



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.

The Omnibus Society of America has a new website "[www.osabus.com](http://www.osabus.com)". At [osabus.com](http://osabus.com) we will be posting upcoming fan trips and meetings information, as well as membership information.

Please visit our site when you have a chance and give us your opinions and comments.

## • JULY/AUGUST OSA MEETINGS

**The July meeting** of the Omnibus Society of America was held on July 1, 2005, in the Anderson Pavilion of Swedish Covenant Hospital, 2751 W. Winona Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. The meeting started at 7:30 pm.

Our program for the evening was a slide presentation by well-known and respected rail and transit photographer phen Klabish.

The August meeting of the Omnibus Society of America will be held on August 5, 2005, in the Anderson Pavilion of Swedish Covenant Hospital, 2751 W. Winona Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. The meeting will start at 7:30 pm.

Our program will be a presentation of vintage transit-related movies and promotional films by noted transit historian and author Bruce G. Moffat.

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.

## • CTA CORNER

**The Chicago Transit Authority** has launched a new type of advertising technology in the southbound Blue Line

Dearborn Subway tunnel between the Clark/Lake and Washington stations. Through the windows of the moving trains, customers will see a moving picture ad appear on the tunnel wall. The new advertising medium is expected to generate \$100,000 annually in revenue for CTA.

In addition to this newest medium, CTA generates advertising revenue from buses, trains, stations and billboards located on CTA property. In 2004, CTA generated \$20 million in advertising revenue and \$2.1 million in billboard revenues.

The ad is actually a series of several hundred different still images that are slightly different, as in cartoon animation. As the train passes by, the human eye sees the different images making it appear as if the images are moving when in fact it is the train's motion that provides the special effect.

The technology for the tunnel art display comes from Submedia, a New York-based company that has agreements for similar installations on nine other transit systems around the world including Atlanta, New York, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Bucharest and Istanbul, Paris, Moscow and Singapore.

A tunnel advertisement for Target stores is the first to appear in the Blue Line subway. Advertisers interested in advertising on the CTA's new tunnel ads should contact Submedia directly or log on to [www.sub-media.com](http://www.sub-media.com) for more information. ([www.transitchicago.com](http://www.transitchicago.com) 06/03/05)

**On June 6, the CTA launched** a pilot program on 10 of its buses and at eight rail stations to help speed boarding for customers. An express fare payment lane was designated on the left-side of the bus entrance for Chicago Card and Chicago Card Plus customers, and the right side will be reserved for customers paying with a magnetic strip transit card or cash. The rail stations dedicate one turnstile for those paying with either Chicago Card option. The pilot is part of CTA's continued commitment to customer service and is being conducted to determine if providing two lanes for boarding bus customers and a dedicated turnstile at stations will help to speed boarding and, therefore, speed service.

The faster and easier the boarding process, the more the transit experience is improved for existing customers. Faster boarding also helps to attract new customers. CTA currently provides approximately 1.5 million rides on an average weekday and has shown strong growth in ridership for the first half of 2005.

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(Cont from page 1)

## CTA

The pilot will also provide an additional incentive for customers to switch to Chicago Card fare options.

The bus routes and rail stations getting Go Lanes for the pilot were chosen because they are a geographically balanced group of routes and stations that carry a high volume of customers. At rail stations particularly, CTA chose stations that serve a high volume of customers who transfer between bus and rail.

Ten low-floor, wide-door buses have had the electronic touchpad for Chicago Card and Chicago Card Plus relocated to the horizontal hand rail on the left of the bus entrance. The farebox for transit cards and cash remains on the right entrance by the bus operator. The selected bus routes are the #151 Sheridan, #144 Marine/Michigan Express, #145 Wilson/Michigan Express, #156 LaSalle, #126 Jackson, #6 Jackson Park Express, #29 State and #3 King Drive. Go Lane buses can be identified by bright yellow and blue decals on the outside of the bus and bus operators will make announcements as customers board.

