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VRE Station On Track!



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FROMTHE **CEO**



DOUG ALLEN
Chief Executive Officer

hope you and your family had a nice holiday season and that you enjoy riding VRE in 2015. In 2014, VRE realized 92% on-time performance, an 88% "highly satisfied" customer rating, and nearly five million trips taken. This record was accomplished while, first and foremost, making sure you are safe and secure on VRE.

While we work hard to keep costs down, from time to time we do need to propose fare increases as a way to close budget gaps. Over the next couple of months, VRE will be holding public hearings on a proposed 4% fare increase that would become effective July 1, 2015. For more information on this subject, please see the article on page 4. VRE has employed a number of internal efficiencies to keep our costs as low as we can but we need additional revenues to support increasing costs for existing operations.

On another note, a Train Talk email/text message will soon ask if you want to volunteer for Beta testing of the new VRE mobile ticketing software application. While we may not be able to use all volunteers due to parameters in developing the application, I appreciate your willingness to help us test and improve this new software before it rolls-out. We hope to offer the new mobile ticketing application to all riders in the next several months.

Thank you for riding VRE and being such a large part of our success.



VRE PLACES NAMES ON LOCOMOTIVES TO HONOR BOARD MEMBERS

he Virginia Railway Express (VRE) Operations Board approved a new Board Member Recognition Program at its December meeting. Under the new recognition program, Operations Board Members who played a key role in establishing VRE service, were early or long-tenured members, or whose extraordinary efforts contributed to its success, will be honored by having their names placed on the front of VRE locomotives. The nominations that were approved for the honor by the VRE Operations Board include:

- Edwin King Prince William County (Original Member)
- James Hugh Payne Sr. City of Manassas (First Elected City of Manassas Member)
- Bernard Cohen VA House of Delegates (Original Member)
- Bob Gibbons Stafford County (First Elected Stafford Member)
- Sally H. Cooper VDOT (Original Member)
- Sharon Bulova Fairfax County (Original and Continuously Serving
- John Jenkins Prince William County (Long Serving Member)
- Hilda Barg Prince William County (Long Serving Member)
- Elaine McConnell Fairfax County (Long Serving Member previously recognized)

"Naming locomotives to honor those who helped establish or ensure the success of VRE is a small token of the appreciation we have for the foresight and public service these Board Members provided in creating VRE," said Paul Milde, Operations Board Chairman of VRE.



▲ Pictured with an example of what will be placed on the front of VRE locomotives are (left to right) John Jenkins, Prince William County Supervisor; Sharon Bulova, Fairfax County Chairman; and Paul Milde, Stafford County Supervisor and VRE Operations Board Immediate Past Chairman



King Street at Royal Street Old Town Alexandria, VA 22314

Celebrate George Washington's birthday with a one-mile parade through the beautiful streets of Old Town Alexandria, Join nearly 3,500 community members honoring one of the town's most famous sons. Free admission. More information at washingtonbirthday.net/



Winter Farmer's Market February 28, 9 AM-1 PM

Harris Pavilion Lot B Historic Downtown Manassas, VA 20110

Voted one of the best farmer's markets by Prince William Living magazine, venture to Historic Downtown Manassas to support local shops and producers. Enjoy everything from locally made doughnuts and pastries to harvest bread and firewood.

Fredericksburg Art Show February 28, 2-6 PM

Fredericksburg Community Center 408 Canal Street, Fredericksburg, VA

Support Fredericksburg's local art scene by exploring the drawings, photography, paintings, and photography of the town's artists. All proceeds will go to help fund youth programs in the town. No RSVP necessary.

Troop 964's 17th Annual Model Train Show March 7–8

Saunders Middle School, 13557 Spriggs Rd, Manassas, VA 20112

Model railroad enthusiasts, Scouts, and families alike, mark your calendars and please come see Troop 964's 17th Annual Model Train Show on March 7-8. Details may be found at www.troop964.org.



MEET MARTY NOHE

By Jennifer Buske

hen Marty Nohe's family moved to Prince William in 1974, they settled right off I-95 in Woodbridge so his father could make the short trip to Fort Belvoir for work each day.

The trip was so easy, he said, that his family would also travel north for church and to shop at the Fort Belvoir Commissary each week.

Today, however, that same trip can take an hour or more as traffic congestion now cripples the region. It is a problem that impacts thousands daily and one Nohe hopes to help solve as a member of the Virginia Railway Express Operations Board and other transportation organizations.

