



VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS

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## **Virginia Railway Express Shatters Ridership Records as Metro Riders Try Out System during SafeTrack Work**

**ALEXANDRIA, Va. (July 19, 2016).** – During a time of year when ridership typically drops due to summer vacations and flexible schedules, the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) is instead carrying more passengers than ever before. Last Tuesday, July 12, VRE experienced its highest single-day ridership with 23,309 individual trips.

The uptick in single-day trips continued through the week, as the following day, (Wednesday, July 13) saw 21,935 trips, which is the system's second highest single-day total and Thursday (July 14) boasted the third highest single-day ridership at 21,196 trips. Another record was shattered in regards to weekly ridership, as VRE topped 100,000 trips last week, the first time VRE has hit that number.

This ridership surge can be linked to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) SafeTrack program. Beginning July 5, WMATA's SafeTrack Surges #3 and #4 closed sections of Metrorail's Blue and Yellow lines in Northern Virginia. Those Metrorail lines generally parallel VRE's rail lines and serve many of the same destinations, allowing Metro riders to easily transition to VRE.

"It's been exciting to introduce a whole new group of people to VRE and to get their feedback on our service," said VRE Director of Rail Operations Chris Henry. "We're pleased to hear their satisfaction with our on-time performance, railcar restrooms, helpful staff and the comfortable, safe and easy ride to and from work, because that's what we strive for every day. It's our hope that some of these riders continue to utilize VRE and integrate us into their regular travel routine."

Many of these new VRE riders were able to take advantage of the VRE Mobile app, which experienced a spike in downloads during the last two weeks. VRE became the first transit system in the greater Washington area to offer such an app, which allows customers to plan their routes and purchase their tickets directly on their smartphones. They are also able to validate their tickets and completely bypass the need to visit a Ticket Vending Machine for more convenience and flexibility. In addition, riders can set up and utilize SmartBenefits for their fares with the app.

The next SafeTrack Surge begins July 20 and will involve single-tracking on the Orange and Silver lines between East Falls Church and Ballston. VRE's Manassas Line will serve as an alternative for some Orange line riders. Those potential riders may want to consider hopping on VRE at Burke Center, which generally has the most available parking spots.

### **About the Virginia Railway Express**

Virginia Railway Express, the 10th largest commuter rail service in the U.S., is a partnership of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission and the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission. VRE's mission is to provide safe, cost effective, accessible, reliable, convenient, and customer responsive commuter-oriented rail passenger service. It provides more than 4 million rides annually in Northern Virginia and Washington, D.C. Visit [www.vre.org](http://www.vre.org) for additional information.