



Welcome to another issue of The Green Pennant Special, the official publication of The Omnibus Society of America.

Through this publication we hope to keep our readers informed of events happening in the transit industry in Chicago and other cities in the United States.

• SEPTEMBER OSA MEETING

The regular meetings of the Omnibus Society of America will remain at 7 pm on the first Friday of each month, except July and August. The location changed to the auditorium in Anderson Pavilion, Swedish Covenant Hospital, 2751 W. Winona Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. The next meeting will be on September 6, 2002.

The hospital is on California near Foster. Winona is one half block south of Foster. By public transportation, take the 92 Foster to California. From the Ravenswood Brown Line, take the 93 North California from Kimball, get off after it turns onto California from Foster and walk back south. Or, take the 11 Lincoln from Western, get off at Carmen (One block south of Foster) and walk west on Winona.

There is some parking on California and Winona. The parking structure is on the west side of California just south of Foster.

The meeting will be "A Potpourri", a presentation by members of the society. Members may bring up to 25 minutes of material on any topic.

There will be two Director's positions up for election in December. If any member in good standing wishes to be nominated for one of these positions, please see any of the Directors at the September, October or November meetings.

• CTA HAPPENINGS

The sixth anniversary of the reopening of the CTA's Green Line finds average ridership at 31,860 or 19 percent more than before the line was closed for two years of rehabilitation in 1994. Saturday ridership is up by 18 percent and Sunday ridership by 28 percent. The Green Line was reopened for service on May 12, 1996.

Customers took a million more rides on Green Line trains in 2001 than in 1993, which was the last full year of service before the line was closed for rebuilding. Ridership on the Lake Street branch alone has grown by more than 52 percent since 1993. Annual ridership for the Green Line as a whole reached 9,455,726 last year.

The CTA Board on Wednesday June 5, 2002, approved the establishment of a new experimental bus service to the Avon Products Inc. facility in north suburban Morton Grove. The six-month experimental service is aimed at reverse commuters, and is supported by Suburban Job Link, a non-profit agency that helps inner-city residents find employment opportunities in the suburbs. Service began June 24, 2002.

The X98 Avon Express is the newest CTA route designed to serve reverse commuters. Two years ago, the CTA partnered with United Parcel Service to provide direct service from the Red Line station at 69th to the UPS facility in southwest suburban Hodgkins. Weekday ridership on the #169 69th/UPS Express route exceeded expectations by as many as 700 customers a day, and the CTA recently started another bus route, the #168 UIC-Pilsen Express, to the UPS facility on an experimental basis from the University of Illinois at Chicago and Pilsen communities.

Fully accessible buses on the X98 Avon Express route are scheduled to meet shift changes at the Avon facility. Leaving the Irving Park Blue Line Station at 6:17 a.m., 2:17 p.m. and 10:17 p.m., the buses will operate via I-94, Dempster and Waukegan to the Avon site near Golf Road in about 25 minutes. Return trips will start at 7:10 a.m., 3:20 p.m. and 11:20 p.m.

Also on June 5, the Board approved the permanent routing of #75 74th/75th buses to serve the Red Line station at 79th. To reach the Red Line station, both east and westbound #75 buses use Lafayette to 79th and State back to 75th. Before the change was made experimentally last December, the #75 was the only east-west bus route on the South Side that did not connect to an 'L' line. Since November, 2001, ridership on the #75 route has increased 5 percent.

The \$482.6 million Cermak (Douglas) Blue Line Rehabilitation Project took another step forward on Monday, June 17, 2002, with the opening of a temporary station just west of Pulaski. The temporary facility will be for customers of both the Pulaski and Kildare stations while both undergo reconstruction, and will have entrances west of Pulaski (4300 West) and east of Keeler (4200 West).

Work on the entire project, which began in last September, is proceeding on time and on budget. To date more than 400 caissons, or foundations for the support columns, have been completed, and 300 columns have been poured. Other completed work includes the replacement of 62 spans of steel elevated structure and 90 percent of the foundation for the new 54th/Cermak station.

(Cont. on page 2)

CTA

When the rebuilt station at Pulaski is completed, it will be in approximately the same location as the existing facility, with the entrance on the east side of Pulaski just north of 21st Street. There will be a secondary stairway exit at the east end of the platform near Harding (3932 West).

In addition to stairways, the station will have an elevator for ADA accessibility and an escalator. Platform canopies and windbreaks with overhead heaters will protect customers waiting for trains in inclement weather. The station house will have quarry tile at the base and glass wall openings. There will also be a customer assistant kiosk and seats for customers waiting for buses, which will use a turnaround adjacent to the station.

The reconstructed station that will serve Kostner (4400 West) and Kildare (4300 West) is at street level and will have its main entrance at Kostner, which is a through street exactly half way between Pulaski and Cicero. The Kostner entrance will have a ramp for ADA accessibility, while a reversible high-barrier gate will allow customers with fare cards to enter at Kildare. Canopies will provide protection for waiting customers at both ends of the station, which will also have windbreaks with overhead heaters for cold-weather comfort.

