



Annual Report

FY 2008

Virginians for High Speed Rail

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March 2009,

Dear Supporters:

This has been an exciting year for rail. As gas peaked at nearly \$4 a gallon, passenger rail ridership across the country skyrocketed. Many rail stations in Virginia experienced double digit growth, with no concurrent expansion of rail service. As gas prices have dipped below \$2 a gallon, ridership continues to increase, Virginia Railway Express boarded more commuters in the single month of October than at any time in its history and Amtrak's ridership continues its upward trajectory.

Virginia is on the verge of becoming the 15th state to partner with Amtrak to sponsor regional intercity passenger rail. In a historic first, the Kaine administration is preparing to launch two new daily regional trains, one on the I-95 corridor between Richmond and Washington, the other on the US-29 corridor between Lynchburg and Washington. The impending new services have received widespread popular support as Virginians demand more cost-effective and environmentally-friendly alternatives to building and maintaining roads. VHSR was an effective force in getting these services in the state's strategic plan and we are now working to make sure they are adequately funded.

At the federal level, we have seen more progress over the last year than we saw in the previous ten years. Congress passed (with veto-proof majorities) the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act, which re-authorizes Amtrak over a multi-year cycle and creates a \$2 billion federal-state grant program for new projects. Enhanced federal investment in passenger rail corridors will benefit freight and commuter rail as well.

Virginians for High Speed Rail is very proud of Senator Jim Webb and former Senator John Warner for co-sponsoring this legislation, and we appreciate the favorable votes of Representatives Eric Cantor, Bobby Scott, Jim Moran, Rick Boucher, Frank Wolf, Bob Goodlatte, and former Representatives Thelma Drake, Tom Davis, and Virgil Goode in support of the bill. Building on their momentum, VHSR has been mobilizing a large network of rail constituents to persuade Congress to fully fund the bill.

We are also very excited about the \$8 billion dedicated to high speed rail the President Obama Administration included in the stimulus legislation that passed Congress. We are working to ensure that Virginia takes full advantage of these valuable resources.

On other legislative fronts, VHSR is working with key members of the General Assembly to amend Virginia's Rail Enhancement Fund so that it can be used as a resource for leveraging state dollars by drawing down federal money for expensive projects of the future, such as the Southeast High Speed Rail corridor.

The support of our local governments, economic development agencies, businesses, and individual donors is what allows VHSR to make such progress. Our success is because of you. Thank you for continuing to support our work at VHSR.

Sincerely,

Meredith Richards
President

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Mission, Vision, and Goals for 2008-2009

About VHSR

Virginians for High Speed Rail (VHSR) is a 501 (C) (3) non-profit coalition of citizens, localities, economic development agencies, community organizations, and businesses that educate and advocate for the improvement and expansion of rail service in Virginia. We work closely with the Greater Richmond Chamber of Commerce, Amtrak, Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce, Virginia FREE, Sierra Club, Peninsula Chamber of Commerce, Fredericksburg Chamber of Commerce, Partnership for Smarter Growth, Greater Williamsburg Chamber of Commerce, National Association of Railroad Passengers, and the Virginia League of Conservation Voters.

Vision

We foresee a Commonwealth that is economically competitive, socially vibrant, and environmentally sound. We envision a comprehensive, high-tech transportation system, consisting of High Speed Rail and other modern passenger rail services, linking major urban areas. We foresee these services working seamlessly with all other modes of transportation, including the state's primary commercial airports, the Washington-area Metro system, Norfolk's light rail system, Virginia Railway Express commuter rail, and urban public transit.

Mission

The mission of Virginians for High Speed Rail is to promote rail transportation as an energy-efficient, environmentally friendly, pro-economic development mode of transportation for which there is a substantial and growing market, as reflected by user trends, and unmet demand, in both freight and passenger transport.

