



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.

• FEBRUARY OSA MEETING

The next regular meetings of the Omnibus Society of America will be on February 6, 2004, in the Anderson Pavilion of Swedish Covenant Hospital, 2751 W. Winona Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. The meeting will be start at 7:30 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 program, "From the Camera of Myron Lane," will be an eclectic look at rail and rapid transit images from the camera of noted photographer Myron Lane.

• CTA HAPPENINGS

On December 10th, the Chicago Transit Authority announced improvements that include making service enhancements on three routes permanent, and adding a second 180-day experiment to downtown shuttle routes, north suburban routes and the **#56 Milwaukee** and **#124 Navy Pier** routes.

The adjustments are in response to customer feedback, as well as observation and analysis by CTA staff and were approved by the Chicago Transit Board at its monthly meeting.

Most of the changes are designed to benefit customers by improving bus operations, providing additional transit choices and improving travel times. All changes comply with the service standards adopted by the board in 2001.

Three of the experimental changes that took effect this past June will become permanent. These include: extending late night and early morning trips on the **#55 Garfield** to Midway Airport from 55th and St. Louis, routing the **#120**

North Western/Wacker Express to Lower Wacker Drive and rerouting the southern rush period terminal of **#9 Ashland** buses to reduce travel delays and better serve customers.

A second 180-day experiment serving West Rogers Park and the northern suburbs of Evanston and Skokie will modify two routes to provide more direct service for customers.

#96 Lunt buses will operate west on Touhy to the shopping and job centers in the Lincolnwood Town Center and south along McCormick to the Devon/Kedzie terminal instead of through the southeast Skokie Industrial District. This improvement will provide access to the shopping centers along McCormick and facilitate transfers between the **#96** and **#82 Kimball/Homan**.

#201 Central/Ridge buses will be rerouted from Sherman to Sheridan. This change will link Northwestern University to multiple traffic generators, and provide access to the beach at Central. It also will remove service on Benson and Oak in order to simplify and streamline service through downtown Evanston.

These changes will be implemented in March 2004.

The other routes in this experiment which include: **#11 Lincoln**, **#93 California/Dodge**, **#200 Main Shuttle**, **#205 Chicago/Golf** and **#206 Evanston Circulator** will remain as they are currently.

A second 180-day experiment will be implemented on the **#56 Milwaukee** which now terminates at Michigan and Madison instead of Navy Pier. This has resulted in greater reliability of the route. At the same time the experiment on the **#124 Navy Pier** route will be continued and service will be extended one-half hour later to 10:30 p.m. during the fall, winter and spring (midnight during the summer months) and begin one-half hour earlier at 8:30 a.m. The route name will officially change to **#124 Navy Pier**, dropping the term "Express" to reflect its local operation through the Loop.

Three routes serving West Loop Metra stations will undergo a second 180-day experiment.

#121 Union/Wacker Express buses will board customers on the south side of Jackson between Clinton and Canal to help ease congestion at Union Station.

#123 Illinois Center/North Western Express buses will operate on street level instead of returning to Lower Wacker Drive.

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#123 Illinois Center/Union Express buses will operate on street level instead of returning to Lower Wacker Drive and customers will now board on the south side of Jackson between Clinton and Canal to ease congestion at Union Station.

The board also agreed to eliminate the routing of the #95E 93rd/95th into the Stony Island Plaza due to low ridership. This routing was implemented as an experiment in December 2002. (www.transitchicago.com)

Starting in January, riders were able to use the CTA's new Chicago Card Plus, as either a monthly pass or a stored-value card that is automatically replenished using a customer's credit card or checking account, the agency's president said on December 18, 1993.

CTA President Frank Kruesi said the new card will be available online and perhaps through a tax-free transit benefit program offered by many employees.

The new card will be "good for a 30-day pass or a pay-per-use" card, Kruesi said.

Kruesi and other CTA officials said they hope use of the new card will become more widespread because it should speed up rider's entrance to CTA 'L' lines and bus boarding. The cards are simply held near a farebox or turnstile, rather than being inserted in a reader, saving several seconds for each rider. The cost of the ride is electronically deducted from the card's value each time it is used.

The card is in addition to the existing Chicago Card, which has been a disappointment to CTA officials. The Chicago Card, which debuted in November 2002 and which is rechargeable at 'L' stations, has only drawn about 25,000 users, though the agency bought 100,000, with an option to buy 200,000 more.

