyner has had experience in almost every mode of transportation.

Prior to NVTC, Coyner worked to ensure transportation in the region was safe and secure during any kind of emergency and was an expert advisor to the National Academy of Sciences on transportation and national security issues.

Coyner took the reigns at NVTC just as a landmark transportation bill was passed that sent additional money to some of the Commonwealth's most congested areas and overhauled the way Virginians pay for roads, highways and mass transit. "I interviewed for the job as the bill was being passed and for a transportation geek, that was just heaven," she said. "It's a really exciting time in terms of regional transportation." Coyner said she has been working closely with the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority to ensure that some of the new transportation funds support the commuter-rail system as well as metro and regional bus service. "We have looked at making a very significant investment into VRE," Coyner said. "We need to make commuter-rail a much bigger deal and dramatically increase the number of people who can take advantage of the service." Coyner said she wants to see VRE expand its capacity, add new rail cars and increase the number of outbound trains for people doing the reverse commute. It is also important to connect VRE to other public transit options including metro, bus service and even the MARC trains.

"Going forward, NVTC will really be focused on how do we make sure there is connectivity between the different transit options we have," Coyner said. "We can be the catalyst in solving (transportation) problems, but it will also take all the different sectors working together."

Coyner said she has also worked closely with VRE CEO Doug Allen on VRE's new system plan, which outlines where the commuter-rail system will go in the next several years and includes both short-term and long-term improvements. "The real test for VRE in the next few years is how well it manages investments and turns them into higher quality services," she said. "How do you purchase additional cars and expand platforms and parking facilities to accommodate more riders? That is going to be the next wave of investment and what we are working on right now."

When not working on the region's transportation issues, Coyner spends time with her husband and three children. Coyner coaches her daughter's basketball team and also instills the value of public transit into all her children, providing each of them with SmarTrip cards before car keys.

"We need to make commuter-rail a much bigger deal and dramatically increase the number of people who can take advantage of the service."
The Power of Silence

Quiet - when it comes to public transportation it's not always easy to come by. If it is something as simple as the rustling of a newspaper in the Quiet Car, or an hour long phone conversation in our regular cars that one finds annoying, then maybe the noise cancelling headphone might be a welcome consideration. Below are a few examples of what's available.

**Beats Executive**

Beats Executive headphones are designed for travel, whether you're cruising at 30,000 feet or just flying across town in a cab. They're lightweight, comfortable to wear, and fold flat for easy packing. Powerful enough to reduce a jet engine to a whisper, Beats use battery-powered noise cancellation to deliver your music without outside interruption.

**Bose QuietComfort 15**

Imagine you've had your fill of music on a very long flight, and you just want to be one with your thoughts. That's when our proprietary Acoustic Noise Cancelling technology stands on its own to hush the world around you. With the luxurious fit and a welcome quiet, you just may forget you have the headphones on.

**Harman Kardon NC**

Harman Kardon NC headphones offer high-tech performance wrapped in an elegant package and interface. With its blend of sandblasted steel and black matte housings, the NCs' design and function complement Apple products while reinforcing the sophisticated elegance of the Harman Kardon brand.

**PSB**

On a train, on a plane, from your computer to your bedroom, PSB headphones are lightweight and ready to pack up anywhere you want to go. Fold 'em up into the protective travel case and you'll never be far from true hi-fi listening. We even added a thoughtful touch for your comfort—dual input connections on either side of the headphones means no more crossed wires. Just plug in the cable on the left or right and be within easy reach of a headphone jack.

**SPOTLIGHT ON KEOLIS:**

**Kindness Carr-Pigford** is an Operations Specialist for Keolis. She works in the operations control room at VRE headquarters in Alexandria. Kindness assists VRE and the host railroads in helping to minimize train delays and by communicating important real-time messages to train crews.