The eight selected rail stations are Howard, Chicago, 79th and 95th/Dan Ryan on the Red Line; Jefferson Park on the Blue Line; and Clark/Lake, Washington/State, and Washington/Dearborn in the Loop. The dedicated lanes are identified by signs over the turnstile and on the floor in front of it.

To further encourage customers to switch to the more efficient electronic fare media option, the \$5 fee to purchase the Chicago Card and Chicago Card Plus has been waived through July 31. The fee waiver allows customers to make the switch to either farecard without the initial cost.

CTA will monitor Go Lane boarding times during morning and evening rush periods to measure time saved during boarding, as well as the ratio of customers using electronic fare media compared to cash or transit cards. Customer reaction and ease of use will also be evaluated as part of the pilot to determine whether use of Go Lanes should expand.

The cost of conducting the pilot is minimal for CTA because the work to move the electronic touchpads was done internally and uses existing equipment.

Both the Chicago Card – introduced in 2002 – and the Chicago Card Plus – introduced in 2004 – enable customers to simply touch the card against a target on bus fareboxes and rail station turnstiles, and go. The

Chicago Card Plus allows customers to manage their accounts online and add value to their cards automatically each time the balance falls to \$10. The Chicago Card Plus offers two fare choices – a 30-Day pass or a Pay-Per-Use card.

With the Chicago Card, value is added at fare card vending machines and there is no online account management. Registering the Chicago card protects the balance if the card is lost, stolen or damaged. By notifying the CTA, a new card will be issued with the remaining value of the missing card intact.

CTA personnel will be at select pilot locations to provide details for acquiring Chicago Cards and signing up customers. Customers also can order Chicago Card and Chicago Card Plus online, through the mail, by calling 1-88-YOUR-CTA (1-888-968-7282), Monday through Friday, 7 am to 8 pm, or at CTA's main office at 567 West Lake Street. Order forms can also be found at CTA's main office and online at [www.chicago-card.com](http://www.chicago-card.com). Chicago Cards are also available at Chicago Currency Exchanges, Jewel-Osco and Dominick's Finer Food stores. ([www.transitchicago.com](http://www.transitchicago.com) 06-05-05)

**The Chicago Transit Board** has voted to defer the paratransit fare increase scheduled for July 1 until January 1, 2006. As part of its 2005 budget the Chicago Transit Board had previously approved increasing the paratransit fare from \$1.75 to \$3.50 for the Taxi Access Program, Mobility Direct and Special Services, as well as increasing the price of a 30-day paratransit pass from \$75 to \$150.00.

The first week of June, the General Assembly approved an amendment to the RTA Act which places responsibility for the funding, financial oversight and coordination of all paratransit services with the Regional Transportation Authority effective July 1, 2005. The amendment also directs CTA to work with the RTA and Pace to develop a plan to transition paratransit service delivery to Pace. The amendment moves the responsibility for providing al paratransit service to Pace no later than July 1, 2006. ([www.transitchicago.com](http://www.transitchicago.com) 06-09-05)

**On June 9, 2005, the Chicago Transit Board** approved a \$94.3 million contract for the reconstruction of the Belmont and Fullerton stations, which are part of the Brown Line capacity expansion project. CTA received four bids from construction contractors through a competitive bidding process. Chicago-based FHP Tectonics Corporation was selected as the lowest responsive and responsible bidder.

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## CTA

The contract includes demolition of existing structures on the property, construction of new stationhouses, track renewal at each station to accommodate wider platforms and track realignment, and relocation of the historic stationhouses.

Following contract approval, the construction contractor will prepare and submit a construction plan to CTA for approval. CTA will hold community meetings with residents and businesses near the stations to provide further construction details and timelines for the work. Station construction work at Belmont and Fullerton will begin later this year.

In May 2004, CTA received construction bids for the project that substantially exceeded the budget. The project was reorganized into several discrete pieces to help attract more competitive construction bids. Station renovation work was modified and grouped into five separate packages according to location to help reduce the overall cost of station construction.