The original smart cards cost \$5 each and can be loaded with up to \$100 worth of fares. Unlike regular CTA transit cards, they can be registered with the CTA and replaced if lost.

The Chicago Card Plus users will have to set up an account using a credit card that will automatically replenish the transit card's value when it dips below \$10 or a higher amount set by the rider. To spur initial sales of the Plus cards, a \$5 surcharge will be waived until March 31. (Chicago Tribune December 19, 2003)

Chicago Transit Authority rail customers now have access to Automated Teller machines (ATMs) conveniently located at 11 rail stations. The machines provide a convenient venue for customers to access their banks during their daily commute.

The ATMs are located at seven Red Line stations: 95th/Dan Ryan, Fullerton, Sox/35th, Roosevelt/State, Clark/Division, Addison and Jarvis. They are also available at Midway station on the Orange Line, Ashland on the Green Line, and O'Hare and Monroe on the Blue Line. The ATMs are outside of the fare payment area of the stations so individuals not using the CTA also have access to them.

The ATM contract will generate a minimum of \$144,300 annually in additional revenue for the CTA during the first three years of the contract, as well as provide for two one-year extensions. In addition to the minimum payment, Bank One will pay the CTA a percentage of the ATM user fees collected at the stations. The first ATMs to be installed became operational during the week of November 17 and generated \$13,156.70 in revenue for CTA through the month of November.

The new ATMs resulted from an agreement with Bank One Corporation to furnish, install, replenish, operate, and maintain the ATMs. The contract was approved in August following a competitive bidding process. (www.transitchicago.com)

Effective Sunday, January 25 on the Green Line and Monday, January 26 on the Brown and Purple Lines, the CTA began providing additional service on these three rail lines.

The frequency enhancements are as follows:

Green Line: Sunday service will begin operating a half hour earlier in the morning. The first trains will leave Ashland/63rd at 6:40 a.m., Harlem/Lake at 6:30 a.m., and Cottage Grove/63rd at 6:40 a.m. Trains will leave every 15 minutes from Harlem and every 30 minutes from the 63rd Street terminals.

Brown Line: Beginning Monday, January 26, Brown Line trains will run a half hour later weekdays and Saturdays between the Loop and Kimball. The last train downtown will leave Kimball at 12:10 a.m. The last train to Kimball will leave downtown at 12:40 a.m. Trains will operate every 10 to 15 minutes.

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Purple Line: Also beginning Monday, Purple Line Express trains will run 25 minutes earlier in the afternoon between the Loop and Linden. The first train to downtown will leave Linden at 2:30 p.m. The first train to Linden will leave the Loop at 3:15 p.m. Trains will operate every 15 minutes.

Additionally, there will be increased Purple Line service northbound from Howard to Linden during weekday morning rush periods. From 6 a.m. until 8:30 a.m. trains will operate every 12 minutes instead of every 18 minutes. (www.transitchicago.com)

On January 28, 2004, the Chicago Transit Board approved several contracts that further its ongoing effort to upgrade its bus and rail fleets. A power train overhaul for CTA's Flexible 6000 series buses, rear sidewall replacement for its Flexible 5300 series and the procurement of parts required to support the overhaul of 2200 and 2400 series railcars will contribute to the life-extending rehabilitation currently underway.

Midwest Bus Corporation of Owosso, Michigan, will furnish all labor, materials, tools, equipment and insurance for the removal and replacement of up to 200 rear sidewalls on the CTA's Flexible 5300 series buses. The \$1 million replacement will increase the overall useful life of the bus.

As part of the ongoing, three-year mid-life overhaul of the CTA's 6000-series Flexible buses, Inland Detroit Diesel-Allison of Carol Stream, Illinois, will perform a \$12.8 million overhaul to the power train system. The power train is a key element in extending the operating life of the 6000 series buses and contribute to customer comfort by creating a smoother and more reliable ride.

The Transit Board also approved \$3.9 million in increases to various existing contracts to fund the procurement of parts required to support the overhaul of CTA's 2200 and 2400 series rail cars, which will begin later this spring. This will include rebuilding of all 2200 series trucks and control groups. The trucks will receive new wheels, rebuilt traction motors, rebuilt gearboxes and new cabling. A rebuilt truck provides passengers with a smoother and more reliable ride. Other work includes the upgrade and repair of electric couplers, doors and batteries.

