



VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS

Update



703-684-1001

www.vre.org

August 8, 2007

Editor's Note:

Several new and exciting things are happening over the next few months. First, the third track at L'Enfant is being "cut-in" this weekend. Smaller in scope than the "cut-in" of the Quantico Bridge, we hope the final work will not be noticeable to our passengers. However, if the project meets an unexpected delay, then we will operate on the "S" schedule on Monday on both lines.

VRE is working with WMATA and the Commuter Store to bring SmartBenefits to VRE riders. While you won't be able to use your SmarTrip card at our TVMs, we are confident that this program will make it easier for our riders to use.

We have also started a new courtesy campaign: It's so nice to be nice. Our three-panel poster holders at the stations are already sporting our newest poster. Remember, the commute you improve through better courtesy could very well be your own!

As the last days of summer wind down, take some time to register for SmartBenefits and be nice to each other.

L'Enfant's 3rd Track Cut-In This Weekend

Another project designed to ease rail congestion in the D.C. metro area is just about finished, with crews preparing to cut-in the new third track at the L'Enfant station beginning the evening of Friday, August 10. The process, which involves tying the new track in with the existing tracks and testing the tracks and signals, is expected to be finished by Sunday, August 12.

Should testing take longer than expected, it might be necessary to extend the work beyond the weekend. That could mean that VRE will operate on an "S" schedule on Monday, August 13. We are currently working with CSX and Amtrak to minimize the likelihood of such a service disruption, but we will make a final decision regarding Monday morning service by 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 12. All VRE riders on both lines are therefore advised to check the VRE Web site (www.vre.org) for information, or check their e-mail if they subscribe to VRE's



e-newsletter, Train Talk, on Sunday evening so that they can better plan their commutes.

Once cut-in, the new, 6000-foot long third track at the L'Enfant station will serve to decrease congestion by allowing faster passenger trains to run parallel—and pass—slower freight trains on adjacent tracks, thereby improving VRE's speed and decreasing the number of delays we experience. The third track begins just south of the Virginia Avenue tunnel, which is used by freight only. This tunnel is well north of the 1st Street

tunnel that passenger trains use to access Union Station. The new track then runs past the L'Enfant station and continues south towards 14th Street on the east side of the tracks.

So, you may soon see three trains, at once, moving on this busy corridor ... and the key word is "moving!"

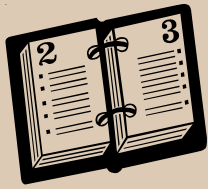
Coming Soon: SmartBenefits For VRE Riders

Are you having trouble getting your Metrochek transit benefits? Then listen up, because SmartBenefits will soon be available for VRE riders. The Web-based program that allows employers to load the dollar value of an employee's transit benefit directly to a SmarTrip card is expanding across the D.C. region to allow many more commuters the option of electronically transferring transit benefits to individual customer accounts.

"Region-wide, we're moving away from paper vouchers in order to reduce the amount of paper

we're using, and so that we can better utilize the flexibility and convenience that electronic accounting allows," explained Lorraine Taylor, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's (WMATA) manager of sales programs. "The electronic cards also offer far more security than the paper cards, since Web-based benefits cannot be easily shared or sold to other people, as some participants have unfortunately chosen to do with their paper benefit cards."

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Upcoming Dates

Today
On-Line Forum
12noon

August 11 and 12
L'Enfant Cut-In
Check Website at
6:00p Sunday for
Service Updates

Monday, August 13
Possible "S" Schedule

Wed., August 15
Meet the
Management
Backlick Road
All Morning Trains

Wed., August 22
Meet the
Management
Lorton
All Morning Trains



VRE Update is a publication of Virginia Railway Express. The newsletter is published bi-weekly 24 times per year. Stories included are for the sole use of VRE riders and its supporters. Comments and questions may be directed to VRE Customer Service at gotrains@vre.org or at (703) 684-1001.

SmartBenefits Coming to VRE Riders

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VRE riders can now access their transit benefits in two ways: They can purchase VRE tickets at any Arlington, Va.-based Commuter Store, or they can set up a reoccurring mail-order account with CommuterDirect.com. While all of the Commuter Store locations in Arlington, Va., are participating, VRE riders will likely find that the Crystal City location is most convenient. (The Connector Store in Springfield, Va., is a separate entity and is not accepting SmartBenefits at this time.) The transit benefit will be stored in an account with one of these two entities, not on your SmarTrip card, though. The SmarTrip card is necessary in order to give everyone a unique ID.

