



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.

• JANUARY OSA MEETING

The next regular meetings of the Omnibus Society of America will be on January 3, 2003, in the Anderson Pavilion of Swedish Covenant Hospital, 2751 W. Winona Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. The meeting will be start at 7:00 pm.

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.

Our meeting for the evening will be a slide presentation by member Walter Collins titled "Motor Transit on the Streets of Boston".

• ELECTION

Members Melvin Bernero and William Shapotin were elected to serve three year terms on the OSA Board of Director at the December meeting.

• CTA HAPPENINGS

The Jefferson Park CTA and Metra stations will be spruced up with new gardens and a privately funded statue of Thomas Jefferson within the next few years, according to plans unveiled at a community meeting held November 7, at the Copernicus Cultural and Civic Center.

The landscaping and beautification projects will be funded primarily through a \$2 million state grant secured by state Representative Joseph Lyons (D-15) earlier this year. The improvements will be coordinated with Metra's \$2.7 million facility upgrade project, which will renovate the station's head houses and shelters and bring the station into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

At the meeting, which was called by Lyons and Alderman Patrick Levar (45th), Charles Crump of DLK Architecture

showed drawings and described the planned beautification improvements to the approximately 40 people in attendance. After the meeting, Crump said that work on the improvements would likely start in the fall of 2003, with the project taking about 6 months to a year.

The thrust of the improvements is focused at the main entrance to the CTA bus terminal at 4017 N. Milwaukee Ave., where a life-size bronze statue of Jefferson will be placed. Thirteen radiating bands will extend from the statue, along with a directional compass. A circular quote from the Declaration of Independence will frame the exterior boundary of the compass, while 13 18-inch-high concrete bollards at the end of each band will offer seating and protect the statue from errant vehicles.

Crump said that the raised planter boxes in the area, which currently serve as informal seating for people waiting to catch a bus, will be removed along with much of the concrete in the front section of the terminal near Milwaukee Avenue. Six trees will be planted in the space created by the concrete removal. The large light in the area will be removed and replaced with four smaller "pedestrian-scale" lights.

Some fencing along Milwaukee Avenue will be removed in order to open up the area and create a more garden-like setting and other portions of fencing will be relocated. That stretch of sidewalk is expected to be widened during the streetscape improvements that the city Department of Transportation has planned for Milwaukee Avenue in 2004 or 2005.

Crump said that the sidewalk along the old Gale Street right-of-way on the far north end of the bus terminal will be improved and that an adjacent refuse area will be sealed off. Benches will be added near the terminal's overhead structure, "sustainable gardens" of low-maintenance plants will be planted at both bus driveway locations, and additional seating will be installed.

As part of the project, the sidewalk in the block north of the terminal will be replaced to ensure that is suitable for people in wheelchairs who go to the CTA station from the tunnel under the Metra embankment at the north end of the block. That stretch of sidewalk also will receive decorative lighting and trees.

Improvements to the Metra viaduct north of the tunnel are expected as part of the Milwaukee Avenue streetscaping, but the beautification project will include improvements to the pedestrian bridge over the Kennedy, which extends from the Metra platform to the street.

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CTA

Crump said that the refurbished bridge will include "some type of covering with lighting and a better and safer railing system".

Another area the project will focus on is the Metra parking lot on the east side of the tracks along Northwest Highway. Scrub trees and weeds that have grown along the embankment will be removed and replaced with lower-profile grasses and shrubs.

The pedestrian tunnel and its stairway will receive "graffiti-proof" tile and new lighting, and about six 4-by-8-foot mural panels with art will be installed.

The pedestrian bridge over the Kennedy Expressway which connects the tunnel to Milwaukee Avenue will also be upgraded.

Two new large, vertical identification signs will be installed along Milwaukee Avenue to let motorists know where the Metra and bus stations are located. One sign will be placed at the south end of the CTA terminal and the other will be placed near the Milwaukee Avenue overpass over the Kennedy Expressway.

The signs will carry logos of the CTA, Pace and Metra, and the location identification of "Jefferson Park." Whether or not the words "Neighborhood Transit Center" will appear on the signs was the subject of some debate at the meeting.