Transportation "has become a real passion for me," Nohe said. "It has a huge impact on everything we do. It is what we talk about all the time; it is what people remember about us."

Nohe, who represents the Coles District on the Prince William Board of County Supervisors, is the newest member of the VRE Operations Board. Nohe replaces former Prince William Supervisor Wally Covington who resigned to become a Judge in the Prince William General District Court.

Nohe was elected to the Prince William Board of County Supervisors in 2003 and served as Vice Chairman of the Board in 2007 and 2012.

"I was in high school when I knew I wanted to be on the Board," he said. "And in 2003, I recognized the county was going through a lot of changes. We were at the front end of rapid growth and I thought we needed a long-term vision. I wanted to be a part of the solution, not the problem."

With an interest in transportation, Nohe serves as chairman of the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority and is on the Board of the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission.

Previously an alternate on the VRE Board, Nohe is familiar with the system and even remembers the day officials announced they were starting a commuter train to connect residents in Virginia with the nation's capital.

"When VRE first started, there was some skepticism as to whether Prince William residents would want to take the train to work every day," Nohe said. "But all these years later, I think we have found that VRE has become a crucial [part] of our transportation network- not just for Prince William residents, but for commuters throughout the region."

With a solid system in place, Nohe said he now wants to see VRE make improvements to existing stations and add or extend platforms to accommodate a growing number of riders. He also said he is "very proud" that NVTA is providing funding to do a feasibility study on the potential expansion of VRE to Gainesville and Haymarket.

Besides transportation, Nohe has a passion for child welfare advocacy. Nohe and his wife Kristina adopted two of their four children and are actively involved in foster care issues and domestic adoption. Nohe served on the statewide steering committee for the Virginia Adopts Campaign in 2013 and also was a parent representative on the State Executive Council for Comprehensive Services for At-Risk Youth.

When not fulfilling his duties as an elected official, Nohe said he enjoys hiking with his family at Prince William Forest Park and operating Appliance Connectiona family business that opened when he was in high school.



MARTY NOHE VRE Operations Board Member



When VRE first started, there was some skepticism as to whether Prince William residents would want to take the train to work every day. But all these years later, I think we have found that VRE has become a crucial [part] of our transportation networknot just for Prince William residents, but for commuters throughout the region.

VRE TO HOLD PUBLIC HEARINGS ON FARE INCREASE

irginia Railway Express (VRE) will be holding a series of public hearings in February and March to solicit comments on a proposed increase to its fares. A four percent fare increase is being proposed in order to pay for increased operations costs. There would be no changes to the discounted fare structure. Multi-ride tickets will still be discounted at the same rate. Reduced fare tickets will continue to be 50% of the full fare rate but the Amtrak Step-up tickets would increase from \$3 to \$5.

While we are doing all we can internally to control costs, there are factors beyond our control that will increase our costs. These factors include the implementation of a federally mandated Positive Train Control system, a decrease in state funding assistance, and increased train operations expenses. The big drivers of increasing costs cannot be avoided and are largely outside VRE's control. We estimate that, along with administrative reductions, a 4% fare increase would fund the increased costs.

In order to balance the fiscal year 2016 budget, VRE needs to implement administrative efficiencies and revenue increases

through fares. Fares were last increased in July 2013 and if the fare increase is approved by the VRE Operations Board, it would become effective July 1, 2015. The VRE Operations Board agreed that the new Fredericksburg line train needs to begin service in 2015 and while no date has been set for the start of service, it should begin operation prior to July and the opening of Spotsylvania station.

We understand the burden increased fares has on our riders. For that reason, VRE is actively engaged in pursuing Commuter Benefits parity. We believe that public transportation users should have the same level of tax benefits as those who receive parking allowances. It is our hope that Congress will address this issue early in the new session and pass legislation that will establish permanent parity between parking and transit.

While the locations and times of the public hearings are not yet finalized, please look for more information in future Train Talk email or text messages, Facebook or Twitter, or on the VRE website at VRE.org. If you would like to let us know your thoughts on the proposed fare increase, please email us at publiccomment@VRE.org.

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NEW SHUTTLE ROUTE: GMU TO BURKE CENTRE VRE

eorge Mason University (Mason) has a robust transportation program. The latest addition to its fleet of shuttles includes the Burke Centre VRE route. The shuttle provides AM and PM service between the Sandy Creek Shuttle Stop at Mason's Fairfax Campus and the Burke Centre VRE and AMTRAK train station. The departures are timed to work with the train's schedule thus making transfers between the two modes of transportation quick and easy. When the train drops off, the shuttle picks up and vice versa.