“Riders will still need to use VRE tickets to board our trains, however,” explained E.B. Easter, VRE’s fare collection specialist. “This program will not mean that they can use their SmarTrip cards at our ticket vending machines. Instead, this program is a way that our riders can use electronic benefits while we work through the difficult process of adapting our machines.”

How will the program work? There are three basic factors that determine who is eligible to use this program. First, the rider will need to be employed by an organization that participates in the SmartBenefits program with WMATA. Participants also must have or be willing to get a registered SmarTrip card. Finally, they must be willing to purchase their VRE fare from an Arlington-based Commuter Store or through [CommuterDirect](http://CommuterDirect.com).

Does that describe you? Then beginning September 1, you can begin the process for accessing your benefits! There are just a few easy steps to get you started:

1) Talk with your employer and tell them that you want to switch from paper Metrocheks to electronic SmartBenefits. Your employer will then need to enroll you in SmartBenefits, so

they can allocate funds to your SmarTrip account for your use.

2) Register your SmarTrip card by visiting www.metroopensdoors.com and clicking on “SmarTrip.” Then, click on “Register Your SmarTrip card.” (If you don’t already have a SmarTrip card, visit www.metroopensdoors.com, click on “SmarTrip,” and then click on “It’s easy to buy SmarTrip.”)

3) You will then need to visit www.metroopensdoors.com, select



SmartBenefits, then select “van pools” (at press time, the link reads “van pools” ... it may ultimately change slightly) in order to assign your funds as you wish to receive them, by selecting either the [CommuterDirect](http://CommuterDirect.com) mail option or the option to purchase your tickets at a Commuter Store.

4) If you plan on having your VRE tickets mailed directly to your home, you’ll also need to register with [CommuterDirect](http://CommuterDirect.com). To do so, visit www.commuterdirect.com and click on “renewable orders.”

5) If you plan on purchasing your VRE tickets from a Commuter Store, simply tell the clerk which type of ticket(s) you would like to buy. Be sure to have your SmarTrip card and a photo ID handy.

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Putting the Brakes on Boorish Behavior

For what seems like a lot of years, we've been begging, pleading and groveling with some of our passengers to always remember "The Golden Rule" while riding on VRE's trains. Please, we've begged, don't queue and block others from detraining. Please, we've pleaded, don't prop your dirty shoes on another seat. Please, we've groveled, don't talk in the Quiet Car.

It sometimes works, and it sometimes doesn't ... so this month, we're kicking our efforts up a notch with a new courtesy campaign, "It's so nice to be nice."

Posters dedicated to a variety of different annoying (and sometimes dangerous) passenger practices have been designed, with the first of the series already posted at station platforms and on the three-panel directory in the parking lots. We'll reinforce the courtesy messages with pre-recorded announcements on the train, and we'll change them out every

month to ensure that one problem isn't overshadowed by another.

"When VRE first began service, we didn't have a huge problem with discourteous behavior because our parking lots weren't full and our



trains often had more than enough seats for everyone," explained VRE's Manager of Market Development Ann King. "But over the past few years, as ridership has increased and the general population has grown more crowded, the increase in complaints has become substantial. We get e-mails and phone calls all the time from passengers who are tired of other passengers' discourteous behavior, and we're really hoping that more reminders and a targeted focus on several key problem behaviors will help make the

commute on VRE more pleasurable for everyone."

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Security Notice

Amtrak Police have been stepping up security screens. Amtrak passengers, including VRE riders who travel on Amtrak cross honor trains, will be subject to random security screening. Passengers who fail to consent to these inspection procedures will be denied access to the Amtrak trains.

Given the other security measures in place at Union Station, please allow extra time to get to the train if you plan on riding an Amtrak train.

SmartBenefits

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Assuming that you complete your registration between September 1 and September 15, you will be able to access your benefits at the Commuter Store beginning October 1. You will need to register for a mail order with CommuterDirect by September 15 to have your first mail order shipped in time for use by October 1.