There currently are three different designs for the signs, known as "station identifiers". One is a simple design of two vertical bands with angled tops, another puts the bands inside a domed cap, and the third design places tube lighting within the signs. In the other two designs, lights would shine on the sign from the outside. Crump said the three transit agencies will decide on the appropriate wording and design for the two signs.

Crump said that the plans shown are for the first phase of the project, which will be funded by the \$2 million grant and which will cover about two-thirds of the total project. The second phase will include landscaping improvements of the triangular area at Milwaukee Avenue and Northwest Highway as well as the removal of the existing depot at the north end of the station, which will be replaced by a stairwell or elevator. None of the second phase has been funded, and no timeline for it has been set, Crump said. (Nadig Newspapers, Week of November 17.)

Imagine as many as 600 trains each day making high speed runs between downtown Chicago and the job-rich northwest suburbs.

Imagine, if you could, CTA express trains arriving O'Hare International Airport from the Loop in less than a half-hour and continuing on to Schaumburg in about 15 minutes, including stops in other suburbs along the route. Imagine the line eventually extending to Elgin.

Northwest municipal officials have shared this vision to ease traffic congestion in their commuter-unfriendly region for years, although discussions with regional transit authorities have been agonizingly slow. But finally the public was invited the week of November 18th, to attend meetings and comment on the CTA's detailed proposal for extending the Blue Line, as well as to hear about competing plans for two types of express bus service offered by Pace.

The options, which include an alternative commuter rail plan that Metra is expected to complete in December share the same goal: reducing congestion and travel times on the Northwest Tollway and surrounding arterial streets in the northwest corridor by luring drivers to use mass transit instead. If it does not happen, projected increases in employment are expected to create gridlock in less than 20 years.

The informational meetings were held from 5 to 8 pm, Tuesday, November 19th, at the Mount Prospect Park District; noon to 3 pm, Wednesday, November 20th, at Roosevelt University's Alumni Hall in Schaumburg; and 5 to 8 pm, Thursday, November 21st, at the Schaumburg Township Community Center.

Extending the Blue Line from O'Hare to Schaumburg, and later to Elgin, is the option heavily preferred by the 19 communities along the northwest corridor and by prospective transit riders who participated in focus groups. The plan would attract the largest number of riders - about 55,000 a day by 2020, according to projections by the Regional Transportation Authority - but at more than \$800 million, it is also the most expensive alternative.

The proposal would extend the Blue Line subway under O'Hare in coordination with Chicago's planned expansion of the airfield and the introduction of express trains between the Loop and O'Hare. The first new Blue Line station would be on the western edge of the airport to serve a planned western terminal

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CTA

The 11.4-mile route would continue along the right of way on the Northwest Tollway (Interstate 90), making stops in Elk Grove Village, Des Plaines, Mount Prospect, Arlington Heights, Rolling Meadows and ending near the Woodfield Shopping Center in Schaumburg.

The CTA is offering an optional southern routing that would proceed west from O'Hare along the Thorndale Avenue corridor, then follow Interstate Highway 290 north to Woodfield. But the southern routing would attract far fewer riders because it does not connect with the Elk Grove Village industrial park and other employment centers, said John DeLaurentis, planning director for the RTA.

Pace has proposed two bus rapid-transit options. The first involves an express bus system that would operate along the Northwest Tollway from Rosemont to Schaumburg and continuing on to Randall Road in Elgin, said Pace spokesman Blaine Krage. The busway would have buses-only lanes, ramps and about 12 stations along the route. Buses would travel on arterial streets in the second option, making use of technology that changes traffic signals to green for the buses to reduce commuting time, Krage said.

Metra is working on two plans, one starting at the Milwaukee District West Line and the other at the North Central Service line. Both would run west along the tollway to the Prairie Stone business campus in Hoffman Estates.

The RTA is coordinating a phased study of the various options and is expected to present the preferred alternative, which could include a hybrid of several ideas, next spring. The federal government is expected to provide half of the funding for the project. (Chicago Tribune)

The reopening of Wacker Drive on November 27th, allowed the CTA to return five bus routes to their regular routings. The routes have been detoured since the project began in February, 2001. In addition, three of four other routes that formally operated on Lower Wacker Drive will begin new routing on Monday, December 8.

