



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.

### • MARCH OSA MEETING

The next regular meetings of the Omnibus Society of America will be on March 5, 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, "Airport Transit" will be a slide presentation by James Beeler.

### • CTA HAPPENINGS

**The Chicago Transit Authority** is enhancing its bus service by adding a new rush hour peak direction express route along Lake Shore Drive, returning two routes, including one along Lake Shore Drive, back to their original routing; making permanent an experimental change on one route; and making modifications to another route that will provide more convenient overnight service. Some of the changes are related to the 180-day experimental restructuring of routes serving the Lake Shore Drive corridor, which began last August. The experiment addressed, for the first time in decades, the growing ridership and changing travel patterns of the area.

Approved on January 28, 2004, by the Chicago Transit Board, the improvements will benefit customers by providing additional transit options and reducing travel times.

The adjustments are a result of customer feedback, as well as observation and analysis by CTA staff. CTA expects to implement the changes by the end of March. All changes

comply with the Service Standards adopted by the board in 2001. Bus ridership along the corridor has increased 1.1 percent from 185,137 customers to 187,156 on an average weekday since the experiment was launched in August.

The Changes are:

**#N4 Cottage Grove** will be rerouted in order to add overnight owl service through the Illinois Center complex and a new southbound stop at Michigan/Randolph, which also serves #151 Sheridan and #N66 Chicago buses. Adding #N4 stops to the location creates a convenient transfer point for customers on those routes looking to complete their trips to the South Side. Service will run from Illinois Center to 63rd/Cottage Grove via Michigan north to Randolph, Randolph east to Columbus, Columbus north to South Water, South Water west to Michigan, Michigan south to Randolph, Randolph west to State, State south to Washington and the existing #4 Cottage Grove route. The #N4 will continue to serve the downtown owl terminal at State/Washington.

**#18 16th/18th** buses were extended eastbound to connect with the Cermak-Chinatown station of the Red Line as part of a service experiment launched in December 2002. Citing increased ridership as a result of this experiment, the CTA is making the extension a permanent part of the route. Weekday ridership is up 5.7 percent, while Saturday ridership is up 11.7 percent and Sunday ridership is up 31.8 percent.

**#X21 Cermak Express** will return to its original hours and routing between North Riverside Park Mall and McCormick Place. As part of an experiment implemented on December 22, 2002, #X21 service was expanded to serve downtown and the Medical District. A second 180-day experiment was approved last June, routing the bus along Damen instead of Marshall Boulevard and Ogden. Low ridership to the Medical District and downtown is the key factor in returning the #X21 to its original route and schedule. Service hours will be Saturdays, Sundays and holidays between 7:40 a.m. and 7:40 p.m. Customers needing to travel to destinations formerly served by the #X21 can transfer to #9 Ashland or #60 Blue Island/26th buses.

**#145 Wilson/Michigan** will revert back to its original routing prior to the 180-day experiment to restructure bus service along the Lake Shore Drive corridor that took effect last August.

(Cont on Page 2)



(Cont from page 1)

## CTA

Based on customer feedback and staff observations, this change will help alleviate crowding on the #146 Inner Drive/Michigan Express route in the densely populated corridor between Belmont and Irving Park. #145 buses will enter and exit Lake Shore Drive at Belmont, operating south on Michigan Avenue and north on State Street in the Loop.

To serve customers who want to enter Lake Shore Drive at Irving park (which the #145 did during the first part of the experiment), the **#148 Clarendon/Michigan Express** has been created to operate peak direction express service during morning and afternoon rush periods. Morning trips will operate between Wilson/Ravenswood and Michigan/Congress. Afternoon trips will operate between State/Congress and Wilson/Ravenswood. Trips will operate express on Lake Shore Drive between Irving Park and Delaware. This will provide faster service during peak times for customers living north of Irving Park to Michigan Avenue. ([www.transitchicago.com](http://www.transitchicago.com))

**Chicago Transit Authority** customers of 28 rail stations system wide will soon enjoy new concession stands thanks to contracts approved on January 28th by the Chicago Transit Board. The move will bring popular added services to CTA customers, provide key infrastructure improvements to the stations, and generate an additional \$4.1 million in rent and capital improvements for the CTA in the next five years.

