



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OMNIBUS SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.

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". At 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.

• FEBRUARY OSA MEETING

The February meeting of the Omnibus Society of America was held on February 3, 2006, 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 "*Vintage Transit*" will be a slide presentation presented by Mike Charnota

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

Skokie is on track to get its first new Chicago Transit Authority train stop in 40 years, thanks to \$9.2 million in federal funding announced in December.

The Yellow Line station, which officials hope will be completed in 2008, is to be built downtown, just north of Oakton Street, west of Skokie Boulevard, next to the massive new Illinois Science & Technology Park.

"This ensures the station is going to get built," Mayor George Van Dusen said. "Getting \$9.2 million was a great

shot in the arm. In these kinds of things, you never know because there are a lot of competing projects and interests."

The funding will come from the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program, which is administered by states.

Planning for the station on the line known as the Skokie Swift should begin next summer, Van Dusen said. It is expected to cost about \$15 million, he said, and the village has also won \$1 million from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The remaining \$5 million will come from the state and, if necessary, the village, which could tap funds from a tax-increment financing district set up for the science center, Van Dusen said.

State Sen. Jeff Schoenberg (D-Evanston), who lobbied state transportation officials for the money from Washington, said biotech giants Searle and Pfizer had to run shuttle buses to Dempster Street in Skokie or Howard Street in Chicago to get employees to work when they were located on the property.

The 23-acre research complex is under development and is expected to create as many as 3,200 jobs, officials say.

The CTA's Yellow Line opened in 1964 along 5 miles of former commuter rail track. It runs non-stop from Dempster Street to Howard Street, where it links with the CTA's Red Line, and carries about 2,800 riders a day.

It does not run on weekends or holidays.

Skokie officials included the idea of a new station five years ago in a funding proposal to the Regional Transportation Authority that also included the possibility of extending the line north to Westfield Old Orchard mall, Van Dusen said. That idea has been around for decades but hasn't gotten past the planning stages.

The CTA has participated in feasibility studies and is on board with the project, spokeswoman Robyn Ziegler said.

"A new station at Oakton is good for the entire region," Ziegler said. "It will increase ridership and it makes better use of existing service capacity."

The station plan meshes with the redevelopment of Skokie's old business district around Oakton Street and Lincoln Avenue, which has been eclipsed by the Village Crossing commercial center to the south and Old Orchard to the north.

(Cont on page 2)

(Cont from page 1)

CTA

A special taxing district set up in 1990 has helped spark a renaissance in the area, once filled with empty storefronts and older houses.

New businesses have moved in, and hundreds of town houses and condominiums have been built.

Those new residents are the other half of the equation, along with the research park, in the need of a new stop, Village officials said.

It's too early to say what the station might look like, but Van Dusen said he hoped it would make a splash architecturally. Cleveland developer Forest City Enterprises, which is investing more than \$300 million in the research center, will likely have a say in the design. (www.chicagotribune.com December 13, 2005)

Neighbors of the CTA Brown Line's Rockwell street stop will get temporary relief from crossing gate bells that have disrupted their sleep in December.

Chicago Transit Authority President Frank Kruesi ordered the bells silenced while his staff determines whether federal or state regulations require them to sound at night.

The gates, which also were installed at Brown Line street crossings at Francisco, Albany, Kedzie, Spaulding and Sacramento Avenues, replaced gates that were 50 years old, said CTA spokeswoman Noelle Gaffney.

The previous gates were silenced with a timer from 9:45 p.m. until 7:15 a.m. except Sundays when they restarted at 9:15 a.m., she added.

But new regulations have taken effect since the previous crossing gates were installed, so the CTA staff decided to err on the side of caution and have the bells sound almost all night, Gaffney said. At Rockwell, the bells were ringing each time a train approached except from 2:35 a.m. to around 4 a.m., according to neighbors.

After learning of the issue on Monday, December 19, Kruesi ordered the silencing of the bells at night pending further research, Gaffney said. Gaffney did not know how long it would take before the bells are turned off. (www.chicagotribune.com December 20, 2005)

Starting Sunday, January 1, 2006, motorists can pay \$43 a month to get a reserved space near rail station entrances at one of three Park & Ride lots near O'Hare and Midway Airports, Chicago Transit Authority officials announced Thursday, December 29.