Free garage parking is available at the train station. The trip from Burke Centre VRE to the Fairfax Campus takes only 12-15 minutes. All Mason students, faculty, staff, and visitors are allowed to ride the shuttle for free. If you have any questions, please email shuttle@gmu.edu or call 703.993.2828.

Sample Commute: Drive, carpool or ride VRE to the Burke Centre VRE and AMTRAK

train station, then park for FREE at the garage located right next to the train station and take the Burke Centre VRE shuttle to campus.

Commuter Tip: Use NextBus.com/GMU to find out when the next shuttle is arriving

to the bus stop.

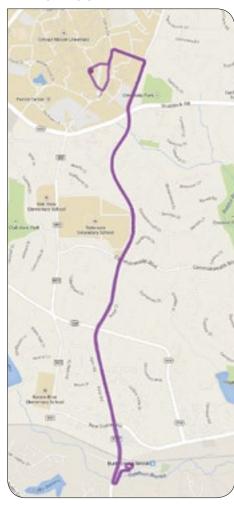




SCHEDULE

MONDAY-FRIDAY	
AM SERVICE	
LEAVES BURKE CENTRE VRE	LEAVES SANDY CREEK
7:10 AM	7:30 AM
7:45 AM	8:00 AM
8:15 AM	8:30 AM
8:45 AM	9:00 AM
9:15 AM	9:30 AM
9:45 AM	10:00 AM
10:15 AM	10:30 AM
10:45 AM	PM SERVICE
PM SERVICE	2:45 PM
3:15 PM	3:30 PM
3:45 PM	4:05 PM
4:30 PM	4:45 PM
5:00 PM	5:15 PM
5:35 PM	5:30 PM
6:15 PM	6:30 PM
6:55 PM	7:10 PM
7:35 PM	7:50 PM

MAP OF ROUTE



SPOTSYLVANIA STATION PROJECT UPDATE

e know many VRE riders are interested in the new station Spotsylvania County building on the Fredericksburg Line. Drainage and fill operations for the new Station have been ongoing for the past four months and concrete work for the station began in October. The station construction is planned to be completed in the first quarter of 2015 and the in-service date for the station is scheduled for summer of 2015 concurrent with the completion of the parking lot. Clearing and grubbing of the site for the parking lot has been completed and drainage work has begun.



▲ CSXT freight trains run past the worksite for the new Spotsylvania Station. VRE's contractor is working on new track and platforms in the foreground, while the County's contractor works on fill and drainage for the parking lot.



SPOTLIGHT ON KEOLIS

MEET JAMIE STUMP

amie Stump is an experienced railroad man. A third generation railroader, he has been working and riding the rails of D.C., Maryland and Virginia for nearly a decade. Jamie joined the VRE team in 2010, initially employed as an engineer on the Fredericksburg Line.

All that experience really paid off one fateful day in September 2011. Torrential rains had been pounding the area, causing major flooding all over the region. As southbound Fredericksburg Line train 309 neared Pohick Creek, Jamie made the decision to stop. Unknown to him at the time, the swollen creek had crested the rail bed and washed it out from beneath the track just ahead. But Jamie knew that standing water on the tracks presented a potentially serious hazard and decided it was no longer safe to proceed. That decision saved train 309 and its passengers from what could have been a major incident.

"I'd been working that stretch of railroad for seven years at the time, and knew it pretty well," he said. "I understood where the problem areas existed, and where things could get nasty." For this bold action, Jamie received a commendation from the VRE Operations Board.

Three years later, Jamie now serves in the role of transportation manager, charged with supervising and training VRE engineers to ensure that they meet and exceed industry regulatory requirements. He also oversees the evening commute, working hard to get passengers