Contracts were approved for several companies to lease, operate and construct 30 quality concession stands at locations that currently are either vacant or being rented on a month-to-month basis. As part of the new agreements, the CTA will lease the concession spaces for five years to lessees who will pay rent and make infrastructure upgrades to improve the appearance of the stations involved. The leases were competitively bid and awarded to First Equity property, Inc. of Rolling Meadows, Illinois; The Coffee Station of Northbrook, Illinois; and A&M Concessions, Inc and KCI Enterprises-1, Inc., both of Chicago.

First Equity, which will lease 26 concession spaces, will operate a gourmet coffee shop inside the North/Clybourn station on the Red Line that will offer a variety of bakery items, bottled beverages, juices and coffee drinks. The company also plans to open newspaper stands, florist shops and convenience stores at its remaining locations.

A&M Concessions, which is leasing two concession stands – Irving Park station on the Blue Line and Clark/Division station on the Red Line – will offer traditional concession items such as newspapers and snacks.

Two of the new contracts were awarded to CTA vendors that have been operating on a month-to-month lease. The Coffee Station will continue to provide a variety of food and beverages at the Jefferson Park station on the Blue Line, and KCI Enterprise-1 will continue to offer snack items at the Randolph/Washington subway station in the Loop, now under a five year lease agreement.

In 1998, the CTA established the Concession Redevelopment Program to implement uniform lease terms that include longer lease periods as well as provisions for controlled merchandising and guidelines for improved presentation and appearance. As a result of this program, 27 CTA concession spaces throughout the CTA rail system have received capital upgrades. The boards approval will add another 30 to that number when construction work is complete.

Capital improvements at the concession spaces typically consist of electrical, plumbing, heating and air conditioning improvements as well as new windows, counter tops, shelving, flooring and ceilings.

The CTA's competitive bid process evaluates bids for the concession spaces based on the vendor's proposed rent and capital improvements expenditure; financial background; experience with concession stands and design of the concession space.

Rent for the concession spaces depend upon the rail station and number of customers it serves. All rents are a combination of the bid rent and the amount of capital improvement to the concession proposed by the bidder. ([www.transitchicago.com](http://www.transitchicago.com))

**Two Chicago Transit Authority** trains collided at low speed during the rush hour on Tuesday, February 3rd, sending about 45 people to area hospitals for minor injuries and delaying thousands of travelers.

The accident took place on elevated tracks just north of the Merchandise Mart when a Purple Line train rear-ended a Brown Line train, causing them to lock together, CTA president Frank Kruesi said.

Power was shut off between the Merchandise Mart and Chicago Avenue stations, affecting Brown and Purple Line service for three hours, until about 8:45 p.m.

(Cont on page 3)



(Cont from page 2)

## CTA

Injured passengers were taken to area hospitals, but most took CTA buses to finish the evening commute home. ([www.chicagotribune.com](http://www.chicagotribune.com))

**The CTA handed out nearly 24,000 free rides to North Side train commuters on Thursday morning, February 5, as it tried to rebound from the low-speed 'L' crash that injured dozens and snarled traffic.**

On Thursday morning, CTA workers went to Brown and Purple line stations to hand out an estimated \$42,000 worth of fare cards good for a free ride. They also handed out cards apologizing for Tuesday's delays.

The agency last passed out free rides in 2001 after two trains collided. (Chicago Sun Times February 6, 1004)

**The Chicago Transit Authority will conduct a second 180-day experiment designed to improve bus service along the Lake Shore Drive corridor. The first experiment launched August 31, 2003, originally included 23 bus routes. In December, nine of the original routes serving the corridor underwent additional routing modifications and five of the routes underwent frequency modifications. Two additional routes, #156 LaSalle and #148 Clarendon/Michigan Express were added to the experiment in December and January, respectively. The original experimental period ends on February 26, 2004.**

Implementing a second experiment will allow CTA staff to continue to monitor and analyze the changes and permit additional customer feedback. The second experiment, which will not involve any routing changes, was approved by the Chicago Transit Board at its monthly meeting on February 11, 2004.