Hometown: Newark, NJ
Favorite Sport: Swimming and walking for charities
Favorite Movie: Anything with Bette Midler or Goldie Hawn
Three words that describe you: Friendly, generous, loud
Favorite Quote: "One day at a time"
Favorite Restaurant: Joe's Crab Shack

Hobbies: Collecting refrigerator magnets from different places around the world

How did you get into the railroad business? I used to catch the New Jersey Transit train from Newark Penn Station to New Brunswick Station to work at St. Peter's Hospital, where I worked as a Patient Registrar. I admired the women who were Conductors and Engineers, so I decided I wanted to change careers. I applied about three times and finally got hired in 2003. My first day as a Conductor was October 15th, 2003.
- The Lorton Station extension project is expected to commence in spring of 2014. This project will extend the existing platform at the Lorton Station by approximately 256 feet to accommodate longer VRE trains.

- VRE anticipates the first four new passenger cars to be ready for shipment from Rochelle, IL by the 2nd week of February.

- Roof repairs at Rippon Station are scheduled for completion by the end of the 1st quarter of calendar year 2014.

Flash Flood Warnings on the Manassas Line

Norfolk Southern’s (NS) Flash Flood warning policy has been revised.

Previously, when a flash flood warning was in effect on the Manassas line, trains were required to go no more than 20 miles per hour. The new policy now requires trains to not exceed 40 miles per hour any time Accu-Weather issues a Flash Flood Warning.

What does this mean for Manassas line riders?

It means very good things.

The 40 mph now puts Norfolk Southern in line with CSX’s flood restriction policy. During flood restrictions on the Fredericksburg line, delays have usually been no more than 10 minutes at most. On the Manassas line, since travel length is shorter than the Fredericksburg line, flood restrictions delays should be minimal.

This is a great thing for those who remember the 20 mph speeds which often resulted in cancelled trains (usually train 335) since the slow speeds didn’t allow the trains whose equipment originated in Broad Run to make it up into Washington in enough time to make the return trip.

Santa enjoying a copy of November’s Ride Magazine
1. The Baths on Virgin Gorda - Monolithic boulders make up a maze that one can climb over, climb under, swim past and squeeze through.

2. The water of St. John - Bathtub warm and turquoise blue, these calm clear bays are the chief selling point of an island vacation and St. John has some of the best. The water clarity is perfect for any landlubber who is wary of possible creatures lurking beneath the surf.

...continued on page 8
Some of those who ride the train also work for VRE. John Duque, our Manager of IT, has been riding for 11 years, commuting from Leeland Road to Alexandria. “I met some of my closest friends on the train. When VRE used to have the Mafersa cars with the table seating, a group of us would always sit together and chat the entire ride. I also love being able to read and study on the train, and on slow evenings, I love being able to take naps. I think the train station in old town Fredericksburg contributes a lot to the city’s character. The train also makes it possible for out of towners to visit the city and allow for an overnight stay at the small boutique style hotels and inns. The ability for people to choose to live outside of the city allowed them to get more for their dollars; bigger homes and lower cost of living. VRE has not only provided me better commute, VRE also provided me an opportunity to share my talent and professional tenure by hiring me as VRE’s Manager of Information Technology. It is a win-win solution for me.”

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*Prices subject to change without notice. See Sales Manager for details. 1/14.
3. **Island Ferries** - Where else can you travel from the US to the UK in 20 minutes for 12 dollars? Sit on the top deck in 84 degree temperatures cooled by a gentle breeze. The scenery is fantastic with wide open skies and jagged, tropical forested islands jutting out from a beautiful blue sea.

4. **Jost Van Dyke** - Main street is a beach. The chicken roti at Ali Baba’s is superb. Party it up at Foxy’s. Sit in a beach chair and soak up the sun outside the Soggy Dollar Bar. Jost Van Dyke may only be 3 square miles, but what a grand 3 square miles it is.

5. **Rum** - What Tang is to space travel, rum is to the Lesser Antilles. Light rums, golden rums, dark rums. Painkillers, Bushwackers, Rum Punch, Pina coladas and Grog. No matter what your taste, there is a rum drink for you.

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**Word of the Day:**

**car knocker:** railroad car repair-person or car inspector; one that taps or knocks the wheels of a railroad car to check their soundness; one that checks the running gear of a train.
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