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OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OMNIBUS SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.

JAN. 2007

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.

## • JANUARY OSA MEETING

**The January meeting** of the Omnibus Society of America will be held on January 5, 2007, 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 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

### CTA CONTINUES EFFORTS TO TRIM COSTS AND IMPROVE EFFICIENCY

The Chicago Transit Authority has implemented more than 100 recommendations developed in partnership with AECOM Consult which are expected to save nearly \$10 million in operating costs and add \$37.9 million of revenue to CTA's bottom line in 2007. Two years ago CTA engaged the service of AECOM Consult to perform a management and operations review of CTA's efficiency

and business practices to further increase efficiencies. Following the review, 246 recommendations were developed that if fully implemented were estimated to represent \$159 million in annual savings. So far, CTA has implemented 123 of AECOM's recommendations and others are in various stages of analysis and implementation.

A number of the recommendations require changes in CTA's collective bargaining agreements with employee unions, or a change in state legislation before they could be implemented. Recommendations falling into that category were estimated to provide \$111 million of the \$159 million of projected annual savings. For example, although CTA is in agreement with AECOM's recommendation that subcontracting would reduce expenses, the agency is currently prohibited from subcontracting many activities by the terms of its collective bargaining agreements.

"Pursuing efficiencies is an ongoing process," said Chicago Transit Board Chairman Carole Brown. "Our customers and the taxpayers deserve continuous improvement from CTA as we balance the demand for service against available funding."

"AECOM has commended the many initiatives CTA has already implemented to significantly reduce costs and improve efficiency. Following their intensive review of our operations and management, AECOM concluded that CTA is cost effective relative to other major transit systems," said CTA President Frank Kruesi. "We will continue in our efforts to keep costs down and implement those recommendations that are not restricted."

Efficiency measures implemented include renegotiating benefit costs which is expected to save the agency \$2.8 million annually. CTA has also implemented its fare media strategy through the use of Chicago Cards which is expected to generate \$37 million in additional revenue for CTA.

The Maintenance Management Information System, or MMIS, continues to be implemented throughout CTA. MMIS is a computerized work-order system that tracks vehicle parts and maintenance time. CTA staff developed the program rollout, which has also been endorsed by AECOM as a project that will contribute to improving efficiency and reduce costs.

CTA has also capitalized on several joint procurement initiatives that allow CTA to leverage more favorable pricing and discounts in various contracts such as those for the purchase of refuse trucks, and software purchases and licensing. In addition, (Cont on page 2)



(Cont from page 1)

## CTA

CTA appointed a director of real estate and consolidated the department to focus on optimizing CTA's assets and improve the marketability of its property.

Since 1997, CTA has pursued major efficiency initiatives that cumulatively have saved over \$1 billion.

TRANSITCHICAGO.COM 12/12/06

## EIGHT CTA BUS ROUTES TO REROUTE AROUND BLOCK 37 CONSTRUCTION SITE BEGINNING IN JANUARY

In January, CTA will reroute eight bus routes that currently operate near the Block 37 construction site away from the construction activity to improve the reliability of CTA bus service in the area and create a more predictable flow of traffic for the duration. The exact start date is not yet final, but the reroutes are expected to begin before mid-January.

Eight CTA routes that normally travel eastbound on Washington to Michigan Avenue will be rerouted: the #14 Jeffery Express, #20 Madison, #X20 Washington/Madison Express, #56 Milwaukee, #60 Blue Island/26th, #124 Navy Pier, #127 Madison/Roosevelt Circulator and the #157 Streeterville.

Six routes will be diverted from Washington at South Wacker Drive then travel eastbound on Monroe. The #14 Jeffery Express, #20 Madison, #X20 Washington/Madison Express, #56 Milwaukee, #60 Blue Island/26th and the #127 Madison/Roosevelt Circulator buses will operate from Washington to South Wacker, then travel east on Monroe to Michigan Avenue. The #20, #X20, #56 and #60 buses will continue northbound on Michigan Avenue and the #14 and #127 buses will continue southbound trips on Michigan Avenue. Four new eastbound bus stops will also be established for these routes along Monroe: at Monroe and Franklin, Monroe and LaSalle, Monroe and Dearborn, and Monroe and Wabash.