The Belmont and Fullerton package is the first of five station construction packages to complete the competitive bidding process. Chicago, Sedgwick and Armitage went out for bid on June 9. The station construction package for Kimball, Kedzie, Francisco, Rockwell and Western is currently being reviewed by IDOT, one of the project's funding agencies, and will go out for bid once the review is complete.

Signal system upgrades and electrical substation work from Kimball to Western was successfully rebid, and work began in fall 2004. The work involves installing signal equipment along the tracks, installing six new crossing gates and circuitry where the Brown Line crosses at street level at Spaulding, Kedzie, Albany, Sacramento, Francisco and Rockwell, and rehabilitating Kimball Tower, where signals control switches and direct trains.

At Clark Junction – the location where Brown, Purple and Red Line tracks merge just north of the Belmont station – work is being done to install a new signal system from Armitage to Addison, provide signals for 14 rail crossovers and rehabilitate Clark Tower located at the junction.

As the project continues to move forward, CTA remains committed to staying within the budget and meeting the completion dates required. The project's Full Funding Grant Agreement with the federal government requires that the CTA complete the project by the end of 2009. In

a separate agreement, the Federal Transit Administration requires that work to make the Fullerton station accessible be completed by the end of 2008.

The Brown Line capacity expansion project includes: the rehabilitation of 18 Brown Line stations; lengthening station platforms to accommodate eight rather than six-car trains; provide station enhancements to meet the accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); upgrade or replace traction power, signal and communication equipment; and reduce the number of slow zones on the line. ([www.transitchicago.com](http://www.transitchicago.com))

**On June 18, 2005**, Mayor Richard M. Daley, 2nd Ward Alderman Madeline Haithcock and Chicago Transit Authority officials announced that every bus on all 150 CTA bus routes is now equipped with a ramp or hydraulic lift. These features, along with low floor and kneeling buses, make it easier for senior citizens and people with disabilities to board CTA buses.

The announcement was made at the Patrick Sullivan Senior Apartments, 1633 West Madison Street. In addition to CTA President Frank Kruesi, the Mayor was joined by Karen Tamley, Commissioner for the Mayor's Office for people with Disabilities, Joyce Gallagher, Commissioner for the Chicago Department on Aging, Terry Peterson, CEO of the Chicago Housing Authority and Jack Catlin, member of the CTA's ADA Advisory Committee.

In recent years, CTA has been able to phase out its remaining non-accessible buses and upgrade its bus fleet thanks mostly to capital funding provided by the Federal Transit Administration and the state's Illinois FIRST transportation funding program. Since 2000, the CTA has purchased and received more than 700 new buses.

The CTA's efforts to make its service more accessible to customers with disabilities and easier for seniors to access include initiatives beyond lifts and ramps. CTA buses are equipped with an automated announcements system that helps visually and hearing impaired customers better navigate the system.

This system features exterior announcements and electronic signs that identify the bus route and its destination when the front doors are opened. It also includes interior announcements and signs identifying the next stop.

All CTA trains are accessible with at least one accessible car per train.

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(Cont from page 3)

## CTA

All CTA trains are equipped with a pre-recorded announcement system that informs customers of upcoming station stops.

Gap fillers for wheelchairs are located at all rail stations to facilitate the movement of mobility devices on and off trains. Most CTA rail platforms include raised tactile edging to alert customers to the location of the edge of the platform.

Following the completion of the rehabilitation of the 54th/Cermak branch of the Blue Line and the renovation of eight stations, half of the CTA's 144 rail stations are now accessible. CTA includes accessibility features into the design of new stations and those stations being substantially renovated. ([www.transitchicago.com](http://www.transitchicago.com) 06/18/05)

**Work has begun on the third** and final phase of the CTA's Dan Ryan Red Line rehabilitation project. The final phase largely focuses on station improvements along the line from Sox-35th to 87th.

