



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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DRPT: Kelsey Webb

E-mail: [kelsey.webb@drpt.virginia.gov](mailto:kelsey.webb@drpt.virginia.gov)

Phone: (804) 840-0575

**DRPT Reports Ridership Increases on Virginia Amtrak Routes**

*~ Increases Across the Commonwealth Emphasize State's Commitment to Transportation Alternatives ~*

**RICHMOND** – Today, the [Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation](http://www.drpt.virginia.gov) (DRPT) announced ridership increases on most Amtrak routes it supports in Virginia, reflecting demand for safe, reliable, and comfortable transportation alternatives. DRPT supports the operation of six Amtrak trains in Virginia that connect the Roanoke Valley, Central Virginia, and Hampton Roads to Washington, D.C. and to cities along Amtrak's Northeast Corridor.

DRPT's Norfolk route, which includes one daily round trip to Washington, D.C., served 155,389 riders in federal fiscal year (FFY) 2017 (October 1, 2016 – September 30, 2017), representing a six percent increase from FFY 2016. Also:

- The Lynchburg route (now the Roanoke route after its extension to the Star City on October 31, 2017) also runs a daily round trip to Washington, D.C. It served 189,811 riders in FFY 2017, increasing by 2.7 percent.
- The Newport News Route, which has two daily round trips to Washington, D.C., served 331,308 riders, increasing by 0.5 percent.
- The Richmond route also features two daily state-supported round trips to Washington, D.C. Ridership on these trains remained relatively steady by serving 174,935 riders.

“Rail ridership increases across Virginia demonstrate that DRPT is meeting a transportation need that benefits citizens of the Commonwealth. Taking the train gets cars off crowded interstates, connects Virginians to business and leisure activities, and provides a dependable transportation alternative that improves mobility,” said **DRPT Director Jennifer Mitchell**.

DRPT-supported Amtrak trains provide single-seat rides from Virginia stations all the way to Boston and also provide numerous other benefits. Café cars, quiet cars, in-seat power outlets, spacious seats, and free Wi-Fi on most trains deliver a comfortable trip to riders, whether they are relaxing or working on-board. Riding the train also reduces about 271 million miles of personal driving in Virginia every year, which prevents about 3,000 accidents and saves lives. Railroads are more fuel efficient due to a lesser production of harmful emissions than cars. In addition, trains also support a growing economy because freight and passenger rail services together support more than 6,000 jobs.

During the holidays and ongoing construction of an enhanced, higher capacity parking lot at the Richmond Staples Mill Station, DRPT urges all passengers using the station to be dropped off, use Lyft, or allow ample time to park. Alternate parking is available at the Henrico County Park and Ride, located just five blocks from the station at the intersection of Cloverdale Avenue and Crockett Street.

For additional information about DRPT’s supported Amtrak routes in Virginia, visit: <http://www.drpt.virginia.gov/rail/amtrak-reports/>