



Welcome to another issue of The Green Pennant Special. It is through this publication that we endeavor to keep the membership informed on happenings in the organization and the transit industry.

*** JANUARY MEETING ***

The January meeting of The Omnibus Society of America was held on Friday, January 5, 1996, at the Welles Park Field House, located at 2333 W. Sunnyside in Chicago. The meeting began at 6:30 pm.

*** FEBRUARY MEETING ***

The February meeting of The Omnibus Society of America will be held on February 2, 1996, at the Welles Park Field House, located at 2333 W. Sunnyside in Chicago. The meeting will begin at 6:30 pm.

Our meeting for the evening will be a slide presentation on articulated buses presented by George Krambles.

*** CTA CORNER ***

The CTA has agreed to study the cost savings that could be gained by privatization.

The CTA and the RTA announced plans to launch the study January 18th. The RTA, the area's transit oversight agency, will fund the three to six-month project.

RTA Chairman, Tom McCracken brought the idea of bus privatization to the table six months ago. He said contracting out bus service could save the region money as the federal government cuts back severely on federal transit funding.

CTA Board Chairman Valerie Jarrett said the agency, along with the drivers union, is willing to study privatization to see whether the concept might make the CTA run more efficiently.

If the CTA had not agreed to the joint study, McCracken had planned to ask state lawmakers to pass legislation encouraging the state's largest transit agency to privatize.

(CHICAGO SUN-TIMES)

*** PACE PATTERN ***

With its current busing contracts expiring in June, Northwest Suburban High School District 214 officials are looking at a cheaper, though arguably less safe, alternative: relying on Pace's bus system to transport students to and from school.

Pace has offered to set up 16 new routes - which would also be available to the general public - to transport students to and from school daily. The district would continue to subsidize busing for the more than 7,000 students who live more than 1.5 miles from school.

Administrators brought a long list of pros and cons of the Pace proposal to the District 214 school board this week. Among them:

- * Pace would run the same route several times a day, so students would have more chances to catch a bus. But most would also have to walk further to their stop, and a small percentage might have to transfer buses.

- * Using Pace is expected to cut transportation costs and administrative work for the district, but there'd be no way to prevent Pace from discontinuing routes if they didn't attract enough riders.

- * Though students would still get free busing, they'd have to stand if the bus was crowded and wouldn't be allowed on if the bus was full.

(DAILY HERALD)

*** OTHER U.S. NEWS ***

- * A crowded train carrying rush-hour commuters from Boston ran into a flatbed tractor-trailer stuck at a crossing the evening of January 16, knocking the truck off the tracks and derailing the train's engine.

At least 21 people were injured, with most complaining of neck and back pain, "not serious bumps and bruises," said Fire Chief David Parr.

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OTHER U.S. NEWS

One person with more serious injuries was flown by helicopter to Boston City Hospital, where she was in stable condition. Nine others were evacuated to hospitals: the others were treated and released.

The train was pulling six cars from Boston's North Station when it ran into a "low-body flatbed trailer carrying a piece of heavy construction equipment," said Peter Sturgis, operations manager of the SmartRoute Systems traffic service.

"Looks like the truck was stuck in the snow," said Robert Prince, chief executive officer of the MBTA. The train was moving about 40 mph before it broadsided the truck, he said.

None of the cars derailed.

The accident occurred near the Greenwood Square stop in Wakefield, about nine miles north of Boston. Uninjured commuters were picked up by a bus (PRODIGY/AP)

* More than 3,200 metro Atlanta school bus drivers have signed up to transport Olympic visitors next summer. And if they pass the GBI background check, ACOG will have almost all the drivers it needs to run its spectator fleet.

The committee needs 3,190 drivers to operate 1,450 transit buses that cities throughout the nation will loan to ACOG during the Atlanta Summer Olympic games. But it wants to recruit 3,500 drivers to cushion the applicant pool in case some people don't pass the criminal background checks and drug tests.

Ranstad Staffing, the company hiring the transit operators for ACOG, says that recruiting additional drivers won't be hard.

ATC/VANCOM won a \$1 million contract to train the school bus drivers to operate transit buses. Training, which begins January 15, will consist of 20 hours of driving and 20 hours of classroom instruction.

The company, based in Oakbrook Terrace, Ill., manages more than 55 public and school bus systems across the country, the largest in Phoenix.

ACOG also has asked Ranstad to hire more than 2,000 people to work as Olympic transportation support personnel, in such positions as radio dispatchers, route supervisors, park-and-ride attendants, bus terminal managers and baggage handlers.

Olympic organizers have yet to assemble a fleet of 350 Georgia school buses to shuttle staff and volunteers to and from the venues, but early indications from local school systems are that they will meet the demand.

ACOG also is trying to secure eight bus terminals in the metro area to park and maintain spectator buses. The vehicles will be parked temporarily at Fort Gillem.

The buses are being sent to Fort Gillem for inspection and minor maintenance, putting Olympic signs on them, installing communications equipment and cleaning.

The buses will remain in Atlanta through October and be used for the Paralympics, which will follow the Centennial Games. The borrowed buses will complement the MARTA rail system, its existing buses and HOV lanes on the downtown freeways.

The system will also be in place to accommodate residents of Atlanta who have business downtown during the 17 days of the Games. Many downtown streets will be closed and Olympic officials are discouraging the use of private vehicles downtown during the Games.

Officials of the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games say the additional buses are necessary to move 2 million spectators to 13 venues.

MARTA awarded a \$3.2 million contract to Bennett International Group in McDonough to bring the buses here and return them to the various jurisdictions after the Summer Games. The first group of vehicles is expected to arrive in March. (ATLANTA JOURNAL AND CONSTITUTION)