The CTA will make monthly parking permits available for 15 percent of the spots at the Cumberland Park & Ride at 5800 N. Cumberland on the Blue Line near O'Hare; and at the Park & Ride lots at 4612 W. 59th Street and 5106 S. Pulaski Road on the Orange Line near Midway.

The permit reserves a space until 10 a.m. If someone doesn't use the spot by then, the reservation will be forfeited for the day and the space will be available to anyone who enters the lot.

Customers will still have to pay the daily parking rate at the lots, which is \$2 for 24 hours at the Midway lots and \$2 for 12 hours at the Cumberland lot. There also is a one time \$4.95 registration fee.

People may purchase the permits at the parking facilities or online at www.transitchicago.com. Permits will automatically renew each month unless a customer opts out of the program, officials said. (www.chicagotribune.com December 30, 2005)

As announced on December 20, the Chicago Transit Authority has confirmed the dates for temporary station closures and provided a three-month construction schedule for the capacity expansion project currently underway on the Brown Line. The schedule includes dates for temporary station closures for Chicago, Armitage and Sedgwick stations, as well as Kimball, Kedzie, Francisco and Rockwell. The location and dates are subject to change based on weather conditions or other circumstances beyond the control of CTA.

Kimball, Kedzie, Francisco and Rockwell stations will be subject to temporary station closures during the weekday throughout portions of the construction project. These stations are within a half-mile or less of each other and no two adjacent stations will be closed at the same time during weekdays so customers may go to the next station for service, or use nearby bus routes.

The Kedzie and Rockwell stations will temporarily close starting February 20 for up to six months. Alternate rail service includes Kimball station, adjacent to Kedzie, and Francisco, located between Kedzie and Rockwell stations, which will remain open to serve Brown Line customers throughout the temporary closure of Kedzie and Rockwell. Customers in close proximity to the Kedzie station are also served by the following CTA bus routes: #78 Montrose, #81 Lawrence, #82 Kimball/Homan and #83 California/Dodge. Customers in close proximity to the Rockwell station are served by the (Cont on page 3)

(Cont from page 2)

CTA

following CTA bus routes: #11 Lincoln, #49 Western, #9B North Western, #X49 Western Express, #78 Montrose and #81 Lawrence.

Signs informing customers of estimated dates for temporary station closures, existing alternate service and construction details will be posted at each of these stations and on CTA's web site. CTA estimates construction on Kedzie and Rockwell stations will take from 10 to 11 months.

In addition to the temporary weekday closures, Kimball, Kedzie, Francisco and Rockwell will close for up to 10 weekends during construction to allow construction crews unlimited access to station platforms. The first two weekends are scheduled for Saturday, February 25 through Sunday, February 26, and Saturday, March 11, through Sunday, March 12. For the duration of these two weekend closures, Brown Line trains will operate between Western Avenue station and the Loop. The Western Avenue station will remain open throughout the course of the construction project.

The Chicago, Armitage and Sedgwick stations will remain open on weekdays, but are expected to temporarily close for up to six weekends throughout the course of the project. The Chicago, Armitage and Sedgwick stations are scheduled to close for a weekend in early spring to allow construction crews unlimited access to station platforms. Dates will be announced when finalized. CTA estimates construction on the Chicago, Armitage and Sedgwick stations will take from 15 to 17 months.

For the duration of the weekend closures, Brown Line trains will operate between Fullerton and Kimball stations. Brown Line trains will not operate south of Fullerton into the Loop on the selected weekends, but will resume normal weekday service. CTA recommends customers use nearby Red Line service to travel to and from the Loop that weekend, or the most convenient existing CTA bus and rail service in the area.

Customers in close proximity to the Brown Line's Chicago Avenue station may use the Red Line's Chicago Avenue station located at Chicago and State. CTA bus routes in the area of the Brown Line's Chicago Avenue station are the #22 Clark, #29 State, #36 Broadway, #65 Grand and the #66 Chicago.

