Brightline to begin service to Miami next weekend

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said City of Miami Mayor Francis Suarez.

MIAMI (WSVN) - Brightline's train service is set to officially begin in Miami on May 19.

Officials made the start date announcement following a media event Friday morning.

The announcement was made after Brightline officials and other local leaders rode the train into the Miami Central station.

"It is one of be most significant transportation achievements, probably today, in the United States — to connect 6 million people in the tri-county area,"

The higher-speed train has been doing simulated service, or testing without passengers, between Miami and Fort Lauderdale since the end of April.

With the start of service in Miami, passengers will now be able to ride the train from Miami to West Palm Beach.

"This is going to transform how people connect between the three most populous cities in South Florida: Miami, Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach," said Brightline President and CEO Patrick Goddard.

Starting in Miami, a trip to Fort Lauderdale should take about 30 minutes, and a trip to West Palm Beach should take about an hour.

"We can jump on a train, come down in 30 minutes and come see a museum. That's a huge game changer," said Christina Crespi, the executive director of the Miami Downtown Development Authority. "Not sitting in traffic for hours on end. Now you can get into Downtown Miami in a more efficient way and that's exciting for us."

The trains come equipped with outlets and WiFi, and Goddard said food and drink services will be available on the trains and in the stations.

However, due to several incidents where people have been hit by Brightline trains, the company has launched a safety program. Part of the program is the addition of 450 cautionary signs in several languages to stay away from the railroad tracks.

A second phase with service to Orlando is currently underway.

For more information on rates and schedules, click here.