



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.

Visit the Omnibus Society of America website at "[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.

## • OCTOBER OSA MEETING

The October meeting of the Omnibus Society of America will be held on October 6, 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 for the evening will be a slide presentation by David Stanley on the Boston MTA.

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

On September 14, 2005, the Chicago Transit Board approved two construction contracts for eight Brown Line stations to be reconstructed as part of the capacity expansion project. A \$45.5 million contract was approved for the Chicago, Armitage and Sedgwick stations, and a \$19.9 million contract was approved for the Kimball, Kedzie, Francisco, Rockwell and Western stations. Chicago-based FHP Tectonics Corporation was selected as the lowest responsive and responsible bidder for both contracts.

The contracts include demolition of existing structures on the property, construction of modern stationhouses, new canopies, fare equipment and a state-of-the-art announcement system. Following contract approval, the construction contractor will prepare and submit a construction plan to the CTA for approval. CTA will hold a community meeting for each station package to provide further construction details and timelines for the work.

During station construction, Chicago, Armitage and Sedgwick will remain open on weekdays, but may experience up to six weekend closures during the construction period when all three stations will be closed at the same time to allow construction crews unlimited access to station platforms.

During station construction, Kimball, Kedzie, Francisco and Rockwell will be subject to temporary station closures during the weekday, however, no two adjacent stations will be closed at the same time during weekdays so customers may go to the next closest station for service. In addition to the temporary weekday closures, these stations may also experience up to 10 weekend closures during the construction period when all four stations will be closed at the same time to allow construction crews unlimited access to station platforms. The Western station will not experience any temporary station closures during weekdays or weekends.

During periods of temporary closure, customers will be encouraged to use the most convenient existing CTA bus and rail service in the area. Station construction work for both groups of stations will begin later this year; however, no temporary weekday station closures will occur before February 2006.

CTA received two bids from construction contractors through a competitive bidding process for Chicago, Armitage and Sedgwick, and three bids for Kimball, Kedzie, Francisco, Rockwell and Western.

The Chicago, Sedgwick and Armitage, and Kimball, Kedzie, Francisco, Rockwell and Western packages are the second and third of the five station construction packages to complete the competitive bidding process. On June 9, the Chicago Transit Board approved a \$94.3 million contract for the reconstruction of the Belmont and Fullerton stations. CTA is currently reviewing the construction contractor's timeline for these stations and will hold a community meeting to provide details.

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## CTA

Signal system upgrades and electrical substation work from Kimball to Western began in 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 for station enhancements to meet the accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); and upgrade or replace traction power, signal and communication equipment.  
([www.transitchicago.com](http://www.transitchicago.com) 09-14-05)

**The Chicago Transit Board** approved a \$17.2 million contract on September 14, 2005, for the purchase of up to 125 new buses to be delivered in late 2006. The new 30-foot buses are shorter and narrower than the standard 40-foot buses in CTA's fleet and will be placed on routes where narrow streets or lower peak ridership call for smaller vehicles.

While awaiting the purchase and manufacture of these new buses, earlier this year CTA purchased 13 narrow, accessible buses previously owned by Pace to make the routes that operate along narrow streets in Hyde Park accessible. These buses were put into service in May, making all 150 CTA bus routes fully accessible to people with disabilities.

Equipped with low emission engines, the low floor, air conditioned, accessible buses will have the same amenities that are part of CTA's existing bus fleet,

including surveillance cameras, bike racks, next stop announcement systems and automatic passenger counters that provide route usage information to further improve schedules.

The bus purchase is part of CTA's ongoing effort to upgrade its fleet. Since 2000, the CTA has ordered 484 40-foot, low floor buses from Nova Bus; 226 low floor, articulated buses from North American Bus Industries, Inc.; and 265 40-foot, low floor buses from New Flyer of America, Inc.

The competitively bid contract with Optima Bus Corporation of Wichita, Kansas, calls for a base order of up to 50 buses. Funding has been provided through a grant from the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA). The contract provides an option for an additional 75 buses. ([www.transitchicago.com](http://www.transitchicago.com) 09-14-2005)

The Chicago Transit Authority has obtained professional construction management services to oversee construction related to the new rapid transit station under Block 37. The Chicago Transit Board approved the \$2.8 million contract at its monthly meeting on September 14, 2005, naming Parsons Brinkerhoff Construction Services, Inc., headquartered in Herndon, Virginia, as the construction manager. The group will oversee building of the new station and the connecting tunnels and track to link both the Blue Line and Red Line subways.

Block 37, also known as 108 North State Street, is currently being developed by The Mills Corporation for the City of Chicago. The Mills development includes a new subway station, and space for a common downtown airport check-in facility for train service to both O'Hare and Midway airports. CTA contractors will build short underground structures and tracks to connect the new station with the adjacent Red and Blue Line tunnels.