The routes that returned to their regular routing are the #2 Hyde Park Express, #6 Jeffery Express, #10 Museum of Science & Industry, #125 Water Tower Express and #146 Marine/Michigan Express.

#2 Hyde Park Express buses operate during weekday rush periods and resumed their regular routing via State, Wacker and Michigan in both directions.

#6 Jeffery Express buses operate daily and start their southbound trips from Columbus via South Water, Wacker Place, Wabash and Wacker Drive to State.

#10 Museum of Science & Industry buses operate year-round on weekends and holidays (except Christmas Day) and on weekdays from Thanksgiving until New Years Day and from Memorial Day until Labor Day. #10 buses resumed their regular routing via State and Wacker to Michigan in both directions, making the same stops as #2 Hyde Park Express buses through the area.

#125 Water Tower Express buses operate during weekday rush periods, and will make outbound trips from Union Station and Ogilvie Transportation Center via Canal, Lake and Wacker to Franklin/Orleans before resuming their regular routing.

#146 Marine/Michigan Express buses operate daily and resumed their southbound routing via Michigan and Wacker to State.

The four rush period express routes that formally used lower Wacker Drive while serving the Ogilvie Transportation Center or Union Station began operating as follows December 8.

#120 North Western/Wacker Express buses remain on their current routing from the concourse level entrance to Ogilvie Center on Canal via Washington, Dearborn and Illinois to Navy Pier. Return trips also stay on their current routing via Grand, Clark and Randolph to Canal.

#121 Union/Wacker Express buses operate from Union Station to Navy Pier via lower Wacker Drive, Michigan and Illinois, running express on lower Wacker to Wabash, and then making all stops north on lower Michigan and east on Illinois. #121 buses returning to Union Station will make their only stop on lower Wacker just west of Michigan before running express to the station.

#122 Illinois Center/North Western Express buses operate from Ogilvie Center to Illinois Center via upper Wacker, running express to State and making local stops thereafter. #122 buses returning to Ogilvie Center will make local stops on upper Wacker to State before running express to the station.

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CTA

#123 Illinois Center/Union Express buses operate from Union Station on upper Wacker, running express to State and making local stops thereafter. #123 buses returning to Union Station will make local stops on Wacker to State before running express to the station.

On December 7, 2002, Mayor Richard Daley unveiled a new underground transfer tunnel connecting the CTA State/Roosevelt Red Line subway with the Green/Orange Line elevated station.

At the east end of the tunnel, CTA users enter a two-story atrium adorned with a large mural composed of more than 4,000 clay tiles created by visitors to the Museum Campus in 1999. The mural, titled "Hopes and Dreams," was created by Juan Angel Chavez and Corrine Peterson of the Chicago Public Art Group.

The boldly colored mural depicts clouds, oceans, forests, earth and space.

The tunnel itself features information panels and tile designs representing four eras: Precambrian, Mesozoic, Paleozoic and Cenozoic. Reflecting the Museum Campus, the tiles feature symbols corresponding with the three Museum Campus institutions: the Planetarium, Field Museum and Shedd Aquarium.

Work on the project, which cost \$10 million to design and build, began in November 2001. Funding was provided through Illinois FIRST and a federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) grant.

CTA officials unveiled a security camera pilot program on December 10, 2002, that allows the agency to record activity at four CTA rail stations 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In addition to deterring vandalism and aiding the Chicago Police Department in identifying offenders, the cameras will enable the CTA to observe platform conditions and ridership patterns, an important factor when determining schedules and service levels. Testing of cameras at rail stations is part of CTA's ongoing effort to provide a secure environment for its customers.

CTA has strategically placed security cameras, monitors and digital recording devices at key points throughout four stations: Roosevelt and 95th/Dan Ryan stations on the Red Line, Kedzie on the Green Line and 35th/Archer on the Orange Line. CTA selected the stations representing a cross section of how the CTA's rail system operates and the varying lighting and climate conditions at each station.