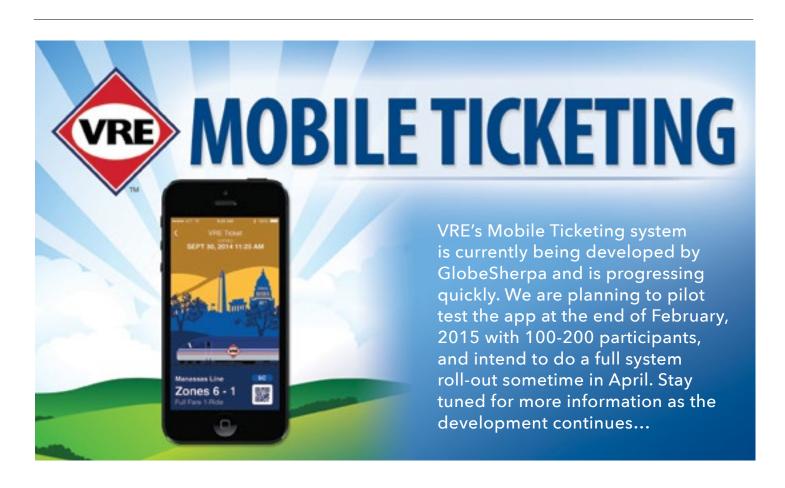
home on-time. "My mandate is to be visible and available... be at the stations where the crews are operating," Jamie said. "That way if there's an issue, I'm there."

Jamie embraces this leadership role, and looks forward to the new challenges and opportunities it presents each day. In his own words, "I strive not only to be an effective manager, but a good leader."

I strive not only to be an effective manager, but a good leader.

When he's not on the job, Jamie enjoys spending time with his wife and eight children. Outdoor activities, such as hunting, fishing and riding ATVs, are also his passion. "When I'm outdoors, I'm happy," he proclaimed.

If you're reading this during your evening commute, rest assured. Jamie Stump and his team are ready at the watch.



VRE ANNOUNCES 2015 OPERATIONS BOARD OFFICERS

he Virginia Railway Express (VRE) Operations Board installed its 2015 slate of officers. The following were unanimously approved by the Operations Board in December and took on their new roles starting at the January meeting:

- John Cook, Fairfax County Supervisor, as Chairman
- Gary Skinner, Spotsylvania County Supervisor, as Vice Chairman
- Paul Smedberg, City of Alexandria Councilor, as Secretary
- Maureen Caddigan, Prince William County Supervisor, as Treasurer

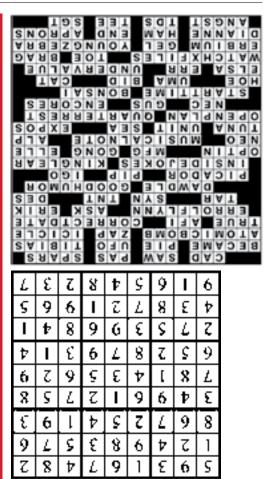
"Having such respected and knowledgeable public officials that really care about improving transportation serve as VRE Operations Board officers is a recipe for VRE's continued success," said Doug Allen, CEO of VRE.

The 2015 VRE Operations Board officers are (left to right) Gary Skinner, John Cook, Paul Smedberg and Maureen Caddigan ▶



COURTESY REMINDERS 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 cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing. Please cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing. Remember riders can only smoke at the northern most 100 feet of our platform. Music is to be played with earphones only.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS



RAIL TIME **PUZZLES**

ACROSS

- 1 III-mannered man
- 4 Perceived
- Faux (minor error)
- Practices punching
- 15 Evolved into
- 18 Budget-graph shape
- 19 Sci-fi staple
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- 25 Frozen spike
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- 48 Torero's sidekick
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- 110 Sandal's lack
- 111 Talk big 113 Element #68
- 114 Hair holder
- 115 A definition of "colt"
- 118 Senator Feinstein
- 119 Omelet ingredient
- 120 Extremity
- 121 Splatter catchers 122 Inner turmoil
- 123 Six-ot, plays 124 Course peg
- 125 Army NCO

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- 6 Deception metaphor
- Corleone creator
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- 9 High voice
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- 13 I Love Lucy surname
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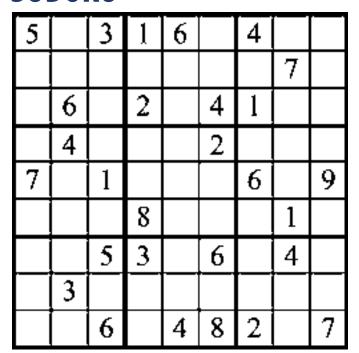
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The Fairfax 2015 World Police & Fire Games will take place from June 26 to July 5, 2015. 12,000 athletes from over 70 countries are expected to compete in 61 sports in 53 area venues.

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COMING SUMMER 2015