Seven stations from Sox-35th to 87th will receive upgrades that include new flooring, enhanced lighting, refurbished platform canopies, new customer assistance kiosks and improved signs. Eight escalators along the branch will be replaced and new elevators will be installed at 47th and 69th, making the stations accessible to customers with disabilities. There also will be enhancements to improve bus connections, such as curb cuts, canopies over station entrances and improved lighting on the approach to each station.

At Sox-35th station, the auxiliary entrance located on 33rd Street has closed until late October 2005 for renovations. Upgrades will include brighter lighting, new benches, improved signs and refurbished platform and canopies. During construction, customers are asked to use the main entrance on 35th Street.

CTA has also started Red Line station and platform renovation work at the Garfield and 63rd Street stations, however, there will be no entrance closures or impact on service at either station.

Improving power reliability and delivery of that power are the most significant aspects of the project, which is being executed in three phases. During the first phase of the project, CTA replaced crossover track, installed a temporary signal system to support the track work and began third rail replacement from Cermak Road to 95th Street. Phase I of the project concluded May 2005.

As part of Phase II, which will run through early January 2006, the CTA is constructing two new substations and upgrading two existing substations. Installation of a permanent signal system and replacement of the power rail is underway.

Phase III improvements consist primarily of station renovations. The \$282.6 million project remains on time and on budget and is scheduled to be completed late 2006. ([www.transitchicago.com](http://www.transitchicago.com) 07/01/05)

**The Chicago Transit Authority** is leasing space in its 120 North Racine facility to the City of Chicago. The 10-year lease, approved by the Chicago Transit Board at its monthly meeting on July 13, 2005, will generate \$8.9 million over the life of the lease.

The City will lease 73,454 square feet – the first two floors and a portion of the building's basement – to house offices for the departments of Public Health, Buildings and/or Human Services.

Last October, CTA departments that had occupied the first and second floors, including transit operations, construction and engineering, were relocated to 567 West Lake Street to enhance efficiency by consolidating a majority of CTA departments under one roof. By owning the 567 West Lake Street facility, the CTA saves \$7.7 million compared to its costs to continue to lease.

The building is governed by terms set forth in its structured finance agreement, which requires any lease of its premises to be with a public agency. CTA solicited interest from local public agencies resulting in the lease agreement with the City. Lease price was determined through negotiations between the City and the CTA.

The lease must be approved by the Chicago City Council. It is expected to take effect this fall. ([www.transitchicago.com](http://www.transitchicago.com) July 13, 2005)

**Ridership on CTA's bus** and rail systems has increased in each of the first five months of 2005. Through May 2005 ridership is up 3.8 percent over 2004. CTA provided 187.2 million rides in 2005 compared to 181.1 million for the first five months of 2004.

The most recent ridership figures for May 2005 show a system-wide increase in ridership of 4.1 percent (39.1 million rides) compared to May 2004 (36.9 million rides).

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## CTA

Weekdays increased 3.3 percent and large gains in weekend ridership, particularly on the train system, continued. Compared to May 2004, Saturdays were up 7.2 percent and Sundays were up 8.2 percent in May 2005.

On an average weekday in May, CTA provided more than 1.5 million rides, with the bus system accounting for nearly one million of those rides, and the rail system providing slightly more than a half million. CTA is the second largest transit agency in the U.S. and operates seven rail lines and 150 bus routes in Chicago and 40 surrounding suburbs.

"Through the combined systems of CTA, Metra and Pace, the Chicago area has one of the most extensive public transit networks in the United States and the goal is to preserve it and continue to add service to meet the demand," said CTA President Frank Kruesi. "Without the growth of 35 million rides on CTA's system since 1977, approximately 5.6 million more hours would be spent by drivers commuting in traffic each year at a cost of \$93 million annually to the region." ([www.transitchicago.com](http://www.transitchicago.com) July 13, 2005)

## • REGIONAL MATTERS

**The Regional Transportation Authority** has picked a new chairman at exactly the time when the public transit agency needs strong leadership that aims for conciliation of competing interests.