Parsons Brinkerhoff will monitor work progress on a daily basis and provide CTA with information regarding any performance or schedule issues which may arise.

After reviewing responses to Letters of Interest and Qualifications (LIQs), it was determined that Parsons Brinkerhoff Construction Services, Inc. was ranked the most qualified firm to provide construction management services for this project.

In addition, the company is committed to meet the 30 percent Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) goal and has subcontracted 15 percent of the contract to DuSable Inc., 0.3 percent to Dynasty Group, Inc., and 15.2 percent to EJM Engineering, Inc. all of Chicago.

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## CTA

Because it is the only vacant parcel between CTA's Dearborn and State subways, the Block 37 site makes possible a unique opportunity to create a track connection and station that would otherwise be prohibitively expensive.

The City of Chicago is the owner of the land and has chosen Mills Limited Partnership and its affiliate, Block 37 LLC, as the developer of the tract.

Funding for the construction manager contract will come from CTA capital funds generated from the issuance of capital grant receipt revenue bonds to fund capital improvement throughout the CTA.

The overall cost of the transit center is estimated at \$213.3 million, of which The Mills will pay \$40.9 million. The remaining \$172.4 million will be funded by the CTA and the City of Chicago. The CTA has allocated \$130 million in capital funds generated from the issuance of revenue bonds to fund capital improvement projects throughout the CTA. The City of Chicago will provide \$42.4 million in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) revenue for the remaining expenses under an intergovernmental agreement specifically covering infrastructure expenses related to the track and tunnel connections. ([www.transitchicago.com](http://www.transitchicago.com) 09-14-2005)

## • PACE PATTERN

On Friday, August 19, 2005, Congressman Danny K. Davis held a press conference to announce several projects of importance to his district contained in the recently passed SAFETEA-LU bill. Pace Executive Director T.J. Ross and several suburban mayors were on hand, among several suburban mayors from the 7th Congressional District, to thank Congressman Davis for his assistance in securing federal funding.

Congressman Davis's efforts resulted in the inclusion of two earmarks for Pace: \$836,000 to purchase vehicles and an authorization for a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project along Cermak and Butterfield Roads, stretching from the west side of Chicago to Wheaton. The BRT project, which requires money be appropriated in the forthcoming annual appropriations bills, will allow faster travel in modern vehicles to job-rich areas on North Riverside Mall, Oakbrook Center, Yorktown Mall and Danada Square. For its ability to get people to work, Congressman Davis commented, "Pace has been a godsend to our suburban communities.

The Cermak Road BRT project also received funding – in a separate earmark secured by Senator Barack Obama – in the amount of \$1.25 million. This funding will be used to install transit signal priority (TSP) along the corridor. TSP will lower travel times for passengers and operating costs for Pace, and can be implemented before the full-scale Bus Rapid Transit project is planned and constructed.

Pace Suburban Bus enjoys a reputation throughout the transit industry as an innovator in creating ways for public transit to serve the suburban market. One of the many programs, Ride DuPage, was originally the brain child of the Inter-Agency Paratransit Coordinating Council (IAPCC), a community-based committee comprised of various DuPage municipalities, townships, human service agencies and job placement agencies. Ride DuPage celebrated its first anniversary of operation on July 1. Partnering with the County of DuPage and Pace, the IAPCC worked together to see how to better serve the senior and disabled community with paratransit service that crosses township boundaries.

Ride DuPage enables riders to arrange rides by calling one number 1-800-713-7445, that allows them to schedule transportation throughout DuPage and surrounding counties in a seamless fashion. The service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Reservations can be made up to 7 days in advance and a person can even receive same-day service. Some of the key sponsors of the program include DuPage County's Department of Health, Parents Alliance, Ray Graham Association, the Village of Glen Ellyn, Lisle and Naperville Townships, the Naperville Park District, the City of Naperville and Pace.

Since the establishment of Ride DuPage, there have been a total of 94,720 trips provided in that service area. Sally Ann Williams, Ride DuPage Administrator, said that "The program has exceeded ridership goals and utilization of services. The challenge is to sustain the project through identifying funding and service providers. We want to find ways to best assist the constituency of Ride DuPage," Williams said.

Coordination among the various local programs is the key to Ride DuPage. When an individual calls and schedules a ride through any of the Ride DuPage participants, the call goes to a call center where the trip is scheduled and subsequently dispatched. Either a Pace bus or taxi cab (from one of two partnering taxi companies) is sent to pick up the client. Pace currently operates 30 paratransit buses for the service and has contracted with 303 Taxi Cab Company and Alliance Cab Company to handle additional trips. (Cont on page 4)



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## PACE

Thus far, 32 percent of trips are provided with bus service and 68 per cent are provided through taxi service. (Pace's Moving into the Future Weekly Newsletter)

**On Wednesday, August 17, 2005,** President George W. Bush visited Montgomery, IL. – one of the 210 municipalities served by Pace Suburban Bus – to sign the major, six-year federal surface transportation authorization bill. Not only did residents of the six-county area get to host the President of the United States to the region, but they will also see a significant improvement in bus service as a result of several of the programs included in the legislation.