Participating in the program requires a small fee, as riders will be responsible for the \$5.00 cost of a SmarTrip card. Customers who register with CommuterDirect and request that their tickets be mailed directly to them are normally

also responsible for a \$6.50 shipping and handling fee. However, until September 2008, VRE has agreed to pay that fee for participating VRE riders who purchase their tickets using SmartBenefits.

While the registration process is complex, you only need to register once. If you choose the reoccurring order from CommuterDirect, then just sit back and relax as your tickets are automatically sent to you each month. Or, simply show up to the Commuter Store after the 25th of each month and your benefits will be waiting for you.



15th Anniversary Winners

Our 15th Anniversary contests are in full swing. Here are the luck winners so far:

Trivia Contest Winners

Daniel Hall
David Kasminoff
Pam Roffall
Mike Karlik
David Higginbotham

Logo Contest Winners

Davin Peterson
Jooyoung Hartzell
Mark Davis

Congratulations all!

To find out more about our 15th Anniversary Contests, visit our website at www.vre.org/fun/15th-Anniversary/anniversary-index.html

Courtesy Campaign

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This month's poster, which focuses on loud cell phone use, uses colorful illustrations and cartoon characters to let passengers know in a humorous way how their loud, drawn-out conversations and arguments on a cell phone can be extremely distracting and annoying for other passengers.

Other behavior that will be highlighted over the next year include queuing in the aisles, speeding in parking lots, smoking on station

platforms (it's only allowed on the north end), being quiet in the Quiet Car, leaving priority seating for those who need it most, putting feet on seats, placing personal articles on seats so that no one can sit there, and leaving trash behind.

Let's all take part in making everyone's commute on VRE a relaxing and pleasant one. Who knows? The commute you improve could very well be your own.

Ask VRE

Dear VRE,

Is there any progress with using a credit card at the Gray Line ticket outlet at Union Station?

Ticketless at Union Station

Dear Ticketless,

Unfortunately, we have had trouble obtaining a replacement card reader for the vendor at Union Station. Compatible devices are not manufactured in the United States. Since they must be imported, these readers need to be certified to U.S. standards by the financial institution that we use to process debit and credit transactions. We are currently awaiting testing and certification for the unit to be placed at Gray Line.

We apologize that this process is taking longer than we had anticipated and hope to have full service available soon. In the

meantime, a list of other vendors can be found at www.vre.org/service/vendor.htm on our website.