Customers in close proximity to the Sedgwick station may use nearby Red Line service at either the North/Clybourn station or Clark/Division station. CTA bus routes near the Sedgwick station include the #8 Halsted,

#22 Clark, #36 Broadway, #70 Division, #72 North Avenue and the #73 Armitage.

Customers in close proximity to the Armitage station may use nearby Red Line service at the Fullerton station or the North/Clybourn station. CTA bus routes near the Armitage station include the #8 Halsted, #72 North Avenue, #73 Armitage and the #74 Fullerton. Signs informing customers of estimated dates for temporary station closures, existing alternate service and construction details will be posted at each of these stations and on CTA's web site.

At the September meeting, Chicago Transit Board members approved a \$45.5 million contract for construction to expand capacity and make the Chicago, Armitage and Sedgwick stations accessible, and a \$19.9 million contract for construction to expand capacity of the Kimball, Kedzie, Francisco, Rockwell and Western stations, and to make the Kedzie, Francisco and Rockwell stations accessible. 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.

The purpose of the Brown Line project is to increase capacity and therefore improve service. Currently, during rush hours customers often cannot squeeze into a crowded train and must wait, sometimes for several trains. Platforms will be lengthened to accommodate eight-car trains instead of the six-car trains currently in use which will allow more customers to board.

In addition to increasing capacity, Brown Line stations will be made accessible to people with disabilities as part of CTA's ongoing commitment to making its system accessible to all customers. Other improvements such as wider stairways, additional entrances and exits, and more turnstiles will ease congestion during busy hours, and upgrades to traction power equipment and the signal system are also included in the project.
(www.transitchicago.com January 6, 2006)

The Chicago Transit Board on January 11 approved a \$56.7 million construction contract to rehabilitate the Chicago Transit Authority's Red Line Howard station, which will bring major overall improvements to the facility and boost ongoing neighborhood revitalization efforts in the Howard Street area. The Howard station is a major transportation center serving transit customers on the CTA's Red, Purple and Yellow Lines, seven CTA bus routes and two Pace bus routes (Cont on page 4).

(Cont from page 3)

CTA

As a result of a competitive bidding process, CTA has selected Chicago-based James McHugh Construction Company to rehabilitate the existing station. The work will create a state-of-the-art ADA accessible station and include renovating the existing station house and platform areas, and upgrading communications, electrical and lighting systems. The station will also feature customer-friendly amenities such as new benches, signs, and bike racks and new wind breaks and canopies to protect customers during inclement weather.

The construction contract also includes the rehabilitation of the existing Howard Street viaduct and the retail space on the north side of Howard Street, and the creation of a new entrance at the south end of the station. The new south entrance will provide a convenient, accessible path between the station platforms and the multi-story parking garage and bus terminal on the west side of the station that were completed in 2001 and 2002 respectively. Additionally, new facilities will be constructed on the second floor of the station house for the Red Line Rail Operations and CTA Maintenance Departments.

The station will be equipped with security cameras and linked to the CTA security camera network when complete. In addition, artwork will be installed to enhance the look of the newly rehabbed facility.

The project is scheduled to begin in spring 2006 with expected completion in 2009. The Regional Transportation Authority and proceeds from CTA Bonds are providing the funding. (www.transitchicago.com January 11, 2006)

January 11 also saw the Chicago Transit Board approve new express service to University of Chicago Hospitals (UCH) in Hyde Park. The new #192 University of Chicago Hospitals Express (accessible), expected to begin in February, will operate in the off-peak direction during the morning and evening rush periods between the Ogilvie Transportation Center and Union Station and the University of Chicago Hospitals.

Under a five-year agreement, the hospital will subsidize operating costs estimated at \$221,200 for the first year of operation. Customers will pay the regular CTA fare. The new collaboration with U of C Hospitals is an outgrowth of the CTA's successful partnership with the University of Chicago. The CTA currently provides four subsidized bus routes for university students, employees and residents and includes the #173 University of Chicago/Lakeview Express, which operates between University

of Chicago's Hyde Park, downtown and North Side campuses every evening during the school year.

The recommended service complies with the Service Standards adopted by the Board in 2001.