All 2400 series rail cars will receive overhauled cam control groups, which are the heart of the propulsion system and provide for smoother acceleration and

braking. The 2400 series rail cars will have master controllers rebuilt, a heavy inspection of trucks, upgrade of door units and upgrade of the friction brake hydraulic pump control units.

In 2002, CTA completed a four-year \$354.7 million rehabilitation of its 2600 series railcars. The 2600 series represents half of the CTA's rail fleet.

All 474 lift-equipped TMC buses purchased in 1991 underwent a life-extending overhaul that was completed in April 2003.

In addition to the ongoing overhaul of the 6000 series Flexible buses, the CTA is currently overhauling all 65 of its New Flyer buses (5800 Series) at a cost of \$7.3 million. (www.transitchicago.com)

• PACE PATTERN

The smart was to travel in the suburbs is getting ever brighter. Pace introduced new solar-powered illuminated bus stops in November 2003 at 13 locations along Sibley Boulevard in Harvey, Dolton and Calumet City. The hi-tech equipment, which attaches to existing bus stop poles, provides on-demand lighting for the passenger waiting area, and a flashing beacon to notify bus drivers that a rider is waiting at the stop.

Pace's enhanced bus stops, serving Route 350 Sibley between Halsted Street and Wentworth Avenue, improve safety and visibility at night with security downlighting from atop the pole. With the simple push of a button, riders can read their newspapers or route timetables while waiting for the bus. Another button activates the flashing beacon, which is visible from a distance of one mile at night and a quarter-mile during the day.

Pace purchased the maintenance-free equipment, called the i-STOP, from Carmanah Technologies, Inc. The system uses built-in solar panels to charge batteries that power the lights. The LED lights (light emitting diode) use 90 percent less electricity than regular bulbs, and never need to be replaced. The lights can run for about 200 hours on a 90-minute sunlight charge. The batteries get replaced every five years.

Each new stop costs about \$1,000, but then costs nothing to operate as it contributes to Pace's environmentally friendly mission. Pace will survey riders on Route 350 early this year to gauge the project's popularity, and determine whether to install more solar-powered illuminated bus stops in other suburban areas.

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PACE

The i-STOP from Carmanah Technologies is the world's first solar-powered LED-illuminated bus stop. The equipment is being used at several other transit agencies, including Atlanta, Sacramento and Seattle.

(www.pacebus.com)

Riding pace buses on one northwest suburban route is a new transit experience, and more Pace routes will follow this spring. It's the debut of the Transit Television Network on two of the four buses that serve Pace Route 757 Northwest Connection between the Forest Park Transit Center and Woodfield Mall in Schaumburg.

Monitors are airing informative and entertaining programming on the two prototype buses, giving riders a great way to pass the time. The 15-inch color screens broadcast news, weather, sports, trivia, old movies, classic television shows, and more. Better yet, it all comes at no cost to Pace and its passengers.

Pace will complete a survey of Route 757 riders and make any necessary adjustments to the new system before the equipment is installed on more fixed-route buses beginning in late March.

By the end of summer, Pace will have monitors on 389 buses throughout the suburbs. Pace has 678 buses in its fleet, but the remaining vehicles will wait to be retired in the next few years and then be replaced by new buses that have monitors.

The five-year agreement with Transit Television Network of Orlando is a revenue-generating contract for Pace. The project is fully funded by TTN, and provides Pace with a minimum total of \$500,000 over five years because advertisers buy commercial time on the network. Buses will be equipped with three 15-inch monitors or two 17-inch monitors, depending on the length of the bus. The high-resolution flat screens provide wide viewing angles and high contrast, giving riders an optimal viewing experience. The volume is kept at a reasonable level.

A future phase of the project will link the monitors to Pace's Intelligent Bus System so riders can view a scrolling column of upcoming stops on the left edge of the screen. The real-time information will keep riders aware of their approaching destinations.

- CALENDAR OF EVENTS -

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

Feb. 13. 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."***

Feb. 20. 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 - ***"Mind the Doors, eh?"*** a look at suburban rail operations in various North American cities, including Toronto, Baltimore and Dallas by David Phillips.

Feb 27.. Central Electric Railfans' Association meeting. 7:30pm. 205 W. Wacker Drive Suite 200 (Securities Training Corp). \$5.00 admission for non-members. Program - ***"L' Oddities"***, a slide presentation by numerous individuals covering oddball and unusual operations on Chicago's Elevated Railway system.

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