Additionally, the Board also approved the creation of a new 180-day experimental route, the #X99 Chicago Manufacturing Campus and a modification to the south terminal of the #37 Sedgwick/Ogden route, so that it will better serve customers.

The #X99 will serve customers between the 95th Street Red Line station and the Chicago Manufacturing Campus at 126th/Torrence. The campus of nine companies that supply auto parts to the nearby Ford plant. The service will coordinate with the schedules of three weekday shifts at the campus. Approximately 50 percent or #142,000 of the annual cost for operating this

route will be funded by a Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) grant.

The #37 route will move its south terminal from Cermak/Karlov to the newly reopened Pulaski station on the Cermak (Douglas) branch of the Blue Line. The new bus turnaround at the station is protected from inclement weather and provides a direct connection to the Blue Line, improving customers' overall transit experience.

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. ([www.transitchicago.com](http://www.transitchicago.com))

**The Regional Transportation Authority and two north suburbs on the CTA's Yellow Line will conduct a study of travel patterns to help determine where additional stations might be built, RTA officials said on Thursday, February 5, 2004.**

The travel analysis will be a follow-up to a report released in September that looked at the feasibility of adding stations along the Yellow Line.

The report also considered extending the route 1.6 miles from Dempster Street to near Old Orchard Shopping center, north of Golf Road.

The report said downtown Skokie, just north of Oakton Street on Skokie Boulevard, is the best location for a new station. Evanston officials have expressed interest in building a station on Dodge Avenue south of Oakton to serve a senior citizens community center.

The RTA-funded study on travel patterns is expected to start in the fall and be completed in mid-2005.

A trip on the Yellow Line takes 8 minutes from the Howard Street Red Line station in Chicago to Dempster Street in Skokie. Adding a stop in downtown Skokie would be expected to add a minute to the trip, said Bill Lenski of the RTA. ([www.chicagotribune.com](http://www.chicagotribune.com) February 6, 2004)

## • PACE PATTERN

**Pace is engaging in community-based marketing to improve and maximize the use of several bus routes in the North Shore area as part of the agency's Vision 2020 plan.**

(Cont on Page 4)



## PACE

The end result of this North Shore Study will be the possibility of restructured services that provide faster trips, less transferring and more direct riders.

Pace has been working with a consultant since November on the North Shore Study, which involves the communities of Evanston, Lincolnwood, Skokie, Wilmette and surrounding towns. Pace collected detailed data through passenger counts, surveys and focus groups, and met with officials from each community to discuss local transit options. Pace is also working with the Chicago Transit Authority, Metra and other transportation service providers. This spring and summer, Pace's public outreach efforts along the North Shore include an employer survey, phone survey, workshops and the creation of the North Shore Citizens Advisory Committee.

The 16 Pace routes in the study are 204 Dodge, 208 Church Street/Golf Road, 210 Lincoln Avenue, 212 Evanston/Glenview/Northbrook Court, 213 green bay Road, 215 Crawford/Howard, 225 Central/Howard, 226 Oakton, 250 Dempster, 254 North Cicero/Skokie Boulevard, 290 Touhy, 421 Wilmette Avenue, 422 Lake Avenue, 423 Sheridan Road, 426 Northwestern University Evanston/Chicago, and 626 Skokie Valley Limited. The project's boundaries are Howard Street, Central Avenue/Harms Road, Winnetka Road and Lake Michigan.

To speed buses along, Pace is investigating traffic signal priority for some routes. Such a system would give buses longer green lights or shorter red lights at busy intersections, making bus riding faster than driving.