UCH issued a Request for Proposal for service carriers interested in providing bus service from Ogilvie and Union Station to the hospital. Service is currently provided by a private carrier. UCH accepted CTA's proposal in a competitively bid process. CTA will cover larger time periods with runs leaving downtown from 6:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. and runs leaving the Hospital campus from 3:45 p.m. until 7:30 p.m.

In addition to the current service agreement with the University of Chicago, CTA has service agreements in place with UPS, Harborquest for Avon, and the Chinatown Chamber of Commerce and the Latino Information Center. (www.transitchicago.com January 11, 2006)

• PACE PATTERN

Dundee Township senior citizens worried about the fate of the Pace Dial-a-Ride service can rest assured the bus will keep on running. But it will cost them more to ride.

The Dundee Township Park District plans to hike roundtrip fares from \$1.60 to \$2.50 for rides within the township, and from \$1.85 to \$3.50 if customers need to leave the township. One-way fares also will increase.

The fee hike is part of the park district's recipe for saving Dial-a-Ride, a door-to-door bus service for elderly and disabled residents that was putting a major hole in its budget.

The other ingredient is the cooperation of the towns that use the service, which have agreed to share the cost of the program.

A meeting on Thursday, January 12 that spelled out exactly how much each village would be expected to pay "went very well" said Tom Mammoser, executive director of the Dundee Township Park District.

Carpentersville, which accounts for 51 percent of riders, is being asked to pay \$16,400 annually; West Dundee, with 34 percent of riders, is looking at \$9,000; East Dundee, with 7 percent of the riders, is being asked for \$5,400; Sleepy Hollow, which provides 3 percent of the riders, \$5,000.00; and Dundee Township, whose responsibility it is to provide transportation, is being asked for \$4,000.

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PACE

The park district, which has shouldered the entire cost of the program since it took on responsibility in 1985, has agreed to pay the remainder, which is about \$30,000.

Algonquin, which accounts for about 5 percent of riders, was not asked to contribute because the village runs its own program, and the services sometimes overlap.

The respective village boards are now expected to confirm their financial commitments, which would go into effect May 1 for a period of three years.

The park district announced last year that it wanted to shed the burden of Dial-a-Ride, which costs about \$90,000 annually to operate, creating a \$60,000 deficit each year.

The final compromise is not what the park district had set out for – to get out of the transportation business – but is acceptable. (www.dailyherald.com January 13, 2006)

Pace will enact a host of schedule changes for routes affected by Metra schedule shifts going into effect on January 23 to feed into Metra stations on the Union Pacific West Line through DuPage County in response to the line's expansion from Geneva to Elburn.

Starting January 23, schedules for Pace routes 645, 654, 657, 653, 674, 706, 707, 711, 712, 713 and 921 will change. In addition, starting January 30, minor schedule adjustments will occur on Route 602, which serves a Metra Milwaukee West line station. Also, starting January 23, routes 690 and 694 will have schedule adjustments related to Metra's Union Pacific Northwest line. (www.dailyherald.com January 17, 2006)

Vanpooling is catching on, Pace, the suburban transit provider, is reporting the largest net gain in the number of vanpools since its VIP (Vanpool Incentive Program) began in 1991, with 150 new vanpool groups formed in 2005.

"We ended the year with 600 vans in service," T.J. Ross, Pace Executive Director. "It was only last April when we inaugurated our 500th vanpool – then a major milestone for the program. And we've added another one already this year. Clearly, this growth is validation that vanpooling is a viable and necessary alternative to driving a car for thousands of people who commute to work in the Chicago region."

Ross said Pace's program is the second largest in the nation and is fast approaching the Seattle metropolitan

area's program, the country's largest, which has 700 vans on the road.

"The growing interest in vanpools can be attributed to a number of factors, most related in some way to the economy," Ross said. "Vanpooling provides tremendous benefits to riders. In fact, riders in our traditional vanpool program get themselves between home and the office for less than half the cost of operating a car every workday – a significant fact when you consider the price of gas today. Primary drivers save even more since they ride free and get 300 personal miles of van use a month."

