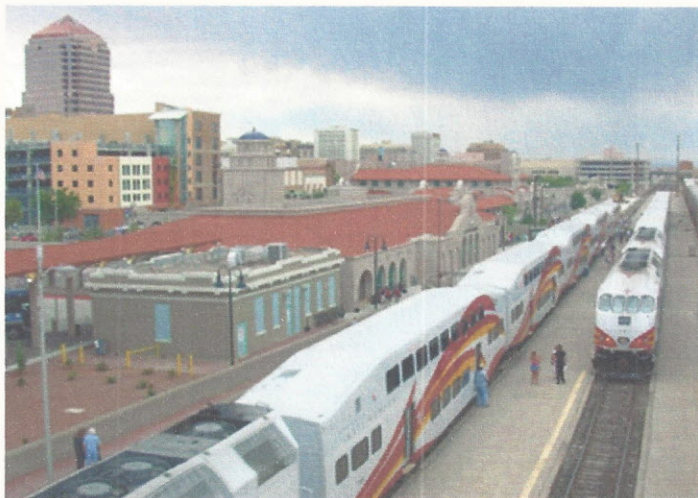


Green Pennant Special

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OMNIBUS SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.

Albuquerque's new commuter rail operation "The Rail Runner Express" began limited operation on July 14th between Downtown Albuquerque and Sandoval County/US 550. Service to Rio Bravo/Airport, Isleta Pueblo, Los Lunas and Belen will open in stages later this year.

Here are two photos of the trains taken off of the Albuquerque website.



The station in Downtown Albuquerque is also the Intermodal Station where one can catch Greyhound and Albuquerque city buses.

Albuquerque is not the only city that will be opening a new commuter rail system.

Nashville will be opening their system, called the Music City Star on Monday, September 18th between Nashville and Lebanon.

Here are a few photographs taken from their website.



The Music City Star will be using ex-Metra bi-levels.

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.

The OSA has begun to offer for purchase photo DVD's containing scanned images of slides and photographs from the collection of Melvin Bernero.

The DVD's contain close to 300 images each and the current offerings consist of: CTA buses (color and black & white on one DVD); Northern Illinois (color and black & white on one DVD); CTA/CSL streetcars (black & white); CTA 'L'/Subway (color and black & white on one DVD); Transit Properties of Wisconsin (color and black & white on one DVD) and Chicago Trolleybuses (color and black & white on one DVD).

All the DVD's are priced at \$15.00 and can be purchased at any OSA meeting from Melvin. We are also offering them by mail.

All funds raised by the sale of these DVD's go into the OSA general fund to help support the Omnibus Society of America.

• OCTOBER OSA MEETING

The October meeting of the Omnibus Society of America will be held on October 6, 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 will be a slide presentation by noted rail/transit photographer Myron Lane.

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.

• KANKAKEE RIDE-IN

The Chicagoland Historical Bus Museum will have a ride-in on River Valley Metro (Kankakee) on Saturday October 7, 2006.



Attendees will travel via scheduled Metra Electric service to University Park where they will board a River Valley Metro bus to Northfield Square Mall at 1115. Travel from Chicago to University Park will be on your own, as will University Park to Northfield Square Mall. The Metra fare will be a \$5 weekend pass (purchase on your own) and \$3 from University Park to Northfield Square Mall (again payment on your own).

Lunch will be at the Northfield Square Mall from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm. At 12:30 pm attendees will be picked up by a CHBM bus where they will travel to the River Valley Metro bus garage to photograph the equipment at the garage and have a tour of the facility. From there, they will travel to the downtown transfer point to get photographs of in service equipment.

After photographing the lineup/lineups, it is planned to travel to Coyote Canyon for dinner. Coyote Canyon is a buffet-steak eatery. The bus will then depart for University Park to connect with the 7:40 pm train to Chicago.

