

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION ROLLS OUT NEW ELECTRONIC MESSAGE SIGNS TO HELP MOTORISTS “REACH THE BEACH”

Signs will display quickest route to Virginia Beach Oceanfront and Outer Banks Expressway

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va., (May 29, 2012) - The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) recently rolled out an enhanced information system as a new tool for motorists to find the quickest route to the beach by following new signs that will display real-time traffic times. VDOT unveiled six new electronic message signs in the Hampton Roads region to help motorists choose the quickest drive time to the Virginia Beach Oceanfront or the North Carolina Outer Banks.

The ‘Reach the Beach’ initiative will help VDOT improve the overall traveler experience by providing updated travel times at key decision points approaching and leaving the beach. This system will help travelers by providing them with the most reliable travel time information available and where possible, encourage them to use alternate routes that are less congested. The system relies on highway-embedded sensors and other technologies to generate real-time data and video that is pushed to a significant upgraded website and “Reach the Beach” signs. The signs are part of an ongoing initiative to improve the quality of transportation services in the commonwealth and are being activated in time for the summer vacation travel season, according to state officials.

The new traffic information website, located at www.511virginia.org, has upgrades that also include: an enhanced 511 phone service with improved voice recognition, traffic camera that provide sharper images, and mobile apps for Android and iPhone that feature alerts and many real time traffic features.

Using a system that incorporates data from roadway sensors, Bluetooth devices, and data provided by INRIX, Inc., the “Reach the Beach” signs will display comparative travel times (in minutes) for two routes. The six static roadside signs are positioned at strategic decision points at the following Hampton Roads locations:

- I-64 eastbound at Denbigh Boulevard (2) in Newport News
- I-264 westbound at First Colonial Road in Virginia Beach
- I-664 at U.S. Route 58 eastbound (Bowers Hill) in Chesapeake
- VA Route 168 northbound Chesapeake Expressway
- I-664 south at Dock Landing Road in Chesapeake



Travel time information will also be available at Safety Rest Areas and Welcome Centers in Fredericksburg, Skippers and New Kent County to help motorists traveling from the Washington, D.C. and Richmond areas.

VDOT’s key priority is to keep traffic moving particularly during the busy summer season as travelers are headed to the beach. Providing travel times gives motorists the information they need to figure out the best way to reach the beach.

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VDOT has installed travel time signs in other areas of the state, including Interstate 95 between Fredericksburg and Washington D.C. and on Interstate 66 between I-495 and Gainesville. VDOT will continue to expand travel times to key destinations along interstates and highways throughout the commonwealth.

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