And James Reilly takes command with qualifications that lend hope he can be the great compromiser between the city and the suburbs.

There is more than trains running between these two places. There is also mistrust.

Reilly, though, has been in the midst of political battles where, as he puts it, "disparate interests needed to be brought together." He served as a state legislator, was chief of staff for Gov. James Thompson and — in a capacity that should have provided great experience for this job — headed up the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority, overseeing Navy Pier and McCormick Place operations.

Now he comes to the RTA, correctly noting that its public transit mission "is critical to the entire region, and shouldn't become a city versus collar counties kind of thing."

Yet there has been just such a tug of war of late, with the collar counties holding on tight so their established role in transit planning is not pulled away from them. They rightfully fear that a proposed reorganization of the RTA board has been kicked around would shift clout to Chicago, giving it the ability to pass construction plans and budgets with little to no input from suburban officials. Lest this fear be dismissed as so much parochial whining, keep in mind that it is vital to fight against diminishment of suburban authority in transit planning. It could be devastating to RTA users in that jobs and traffic congestion are shifting from Chicago to suburban Cook and the collar counties. That is fact.

Moreover, officials at Metra, the commuter rail arm of RTA, and Pace, the suburban bus division, have also been wary of new money for the Chicago Transit Authority being siphoned from their budgets.

These fears have not been realized, but it is not paranoia to sustain a degree of suspicion.

Or, better yet, hope that there can be give and take leading to the dashing of any notions of a city power grab.

Enter Reilly, who comes to the job with a reputation as a consensus builder. This skill will be welcome in an RTA chairman, not only in seeking fairness in the management structure of the RTA, but also in public transit. (Daily Herald June 15, 2005)

**Suburban bus and rail** agencies have big expansion plans, but it will be a while before the full impact is felt in Lake County.

Nonetheless, some commuters by the end of the year will be able to leave the car in the garage with the scheduled completion of Metra's North Central line to Antioch.

A corresponding expansion of a shuttle bus program will target high employment clusters in Prospect Heights, Buffalo Grove, Lincolnshire and Vernon Hills. And transit officials are looking at other ways to improve public transportation for workers who travel from suburb to suburb or Chicago to the suburbs.

Meetings are also planned with businesses to discuss changing work schedules so train schedules can be modified to make reverse commuting easier.

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## REGIONAL

Phil Pagano, executive director of Metra, and T.J. Ross, head of suburban bus company Pace, outlined the possibilities on June 14, 2005, during the annual meeting of TMA of Lake-Cook, a Deerfield-based business group heavily involved in transportation issues.

Pagano said the job shift from Chicago to suburban Cook and collar counties has heightened the need to improve suburb-to-suburb and so-called reverse commutes.

"It is difficult for someone to get public transportation to go, for example, from Naperville to Hoffman Estates. We just don't have that type of transit system," he said.

Three "New Start" projects should help that to some extent. The projects will be on line by December 31, a year ahead of schedule and \$75 million to \$90 million below budget, he said. The projects will:

- Improve service to southwestern Cook and northern Will counties.
- Extend the Union Pacific west line 10 miles from Geneva to Elburn.
- Double the number of trains on the North Central line to 20, as the first new rail service in 70 years.

Future plans call for a new rail line in southern Cook County and a \$100 million signal upgrade on the Union Pacific Northwest line to Harvard and McHenry to allow more express trains to and from Chicago.

The biggest improvement in suburb-to-suburb commuting would be the STAR line connecting more than 100 communities from Joliet to Hoffman Estates to O'Hare International Airport. That's at least seven years away, and plans to extend that line north to Waukegan and Wadsworth are even more distant.

Ross said Pace's 2020 plan will improve access for seniors and the disabled and provide better suburb-to-suburb and city-to-suburb services.

That ambitious plan would require an investment of \$1.5 billion or more in equipment and \$340 million each year to operate.

