

Prince William Times

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Battlefield grad goes to bat for Senators

"Just being close to home in Haymarket, it was a good all-around experience."

Aldie Senators player Derek Evans. B1.



Tales of valor

Responding to a 9-1-1 call for a 1-year-old child choking and having difficulty breathing, Manassas Police Officer Officer Trey Cram determined that the child was having a seizure. His actions saved the child's life.

A3.

MASS TRANSIT STATION

Work starts on Potomac Shores VRE



An artist's rendering shows what the completed project will look like.

COURTESY PHOTO/MCAULIFFE ADMINISTRATION

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The helicopter was the key element.

Traffic on Interstate 95 is so bad, so unpredictable, that to get to an event on the Cherry Hill peninsula last week, Gov. Terry McAuliffe had to take a helicopter to ensure prompt arrival.

That's not necessarily surprising.

What made the move poignant, however, was that the shindig was for a new Virginia Railway Express station.

So that means that His Excellency had to fly to a program about, yes, getting commuters off the road. Perhaps that was appropriate.

The occasion was the groundbreaking for a VRE station in Potomac Shores, a

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VRE station will ease Potomac traffic

VRE from Page A1

1,920-acre development that is slated to include nearly 4,000 homes, a town center, two schools, a Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf Course, a marina and waterfront village, a resort hotel, a corporate campus, sports fields and courts, and nearly 2 miles of shoreline on the Potomac River and Powell's Creek.

The property, not far from Dumfries, is being developed by the Irvine, Calif.-based SunCal, which bought the land on a short sale out of foreclosure in 2011.

A project had been started there, and SunCal wants to turn it into a "transit-oriented development."

"We made some adjustments to the previous plans," Eddie Byrne, vice president of project management for Potomac Shores, said in a prepared statement, "and the county's 2013 approval of a zoning amendment and special-use permit allows us to concentrate various uses in the town center."

The Potomac Shores VRE station will be between the current Quantico and Rippon commuter-rail stops.

The state is spending \$15 million and SunCal is contributing \$20 million toward the design and construction of the station.

And Congress in 2012 allocated \$74.8 million for an 11-mile rail extension and a third

track that will serve it.

The station will sit along a bluff-top promenade overlooking the Potomac, and commuters will take an elevator or stairs down to the boarding platforms to catch VRE trains.

"This station will take ... thousands of cars off the road after it is built," Prince William County Supervisor Maureen Caddigan, who represents the area where Potomac Shores is located, said at the VRE groundbreaking.

Hilda Barg, a former Prince William supervisor who has lived on the peninsula all her life, told the crowd assembled for the event that the SunCal development and VRE station will be the culmination of a vision that many have had for years.

"This is about our dream, our dream for this community," Barg said.

She also said that it should help to attract jobs to Prince William.

"Terry," she said, addressing McAuliffe, "we're going to bring some of those Fortune 500s right here. Right here."

Paul Milde, a Stafford County supervisor who chairs VRE's Operations Board, said that the commuter-rail line wants to double its ridership over the next two decades, and

that the Potomac Shores station is part of the strategy to accomplish that goal.

Milde also said that VRE provides the least expensive option for adding capacity of any transit system.

"This is the best deal," he told dignitaries and guests gathered under a tent situated to present a water view.

Speaking last, McAuliffe said that, as a former land developer, he was impressed by the work of all involved in the Potomac Shores project.

"I know what it takes to do this," he said.

And as for the VRE station specifically, the Democrat said reliable transportation options are essential to economic development.

"You cannot grow an economy if your transportation system doesn't work," McAuliffe said.

The Potomac Shores station will be a "vital link to the region's commuter network," he said, and it's another in a series of Northern Virginia transportation projects for his administration. Others are the recent launch of Metrorail's Silver Line and work on interstates 95 and 66.

"Opening up this region is absolutely critical," McAuliffe said.