Pace's vanpool program has evolved from a traditional one where a group of five to 15 people commutes to work in a van that is owned and maintained by Pace, but driven by a vanpool participant. Other components of Pace's vanpool program include employer shuttle service, which is a way for employers to transport employees between the office and transit centers, Metra and CTA stations or other work sites. There are also Metra feeder vanpools which provide the last mile of service between Metra stations and places of employment, and another type of vanpool is used by organizations to provide work-related transportation to persons with disabilities.

Recently, Pace introduced Vanpool Finder, where, at its website at www.pacebus.com, potential riders can search for existing vanpools by entering, on a secure site, their home and work address, intersection or city. The feature also helps job hunters who want to know if there is any transportation available to potential workplaces since you can scan a list of all current vanpools. Anyone who doesn't find their vanpool match should consider starting their own vanpool. They can do so by checking out the information on Pace's website, or by calling (847) 228-2492. Pace also has a line for Spanish language inquiries, (847) 228-3575. (www.pacebus.com January 17, 2006)

A new service proposal will be considered by the Pace Board of Directors to address the needs of Route 835 riders.

As regular riders know, on January 30, 2006 Metra is expanding service on their SouthWest Line. While it is difficult for Pace to financially maintain our route while similar train service is available, we want you to know that we heard you and want to do what we can to help.

As some of you suggested, we plan on reducing the amount of service to four morning and four evening trips. The route would operate rush hours only between Monroe and Wabash in Chicago and the three areas that have the highest number of riders – Worth, Chicago Ridge and Oak Lawn.

(Cont on page 6)

(Cont from page 5)

PACE

Since Metra is no longer partnering with Pace, their monthly passes would not be accepted as fares. A fare of \$3.00 per trip would be charged, the usual amount for our premium routes.

Pace hopes to take the Route 835 changes to their Board on February 1st. Before they do, they want to what their riders think. If you have any questions or comments about Route 835 contract Pace by calling 847-364-PACE (7223); you can also give your comments on their website, www.pacebus.com or write PACE at 550 W. Algonquin Road, Arlington Heights 60005.

The Pace Board will make the final decision; if they approve of these changes they could go into effect on March 1. Pace will continue to operate Route 835 on its current route and schedule and with current fare until that time.

Currently, riders can flash their Metra Monthly Pass on Route 835 or pay cash fare according to the Metra zone fares. With this revised schedule there will be a \$3.00 fare per trip; riders may pay cash fare or use the Pace 10-Ride *Plus* Premium Fare Ticket which allows 11 rides for the price of 10. Riders will no longer be able to use their Metra ticket as a fare.

The \$3.00 fare is less than the Metra fares. Metra's fares for Worth, Chicago Ridge and Oak Lawn to Union Station are \$3.50; \$3.00 is the Pace premium fare charged on similar routes.

• METRA MATTERS

Metra officials are in talks with federal and state regulators over the safety of an Elmwood Park rail crossing, the site of a Thanksgiving-eve wreck that involved more than a dozen cars and injured 16 people.

The discussions, which are expected to continue on several occasions next year, may include a look at other potentially dangerous crossing, a Metra spokesman said.

Federal investigators said shortly after the crash that a sure way to prevent future accidents at the diagonal crossing would be to tunnel the busy Elmwood Park street under the tracks or to build a bridge for the trains, which include freight and Metra's runs to and from Antioch.

Such a project could cost upward of \$60 million, Metra officials estimate. At Metra's monthly board meeting on

Friday, December 16, directors learned the talks will center on tunneling or bridging the rail crossing.

Meanwhile, the board also voted to approve spending more than \$13 million on safety improvements over the next two years in light of the September train derailment on Chicago's South Side that killed two. About \$5 million will go toward a new warning system for conductors (engineers) that will notify them if approaching signals.

In both September's derailment and another at the same spot in 2003, the trains were traveling more than 50 mph over the posted speed limit as they switched tracks.

Federal investigators have said Metra's signal and track-switching equipment was working properly at the time. A report released last month said the conductor (engineer) in the 2003 derailment was distracted and unaware of an approaching signal to slow down. The investigation into September's accident is ongoing.