U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert welcomed President Bush to his congressional district at the bill signing ceremony. He was flanked by many key members of Congress who authorized the legislation, as well as members of both parties from the Illinois Congressional delegation.

The long-awaited bill is a boon to Pace and public transportation in northeastern Illinois. In all, Pace was awarded seven earmarked projects, two of which were authorized and five of which had dollar amounts obligated, totaling over \$4 million.

The main focus of Pace's request – Bus Rapid Transit and Transit Signal Priority – was an improvement in the speed of buses, which has many benefits. Of course, bus passengers can travel more quickly to their destinations, making public transportation a more attractive alternative to the automobile. But in addition, the reduction in travel time helps Pace lower its operating costs, which is extremely important given the current state of public transit funding in the region.

**On Monday night, September 16, 2005,** 15 Pace vehicles arrived in Jefferson Parish, just outside of New Orleans. Like so many others, Pace employees, Board members and their neighbors around 10 operating divisions wanted to do something to aid the people of a region devastated by Hurricane Katrina. Pace Chairman John Case said he felt "the best thing to do is what we know how to do – provide transportation."

Efforts to get transportation to those in need were coordinated with MV Transportation, one of Pace's contract carriers. The convoy that started at Pace's West Division facility in Melrose Park, with a stop at Pace's South Holland acceptance facility, consisted of four standard transit buses which carry about 40 passengers,

10 paratransit vehicles that accommodate 15 people, wheelchairs, and motorized personal transport vehicles and one supervisory van with a lift.

Since many local transit vehicles were lost, Pace buse have been put into service. The larger vehicles are being used on a fixed route between West Jefferson Medical Center and a Navy hospital ship, the "Comfort", located close to New Orleans. The smaller paratransit vehicles are providing non-emergency trips of an essential nature to get food or reach doctors.



Before the Pace vehicles left the area they were loaded with well-received goods for distribution. The effort was organized in a short period of time, and word spread quickly through the agency and to the public. Pace employees – bus operators, mechanics, and office staff – collected money that was used to purchase bottled water, sleeping bags, batteries, flashlights, diapers and canned goods. Local businesses wouldn't accept money for items like jumper cables, and people in their cars pulled over to offer donations.



Pace Executive Director T.J. Ross said the agency is here to help with whatever is needed, whenever it's needed.

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## PACE

He added that help could take many forms, perhaps local shuttles, bus passes for evacuees who relocate to the area or expanded vanpools. ([www.pacebus.com](http://www.pacebus.com) September 7, 2005)

**A public hearing will be held on Monday, September 26, 2005, to address the proposed discontinuance of Pace Route 641 Lake Cook Midday Shuttle. The hearing will start at 11:30 a.m. in Learning Room #1 at Baxter Health Care, One Baxter Parkway in Deerfield. Pace staff will be on hand until 1:00 p.m. for area employees who would like to stop by and comment on the proposal.**

Route 641, a midday shuttle operating along Lake Cook Road between the Braeside Metra Station in Highland Park and Discover near Deerfield Parkway in Riverwoods was started in October 2004 as a demonstration project. The route was introduced as an experiment to test whether employees might use shuttle service at times other than standard rush hours. Despite the joint efforts of the Lake Cook TMA (Transit Management Association), Discover, and Pace Suburban Bus, ridership remains low with an average of about 7 passengers a day.

The route is operated by Pace and funded through a grant and a financial contribution from Discover. Since the shuttle's performance has not improved over time and there is a lack of funding sources to continue its operation, the purpose of the hearing is to discuss the possible discontinuance of the route. ([www.pacebus.com](http://www.pacebus.com) September 14, 2005)

With 3.3 million passengers, August 2005 had the fourth highest August ridership in Pace's 22 year history. In a preliminary report presented by Pace Executive Director T.J. Ross to the Pace Board on September 14, Ross said ridership is up 12.7 percent over last year. Website use indicates that there's real interest in public transportation. More than 61,000 people – the highest amount since the site started – checked out Pace's website in August 2005 compared to 44,000 in August 2004.

Also during the meeting Pace Board members approved extensive service changes in the Aurora area. They are the result of a year long effort, the Fox Valley/Southwest DuPage Initiative, to change the design of services to allow for some expansion. More than a dozen bus routes are going to be renamed and restructured on October 24, 2005. Two new routes also begin operating on that date – Route 529 Randall Road–5th Street and Route 535 Fox Valley Shuttle. Kane County Pace Board member

Jeffery Schielke credited good communication and extensive outreach for positive acceptance of the changes.

