

Going Places

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM AROUND THE CTA

JUNE, 1997 • VOL. 2, NO. 6

Transit Card Survival Guide

The new turnstiles are ready, the bus farecard readers have been installed, the vending machines are in place, and the new fare system has been tested

and tested, and tested some more. Soon, hundreds of thousands of CTA riders will use Transit Cards to pay their fares and transfers.

The introduction of CTA's new fare

system is one of the biggest changes in the agency's history because the Transit Card will affect EVERY CTA RIDER in one very basic way – how they pay their fares.

What follows are a few pointers that we can use to help our customers make a smooth transition to the Transit Card.

Stored Value

With tokens, customers must count their remaining fares to determine what they have left. With the Transit Card, that counting is done electronically. Every time a customer uses a Transit Card, the fare or transfer amount deducted from the card and the amount remaining on the card will be displayed.

Customers may check their cards' remaining value at train station vending machines. On buses,

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RTA Reduced Fare Card Holders:

Deadline Extended

The deadline for senior citizen, disabled, and paratransit riders to switch to the new RTA reduced fare permit has been extended. The old RTA reduced fare permits are valid on CTA trains until August 16, 1997 and on CTA buses until December 31, 1997.

New RTA reduced fare permits (with the magnetic stripe) will provide our customers with all the advantages of the new Transit Card fare payment system. Please encourage your customers to apply for their new RTA reduced fare permits early. To apply, customers should call: (312) 836-7000 or TTY (312) 836-4949.



CTA Taking Bold Steps to Meet Current Realities

Chicago has changed a great deal since the creation of the CTA in 1947, and so have the ways people use public transportation. Because of these changes, the CTA is taking bold steps to secure a solid transit future for our customers.

President David Mosena has laid out a four-point blueprint for the CTA: improve customer service, reduce costs, boost capital funding, and make service changes.

Customer service improvements already achieved include station-specific timetables, subway power washing, and a toll-free customer assistance hot line.

Cost-cutting measures to date have reduced operating costs by over \$60 million annually.

The CTA's capital funding needs over the next five years require an investment of \$2.7 billion to improve, repair and maintain its infrastructure. Current funding levels will produce only \$855 million in capital funds, leaving a \$1.9 billion shortfall. The CTA is trying to close this gap.

Before approving any service changes, the CTA Board established a list of priorities:

- Do a better job matching service with demand.

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Mr. William Nichols
General Manager
Red Line
Chicago Transit Authority

Dear Mr. Nichols:

Barry Collins, badge #20832, is to be commended for the fine job he does at the rapid transit station at 79th Street and the Dan Ryan.

I see Mr. Collins many mornings on my way to work and he has either a mop or broom in hand cleaning up. His daily job is really ongoing, unfortunately, because people find it easier to drop refuse on the floor than use the containers provided for such. In spite of this, Mr. Collins has a ready smile and a "good morning" as you pass.

Too often we find only fault with our public workers so I wanted to take this opportunity to let you know that Mr. Collins is doing an excellent job.

Sincerely,

Annette Williams

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News & Views

Ladies and Gentlemen, Start Your Engines

Bus operators and maintenance teams from every CTA garage will compete in the 1997 CTA Bus Rodeo Competition at the north parking lot at Comiskey Park. Preliminaries will take place on June 28 and 29 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. with the finals on July 12 beginning at 8 a.m.

The competition tests operators' ability to maneuver 40 foot CTA buses through 11 obstacles including passenger stops, right and left turns, and a serpentine maneuver. Backing up and stopping are also tested.

Competing maintenance crews

must perform routine tasks quickly as well as diagnose bus mechanical problems accurately.

The winning operators will represent the CTA at the International Bus Operator Rodeo at Soldier Field. Practice and final rounds will take place September 22 and 23 beginning at 7:30 a.m. The winning bus maintenance crew will represent the CTA at the International Bus Maintenance Rodeo in Nashville August 22 through 24.

Rodeo competitions are open to the public. Everyone is invited.

Early Retirement Update

Just over 2,100 CTA employees are eligible to participate in the first phase of CTA's Voluntary Early Retirement Incentive Program (VERIP). To be eligible, employees must have 25 or more years of CTA service by June 30, 1997. To date (June 3), 960 (46%) of those eligible have applied. Employees wishing to participate must turn in their retirement forms to Human Resources on or before June 30.

VERIP differs from the regular CTA retirement program in three ways:

1. Under VERIP, the retirement income multiplier – based on the average of an employee's top four income yrs. – increases from 1.85% to 2.4%.

2. The VERIP maximum retirement benefit increases to 70% of an employee's top four-year income average from the 62.5% cap.

3. The CTA reserves the right to issue retirement dates. While this requirement may delay an employee's preferred retirement date, it helps the CTA to better handle manpower losses.

