

VRE to open new Spotsylvania station on Nov. 16

BY SCOTT SHENK/THE FREE LANCE-STAR | Posted: Monday, October 26, 2015 3:57 pm

Monday, Nov. 16, 4:57 a.m.

That is the slot scheduled for the first train to leave the new Spotsylvania Virginia Railway Express Station, which is the first extension of the VRE rail line since service started in 1992.

“We’ve been long anticipating the completion of the Spotsylvania station,” county Supervisor Gary Skinner said in a statement.

The station, in the Crossroads Station development off the U.S. 17 Bypass, includes a 1,500-space parking lot, a 700-foot platform with a waiting area and bathrooms. The station will be the southern terminus of the commuter rail line.

VRE built the station and platform while Spotsylvania built the lot. A companion project, the construction of a third track from the station to Fredericksburg, is slated to be finished by the end of the year. An additional train also will be added to the busy Fredericksburg line by the end of the year.

On average, VRE’s Fredericksburg line carries nearly 5,000 riders daily each way.

The Spotsylvania trains will begin using the existing schedule, leaving eight minutes prior to Fredericksburg station departures.

The opening of the new station is coming at an ominous time for the railroad industry, much of which could shut down because of a positive train control mandate. VRE is among many in the industry saying the federal safety regulations cannot be met by the Dec. 31 deadline. If there is no extension, industry officials say they would have to stop running trains.

Having a dark cloud hanging over the opening of the station wouldn’t be out of the norm because the station and third-track project has endured numerous delays and problems over the years.

County officials initially hoped to have the station open by late 2013, but that didn’t happen because of technical and funding issues.

Once those issues were dealt with, the county ran into a problem securing property needed for the parking lot. That issue continues to wind through the court system, but the Virginia Department of



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Construction work continues on the Spotsylvania VRE station on Friday, Aug. 14, 2015.

Transportation used eminent domain, allowing work to start.

Earlier this year, VRE suspended the contractor building the third track, citing safety violations. That delayed the project for months, but crews eventually got back to work.

“The new Spotsylvania Station is a great addition to our Fredericksburg line service,” said Doug Allen, the commuter rail line’s CEO.