The tentative schedule is:

Depart Chicago	09:30 am
Arrive University Park	10:30 am
Depart University Park	11:15 am
Arrive Mall	11:55 am
Depart Mall	1:00 pm
Arrive University Park	7:30 pm

Fare for the ride on the CHBM bus for the day will be:

CHBM members – donation for fuel

Non-members - \$35.00. This will pay for a membership in the CHBM. Due to insurance requirements, any passengers on the CHBM bus must be members of the museum.

• CTA CORNER

The Chicago Transit Board on September 13, 2006, approved a \$94.1 million construction (Cont on page 3)

CTA

contract to build connecting tunnels and tracks that will link the Red and Blue Line Subways and connect them to the planned rapid station at 108 N. State Street, also referred to as Block 37. The contractor also will cover modifications to the State Street and Dearborn Street subway platforms for installation of connecting tracks and the replacement of rail ties on adjacent Blue and Red Line track.

Development of the site at 108 N. State Street is being conducted by the Mills Corporation for the City of Chicago. The Mills development includes the new CTA subway station.

As part of the project, the contractor will build two short connecting tunnels and tracks that will link the existing Red and Blue Line subway tunnels with the new transit subway station. The contractor will accomplish the task by digging a trench, using a technique called cut and cover, which was also used when two smaller CTA subways – the Logan Square Subway and O'Hare Subway – were constructed by the City of Chicago in 1970 and 1984, respectively.

CTA also plans to modify the fare control areas in the Red Line subway at Randolph/Washington, Washington/Madison, Madison/Monroe and Monroe/Adams; modify the continuous platforms north of Washington inside the Red and Blue Line subways to connect them to the new transit station; and replace approximately 4,000 ties in both subway tunnels as part of the contract.

Construction is expected to begin later this year and conclude in fall 2008. When the contractor's construction schedule is finalized, CTA will inform customers of how the work could potentially affect bus and rail service in the Loop.

Funding for the platform modifications, rail tie replacement, and tunnel and track construction will come from CTA capital funds generated from the issuance of capital grant receipt revenue bonds to fund capital improvement projects 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. The City of Chicago has allocated \$42.4 million in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) revenue under an intergovernmental agreement specifically covering infrastructure expenses related to the track and tunnel connections. (www.transitchicago.com September 13, 2006)

September 13, 2006, saw the Chicago Transit Board approve a \$3.5 million contract to perform Alternatives Analysis studies for the proposed rail line extensions on the Chicago Transit Authority's Red, Orange and Yellow lines. CTA is considering extending the Red Line to 130th Street, the Orange Line to the Ford City Mall and the Yellow Line to Westfield Shoppingtown Old Orchard shopping center.

An Alternatives Analysis study is a required planning step in the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) process for pursuing New Start grant program funding for major transit system expansions. The studies will examine all of the transit options available and a locally preferred alternative will be determined for each area.

Extending the Red Line from its existing south terminal at 95th Street to a new terminal at 130th Street would streamline bus-to-rail connections for 12 CTA bus routes and four Pace routes and could also connect the line with the South Shore commuter rail line and Metra's proposed SouthEast service commuter rail.

Extending the Orange Line to Ford City would complete the original Orange Line plan to provide improved access to downtown from the southwest side and from the central city to the strong employment corridor along South Cicero Avenue.

The proposed Yellow Line extension would provide service to major destinations such as Westfield Shoppingtown Old Orchard, Cook County Courthouse and adjacent office, and retail and residential developments currently just beyond the reach of the existing CTA terminal on Dempster Street. Expanding service would also strengthen the reverse-commute flow along both the Yellow and Red lines, and make better use of CTA's existing service capacity.

The Alternatives Analysis studies will be conducted concurrently over the next few years.

