

TARRANT COUNTY

After five-day delay, TEXRail will begin service Thursday

Five days after it was supposed to begin service, Tarrant County's TEXRail commuter train will start rolling on Thursday.

Trinity Metro announced Monday afternoon that the 27-mile route had been approved for passenger service by the Federal Railroad Administration.

Service on the line connecting Fort Worth, North Richland Hills, Grapevine and DFW International Airport had been set to begin Saturday, but it was called off Friday after a signal problem was discovered that afternoon.

Although the issue was fixed, Trinity Metro was unable to get the clearance it

needed to operate in time. Paul Ballard, TEXRail's president and chief executive, said that the delay was not directly related to the federal government's shutdown.

Three sleek silver-and-blue trains made their inaugural trip down the tracks Dec. 31, taking about 500 VIPs to a lunch at DFW Airport. The line's nine stops stretch from the T&P Station in Fort Worth to the airport's Terminal B.

Twenty-one TEXRail trains, each capable of carrying 488 passengers, will arrive at the airport hourly from 4:17 a.m. to 12:17 a.m. each day. Trains will depart the airport hourly from 4:55 a.m. to 12:55

a.m.

TEXRail is offering free rides for the month of January. Regular fares — \$2.50 per trip or \$5 for a day pass — start on Feb. 1.

Trinity Metro expects the line to carry 8,000 riders a day by the end of the year and 14,000 by 2035 — and residents hope to see benefits from the billion-dollar commuter train.

“Hopefully it will help us with our congestion,” R.D. Cavazos, who owns Ernie's Seafood Restaurant in North Richland Hills, said last week. “It'll help a lot of people every day if it keeps 500 to 600 cars off these roads.”

Tom Steele