A proposed restructuring plan for the North Shore area is expected to come before Pace's Board of Directors in August, and improvements could begin to be implemented in late 2004 or early 2005. Pace's Vision 2020 plan is generating significant improvements to the way public transportation is provided in Chicago's suburbs. Pace is becoming faster, more convenient, more comprehensive and simpler to understand.  
([www.pacebus.com](http://www.pacebus.com))

## • METRA MATTERS

**P**rospects for a new Oak Lawn station brightened for a new Metra station the week of January 16th, when a Village Board committee recommended that trustees move forward with planning.

Construction is expected to begin in 2005 with adjacent shops and perhaps a residential complex added to the mix.

The new station, with additional parking spaces and retail shops, would be more convenient than existing facilities, Village President Ronald Stancik said.

Last month Metra notified Oak Lawn officials of plans to build a station between 51st Avenue and Tulley Avenue. The proposal includes adding 500 additional parking spaces before the train line begins a full-time schedule in 2006. Metra must acquire additional property or build a parking deck to secure the extra parking, officials said.

Village Manager Joseph Faber suggested that the village incorporate the Metra improvements into a more comprehensive proposal, which Mid-America Real Estate drew to include a condominium development, officials said.

The \$9 million proposal includes about \$1.5 million for the train station, \$1.5 million for the roadway and utility improvements and \$6 million for the parking deck. Metra would pitch in about \$3 million. \$4.8 million would come from parking fees and grant moneys and about \$1.2 million from the condominium  
([www.chicagotribune.com](http://www.chicagotribune.com) January 16, 2004)

**South Siders celebrating** the removal of turnstiles on the Metra Electric Line might be whistling another tune when cost-cutting measures taken by Metra catch up with commuters this winter and spring.

To prevent couples from sharing monthly passes, Metra will begin issuing gender-specific monthly passes for Electric Line riders sometime this spring. (A sign at Randolph Street station lists an effective date of April 1)

The move will bring local commuters in line with the rest of Metra, where monthly passes have long noted the rider's gender, said Metra spokesman Dan Schnolis.

South Side scofflaws who have been sharing their monthly passes benefited from turnstiles which required unique tickets, according to Metra officials. The high cost of updating system-wide changes for these tickets proved too expensive, according to Schnolis. The removal of station turnstiles in the fall cleared the way for Metra to begin implementing other cost-cutting measures as well. Other changes include a shrunk grace period for monthly pass holders to purchase a new pass. (Cont on Page 5)



(Cont from page 4)

## METRA

Previously monthly pass holders had one extra work day before their pass expired. They now have until noon.

People used to buying their tickets on the train instead of from station vending machines might be in for a \$2 surprise. As of the first of the month anyone getting on at an electric line station with no attendant will have to pay an additional \$2 over the price of their fare for the luxury of buying a ticket from the conductor, according to Metra officials.

In other news, Metra expects 26 new cars to be in service later this year. A Japanese firm manufactured the stainless steel cars, which are being assembled in Milwaukee, according to Metra officials. The \$78 million purchase marks the beginning of a 10 year plan to replace the entire fleet of cars on the Electric Line. ([www.chicagotribune.com](http://www.chicagotribune.com) February 10, 2004)

**F**or less than the cost of a toy train, Virginia Railway Express will buy 35 full-size rail cars from Chicago's Metra railroad for one dollar apiece.

VRE officials say the Chicago railroad bought the rail cars with federal money in the 1970's, which means they cannot sell the cars to other railroads for a profit.

Representatives from VRE handpicked the cars they wanted in early August. Metra is unloading the cars because it's buying 600 modern gallery cars.

VRE Dale Zehner says that although the Metra cars date back to the 1970's, they got an overhaul during the 1990s to extend their service life.

He says some cars may need to be repaired, and all must be repainted inside and outside to reflect VRE's color-scheme and logo.

Metra was to deliver the first ten cars – by rail – by the end of the year. Zehner said the first ten cars will be pressed into immediate service. ([www.news8.net](http://www.news8.net) October 21, 2003)

## • OAK PARK NEWS

**A** free shuttle van system is up and running in Oak Park.

The system had a "soft launch" January 26, with one van, leased by the village from Pace Suburban Bus. A

second van will eventually be added to the system, offering free daily transportation within the village from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Village trustees in December hired MV Transportation Inc for \$85,602 to operate the two vans for a yearlong pilot program.