The FTA New Starts program requires conceptual transit project proposals to proceed through a formal process of planning, design and construction. The FTA process consists of five formal steps: Alternatives Analysis, Environmental Impact Statement, Preliminary Engineering, Final design and Construction. (www.transitchicago.com September 13, 2006)

The Chicago Transit Authority will hold a second round of public meetings in September to receive input on the proposed Circle Line project. The first round of meetings was held in May. The meetings are part of the Alternatives Analysis study – the first step in pursuing federal funding for major transit projects. The Alternatives Analysis study is designed to examine all the transit options available and determine a locally preferred alternative. (Cont on page 4)

(Cont from page 3)

CTA

Meeting dates and venues are:

Tuesday, September 26, 2006

6 pm- 8 pm

Bucktown/Wicker Park

Chicago Public Library

Second Floor Community Room

Chicago IL 60647

Wednesday, September 27, 2006

6 pm – 8 pm

The National Teachers Academy –

Professional Development

Lunch/Auditorium Room

55 W Cermak

Chicago IL 60616

Thursday, September 28, 2006

6 pm – 8 pm

The First Baptist Congregational Church

Community Room

1613 W Washington

Chicago IL 60612

All locations are accessible to people with disabilities.

The proposed Circle Line would link all of CTA's rail lines and all of Metra's lines in a study area bounded by 39th Street on the south, Fullerton Parkway on the north, Western Avenue on the west and Lake Michigan on the east, creating improved transit connections throughout the six-county region and helping to further ease traffic congestion and improve travel times.

DMJM+Harris, A Joint Venture, which specializes in transit/rail, highway and bridge, marine, aviation and energy infrastructures is conducting the Alternatives Analysis study. (www.transitchicago.com September 15, 2006)

• PACE PATTERN

Pace officials expect to break ground on a \$12 million headquarters next spring just as transit officials head to Springfield to seek more funding for public transportation.

Pace Executive Director T.J. Ross defended the project saying the current headquarters is cramped, needs a new roof and has numerous heating and air conditioning issues.

The new building will be funded with a \$7.5 million

federal grant that cannot be used for any other project; \$1.9 million from the Regional Transportation Authority; and \$2.6 million from Pace.

The building should be finished in April 2008 and will sit next to the existing Arlington Heights headquarters, which was built in 1962. Pace is considering selling that land to recoup some of the costs.

Pace board members said they don't want an extravagant headquarters like the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority's central administration building. (www.chicagotribune.com September 7, 2006)

• METRA MATTERS

For the first time in 22 years, Metra has a new leader at the helm after the commuter rail agency's board unanimously voted today to elect Carole Doris of DuPage County to be its new chairman.

Doris replaces longtime Chairman Jeffrey Ladd, who stepped down from the board when his most recent term expired in June. Ladd had headed the Metra board since its inception in 1984.

Funding for transit will be a top priority for Doris during her two-year term, but she said that she also wants the agency to do a better job communicating with passengers when trouble arise.

The vote culminates months of behind-the-scenes negotiations among the powers that are responsible for appointing the board members.

It also represents a coup for DuPage County Chairman Robert Schillerstrom, who had publicly backed Doris. Schillerstrom appointed her to the Metra board in January 2003.

Doris' election was a loss for Cook County board members who had been angling for someone from suburban Cook to secure the chairmanship. (www.chicagotribune.com August 25, 2006)

Faced with opposition from railroad enthusiasts, Union Pacific Railroad announced August 28th that it will once again allow people to take pictures from Metra platforms on the routes it operates.

A month ago, Union Pacific decided to ban photography from platforms on the North, Northwest and West lines for passenger security. Claiming the ban violated their 1st Amendment rights, railroad enthusiasts contacted the American Civil Liberties Union. On August 28th, the railroad announced it will allow pictures to be taken from the Metra platforms but reserved the right to question photographers.

On Union Pacific property, however, photography will only be allowed with prior consent. (Cont on page 5)

(Cont from page 4)

METRA

If railroad officials spot people taking pictures of railroad operations on public property, an employee may question the photographer if the activity is suspicious, the railroad stated.