The Lake County portion would be about \$200 million in capital improvements and a \$37 million annual operating cost.

"It has to be fast, and it has to be frequent," Ross said. "We're focusing on technology to speed up our services."

The most immediate impact will come from the expansion of shuttle bus service along the North Central line. About 700 companies were surveyed, resulting in 13 possible routes to serve 10 new stations on the rail line. ([www.dailyherald.com](http://www.dailyherald.com) June 15, 2005)

## • PACE PATTERN

**WTS Greater Chicago Chapter** has named Melinda J. Metzger of Pace, the suburban transit agency for Northeastern Illinois, Women of the Year. WTS (Advancing Women in Transportation) is an international organization for transportation professionals.

Metzger is Pace's deputy executive director of revenue services and oversees the operations of the 13th largest transit agency in North America. She is being recognized for her expertise in developing a transportation system that is both technologically advanced and sensitive to everyday customer needs.

Metzger's honor comes as the Illinois Legislature has approved a plan to shift to Pace all responsibility for providing transportation to the region's disabled population, including the City of Chicago. This is an area Metzger knows a thing or two about.

"My career is rooted in planning for elderly and disabled transportation," Metzger said, reflecting on the 25-years in transit that began when she was a project manager for the North Suburban Mass Transit District (NORTRAN). "At that time, we were running a small dial-a-ride system and a fixed-route operation out of what is now Pace's Northwest Division. My expertise was in elderly and disabled transportation regulations."

Over the next 25 years, Metzger's career advanced into a variety of planning, development and eventually operations areas, but she has never lost interest in providing service to seniors and people with disabilities.

This fact is reflected in the track record Pace has sustained in paratransit service since the agency was created by reform legislation in late 1983 and began operating in 1984 throughout the six-county suburbs.

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## PACE

"Pace currently spends \$23.5 million per year for the elderly and persons with disabilities on Dial-A-Ride and ADA services – these are services that did not exist and were not taken into account when Pace was formed," Metzger said. "Compared with our peers nationally, no one spends as much on paratransit services."

Metzger said Pace is poised for the job of providing paratransit service to the entire region. "We've already proven ourselves to be an efficient and effective provider of paratransit service in Northeastern Illinois and with the new plan we will bring our expertise to an even larger area."

She added that Pace is different from most other transit organizations in the way it has integrated operations for elderly and disabled service with fixed-route and vanpool services. "At Pace, our paratransit service is another important mode of service for people. This means we cross-train our employees so they garner a higher degree of understanding of all our passengers – you don't see this in most big operations."

Recently, Pace's disabled services were audited by the federal government, according to Metzger. The routine casation turned out to be a source of real pride for all involved.

"Usually these audits can be very hard on employees – in other words, there can be a lot of mistakes found – lifts not working properly, tie-downs not in place, PA systems down," she said.

:Instead, what we were told when all was said and done is that if we had been the first entity ever audited, no other transportation agency afterward would've been able to meet our standards, we were that good. This is all because we care so much about our riders."

Metzger said that among the biggest and best changes she has witnessed over the past 25 years in transit has been the increasing role technology plays in keeping buses on time – and a whole lot more.

A key to Pace's success and in its current restructuring efforts is found in its Intelligent Bus System (IBS). In November 2001, Pace began installing the technology into its system to make it more efficient, more accountable and more reliable for passengers.

"With IBS, I can look at the computer on my desk at anytime and see where virtually all of my buses are in

our entire system," Metzger said. "I know if we're running late somewhere. Service can be adjusted on a real-time basis, giving us the ability to re-assign or redeploy vehicles that may bunch together."

"With IBS, we're also able to speed up the operation of our service and increase our on-time reliability with a feature called traffic signal priority," she said.

Another IBS feature includes digital communications between bus operators and dispatchers for a comprehensive emergency notification system. "If there's a problem, the driver hits a button and we can locate them and respond accordingly."

Also with IBS comes a vehicle system monitoring that records engine data and warns of mechanical problems.