Budgeted at just over \$294,000, the CTA will use the yearlong pilot project to ascertain the best technology, the most effective locations for cameras to be installed and the number of cameras required to adequately record activity. The agency will assess video equipment supplied by three different manufacturers, experiment with camera angles and determine whether fiber optics or digital phone connections are the best means of transmitting data from each station back to the agency's control center. On average, participating stations have six cameras and two monitors each. Activity can be recorded along the platforms, on stairways, as well as near elevators, escalators and transit card vending machines at the pilot stations. Images at these stations are recorded to a digital hard drive and transmitted to the CTA control center via fiber optics from the Roosevelt and Kedzie stations and via digital phone connections from the 35th/Archer and 95th stations.

Commuters who ride Metra and CTA will benefit from expanded hours and service routes the Chicago Transit Authority is implementing under its rush shuttle fare program. The Chicago Transit Board approved the service enhancements at its monthly meeting on December 11, 2002. The changes took effect Monday, December 23, 2002.

Under the new schedule the hours increased by half an hour in the morning and evening to 6-10 am and 3:30-7:30 pm. The rush shuttle service offers commuters \$1 bus rides on 20 routes between Union Station, Ogilvie Transportation Center, LaSalle Street Station, the Metra Electric Station and designated stops. Because Metra subsidizes each shuttle fare ride, customers using the rush shuttle service are provided a lower fare than the CTA's standard fare of \$1.50. Metra's subsidy rate for CTA's rush shuttle amounts to 12 cents per ride, up to a maximum of \$184,000 annually.

Additionally, three routes are being added to the shuttle fare program. They are the #22 Clark, #145 Wilson/Michigan Express and #146 Marine/Michigan Express. Other stops also are being added on existing shuttle fare routes to give customers a choice of more than one bus option at a particular stop.

Eleven more CTA bus routes became accessible to customers with disabilities on December 22, making 88 percent of all CTA routes fully accessible. A bus route is considered accessible only when every bus needed to serve the route is equipped to accommodate customers with disabilities. Fully 96 percent of the CTA bus fleet is now accessible.

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CTA

The newly accessible bus routes are the #33 Mag Mile Express, #48 South Damen, #54A North Cicero/Skokie Blvd, #55N 55th/Narragansett, #69 Cumberland/East River, #91 Austin, #96 Lunt, #136 Sheridan/LaSalle Express, #152 Addison, #202 Main/Emerson, and 204 Dodge. #91 and #152 which operate daily, became accessible Sunday, December 22, while accessibility on the other routes took effect Monday, December 23.

All new CTA buses purchased since 1990 have been accessible to persons with disabilities. The CTA now has 1,933 accessible buses, including models with lifts and others with low floors and ramps to accommodate customers in wheelchairs.

In 2003, the CTA will begin receiving 226 low-floor articulated buses and 25 low-floor 45-foot buses from North American Bus Industries, Inc. These buses will make the fleet 100 percent accessible once all older models have been replaced.

Currently, all bus routes operating out of five of the CTA's eight garages are accessible. These include 74th Street and 77th Street on the South Side, Archer on the Southwest Side, Chicago Avenue on the West Side and Forest Glen on the Northwest Side. Of the 17 routes that are not fully accessible, five are downtown shuttle routes, four are North Side routes and one is a South Side route. The other seven are special events routes or routes that are subsidized by employers.

The Chicago Transit Authority announced on December 21, 2002, that thousands of CTA bus and rail customers will experience improved service on thirteen bus routes and two rail lines as a result of service changes approved by the Chicago Transit Board in October. Improvements began December 22, and are designed to provide better connection with other services and greater convenience.

CTA Service Changes December 2002

#N4 Cottage Grove owl service will be extended from 59th to 63rd to connect with all-night service on the #N63 63rd route, effective Sunday, December 22.

#7 Harrison buses will operate east via Harrison and Canal to Jackson and west via Adams and Clinton to Harrison to better serve Union Station and the Greyhound bus terminal, starting Monday, December 23.

#18 16th/18th route will connect on the west with the Blue Line at Cicero/Cermak and on the east with the Red Line at Cermak/Chinatown as part of a six-month experimental program, effective Sunday, December 22.