A second VERIP window covers employees who reach 25 years of service between July 1, 1997 and December 31, 1999.

Interested employees will have the opportunity to apply July 1, 1997 – February 28, 1998.

Leasebacks Provide CTA Extra Cash

A recent flurry of leaseback activity has given CTA a cash benefit of \$12 million, which will be applied to capital projects. CTA's new warehouse on Division Street and three bus garages were included in the transaction.

Under this arrangement, CTA property is sold to an equity investor, who then leases it back to CTA. The investor benefits from a tax write-off, while CTA gets the cash and retains use and control of the property.

The first transaction was for 792 rail cars in September, 1995, yielding \$26

million. An additional 54 rail cars were leased three months later, bringing in \$4 million. Transactions last fall involved Skokie Shop and the 120 North Racine facility, yielding an additional \$11 million.

Lynn Sapyta, General Manager, Finance/Comptroller, calls the transactions "innovative financing techniques that CTA's Law and Finance Departments came up with to generate additional funds to aid in balancing the 1995-96 budgets, as well as to provide funding for capital projects."

CTA Taking Bold Steps To Meet Current Realities

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- Ensure that all neighborhoods have access to public transit.
- Minimize the impact on riders.
- Develop a plan that will carry the CTA into the foreseeable future.

CTA Planning staff, together with the consulting firm of Booz-Allen, Hamilton, undertook the task of assessing each CTA route, ride and hour of operation to determine how and when riders use the system.

This study identified a core system of routes that the CTA can build on while providing a net savings of \$25 million annually. The focus is less on moving buses and trains across fixed routes and more on moving people to where they need to go.

Here are key provisions from the proposal:

- Designating 46 bus routes as a Key Bus Network ensuring city-wide coverage on a one-mile street grid pattern.
- Designating 73 bus routes as a Support Bus Network providing additional service to critical areas.

- Eliminating 10 bus routes with the lowest ridership and highest costs. Five additional routes, which don't have nearby alternatives, will be replaced by new flexible services.
- Tailoring "Night Owl" service to reflect demand while minimizing rider impact.
- Providing new "flexible" service as a demonstration project in four areas to determine cost-effectiveness and practicality.
- Replace some train service during owl and weekend hours on the Blue Line Douglas branch, Purple and Green Lines, when ridership is very low, with less costly bus service.

Under the proposed service restructuring, the CTA will be able to better match service to demand while ensuring viable transit service for all communities for many years to come. After a public hearing this month, the CTA Board will put the proposals to a vote.

Employees who would like more detailed information on the proposed service changes should call Bus & Rail Planning manager Paul Gross at extension 6750.

Scores Show Up For Spring Spruce Up



CTA President David Mosena joined Bus Division employees for some Spring cleaning at South Shops on

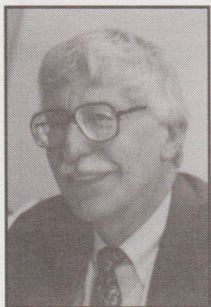
May 17. More than 120 volunteers including families, kids and even a Girl Scout troop took part.

Employees armed with brooms, shovels, rakes and saws volunteered their time, effort and elbow grease to fight dirt, grime, litter and debris at four CTA facilities that day.

40 volunteers from the CTA Administrative staff cleaned up the Purple Line Central Ave. Station in Evanston. More than 60 Rail Division employees cleaned up the Brown Line Kimball Terminal while 50 Construction and Engineering employees pitched in at West Shops. Volunteers then headed for Connie's Pizza on South Archer for a CTA-sponsored luncheon.

Transit Trio To Retire

Three titans of Chicago transit are preparing to wind down their careers this summer, bringing to a close a combined 114 years of service to CTA.



Harold Hirsch, Vice President, Planning, began his CTA career as a management trainee in 1957, joined the Schedules Department two years later, and was selected

to head the newly-created Operations Planning Department in 1974.

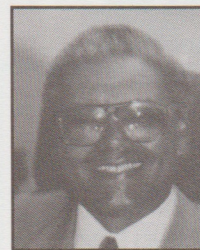
Hirsch has been involved in all major route changes, such as those brought about by the introduction of Orange Line service, the reconstruction of both State Street and Michigan Avenue, and CTA's recent restructuring proposal.



William C. Buetow, Senior Vice President/Treasurer, worked in the Claims Department from 1959 until 1975. His most recent challenge has

been to manage the agency's accounts and revenues. He also has been a key player in the planning and implementation of the automated Transit Card system.

A trustee of the Retirement Plan for CTA Employees, he has also served on the Employee Retirement Review Committee and on the Deferred Compensation and Employee Welfare Fund Committees.



Elonzo Hill, Executive Vice President, Service Delivery, since 1992, started as a CTA bus operator in 1961. He served in a number of

supervisory roles up to and including Deputy Executive Director, Operations.