The RTA's (Regional Transportation Authority) funding marks for 2006 were distributed to the Pace Board. Since these marks had not yet been formally approved, the Pace Board did not discuss the implications on their proposed 2006 budget. They are likely to meet again to finalize the budget document that will be presented to the public at hearings scheduled for October 25-27.

RTA Deputy Executive Director of Planning, John DeLaurentis was on hand at the Pace meeting to present an update of market analysis work done by his agency in the Cook-DuPage Corridor. During the Strategic Services Committee meeting, Pace Board members received their first briefing on Pace's next restructuring effort, the South Cook – Will Region Initiative. This initiative will be an extensive analysis of existing services and transportation needs in an area of South and Southwest Cook County and Will County that includes 80 communities and some of Pace's top performing routes.

## • METRA MATTERS

**On Saturday, September 17, 2005,** a Metra commuter train on the Rock Island Division derailed killing two riders and injuring 80, some critically.



The accident occurred just east of the Dan Ryan Expressway at 47th and Federal, the scene of another derailment two years ago.

Train No. 504 was scheduled to leave Joliet at 7:24 a.m. and arrive at the LaSalle Street Station at 8:45 a.m. ([www.suntimes.com](http://www.suntimes.com) September 18, 2005)

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## • SOUTH SHORE NEWS

**Aiming to speed up travel times**, the managers of northern Indiana's commuter rail line are reviewing plans to allow for faster boarding of trains so that passengers can be whisked to their destinations with fewer delays.

The plans for the South Shore rail system are evolving at a time of rising ridership on the trains that run from South Bend across LaPorte, Porter and Lake Counties in Indiana into Chicago.

With gas prices at record highs, a growing number of motorists are riding the trains.

However, passengers board too slowly at some station stops because boarding platforms do not allow all entrance doors to be opened. Altering other stations to permit all of the doors to be cut three-minute boarding times to 30 or 45 seconds, officials said.

Slow boarding can lengthen a train's travel time to Chicago, creating far longer delays.

Near Chicago's Kensington station, South Shore trains must converge on tracks that are shared by Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District, Metra and Canadian National.

If they arrive late, they miss their allotted time for passage through the area and are held until other Metra or Canadian National trains pass.

Nearly all the proposals for altering or upgrading the line pertain to speeding up travel times of the electrically powered trains. But some would add additional rail lines or rail cars.

The various plans would require several millions of dollars in funding, only some of which has been secured.

Aside from changing some boarding stations to speed up the boarding process, planners are also looking at expanding station parking lots that have become so cramped some commuters have to leave their vehicles on the roadside as they rush to catch their trains.

Another plan would create a bypass of a residential area of Michigan City where trains are restricted to speeds of 25 mph, moving trains into a less populated region where they could double their speeds.

August marked the second most traveled month in South Shore history with passengers taking 354,575 trips, but the trend in increased ridership did not just begin last month.

So far this year, riders have made 2.5 million passenger trips, topping last year's 2.3 million within the same time period.

Rail officials are also looking to replace older cars, many of which have been in service since 1982. The South Shore currently operates 41 cars of 1982 vintage, 17 cars bought in 1992 and another 10 obtained in 2000.  
(www.Indystar.com September 6, 2005)

## Calendar of Events

**Oct 8 (Saturday) Kenosha Streetcar Society meeting. 7:00-9:45 pm.**

Location: Immanuel Methodist Church (54th/Shedidan - 1-1/2 blocks east of the Kenosha Metra/UP Train Station, Kenosha, WI)

Admission: \$5.00 for nonmembers

Program: "Seattle Trolleybuses of the 509's and 60's" a slide presentation by Jack Doyle.

**Oct 12 (Wednesday) Twentieth Century Railroad Club meeting. 7:00-9:00 pm.**

Location: Electricians Union Hall (600 W. Washington Blvd)

Admission: Free

Program: To be announced

**Oct 14 (Friday) Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, Chicago Chapter meeting 7:00-10:00 pm.**

Location: The Chicago Temple (77 W. Washington - 3rd Floor.

Admission: Free

Program: To be announced

**Oct 21 (Friday) The Railroad Club of Chicago meeting 7:30-10:00 pm.**

Location: The Chicago Temple - 3rd Floor

Admission: \$3.00 donation requested from nonmembers

Program: "Everything Milwaukee" a slide presentation on America's Resourceful Railroad - the Chicago Milwaukee St Paul and Pacific by Dr. James Arvites.

**Oct 28 (Friday) Central Electric Railfans' Association meeting. 7:30-10:00 pm.**

Location: 203 W. Wacker Dr. - 2nd Floor Auditorium

Admission: Free

Program: "What's My (Streetcar) Line?" a slide presentation by established transit photographer Walter D. Collins on his favorite streetcar routes from end-to-end.