#21X Cermak Express will operate between North Riverside Mall and the Loop under a 180-day experimental program via Cermak, Marshall, Ogden, Polk, Ashland, the Eisenhower Expressway and Dearborn to the Jackson/Dearborn Blue Line station. On outbound trips from Jackson/Dearborn, #X21 buses will make their final stop downtown southbound on Clark at Van Buren before entering the Eisenhower Expressway for express trips to Ashland, where they will follow the same routing in reverse of inbound service. Stops that #X21 Cermak Express buses have been making on Cermak east of Kedzie will continue to be served by #21 Cermak local buses.

#44 Wallace/Racine buses will end their northbound trips at the Halsted Orange Line station daily, beginning Sunday, December 22.

#60 Blue Island/26th buses will operate east through downtown via Harrison, Canal and Washington and west via Madison and Clinton to Harrison to provide better connections between the UIC Campus and both Union Station and the Ogilvie Transportation Center (North Western Station), and to offer additional weekend and evening service to the stations from the North Loop area, starting Sunday, December 22.

#73 Armitage weekday service will be modified to operate via Armitage, Racine, Cortland, Hermitage and Armitage at all times, effective Monday, December 23.

#78 Montrose buses will regularly serve the Montrose Beach throughout the summer on weekends and holidays, starting next summer.

#86 Narragansett/Ridgeland, the north terminal will be extended to Montrose to better serve the residential community north and west of the Wright College campus and to allow connections with #78 Montrose buses, effective Monday, December 23.

#95E 93rd/95th route will be modified experimentally for six months to serve the Stony Island Plaza shopping center at 95th and Stony Island, starting Sunday, December 22.

#126 Jackson buses will use Adams west to Clinton to serve Union Station before continuing over the regular route west on Van Buren, starting Sunday, December 22.
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CTA

#152 Addison buses will end their trips east via Addison and Lake Shore to West Sheridan Road (3900 North) before returning to Addison for trips west, beginning Sunday, December 22.

#170 University of Chicago/Midway, route will be extended on the east to serve the Metra Electric station at 57th and Stony Island, starting Monday, December 23.

The experimental expansion of weekday service on both the Orange Line and Purple Line Express was made permanent the end of December.

• PACE PATTERN

The Pace Board has approved the agency's 2003 operating budget and capital plan, which now head to the Regional Transportation Authority for final authorization in December. Ninety-nine people commented on the Pace budget in October at nine public hearings held throughout the six-county suburbs. The new Pace budget year starts January 1.

The 2003 operating budget of \$137.3 million is 4.5 percent higher than this year's estimated budget of \$131.3 million. Factors causing the increase are an expansion in paratransit service, higher health care expenses, a cost increase in private-contract bus services, and inflation. There will be no increase to the \$1.50 fixed-route fare. To balance the budget, Pace will target at least \$1.65 million in service reductions, which have yet to be determined. The cutbacks might impact Pace's corresponding services for people with disabilities.

Pace's 2003 capital plan totals \$62.8 million, with the majority earmarked for new buses and vans. Pace will purchase 92 fixed-route buses, 44 paratransit buses and 190 vanpool vans to expand services and replace vehicles at the end of their useful life. Ridership on the Pace system next year is projected to rise 1 percent from this year's estimate of 34.6 million riders.

Pace's farebox recovery rate, which is the percentage of operating costs covered by riders fares, is required by the RTA to reach 40 percent for the fourth straight year. That recovery rate, which is double or triple the rate found at many other suburban bus agencies across the country, has been the major cause for past fare increases and service cuts.