The Chicago Transit Authority began two new express bus routes on June 24, 2002. On that day, #X55 Garfield Express and #X80 Irving Park Express buses began operating.

The express bus routes provide fast service along two major east-west traffic corridors where there are no parallel 'L' lines. The new service allows customers to reach their destinations quickly and directly, with travel times expected to improve by 10 to 15 percent along each corridor.

The proposal for these two express routes follows the successful launch of express service on Western Avenue in late 1998. The X49 Western Express operates weekdays from 6:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. and makes 31 stops rather than the normal 150 between Berwyn and 95th Street. Since the X49 route was established, ridership on the entire Western Avenue corridor has increased 10 percent.

The CTA will measure the success of the new routes through customer surveys and ridership numbers to

determine whether the routes will become permanent at the end of the experimental period. The CTA hopes to gain 2000 additional customers on the X55 route and 1200 additional customers on the X80 route during six-month trial.

X55 Garfield Express buses will follow the routing of the CTA's #55 Garfield local buses along 55th and Garfield, but will make only 14 stops, mainly at streets with crossing bus or 'L' lines, between the Museum of Science & Industry and the Midway Orange Line station. The regular #55 makes 75 stops. The X55 buses will save between five and seven minutes per trip over the regular X55 route.

X80 Irving Park Express buses will follow a major portion of the #80 Irving Park local bus route between Cicero and Lake Shore Drive. X80 buses will make 18 stops along Irving Park from Cicero to Lake Shore, and also along Lake Shore and Sheridan from Irving Park to Diversey, compared to 65 stops made by the normal #80. The X80 route will save customers between four and nine minutes over the #80 route.

The X55 Garfield Express buses will operate every 15 minutes on weekdays from 5:30 a.m. until 10 a.m. and again from 1 p.m. until 7 p.m. The X80 Irving Park Express buses will run every 15 minutes from 4:45 a.m. until 9:30 a.m. and from 2:30 p.m. until 7:45 p.m.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds from the Federal Transit Administration will pay for the six-month experimental operation of both express routes. Costs for the X55 Garfield Express will be \$410,000 during the experimental period and the X80 Irving Park Express is expected to cost \$408,000.

Starting Monday, July 15, 2002, Green Line trains began operating with six cars throughout both morning and afternoon rush periods.

Longer trains are in service leaving all three terminals between 6:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m., week-day mornings, and heading out from downtown between 3 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. weekday afternoons.

With the rehabilitation of about half of the rail cars in the CTA fleet now nearing completion, more cars are available for service, allowing Green Line trains to operate with six cars for two hours longer than at present. Green Line trains were running with six cars for only about one hour during both morning and afternoon rush periods. For most of the day four cars are sufficient to accommodate average customer loads. (www.yourcta.com)

• PACE PATTERN

The best buses in the Pace system were introduced at a dedication ceremony on Thursday, August 8, at Pace's Blue Island Park-n-Ride, 3060 W. 127th Street, just east of Kedzie Avenue.

Pace recently took delivery of eight over-the-road coaches from Motor Coach Industries, which is based in northwest suburban Schaumburg. Passengers on two of Pace's long-distance express routes are now enjoying improved style and comfort during their daily commutes.

The new MCI D4000 buses feature an airplane-style interior with reclining upholstered seats, reading lights and air vents above each passenger, and overhead luggage racks for convenient storage. Each 40-foot bus is wheelchair accessible and seats 49 passengers, which is at least six more than typical Pace buses.

The top-notch vehicles, which cost \$382,000 each, are operating on Pace Routes 877 South Suburban Oak Brook Limited and 888 Tri-State Flyer. Passengers ride for more than an hour each way on these two routes, which bring workers from the south and southwest suburbs to jobs in the west suburbs. Route 877 provides weekday rush-hour trips from Pace's Harvey Transportation Center and Blue Island Park-n-Ride to employment and shopping centers in Oak Brook, Lombard and Downers Grove. Route 888 operates weekday rush-hour trips from Pace Park-n-Rides in South Holland and Homewood to businesses and malls in Oak Brook, Lombard, Downers Grove and Lisle. Route 888 is the longest route in the Pace system, having a round-trip distance of 81.4 miles. The one-way fare on both routes is \$1.50. (www.pacebus.com)

• METRA MATTERS

Shortly after 9:00 a.m. the morning of July, 11, 2002, an empty Metra Electric train derailed at 11th Place while it was heading into the storage yard just south of Roosevelt Road.

The derailed train knocked down the structure that carries electrical and signal hookups. All Metra Electric and South Shore trains were halted shortly after the incident.

It took workers using torches more than nine hours to dismantle the structure, which had fallen on top of the train.

About 40,000 passengers use the Metra Electric each day. The morning rush hour ride was largely unaffected by the derailment, and many evening riders arrived at the Randolph station not knowing what they were walking into.