Metra will spend about \$4.63 million adding four more emergency release windows to every railcar, a project suggested by rescuers following this year's derailment.

Another \$4.1 million will be spent on improved simulators for conductor (engineer) training, a recommendation by the National Transportation Safety Board following the 2003 crash. (www.dailyherald.com December 17, 2005)

Commuters who live in Lake, Kane and Will Counties will see expanded service on three Metra lines that serve those areas in Late January, the commuter railroad announced on Thursday, December 22.

On January 23, Metra trains on the Union Pacific/West line will start running to new stations in Elburn and LaFox in Kane County. A dedication ceremony for that 8-mile extension of service will be held the same day in Elburn Village Hall.

The following week, expanded commuter service on the North Central Service line will begin. On January 30, four new stations will open and 22 daily trains will operate on the line, which runs between Chicago and Antioch. Currently there are a total of 10 weekday trains on the line.

The new North Central stations are in Grayslake, Schiller Park, Franklin Park and Rosemont. A fifth station at Grand/Cicero in Chicago will open later next year.

(Cont on page 7)

(Cont from page 6)

METRA

Metra will hold a dedication ceremony for the expanded North Central Service line on January 26 in the Wheeling Community Center.

Also, on January 30, service on the Southwest Service line will be extended to Manhattan in Will County.

The number of commuter trains running on that line will nearly double, with 30 operating between Chicago and Manhattan, starting that day. Currently, there are 16 weekday trains on the line.

A dedication ceremony for that extension will be held January 27 at the Manhattan Fire Department headquarters. (www.chicagotribune.com December 23, 2005)

Ottawa Mayor Robert Eschbach is asking area officials to write letters of support for extended train services from the Illinois Valley to Chicago. Illinois Valley communities formed a Illinois Commuter Rail Steering Committee, which began a study in 2002 to determine the feasibility of reinstating commuter rail service from Joliet through Grundy and into LaSalle County.

The plan would create a CSX line, formally Rock Island Railroad, to run from the Union Station in Chicago to Peru, making stops in Channahon, Minooka, Morris, Seneca, Marseilles, Ottawa and Utica.

Eschbach is asking other communities in Grundy and LaSalle counties to submit letters of support to the Federal Transportation Authority for funding the second phase of a study on the project.

The committee conducted the first phase in 2003 and 2004, concluding rail service is physically, operationally and financially feasible.

A second research phase will determine whether there will be a substantial amount of ridership and will provide details into the cost of the project.

Initial estimates concluded construction of the rail service would cost about \$161 million with an annual operating cost of about \$10 million. Rock Island Railroad used to have a service running in the Illinois Valley area, and preliminary studies showed the tracks and stations from the former service could be reused.

The project was earmarked for federal money in the transportation bill, Eschbach said, and the communities have until 2009 to apply for federal funding.

Eschbach said a meeting with the FTA scheduled for January 10 was cancelled and will be rescheduled within a month, possibly in Ottawa.

He hopes to have letters of support to present to the FTA along with their plans for the project. (Journal Star January 7, 2006)

• REGIONAL NEWS

In an effort to resurrect the long-failed drive to develop a single pre-paid fare card for Metra, CTA and Pace customers, transit officials said on Friday, December 16 they are looking to start out small with a universal monthly pass, hopefully by summer.

The plan is still in the idea stage, stressed Stephen Schlickman, director of the Regional Transportation Authority, which oversees Pace, the Chicago Transit Authority and Metra.

Still, he said that within six months the RTA hopes to roll out a combination of Metra's monthly-pass with a monthly pass for CTA and Pace that will have fewer – if any – restrictions than the current fare system.

The proposal comes less than a year after many transit leaders ruled out a universal fare card project as too costly after a \$700,000 study found such a system would cost between \$60 million and about \$170 million just to get started.

Schlickman, who was appointed in September, said he did not know how much the entry-stage plan will cost and said it would be just a small step toward a universal fare card.

The new fare system would likely be a variation of the Link-Up card, which costs \$36 on top of a monthly Metra pass that can range from more than \$150 to less than \$50, depending on where a commuter is traveling from.