The Pace Board of Directors approved a \$178,300 contract with Siemens Transportation Systems of Cedar

Rapids, Iowa for the purchase, installation and maintenance of 10 communication kiosks. In this new program, the kiosks will provide on-line route and schedule information to passengers at high volume suburban transit locations. The freestanding units are equipped with keyboards, screens and printers. Linked to Pace's website at www.pacebus.com, the kiosks will print bus schedules on demand, making it simple for riders to obtain up-to-date travel information. Outdoor kiosks are proposed at Pace's Northwest Transportation Center in Schaumburg, and the Aurora Transportation Center. Indoor kiosks are proposed at Woodfield Mall in Schaumburg, Elgin Transportation Center, Rosemont CTA Station, Davis Street CTA Station in Evanston, Des Plaines Metra Station, 95th/Dan Ryan CTA Station, O'Hare Airport and Midway Airport. The units are expected to be installed and operating in the fall of next year. (Pacebus.com)

• METRA MATTERS

Metra's Board of Directors has approved a final 2003 Budget that contains no fare-increases or service cutbacks.

Metra's \$459 million 2003 operating budget outlines operating expenditures and revenue that will allow the agency to meet its 55 percent recovery ratio.

Metra's \$395 million planned capital improvements in 2003 include \$166 million for rolling stock, \$63 million for infrastructure improvements, \$60 million for Acquisition, Extension, and Expansions (specifically, Metra's New Starts service upgrades on its SouthWest Service, Union Pacific West Line, and North Central Service), and \$42 million earmarked for station and parking improvements in its service territory.

Metra is on schedule to begin the phased-in delivery of 300 new cars and 27 locomotives into their fleet, starting in January 2003.

Valued at nearly \$500 million, these new cars and locomotives were funded by a blend of state and federal dollars from the Illinois FIRST program and Federal Transit Administration.

Metra recently introduced the prototype cars on the Milwaukee District for testing. The delivery schedule will range approximately 10 new cars per month going forward. By fall 2005, all 300 cars will be in service, replacing more than 250 cars on the Union Pacific and Burlington Northern Santa Fe lines that have earned their retirement.

(Metra-rail.com)

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METRA

A multi-level ramp likely will be installed at the south end of the Jefferson Park Metra Station instead of the previously proposed two elevators to bring the station into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

A single elevator which would serve both the inbound and outbound platforms is still being considered, but Metra is leaning towards the construction of one enclosed, heated ramp which would serve both platforms, said V. Clayton Weaver, director of Metra's Technical Services Division. Under either scenario, escalators that had been slated for removal would remain at the station.

Construction is expected to start next spring and be completed by the fall, a full year later than originally scheduled. Also included in the \$2.7 million project are plans to rebuild the deteriorating "head houses" which enclose the stairways that connect the Metra platform to the Jefferson Park CTA terminal at ground level.

Metra was forced to revise its plans because an appropriate staging area for a 100-ton crane, which would have been needed to allow for the installation of the elevator near the outbound platform, could not be located, Weaver said. The crane, which requires at least a 40-by-50-foot area to operate, would have been situated in the adjacent CTA terminal's bus turnaround area, causing too many disruptions, and when in use it would have blocked two of the three sets of Metra tracks, Weaver said.

Weaver said that the ramp, which commuters would access from inside the CTA terminal lobby near the escalator and stairway leading to the inbound platform, would run along the station's east embankment. He said that the ramp would have about six levels linked by platforms, running approximately 200 lineal feet for the 17 or 18 foot climb to the platform, so that its incline is not too steep.

Weaver said that a signalized crossing would be installed on the Metra platform to allow those in wheelchairs to cross the tracks to the outbound platforms. He said that the proposal for a single elevator also calls for a crossing since the elevator would be located on the inbound side of the tracks.

Original plans called for the removal of the existing escalators to make room for each elevator, but some commuters complained that they would have to either wait for an elevator or use the stairs, Weaver said.

Weaver said that while an elevator would be easier for disabled commuters to use than a ramp, Metra's research shows that an increasing number of the agency's disabled riders use motorized wheelchairs. He said that similar ramps have been installed in Metra stations in Evanston and that they have been successful in accommodating those with disabilities, adding that ramps are free from the mechanical breakdowns associated with elevators.

Weaver said that a decision on whether to build a ramp or an elevator will be made in the near future. He added that further enhancements to the head houses, which would be replaced and which would feature brick towers, are possible if no elevator is built since the towers would not have to house elevator shafts. (Nadig Newspapers Week of November 17, 2002)

• NATIONAL NEWS

Peter Pan Bus Lines announced on December 5, 2002, it has signed a purchase and sales agreement with Coach USA, the first step in Peter Pan's acquisition of Coach's five New England affiliates - The Arrow Line, Bonanza Bus Lines, The Maine Line, Pawtuxet Valley Lines and Coach USA Boston.