In recent years he directed the realignment that produced today's Red and Green Line service, and also helped oversee the opening of the Orange Line. He had a major role in the two-year rehabilitation of the Green Line, and has also been chairman of the Retirement Allowance Committee for CTA employees.

Transit Card Survival Guide

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operators may press the F2 key (middle button on the bus farecard machine) before the card is inserted so that the card's remaining value may be displayed.

Transit Card Pricing, Easier Transfers

Transit Cards will be priced and distributed very much like rolls of tokens, but with important advantages. Beginning in mid-June, Transit Cards will be sold at neighborhood currency exchanges and Jewel and Dominick's food stores. As with a roll of ten tokens, customers may purchase Transit Cards at a 10% discount. A ten-ride card (\$15.00 value) will be sold for \$13.50. A \$16.50 Transit Card contains ten discounted fares and ten 30¢ transfers. With Transit Cards, there is no need to wait in line to purchase or use a separate transfer.

CTA Train Stations & Transit Card Vending Machines

Customers will be able to purchase and add value to Transit Cards at vending machines at all CTA train stations.

Transit Card vending machines offer a minimum purchase of \$3 to a maximum card value of \$100. Customers who purchase cards at vending machines will receive a 10% discount when they buy 10 rides. By inserting \$13.50 into the vending machine, customers will receive cards with stored value of \$15.00. Customers will receive a \$1.50 bonus for every multiple of \$13.50 they insert. For example, customers who insert \$27.00 will receive a \$3.00 bonus. The bonus also applies when customers add value to Transit Cards.

Transit Card vending machines located at Orange Line, Green Line and Loop "L" stations will be available beginning June 22. Red Line vending machines will be available beginning July 6 and at Brown, Purple, and Yellow Line stations on July 13. Blue Line vending machines will be available beginning July 20.

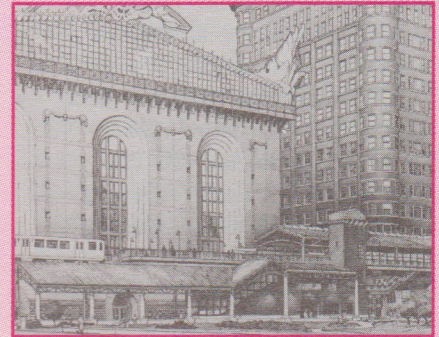
If any of your customers require more detailed information, please refer them to our toll-free Customer Service Hot Line: 1-888-YOUR-CTA.

Changing Gears

New Library Station Opens Mid-June

The new Library elevated station at State/Van Buren is scheduled to open mid-June. Free connections will be available between Brown, Orange, and Purple Lines.

This station serves the popular south Loop area, including the Harold Washington Library, Music Mart, and DePaul University. This fully accessible station will be open daily.



Celebrate On State Street 6/18-6/21

The 10th annual Celebrate On State will take place along State from Wacker to Van Buren Wednesday, June 18 through Saturday, June 21.

The following bus routes will be detoured: #2, #4, #6, #10, #11, #29, #36, #44, #56, #62, #99, #145, #146, #147, #151, #164.

Taste of Chicago Extra Service 6/27-7/6

- Brown Line: Evening, Sunday, and July 4 service downtown.
- Red Line: Harrison/State station open later evenings, weekends, and July 4.
- Yellow Line: Later evening, weekend, and July 4 service.
- Loop 'L': Madison/Wabash station open Sundays and July 4.
- #2, #6, #14: Detoured off Lake Shore north of 31st, operating via State both directions (no stops south of Roosevelt).
- #6: Later evening service weekends and July 4.

- #146: Split downtown **after 5:00 p.m.** FREE shuttle bus between State/Washington and Museum Campus.

Fireworks Night (July 3)

- Brown, Orange, and Yellow Lines, #6 bus: Later service.
- Madison/Wabash Loop 'L' and Harrison Red Line stations open later.
- Buses: State closed between Wacker and Congress from 6:00 p.m. July 3 until 3:00 a.m. July 4. Buses detoured to Clark and Dearborn.

Loop Tour Train

Celebrate the centennial anniversary of the Loop 'L' by taking a FREE 40-minute ride, complete with commentary. Trains leave from the

Orange Line platform at the Randolph/Wabash station Saturday afternoons from 6/14 thru 10/18. Get tickets at the Cultural Center (Michigan/Randolph).

Ravinia Park Service

Metra operates a special train for all Ravinia Park concerts on the Union Pacific Line daily except Monday. The train departs North Western station at 5:50 p.m., making all

stops to Central St. (Evanston), then express to Ravinia Park.

Return train departs 15 minutes after concerts, making all stops to Chicago. \$4 round-trip fare.