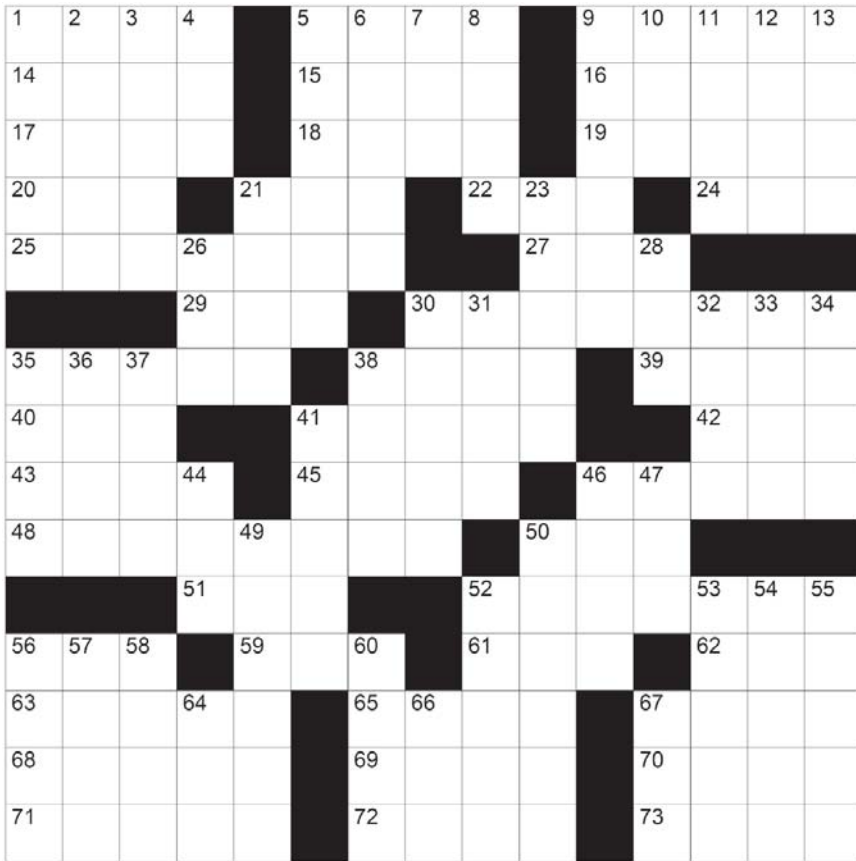


If you use a vendor to purchase VRE tickets using Metrocheks as a form of payment, you may wish to take advantage of our TVM Mail-In Reimbursement Program. Simply use your credit card to purchase your tickets at a platform ticket vending machine, then mail in your Metrocheks along with your ticket receipt, and we

will reimburse your credit card for the amount of Metrocheks you send in. The reimbursement form can be found at www.vre.org/service/metrochek_redemption_form.pdf.

Your Customer Advocate

Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS

- 01. Type of candy
- 05. Hoax
- 09. Tower of __
- 14. Sustained dull painful emotion
- 15. Cab
- 16. Past: Arch.
- 17. Bright light
- 18. Beer
- 19. Ointment

- 20. Argon or oxygen
- 21. Before: Pref.
- 22. Small bed
- 24. French river
- 25. Foes
- 27. Obtain
- 29. Conjunction
- 30. Pilchards
- 35. Florida trees
- 38. Capital of Italy
- 39. Cloak

- 40. Self
- 41. Unpleasant persons
- 42. Container
- 43. The sister of your father or mother
- 45. British PM
- 46. Records
- 48. Heritages
- 50. Obese
- 51. Annoy: Sl.
- 52. Origin

DOWN

- 01. Stove
- 02. Main
- 03. In a way, judged
- 04. Cognizance
- 05. Gazed
- 06. Leporid mammals
- 07. A way to terminate
- 08. Various: Abbr.
- 09. Clobbered
- 10. Honorable title (Turkish)
- 11. Cotton pod
- 12. Rancor
- 13. The sediment from fermentation of an alcoholic beverage
- 21. Pegs
- 23. Giants
- 26. Mayan
- 28. A local and habitual twitching in the face
- 30. Infections
- 31. After a prayer

- 32. In a way, takes
- 33. Impressive in size or scope
- 34. Marijuana
- 35. Ring
- 36. Acute
- 37. Great length
- 38. Taunted
- 41. Light brown
- 44. Pitch
- 46. Damn
- 47. Inhabitant of: Suff.
- 49. Stroking
- 50. In a way, thought highly of
- 52. Glower
- 53. Indian term of respect
- 54. Extremely angry; highly incensed
- 55. In a way, fashioned
- 56. Saddle horse
- 57. A way to tissue
- 58. Monetary unit
- 60. Defy
- 64. Monetary unit
- 66. Fit tightly
- 67. Helps little firms

- 56. Complete
- 59. Crimson
- 61. Fail to keep up with
- 62. They __
- 63. Elevate
- 65. From a distance
- 67. G.B. __, writer
- 68. Land measurements
- 69. Recurring only at long intervals
- 70. Morsel

- 71. Limas, for one
- 72. In a way, looked
- 73. Asleep



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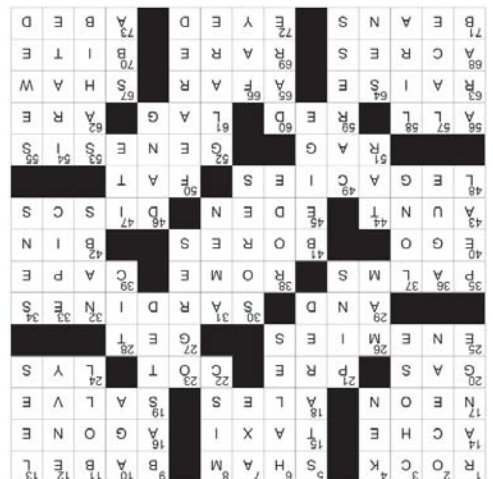
Featured Listing

Custom built home on 14.7 picturesque acres on Rosier Creek in King George ... \$595,000 (MLS KG5400149).



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