Union Pacific spokesman Mark Davis has said the photography ban was imposed for the safety and security of passengers. A similar ban has been in place at Ogilvie Transportation Center since 2001. (www.chicagotribune.com August 29, 2006)

The Northeast Illinois Regional Commuter Railroad Corp. (Metra) recently awarded TESS Corys Inc. a contract to supply five locomotive simulators.

To be delivered in spring 2007, the machines will simulate operations of Metra's locomotives, and cab and Electric District cars moving along 290 track miles in downtown Chicago and outlying suburbs. Metra officials will use the simulators at the railroad's Union Station headquarters to train new hires and provide continuing education to experienced engineers. (Progressive Railroad August 31, 2006)

The maker of a sophisticated pipe bomb that exploded in a trash receptacle inside the Hinsdale Metra station early Friday, September 1st was still at large late in the day, police said.

Nobody was injured in the 6:50 am blast inside the ticket building, authorities said.

A man witnesses had pointed to as possibly being involved was released after a consensual search of his home turned up nothing, Hinsdale Police Chief Bradley Bloom said. The man had been seen near the receptacle and was apprehended at Union Station about an hour and a half later.

Bloom said the department has not ruled that man, or anyone else, out but said police don't have a good description of who may have left the bomb. There are no security cameras at the station, and nobody saw anyone place the bomb, he said.

The device was more elaborate than some – it had a timer that allowed a delayed detonation, authorities said. (www.chicagotribune.com September 1, 2006)

In response to criticism about the North Central Service line, Metra announced Tuesday, September 5th that it was instituting two morning and two afternoon semi-express train runs to help shorten travel times.

The changes went into effect Monday, September 11th. They will enable Metra to meet its goal of providing 22 daily weekday trains on the line, which runs between Chicago's Union Station and Antioch. Currently, there are

20 daily weekday runs.

The two morning semi-express trains will depart Lake Villa at 6:44 am and Antioch at 6:45 am. They will arrive at Union Station at 8:03 and 8:11 am respectively. The afternoon semi-express trains will depart Union Station at 4:58 pm and 5:01 pm and arrive at Lake Villa at 6:14 pm and Antioch at 6:27 pm respectively.

By skipping alternate stops, Metra was able to shave off as much as 14 minutes from the ride on those runs while continuing to serve most communities, except for Rosemont, Schiller Park, Franklin Park and River Grove. Those villages will not be served by any of the new semi-express trains.

But Metra spokeswoman Judy Pardonnet said a ridership review showed that more passengers will benefit from the changes than will be negatively impacted by them.

The push for additional changes started last winter after Metra announced a new schedule for expanded service on the North Central route. Thanks to a \$218 million project, which among other things added 16.3 miles of track to the route, Metra was able to bump up the number of weekday trains to 20 from 10.

But some people said the trip was longer because of new stops that were added on the route. Others complained that Metra didn't meet its promise of providing 22 weekday trains. (www.chicagotribune.com September 5, 2006)

To help preserve the oldest operating train station on the Metra line, Bartlett officials have entered into an easement agreement with the rail agency.

When the new Metra station to be located at Town Center in downtown Bartlett becomes functional, the old one will be used as a museum with permanent and changing exhibits, officials said.

These exhibits will be researched and installed by staff members with the Bartlett History Museum, who are "anxious to begin," said Village Manager Valerie Salmons.

The agreement between Bartlett and Metra – to begin one month after the new station opens for service – allows for village staff to renovate, operate and maintain the historic station as a museum dedicated to Bartlett rail history, Bartlett officials said.

Bartlett officials can turn the property back to Metra when they no longer want to maintain it as a museum, "but we should be able to run it for a long time," Village President Catherine Melchert said.

The museum is planned to promote the Chicago and Pacific Railroad, the types of jobs the railroad offered and how the railroad affected village industries, officials said.

(Cont on page 6)

(Cont from page 5)

METRA

It will also include an area focused on children's education and activities that will serve as a depot for students, Scouts and younger Bartlett residents, officials said.