And the satellite-based vehicle location technology of IBS tracks every bus and gives actual arrival times to waiting passengers, who have access to this information at Pace's website [www.pacebus.com](http://www.pacebus.com).

Metzger said Pace is now incorporating some of this same technology into its paratransit service. "These are the folks who need to know precisely when their bus is outside heir door," she said.

Metzger, who has been with Pace since it began operations 20 years ago, fondly recalls an early influence on her career. "I was inspired by the first women bus driver and supervisor for the organization. There were so few women in transit at the time, period. She actually taught me how to drive a bus! She shared horror stories, such as people not wanting her as a driver because she was female, that still resonates with me to this day. This person was a great pioneer and broke down so many barriers for me and others," Metzger recalled.

She offered this sage advice to those in the transit industry – men and women: "Be a part of this business for two reasons, 1.) service to people and, 2.) the love of it. This is a tough career choice that demands dedication and long hours. You must love it in order to succeed." Regarding her "Women of the Year" honors from WTS, Metzger said: "I have been with the WTS for at least 10 years and I'm honored to receive this award that recognizes women in the transit industry." ([www.pacebus.com](http://www.pacebus.com) June 1, 2005)

Pace, the suburban transit agency, has scheduled a public hearing at noon on Wednesday, July 27, to discuss a proposed reduction in service on Route 767 Congress/Douglas – Prairie Stone Connection.

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## PACE

It will be held at Sears, Prairie Stone, Building A2 – 137A, 3333 Beverly Road in Hoffman Estates.

Route 767 is a week day rush hour service between the CTA 54th Avenue Blue Line Station and the Prairie Stone development in Hoffman Estates. It also serves the Forest Park Blue Line Station and the Pace Park-n-Ride lot in Hillside. The time and location for the hearings were selected to accommodate Prairie Stone employees who are the route's primary riders.

Pace has been working with Sears and the Prairie Stone Transit Management Association to address declining ridership. As a result, a plan is being presented at the hearing to reduce service on this route from two morning and evening trips to one morning and one evening trip. While most riders can use the reduced schedule, Pace vanpool options are also available to them. Input received at the public hearings will be presented to the Pace Board at their August 3rd meeting, at which they are expected to make a final decision on implementing the service reduction.

Those unable to attend the hearing can send their comments on Route 767 to Pace, Government Affairs, 550 West Algonquin Road, Arlington Heights, IL 60005 or use the form on Pace's website [www.pacebus.com](http://www.pacebus.com), under "Public Hearings."

## • METRA MATTERS

**Officials from Orland Park** and Metra joined together on June 24, 2005, to break ground for a new commuter station with parking at 143rd Street and Southwest Highway, along Metra's SouthWest Service line.

Replacing a station that dates back to 1970, the \$10 million facility will include a fully-enclosed 3,200-square-foot brick warming house with stone and cedar siding, signs, lighting and landscaping.

Amenities will include a 24-hour indoor shelter, vendor area, restrooms and covered outdoor waiting areas. To improve pedestrian flow, two 465-foot platforms and a pedestrian crosswalk will be added.

Vehicular access to the station will be more convenient as road improvements will be made along Southwest Highway. Additionally, 142nd Street will be extended west of LaGrange to reach the drop-off area at the station.

The parking project will feature 475 spaces in the Metra Triangle, which will include commercial and residential developments. Future plans call for the construction of a parking deck to accommodate 600 cars. Other amenities will include clam shell bicycle lockers and racks.

The project was funded by the Federal Transit Administration and will be coordinated with the redevelopment of the downtown area, particularly the historic Old Orland district. Commuter facilities will open by December 2005.

At the same time, service along the route will be increased to 30 trains each weekday and include rush and off-peak service. ([www.metrarail.com](http://www.metrarail.com) June 24, 2005)

**Just because plans for a Huntley train station** have been added to the village's latest comprehensive plan proposal doesn't mean residents will see a Huntley stop on the Metra line anytime soon.