Goals

Short term:

- Appropriate funding for intercity passenger rail (Amtrak).
 - **Appropriate funding for Amtrak in President Obama's budget.**
- Amend the Rail Enhancement Fund (REF) to make it compatible with federal resources.
 - **Legislation introduced in the 2009 General Assembly.**
- Expand passenger rail service between Washington, DC and Richmond.
 - **New service is funded by the Commonwealth Transportation Board. Launch in Fall of 2009.**
- Expand passenger rail service between Washington, DC and Lynchburg.
 - **New service is funded by the Commonwealth Transportation Board. Launch in Fall of 2009.**
- Extend new passenger rail service to Newport News .
 - **Rail Advisory Board funded needed infrastructure improvements to extend service.**
- Passage of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act.
 - **Passed Congress and signed by the President. Authorized funding needs appropriated.**
- Completion of the Richmond to Hampton Roads Passenger Rail Study.
 - **Study before the Federal Railroad Administration.**

Long term:

- Additional rail capacity (i.e. 3rd track) between Washington, DC and Richmond.
- Passenger rail service between Richmond and South Hampton Roads.
- The TransDominion Express from Bristol to Lynchburg then to Washington and Richmond.
- Implementation of the CSX's southeast higher-speed rail Corridors of the Future proposal.

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Thank you.

Finances for July 1, 2007 - June 30, 2008

FY 2008 Contributions

Governmental (9 localities, 1 agency)	\$75,000.00
Business Sponsorships (30 businesses)	\$55,934.00
Individual Memberships (402 donors)	\$27,679.00
Economic Development Agencies (4 EDAs)	\$17,000.00
Misc (interest, refunds, rebates)	\$7,566.61
2008 Annual Meeting	\$2,745.00
Total Contributions	\$185,924.61

FY 2008 Expenditures

Personal & Professional Fees (staff, taxes, accountant, etc)	\$70,084.46
Outreach (printing, postage, events, etc)	\$40,646.19
Office Expenses (rent, supplies)	\$17,466.11
Travel and Conferences	\$5,372.43
Miscellaneous (fees, refunds, etc)	\$3,056.89
Communication (phone, email)	\$2,761.38
Membership and Dues	\$1,829.00
Total Expenditures	\$141,216.46
Difference	\$44,708.15

Activities for FY 2008

Legislation:

The High Speed Rail for America Act (Federal)

- Contacted the offices of both Senator James Webb and Senator-elect Mark Warner.

The Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (Federal)

- Legislation passed Congress and was signed by President Bush, it authorizes \$2.1 billion for passenger rail corridors such as the Richmond to Washington corridor. (Oct 08)
- Passed US House of Representatives 311 to 104 with 9 of 11 members from Virginia voting for passage. (June 08)
- Met with Representative-elect Rob Wittman (VA-1) regarding this legislation (Nov 07)
- Passed US Senate 70 to 22 (Oct 07)
- Sen. J. Warner (April 07) and Sen. J. Webb (May 07) signed on as co-sponsors.
- Met with the staffs of Senators John Warner and Jim Webb to encourage support and sponsorship of S.294 (April 07)

Rail Enhancement Fund Amendments (Virginia)

- Met with Delegates Toscano and Loupassi regarding this legislation (Oct/Nov 08)
- SB 371 passed the Virginia State Senate, died in a House of Delegates transportation sub-committee.
- Prompted State Senators John Watkins & Yvonne Miller, and Delegate Adam Ebbin to introduce REF legislation [SB 11, SB 371 & HB856] for 2008 General Assembly session. (Dec 07)
- Met with State Senator Yvonne Miller, Chairwoman of Senate Transportation Committee regarding legislation (Nov 07)

HR 2116, the Freight Rail Infrastructure Capacity Expansion Act (Federal)

- VHSR Board of Directors voted to support legislation (July 07)
- VHSR Board met with Rep. Eric Cantor per his request to discuss his pending legislation. (June 07)

Meetings:

- Presented before the Chesterfield County Board of Supervisors (May 08)
- Represented at the Richmond Transportation Advisory Board annual breakfast. (May 08)
- Hosted our 12th Annual Meeting at the Science Museum of Virginia. Speakers included Governor Kaine, Dept. of Rail and Public Transportation Director Matt Tucker, NC DOT Rail Director Pat Simmons, Conaway Haskins from Sen. Webb's office, Lloyd Lenhart from Congressman Cantor's office, and Richmond City Council President Bill Pantele. (May 08)
- Presented before the Greater Richmond Chamber of Commerce regarding Rail. (May 08)
- Hosted and Assisted with National Train Day events or proclamations in Ashland, Fredericksburg, Richmond, and Williamsburg (May 08)
- Represented at VDOT's 6-year planning meetings around the state. (Apr 08)
- Board of Directors hosted a presentation by Dept. of Rail and Public Transportation Director Matthew O. Tucker regarding Virginia's upcoming State Rail Plan (Apr 08)
- Presented before the Henrico County Board of Supervisors (Feb 08)
- Presented before the Portsmouth Economic Development Agency (Feb 08)
- Presented before the Chesapeake Economic Development Agency (Feb 08)
- Presented before the Fredericksburg City Council (Feb 08)
- Presented before the Williamsburg City Council (Feb 08)
- Represented at Virginia's Rail Advisory Board Meetings (Feb 08)
- Met with State Senators Watkins, Newman, Ralph Smith, Petersen, John Miller, Ticer, Puckett, Wagner, and Cuccinelli or their staffs regarding state legislation. (Jan 08)
- Met with Delegates Ebbin, Toscano, Valentine, BaCote, Cosgrove, Hugo, and Tata or their staffs regarding state legislation.
- Sponsored the Carmichael Conference on the Future of American Transportation in St. Louis, Missouri. (Jan 08)
- Represented at the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission's passenger rail working group press conference that recommended \$357.2 billion for passenger rail. (Dec 07)
- Hosted first roundtable of Virginia environmental and transportation organizations to discuss rail advocacy coordination (Nov 07)
- Represented at VDOT's 56th Annual Transportation Conference in Roanoke (Nov 07)
- Represented at Virginia's Rail Advisory Board Meetings (Jan-Oct 07)
- Sponsored the East Coast High Speed Rail Summit in Raleigh, NC. Summit included multiple authorities on intercity high-speed passenger rail, State Secretaries of Transportation, Representatives, and congressional staffers. (Oct 07)
 - Rep. Eric Cantor sent his Deputy Chief of Staff and Richmond Director at the request of VHSR.

Outreach/ Grassroots/ Other:

- Emailed 1,192 Virginians to support the additional rail funding in Governor Kaine's transportation proposals. (June 08)
- Mailed 25,034 postcards to support rail funding in Governor Kaine's transportation proposals. (June 08)

Activities for FY 2008 continued

- Mailed information about VHSR to 69,602 Virginians resulting in hundreds of new supporters. (Mar 08)
- Mailed 2,500 action alerts regarding pending state legislation. (Jan 08)
- Sent legislative action alert to 9,000 citizens via email. (Jan 08)
- Obtained the Dept. of Rail & Public Transportation's Amtrak Study via FOIA request. (Jan 08)
- Published the Virginians for High Speed Rail 2007 Annual Report (Jan 08)
- Mailed every elected state senator and delegate a packet of information regarding rail issues in Virginia. (Nov 07)
- Mailed every candidate running for the General Assembly information regarding rail issues in Virginia (Oct 07)
- Emailed over 800 supporters regarding an anti-passenger rail amendment before the US Senate. The email encouraged our supporters to ask Senators J. Warner and J. Webb to vote against it. (Oct 07)
 - After talking to Senator John Warner's office, he voted against it. The amendment failed.
- Hosted a booth at the VA State Fair where we distributed 1,000's of pieces of literature & talked to 100's of Virginians. (Sep 07)
- Interviewed on CBS 6's "Along for the Ride" segment regarding higher speed rail to Richmond. (July 07)

Amtrak and VRE Passenger Rail Ridership Numbers for Virginia

Station	FY 2007	FY 2008	Difference
Alexandria	97,734	120,153	22.94%
Ashland	12,909	16,497	27.79%
Charlottesville	48,190	53,038	10.06%
Clifton Forge	3,216	3,867	20.24%
Culpeper	4,151	5,166	24.45%
Danville	4,662	6,141	31.72%
Franconia-Springfield	1,695	2,598	53.27%
Fredericksburg*	61,615	52,300	-15.12%
Lorton (Auto-Train)	217,822	234,839	7.81%
Lynchburg	18,744	25,383	35.42%
Manassas	8,178	9,644	17.93%
Newport News	96,473	117,154	21.44%
Petersburg	18,725	20,909	11.66%
Quantico*	28,078	21,113	-24.81%
Richmond - Main Street	12,757	19,360	51.76%
Richmond - Staples Mill	234,670	275,479	17.39%
Staunton	6,345	6,265	-1.26%
Williamsburg	41,941	49,685	18.46%
Woodbridge*	15,361	10,426	-32.13%
DC—Union Station (VA ridership est.)	1,000,000	1,000,000	0.00%
Virginia Railway Express (VRE)	3,453,561	3,628,563	5.07%
Total	5,386,827	5,678,580	5.42%

*The decrease in ridership is partially due to a change in VRE's policy where VRE riders used to be able to, for a small fee, step up to the Amtrak trains.