The museum will educate visitors about the original train depot in Bartlett, which opened 133 years ago, and how it has contributed to the village economy, officials said. (dailyherald.com September 6, 2006)

Falling debris from the infamous S-curve bridge over Northwest Highway in Des Plaines has frustrated drivers and city officials alike for years,

On Thursday, September 14th, Mayor Tony Arredia and other Des Plaines officials will meet with railroad and state transportation representatives to work toward a resolution. Arredia said he's looking forward to meet with the railroad's "big guns" about the problem.

The timber bridge was built in 1930 as a temporary structure. It rumbles along with the trains, City Attorney David Wiltse said.

While Union Pacific Railroad Co. is in charge of maintaining the bridge, there has been an ongoing dispute over providing more than just a quick fix.

This fall, Union Pacific will begin a \$1 million project to replace the open-deck bridge with a ballast one, Union Pacific spokesman James Barnes said. That will put the ties closer together than the current bridge, he said.

Last year, Union Pacific spent \$800,000 on bridge repairs, Barnes said. The railroad is committed to the "safe operation" of its rail lines, he said.

Work to straighten the tracks and bolster the bridge is estimated at more than \$40 million.

The ballast plan, however, worries city officials who are concerned the added weight could worsen the problem.

State, federal and railroad officials will attend the meeting at Des Plaines city hall.

"We're really just trying to get the railroads to realize there's a problem and their remediation simply haven't been enough to solve the problem," Wiltse said.

Last December, the city dropped its complaint before the Illinois Commerce Commission to get the railroads and the Illinois Department of Transportation to pay for the project. City officials instead decided to focus efforts on seeking federal and state help to pay for the project.

Railroads have cited a federal statute that would limit what they could contribute to 5 percent of the project. (www.dailyherald.com September 13, 2006)

In a press release dated August 21, 2006, North American Bus Industries, Inc. (NABI), Anniston, AL, announced its purchase of Optima Bus Corporation, Wichita, Kansas. Terms of the recent transaction were not disclosed. This comes on the heels of the Cerberus Capital Management, LLP acquisition of NABI in February 2006.

"With this acquisition, the newly combined organization will be a full service transit bus manufacturer providing the market with a complete range of buses from 30-ft. to 60-ft. Optima Bus Corporation has experienced success and growth over the past several years," says Robert Shaughnessy, Chief Executive Officer of NABI. "This acquisition will allow Optima to continue on that path and represents two market leaders coming together to utilize the core competencies of each company in order to produce even more durable, higher quality transit vehicles."

Shaughnessy says Optima bus will continue to offer its current product lines, which will still be manufactured in Wichita, Kansas. Products include the 30-ft. and 35-ft. Opus Low-floor bus and the American Heritage Streetcar, along with new products in the future.

Optima Bus Corporation's Opus low-floor bus and nostalgic American Heritage Streetcar have lived-up to their reputations with more than 180 Optima customers across the United States. NABI and Optima products are sold to transit systems in major cities and municipalities throughout the United States.

Optima's management team continues to do an excellent job building the company's reputation as a leading developer and manufacturer of quality buses and trolleys, says Optima's previous majority owner Tom Nathanson, principal, of American Capital Strategies, Ltd. Optima's previous majority owner. "Optima is well positioned for continued growth and we wish them well."

The combined companies will have access to significant resources necessary to continue to expand the development of new and innovative products for the transportation industry. Headquartered in New York, Cerberus Capital Management, LLP and its affiliated entities manage funds and accounts with capital in excess of US\$ 16 billion. Headwaters MB LLC served as the exclusive financial advisor to Optima in connection with the transaction.

NABI produces and sells a complete line of standard and low-floor, heavy-duty 35 foot, 40 foot and 60 foot (articulated) transit buses at its facilities in Anniston, Alabama. Buses are available in diesel, CNG, LNG, or diesel hybrid-electric propulsion.