A Metra service extension is still at least 10 years away, Metra spokesman Tom Miller said on June 20, 2005. And until extensions to Elburn and Orland Park are complete, the Huntley station likely won't be on the agenda for several more years.

"Is it a possibility? Yes," Miller said. "But it's still too premature."

It's never too premature to start planning, though, he said. Setting aside land for the project is a major step toward seeing it through.

Huntley's new comprehensive plan, slated for a board vote on June 23, includes 20 acres for a train station at Coyne Station Road on the west side of the village, just south of the Union Pacific railroad tracks.

A Kreutzer Road extension to Coyne Station also has been planned, among a series of other road improvements in the village.

A Coyne Station Metra stop has been under village board consideration for at least three years. Although it has been about a year since village and Metra officials seriously talked about service expansion, the idea is still a very real one to Huntley.

If the Coyne Station stop is approved – by Metra and the village – Huntley could be part of an extension route all the way to Marengo. Metra is completing a feasibility study now. ([www.dailyherald.com](http://www.dailyherald.com) June 21, 2005)



# OMNIBUS SOCIETY OF AMERICA

CHARTER TRIP TO PEORIA & BLOOMINGTON  
AUGUST 20, 2005

## PICKUP

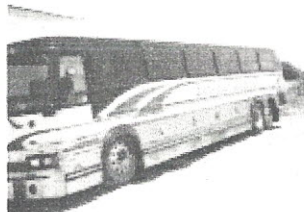
8:00 A.M. FOREST PARK BLUE LINE STATION South Bus Bay

## RETURN

8:00 P.M. FOREST PARK BLUE LINE STATION

**FARE: \$20.00 Members**  
**\$25.00 Non-members**

Come join the Omnibus Society of America on our trip to visit the transit properties of Peoria and Bloomington, Illinois



We will depart the Forest Park Blue Line station, south bus bay at 8:00 a.m., after the arrival of CTA Blue Line Train Run 103 at 0756. using a Prevost charter coach supplied by Reliable Charter. Please call (630) 738-0615 or (630) 567-1567 if the CTA is operating late so we can hold the bus for your arrival.

We will be stopping at the Home Town Buffet for lunch at 1115. Lunch will be individual settlement.



Arrival at Peoria  
Charter Coach is planned for 1240, City Link (Peoria



MTD) garage at 1305 and the Peoria Transit Center at 1400, where we plan to photograph the hourly lineup.

Departure from Peoria will be at 1430 with arrival at the Bloomington Transit Center at 1515 and the B/NPTS garage at 1605.

Departure from Bloomington is planned for 1650 with a dinner and rest stop at Dwight at 1745. Again, dinner will be individual settlement. Arrival back at Forest Park Blue Line Station should be around 1955.



The fare for this trip is \$20.00 for members and \$25.00 for non-members.



## **MILWAUKEE BUS TRIP CANCELLATION NOTICE**

The Milwaukee County Bus Fantrip scheduled for Sunday July 31 is cancelled. The reason for it is that #4700 is no longer decaled. I had seen it on Saturday July 2 on Route 21(North) at 5<sup>th</sup> and North Ave. on my way home. This trip could have been done back in spring. I had problems with the charter bus outfits to provide a MCTS bus for nearly 3 months. There will be no more Milwaukee bus trips for quite a long time.

On the positive side, there will be a Kenosha bus trip on Saturday Sept. 10. We will be using an ex-Oshkosh 30-ft Flxible Metro and a Nova Bus or an ex-MCTS Orion Bus. Details for this fantrip will be out ASAP.

MCTS Route 106 is discontinued as of July 1<sup>st</sup>.

We will have a great bus time.

Any questions or ideas, feel free to e-mail at [www.topcatbus@yahoo.com](mailto:www.topcatbus@yahoo.com)

Sorry for the inconvenience.

Best Bus Wishes

*Ed Montejano*

Ed Montejano

***See ya on the bus!***