

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 9, 2013

ATK-13-085
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GOVERNOR BOB MCDONNELL ANNOUNCES EXTENSION OF AMTRAK SERVICE TO ROANOKE Due to 2013 transportation bill, train service will return to Star City for first time in 34 years

ROANOKE – Standing at the Railside Amphitheater, Governor Bob McDonnell today announced that the Commonwealth of Virginia, Norfolk Southern, Amtrak and the City of Roanoke have joined together to start work to extend Amtrak Virginia regional intercity passenger rail service from Lynchburg to Roanoke. It has been 34 years since intercity passenger rail has served the City of Roanoke. The return of passenger rail to Roanoke is a result of passage this year of Virginia's first major transportation funding plan in nearly three decades. The governor was joined at today's announcement by local elected officials including Roanoke Mayor David Bowers, state leaders including Thelma Drake, Director of the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, and rail officials including Charles W. Moorman, CEO of Norfolk Southern and Joe McHugh from Amtrak.

"For many years, the citizens of Roanoke and the Valley have asked when intercity passenger rail will return," said Governor McDonnell. "I am pleased to announce today that the Department of Rail and Public Transportation, through its partnership with Norfolk Southern, Amtrak and the City of Roanoke, will begin work on bringing service back to this historic railroad city. This achievement is a direct result of the bipartisan effort this past winter to pass

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Virginia's first major transportation funding plan in over a generation. We had gone far too long without investing the necessary resources in our roads and railways. This infrastructure is crucial to future job creation and economic growth in our state. With the passage of that bill, we're cutting a lot of ribbons. We're building new roads and railways all around the Commonwealth. All of this will lead to new jobs for our citizens, and a more prosperous Virginia. And right here in Roanoke, it means the return of intercity passenger rail service to the Star City. ”

“The signing into law of the Governor's transportation bill provided a dedicated funding source for intercity passenger rail, which can be used for capital and the expansion of service,” said Transportation Secretary Sean T. Connaughton. “The administration placed a high priority on extending Amtrak Virginia to Roanoke as a viable transportation option for travel to cities along the Northeast Corridor.”

Work to bring Amtrak Virginia service to the city, as an extension of the highly-successful Lynchburg line, is anticipated to take between three and four years.

Thelma Drake, director of the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), said, “Conceptual design work and rail capacity analysis is already underway. Work will be done by Norfolk Southern, Amtrak and the City of Roanoke.”

“Norfolk Southern is happy to play a role in a new chapter of the Star City's rail history as we support the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation's efforts to extend passenger service to Roanoke,” said Norfolk Southern CEO Wick Moorman. “While freight is at the core of Norfolk Southern's business, we understand the importance of passenger service to the Roanoke Valley.”

“This new service to Roanoke connects passengers to other areas of the Commonwealth as well as cities along the Northeast Corridor,” said Amtrak President and CEO Joe Boardman. “We offer travelers a safe, efficient and reliable alternative that mitigates the effect of high gas prices and pervasive highway and airline congestion.”

“The entire Roanoke region is excited about having passenger rail service back in the Star City for the first time since 1979. Roanoke, the home of the Norfolk & Western for many decades, is once again a ‘railroad town.’ Bringing passenger rail service to Roanoke has been Roanoke's most important economic development priority,” said Roanoke Mayor David. A. Bowers. “I thank Governor McDonnell and his Administration, particularly DRPT Director Thelma Drake and her team, for their leadership and successful efforts to bring passenger rail

service back to Roanoke. I also want to thank AMTRAK and Norfolk Southern for partnering with us. This is a tremendous accomplishment for the Commonwealth, the Roanoke Valley region and our City and, again, I sincerely thank the Governor for his leadership."

Known as the "Amtrak Virginia" partnership, Roanoke is the latest step for the Commonwealth to lead the way as one of the few states in the country to successfully negotiate the addition of new intercity passenger rail service in major rail corridors, balancing freight and economic development needs with additional intercity passenger rail options.

About Amtrak®

Amtrak is America's Railroad®, the nation's intercity passenger rail service and its high-speed rail operator. A record 31.2 million passengers traveled on Amtrak in FY 2012 on more than 300 daily trains – at speeds up to 150 mph (241 kph) – that connect 46 states, the District of Columbia and three Canadian Provinces. Amtrak operates intercity trains in partnership with 15 states and contracts with 13 commuter rail agencies to provide a variety of services. Enjoy the journey® at Amtrak.com or call 800-USA-RAIL for schedules, fares and more information. Join us on facebook.com/Amtrak and follow us at twitter.com/Amtrak.

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