• INDUSTRY NEWS



Annual October Streetcar Fest



By popular request we are back with Octoberfest (renamed KSS Annual October Streetcar Fest). Instead of the scheduled cheeseburger dinner, same time, same place, but fresh bratwurst, sauerkraut, potato salad, pretzels, and all the trimmings. Don't eat lunch.

Where: Immanuel Methodist Church
When: Saturday, October 14, 2006
Time: Dinner served 6:00 P.M. to 6:30 P.M.
Cost: Members \$5.00, Non-members \$8.00
Slide Show: 7:30 P.M. to 10:00 P.M.
"Erie Lackawanna"

Jack Doyle will present a slide show on the last years of the Erie Lackawanna green suburban cars. (Some slides will be provided by Larry Konsbruck.) Jack first saw the electric cars darting across the Jersey meadows from the interstate overpass in 1977 and vowed to come back and photograph the system. In 1980, he did—from Hoboken to Basking Ridge, from Dover to Newark, from Gladstone to Peapack. Come and enjoy this look back in time.

RSVP: For those planning to attend the dinner, please call 708-246-1435 before October 7th and leave a message.

Calendar of Events

The Omnibus Society of America takes no responsibility for the content or accuracy of the programs contained in the events listed, nor for last minute event cancellations or changes.

- Oct 6 Friday: The Omnibus Society of America meeting:** 7:30-10:00 PM - doors close at 8:00 PM.
Program: A slide presentation by noted rail/transit photographer Myron Lane.
Location: Swedish Covenant Hospital, Anderson Pavilion, 2751 W. Winona Avenue.
Admission: \$4.00 for non-members. More information at www.osabus.com.
- Oct 6 Friday: Blackhawk Chapter - NRHS meeting:** 7:30-10:00 PM - doors open at 7:00 PM.
Location: Gladys Fox Museum at the corner of 9th Street and Washington Street in Lockport.
Program: "Railroads of Northern Illinois," a slide presentation by Ed DeRouin.
Admission: Free. More information at bbmolony@juno.com.
- Oct 6 Friday: Wisconsin Chapter - NRHS meeting:** 7:30-10:00 PM.
Location: North Shore Congregational Church at 7330 N. Santa Monica Blvd., in Fox Point, WI.
Program: **To be announced.**
Admission: Free. More information at www.nrhswis.org.
- Oct 11 Wednesday: Twentieth Century Railroad Club meeting:** 7:00-9:00 PM.
Location: Electricians Union Hall at 600 W. Washington.
Program: **To be announced.**
Admission: \$3.00 for non-members. More information at www.20thcentury.org.
- Oct 13 Friday: Railway and Locomotive Historical Society, Chicago Chapter meeting:** 7:00-10:00 PM.
Location: The Chicago Temple at 77 W. Washington (S/E corner of Washington and Clark), 3rd Floor.
Program: **To be announced.**
Admission: Free. More information at www.RRSociety.org.
- Oct 13 Friday: Chicago Chapter - NRHS meeting:** 8:00-10:00 PM.
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.
Program: **To be announced.**
Admission: Free. More information at www.chicaonrhs.com.
- Oct 14 Saturday: Kenosha Streetcar Society Annual October Streetcar Fest and meeting:** 6:00-10:00 PM.
See advertisement on page 7.
- Oct 20 Friday: The Railroad Club of Chicago meeting:** 7:30-10:00 PM.
Location: The Chicago Temple at 77 W. Washington (S/E corner of Washington and Clark), 3rd Floor.
Program: **To be announced.**
Admission: \$3.00 donation requested from for non-members.
- Oct 21 Saturday: Chicago Chapter - Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society meeting:**
Location: Pullman Historical Society (112th/Cottage Grove Avenue).
Program: **To be announced.**
- Oct 27 Friday: Central Electric Railfans' Association meeting:** 6:00-9:00 PM.
Location: Berghoff Restaurant at 17 W. Adams.
Program: "A Taste of the Berghoff with Chicago Streetcars on the side," by Walter Keevil.
Admission: Reservations required **(Sold Out).**