"We're just getting a test going with a single van," said Deputy Village Manager Peter Dame. "We'll have a full-blown push for riders in two or three weeks when we have both vans operating. First, we want to see if we need to make any adjustments.

Shuttle one is operating daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

"We're working through word of mouth at the moment," Dame said.

Stops connect the major business districts – downtown, Avenue/Lake, South Oak Park/Eisenhower and Chicago/Marion – with tourist attractions such as Pleasant Home, the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio, the Hemingway Museum and birthplace, and the Oak Park Conservatory.

Stops also are included at CTA el stations, Oak Park Library, township building and Village Hall.

Dame expects the vans will be used by both residents and tourists.

"Residents can use it to get around to do their shopping," Dame said, "and I think there is a built-in market with visitors."

Since most tourists who visit Oak Park are staying in Chicago, the shuttle will make two stops along the Green Line and one at the Blue Line. It also stops at the major tourist attractions.

Shuttle stops are marked with signs, said village spokesman David Powers. Also, Powers said, a shuttle schedule and route map will be distributed with the March FYI village newsletter and an informational video may be filmed for viewing on cable's VOP-TV6.

Dame said once any necessary adjustments are made, fliers advertising the service will be dropped off at the Visitors Center, tourist attractions and placed throughout the business districts.

## • WARRENVILLE NEWS

(Cont on page 6)

(Cont from page 5)

## WARRENVILLE NEWS

**Disabled and elderly residents** of Warrenville soon will have ACORN at their disposal.

The city's free van ride program, established in conjunction with Pace, the suburban bus agency, will shuttle local residents who are 55 and older or have disabilities. Riders can go anywhere within a 10-mile radius of town. The service starts March 1.

"It provides a larger area of service than the Winfield Township van they have been using," said Mayor Vivian Lund. "This program allows them to get to a movie ... or go shopping at Fox valley.

The Access City Operated Rides Now program was coordinated by Jennifer McMahon, assistant to the city administrator. She said she's just as excited about launching the program as some residents seem to be.

"We don't care where you go," she said. "I've had an amazing amount of calls about it and people are ready to ride this thing."

The program will go through a 90-day pilot period where the services will be monitored and the city council will determine if any changes need to be made to the distance limit, hours of operation or fees.

The program is currently free to participants and likely will stay that way, McMahon said. The van will operate between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

McMahon said potential riders are being encouraged to get RTA cards to use the service. This will help ensure potential users qualify to use the shuttle.

The council budgeted \$35,000 for the project, which includes drivers' salaries, gas, maintenance and a \$260-a-month lease agreement with Pace, McMahon said.

The idea was brought up nearly a year ago and the city has spent that time negotiating with Pace and analyzing a user study.

Lund, herself a senior citizen, said the program is needed.

"I'm very pleased it will begin service soon because it meets a real need for a number of our senior and disabled residents," she said. (Daily Herald Feb. 18, 2004)

## - CALENDAR OF EVENTS -

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

Mar. 12. 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."*

Mar. 12. Kenosha Streetcar Society dinner meeting. 5:30pm. Italian American Society (2217 52nd Street, Kenosha, Wi) \$14.00 for Chicken with spaghetti or Broiled Cod with baked potato. All dinners include salad, bread and drink. Social hour begins at 5:30pm, dinner at 6:30pm. After dinner slide show *"Chicago Surface Lines"* by George Kanary.

Mar. 19. 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 - *"Good Morning Vietnam...and Cambodia and Laos,"* a slide presentation by Ray DeGroote, Jr. on railroading in Southeast Asia.

Mar. 26. Central Electric Railfans' Association meeting. 7:30pm. 205 W. Wacker Drive Suite 200 (Securities Training Corp). Admission is free. Program - CERA will present industrial videos from the CTA video graphic department filmed during the 1970's and '80s; including films for training and informational purposes.

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](http://www.shore-line.org/calendar.html)