



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.

## • OCTOBER 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 October 4, 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 given by Dennis McClendon of Chicago CartoGraphics. He will discuss the art of mapmaking, including how to convey information to the user. He'll talk about his field research in various cities and tell us what he looks for on the ground. Dennis produces maps for a number of cities and transit properties, and has been maintaining the Chicago Transit Authority system map.

Additional program, Saturday, October 12, 2002, 8:15 pm. Amerisuites O'Hare Hotel, 8101 W. Higgins (just east of Cumberland). Free. John LeBeau will present a survey of historical Chicago buses at the fall meeting of the Motor Bus Society.

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

Committed to contributing to the greening of the City of Chicago and a healthy environment for CTA customers, the Chicago Transit Board on September 11th approved

the purchase of approximately 2,300 environmentally friendly composite plastic railroad ties. CTA will use the plastic ties to replace worn creosote soaked wooden ties at various locations on the Brown and Red line.

High-density polyethylene (HDPE) offers both performance and environmental advantages. The plastic ties resist decay, insect attack and water absorption and do not require the use of toxic preservatives. Wood ties require creosote treatments to extend the service life of wood especially in certain harsh climates.

As a result of a competitive bid process the board approved an \$876,568 purchase from the U.S. Plastic Lumber Corporation (USPL), which manufactures plastic lumber, packaging and other products from recycled plastic. Headquartered in Boca Raton, Florida, with one of three plastic manufacturing facilities located in Chicago, USPL is the nation's largest producer of 100% HDPE recycled plastic lumber.

An additional opportunity to convert wooden ties to plastic will exist later this year when CTA will work with USPL to create new plastic ties for use in the rehabilitation of the Cermak (Douglas) Branch of the Blue Line.

Also at its regular monthly meeting on September 11th, the CTA Board approved a construction management contract for a firm that will work on the upcoming Brown Line expansion and Clark Junction projects.

Consoer Townsend Envirodyne Engineers, Inc. (CTE Engineers) participated in a competitive bidding process for the \$22.3 million contract for the Brown Line and Clark Junction. Funding for the contract is provided by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and Illinois FIRST.

As a construction manager, CTE Engineers will participate in construction planning and design review during the pre-construction phase and will handle the day-to-day construction management of the large-scale construction contracts,

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which have not yet been awarded. The firm will be responsible for providing inspectors, resident engineers and document management, as well as ensuring the work is done properly and on schedule. The CTA's Capital Construction department will oversee CTE Engineers.

The Brown Line is the CTA's third busiest rail line serving 47,000 customers each weekday.

The CTA is negotiating a Full Funding Grant Agreement with the FTA. The Agreement will guarantee the CTA will receive the full amount of funding committed by the federal government for the project. Once the funding is in place, a construction date will be set. The CTA hopes to begin construction by late 2003. The project will extend platforms at 18 stations to accommodate eight-car trains and increase capacity by 33 percent. 16 stations will be reconstructed and 13 will have elevators installed, making all accessible to customers with disabilities. Signal, electrical and communications upgrades will be made as well. The Brown Line design, engineering and construction budget is \$476 million.

Clark Junction is the location where Brown, Purple and Red Line trains merge on the city's North Side, just north of the Belmont Station. Rehab of the 100-year-old facility is scheduled to start this fall and be completed in the summer of 2005 and will include replacing worn sections of track; installing special trackwork; and upgrading third rail power, communications and signal systems. Upon completion, trains will operate faster.

The project is expected to cost \$60.7 million.

A 120,000 pound steel beam was carefully lifted into place over Ogden Avenue on September 14th as Mayor Richard M. Daley and CTA officials heralded the progress of the CTA's \$482.6 million Cermak (Douglas) Blue Line Rehabilitation Project. September 10 marked one year since the official launch of rehab work on the 100-year-old line. Officials were happy to report the largest capital improvement project ever undertaken by the CTA is proceeding on schedule and on budget.

Upon completion, which is scheduled for fall 2005, approximately 130,000 tons of structural steel will have been installed, five miles of elevated track and ties will have been replaced and eight stations renovated or upgraded. The rehabilitated line will also boast a new cab signal system for train operators and new automatic highway grade crossings at 10 intersections.

Stations will have elevators and other amenities to make them fully accessible to customers with disabilities. In addition, platform canopies and windbreaks with overhead heaters will protect customers waiting for

trains in inclement weather. There will be customer assistant kiosks and seats for customers waiting for buses.

The Blue Line, Cermak (Douglas) Branch continues to remain in operation during the project. The contractor, Kiewit/Delgado, performs most of the track and structure work on weekends when the branch is not in service. Work that is not at track level, such as station house construction, electrical substation construction, foundations, bents and utilities, is performed on weekdays.

(yourcta.com)

## • PACE PATTERN

Pace and the Village of Buffalo Grove introduced Route 640 Buffalo Grove Midday at a dedication ceremony at 9 am., Monday, August 19, at the Buffalo Grove Metra Station, 825 Commerce Court, just south of Deerfield Parkway.

Route 640 fills a midday gap in local train service, allowing more Buffalo Grove residents to commute to and from Chicago, and between Buffalo Grove and the busy Lake-Cook Road Corridor. Route 640 runs hourly on weekdays from 7:52 am to 3:52 pm between the Buffalo Grove Metra Station on the North Central line and the Lake-Cook Metra Station in Deerfield on the Milwaukee District North line. There are eight eastbound trips and eight westbound trips each day.

Route 640 provides more commuter options until double-tracking on the North Central line takes place in a few years. The annual operating cost of the new route is \$94,600, which will be split between Pace and the Village of Buffalo Grove.

(Pacebus.com)

## • METRA MATTERS

Metra Officials joined with the Mayor of Prospect Heights to dedicate a new \$1 million commuter station, located in Prospect Heights at Wolf and Camp McDonald roads. The new facility represents one of 11 station projects that Metra will complete in 2002 as a continued program of improvements to its service.

This new commuter station replaces a temporary station that had been in place since Metra's North Central Service opened in August 1996 and will allow Metra to better serve the community's population of 16,000 residents, nearby Palwaukee airport visitors, the area's business community, and nearby shopping centers.

The project was funded by the FTA, IDOT, Metra and Prospect Heights.

(Metra-rail.com)