They were greeted by a 30-minute wait to board one of the 30 shuttle busses that would take them around the accident site to the McCormick Place station at Cermak Road.

Many of them waited for hours at McCormick Place because all but two or three trains were trapped north of the derailment.

During the evening rush period on Thursday and all day Friday, Metra used a load-and-go schedule in both directions, making all stops between McCormick Place and the stops farther south.

One Saturday and Sunday, the Metra Electric operated a Sunday schedule. All service was back to normal for the Monday morning rush. (Chicago Tribune)

Officials from Metra and the village of Liberty broke ground on July 21st for a new station at Prairie Crossing/Libertyville on Metra's Milwaukee District North Line from Fox Lake.

The new Libertyville station and parking facility will be built near the intersection of Illinois Route 137 and Harris Road in the village of Libertyville, near an existing station with a similar name on Metra's North Central Service route from Antioch which crosses nearby.

When completed early next year, the new station project will feature a 380-foot lighted platform complete with warming shelter, 400 parking spaces and a temporary station house. The new parking will help to relieve pressure on the downtown Libertyville and Grayslake stations where parking expansion is restricted.

As the development continues in the area over the next few years, a permanent depot will be built. Pickus Construction of Waukegan is the contractor for the \$2.7 million project.

In a ceremony conducted at the Ogilvie Transportation Center, on July 21st, Metra Executive Director Phil Pagano, along with Congressman Mark Kirk and FTA Administrator Jenna Dorn, announced the release of a \$54 million federal grant for "New Start" expansion improvements on three Metra commuter routes. (Cont on page 4)

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METRA

Components of Metra's "New Start" program include more second track so additional trains can comfortably share the Chicago-to-Antioch North Central route with freight trains; improvement of the Chicago-to-Orland Park SouthWest Service route plus extension to Manhattan; and extension of the Chicago-to-Geneva Union Pacific West Line to Elburn.

In November of 2001, Metra received from the FTA three simultaneous full-funding grant agreements that give financial security to expand service by late 2005. Under the agreements, 57 percent of the total \$558 million cost is to be paid with federal funds. The balance is to come from state and local funds.

Although last year's signing of the federal full-funding agreements essentially says Metra's plans deserve the full financial support of the federal government, Congress still must approve annual appropriations. In previous years, Metra was awarded \$68 million in federal "New Start" monies for the three projects.

The \$54 million represents the 2002 federal appropriation. Approximately \$20.6 million will be applied to the SouthWest Service extension; \$16.4 million will go towards the Union Pacific West Line extension; and \$17 million will be for the North Central Service expansion.

Midlothian Mayor Tom Murawski joined Director Lowell Anderson, Metra board member for Suburban Cook County, on July 21st, to dedicate a \$2.6 million commuter station at 3750 W. 147th Street in Midlothian, IL.

Replacing a 50-year-old structure, the all new 2000-sq. ft. depot is made of red brick masonry and topped by an illuminated, colonial-style dome clock tower which is viewable from all directions.

Station amenities include a large waiting area with benches for commuters, vendor area, and restrooms. Commuters who prefer to wait outdoors are sheltered from inclement weather under a full-length canopy.

The existing 412-ft. inbound platform was resurfaced and lengthened 450-ft., totaling 862-ft. to accommodate longer trains and for enhanced pedestrian flows. An all-new 727-ft. outbound platform was also added.
(Pacebus.com)

SEPTEMBER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 13. Chicago Chapter-Railway & Locomotive Historical Society meeting, 7:30pm

The Chicago Temple, 77 W Washington-Pierce Hall (lower level auditorium)

- Admission free
- Program - "The Railway Post Office", a slide presentation by Thomas Post

September 18. Twentieth Century Railroad Club meeting, 7:30pm (doors open at 7pm)

- 328 W. 18th St - Suite 902
- Admission \$3.00 - refreshments are available
- Program - To be announced

September 20. The Railroad Club of Chicago meeting, 7:30pm

- The Chicago Temple, 77 W. Washington-Pierce Hall (lower level auditorium)
- Admission \$3.00 (requested)
- Program - "Railways of Cuba", a slide presentation by member Ray DeGroote, Jr.

September 27. Central Electric Railfans' Association, 7:30pm

- 205 W. Wacker Drive - 2nd floor
- Admission: Free for members; \$5.00 for non-members
- Program - "Archival Preservation: How to preserve collections printed Material, Photographs, Slides, Videos and CDs and How to Bequeath them to Future Generations", by Leslie Williams. (accompanied by photographic slides from the Krambles-Peterson Archives)

An online version of our Calendar of Events is now available, courtesy of the Shore Line Interurban Historical Society, at www.shore-line.org/calendar.html



Dedication ceremony of new Pace MC1 D4000 intercity coaches. August 8, 2002. Blue Island Park-and-Ride lot 127th and Kedzie

OSA

the omnibus society of america, inc.

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