The Link-Up sticker is attached to the Metra pass and is good for unlimited rides on Pace and on CTA buses during rush hour. The new plan may take away those restrictions and expand it to Chicago's elevated train and subway system, Schlickman said.

Transit leaders and commuters have rallied for a universal fare card, which would act like a refillable debit card, for decades. Yet, installing the technological infrastructure in thousands of buses and trains has always proved too costly for the often-strained budgets of the public transit agencies.

Schlickman said he hopes making it easier for riders to switch from CTA to Metra to Pace will attract more riders. (Daily Herald December 17, 2005)

February Calendar of Events

The Railroad Club of Chicago presents a calendar of events in the metropolitan area of meetings and events taking place in City of Chicago, except where noted. Any additions, changes or corrections should be directed to William M. Shapotkin at TrainGG1@aol.com.

The Railroad Club of Chicago takes no responsibility for the content or accuracy of the programs contained in the events listed, nor for last minute event cancellations or changes.

- Feb 3 Friday: The Omnibus Society of America meeting:** 7:30-10:00 PM - doors close at 8:00 PM.
Program: "Vintage Transit," a slide presentation by Mike Charnotta.
Location: Swedish Covenant Hospital, Anderson Pavilion, 2751 W. Winona Avenue, at the southeast corner of Winona and California. Winona is one block south of Forester and California.
Admission: \$4.00 for non-members. More information at www.osabus.com.
- Feb 3 Friday: Blackhawk Chapter - NRHS meeting:** 7:30-10:00 PM - doors open at 7:00 PM.
Program: "The 1980's rebuilding of the Joliet Union Station," a slide presentation Roy Jackson.
Location: Gladys Fox Museum at the S/W corner of 9th Street (Rt. 7)/Washington Street in Lockport.
Admission: Free. More information at bbmolony@juno.com.
- Feb 3 Friday: Wisconsin Chapter - NRHS meeting:** 7:30-10:00 PM.
Program: Tom Hoffmann and Chuck Porter.
Location: North Shore Congregational Church at 7330 N. Santa Monica Blvd., in Fox Point, WI.
Admission: Free. More information at www.nrhwis.org.
- Feb 8 Wednesday: Twentieth Century Railroad Club meeting:** 7:00-9:00 PM.
Program: To be announced. Admission is \$3.00 for non-members.
Location: Electricians Union Hall at 600 W. Washington. More information at www.20thcentury.org.
- Feb 10 Friday: Railway and Locomotive Historical Society, Chicago Chapter meeting:** 7:00-10:00 PM.
Program: "Wabash suburban service to Chicago," a slide presentation William M. Shapotkin.
Location: The Chicago Temple at 77 W. Washington (S/E corner of Washington and Clark), 3rd Floor.
Admission: Free. More information at www.RRSociety.org.
- Feb 10 Friday: Chicago Chapter - NRHS meeting:** 8:00-10:00 PM.
Program: To be announced. Admission is free. More information at www.chicaonrhs.com.
Location: Lincoln Center at 935 Maple Avenue, in Downers Grove. Lincoln Center is two blocks south of the Downers Grove Main Street Metra (Burlington Northern Santa Fe) station.
- Feb 11 Saturday: Kenosha Streetcar Society meeting:** 7:00-10:00 PM.
Program: "New York City Transit," a slide presentation by Lou Gerard covering several properties.
Location: Immanuel Methodist Church, at 54th Street and Sheridan, one and one-half blocks east of the Kenosha Metra (Union Pacific) station, in Kenosha WI. Admission, \$5.00 for non-members.
- Feb 17 Friday: Railroad Club of Chicago meeting:** 7:30-10:00 PM.
Program: A digital presentation by Dave Wilson.
Location: The Chicago Temple at 77 W. Washington (S/E corner of Washington and Clark), 3rd Floor.
Admission: \$3.00 for non-members. More information at www.railcc.org.
- Feb 24 Friday: Central Electric Railfans' Association meeting:** 7:30-10:00 PM.
Program: "Pittsburgh Railways of the 1940s," a presentation by E. L. Tennyson.
Location: 203 W. Wacker Drive, 2nd Floor.
Admission: Free. More information at www.cera-chicago.org.