According to Peter A. Picknelly, president of the Springfield based intercity bus line, "This acquisition allows Peter Pan to enlarge our footprint in New England and virtually doubles the size of our company by adding complementary elements to our core business. Bonanza's Boston-Providence-New York service and their service between Cape Cod and New York will be added to our existing line run business, and Arrow Line, as a leader in the Connecticut charter business with existing contract service for Foxwood Casino extend our Charter business.

Bonanza and Pawtuxet are both in Rhode Island, Arrow Line is in East Hartford, Milford and Waterford, Connecticut, Maine Line is in Portland, and Coach USA Boston in Boston, Massachusetts.

New York Bus Service has advised the City of New York that it will terminate its commuter express service at midnight Sunday, January 12, 2003. This will affect 15,000 Bronx commuters who depend on the express bus service daily to get to and from Manhattan. Without the service, the majority will be forced to take two modes of transportation, that being bus and subway.

NATIONAL NEWS

New York Bus Service provides round-trip transportation to the central business district of Manhattan from the Bronx communities of Co-op City, Parkchester, Pelham Bay, City Island, Throgs Neck and Morris Park. New York Bus Service has consistently been one of the largest employers in the borough of the Bronx. The termination of its commuter operation will result in a significant loss of jobs for its 546 employees.

"Unfortunately, we are forced to terminate the commuter portion of our business based on the inability of the New York City Department of Transportation to resolve one critical issue," said New York Bus Service President Jim O'Reilly.

"The one issue is complex, but boils down to this: Our existence in the commuter bus business is totally at the pleasure of the City – and therein lays the problem," O'Reilly explained. "If and when the City decides to withdraw from the private bus franchise business, as they have been advocating, it would effectively put us out of the commuter bus business. This would accelerate certain funding obligations to the pension fund of our unionized work force. This poses a tremendous financial hardship that we cannot take."

He added, "The City, at this point in time, for whatever reason, is indicating that it would shift these pension obligations to New York Bus Service. We firmly believe that the City is obligated to fund all our pension costs associated with the express bus service. We simply cannot afford to be stuck funding the pension, particularly if we are no longer in business. Based on the City's stated position, we are cutting our losses and exiting the commuter business."

O'Reilly continued, "All we are saying to the City is this: We will work with you on whatever plans best serve our commuters. But it is unfair to have the Sword of Damocles – in this case, the pension termination obligation – hanging over our head. We must stop the bleeding before it drains our school bus operation and results in additional loss of jobs. This is not about an increase in subsidy. It's about the City recognizing basic fairness and its obligations. We want to continue to do what we do best, but not to our detriment."

New York Bus Service was a pioneer in the City's commuter express bus industry. In 1970, it became the first company to launch round-trip commuter service between the Bronx and Manhattan.

- CALENDAR OF EVENTS -

In cooperation with the various rail and transit enthusiast organizations meeting in Chicago, we present this "Calendar of Events".

Jan 10. Chicago Chapter – Railway & Locomotive Historical Society meeting. 7:00pm. The Chicago Temple (77 W. Washington – Pierce Hall (lower level auditorium)). Admission is free. Program to be announced.

Jan 17. The Railroad Club of Chicago meeting. 7:30pm. The Chicago Temple (77 W. Washington – Pierce Hall (lower level auditorium)). Donation of \$3.00 requested for non-members. Program – *Chicago's forgotten suburban railroads – The Grand Trunk Western*, a slide presentation by William Shapotkin.

Jan 24. Central Electric Railfans' Association meeting. 7:30pm. 205 W. Wacker Drive Suite 200 (Securities Training Corp). \$5.00 admission for non-members. Program – videos shot by Robert Olsen during a 1994 trip to St. Petersburg, Russia, with a side trip to Riga, Latvia. Footage includes regular passenger streetcar equipment, work equipment, electric trolley bus trains and electric trolley trucks.

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