The #124 Navy Pier and #157 Streeterville buses will operate from Washington to travel northbound on Wacker Drive then east following Wacker Drive to Michigan Avenue. The #124 buses will cross Michigan Avenue from Wacker Drive and continue eastbound on South Water Street. The #157 buses will continue their northbound trips on Michigan Avenue. In addition to the two existing bus stops on Wacker Drive and Lake Street, and Wacker Drive and State Street, four new bus stops will be established along Wacker Drive for these two routes: northbound at Wacker Drive and Randolph Street, eastbound at Wacker Drive and Wells Street, eastbound at Wacker Drive and LaSalle Street, and eastbound at Wacker Drive and Dearborn Street. Construction is currently underway at 108 N. State Street, commonly referred to as Block 37, on a mixed-

use retail, entertainment, office, hotel and residential complex that will also include a new CTA transit station. TRANSITCHICAGO.COM 12/15/06

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## • PACE PATTERN

### KWASNESKI NAMED PACE CHAIRMAN

Southwest Suburban representative to lead 6th largest transit system

Former Lemont Mayor Richard Kwasneski has been named Chairman of Pace, the suburban bus division of the Regional Transportation Authority of northeastern Illinois and the sixth largest transit system in the country. He has been the Southwest Suburban Cook County Pace Board member since 2002. He is also a Commissioner of the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC) and a member of the Chicago Area Transit Study (CATS) Intermodal Task Force.

Kwasneski brings extensive government, transportation and planning background to the position. He is the Executive Director of the Joliet Arsenal Development Authority (JADA) and served the Village of Lemont for 16 years as Mayor and Village trustee. Kwasneski is also a Director of the Will County Center for Economic Development (CED) and a member of its Airport Task Force and the Illinois Brownfield Association's Government Affairs Committee.

In the past he has also served as Chairman of the Heritage Corridor I-355 Planning Council, Director of the Workforce Development Council of Will County, and Director of the Will County Governmental League where he was also the Chairman of the Government Affairs Committee. His memberships have also included the DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference, the Southwest Council of Local Governments, the Southwest Council of Mayors and the Three Rivers Manufacturers Association Governmental Affairs Committee.

In this new leadership role, Kwasneski feels it's important for the agency to continue to support the RTA on the Moving Beyond Congestion campaign for transit funding. "We need to bring to Springfield a clear, unified message regarding funding public transportation and its importance to the people of Northeastern Illinois."

He added that he's "looking forward to working with fellow Pace Board members and representatives throughout the region to continue to have Pace viewed as an agency that is both efficient and innovative."

Kwasneski is the first Pace Chairman from the southern part of the agency's service area. It's a growing, changing and active area in which a number of Pace projects are underway - the South Cook County - Will County Initiative, the Transit Signal Priority (TSP) Initiative and the first service modifications made as a



# FOR SALE

|    | Type                                                           | Item                                                                                 | Price    |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| 1. | Chicago & West Towns,<br>MU Car Seat<br>(Wicker)               |    | \$200.00 |
| 2. | Chicago Surface Lines,<br>North Side Headlight                 |   | \$125.00 |
| 3. | Chicago Surface Lines,<br>Motorman's Stool, fully<br>restored. |  | \$100.00 |

All of the above items fully restored. If interested in purchasing any of the above, please contact Jack Doyle at 708-246-1435 or send e-mail to [djdoyle@sbcglobal.net](mailto:djdoyle@sbcglobal.net)



In this issue of The Green Pennant Special we present to our members a photo history of some of the different types of buses Pace had used and is using in regular service in the suburbs around Chicago.



Pace 8063 GMC T6H-4523A



Pace 8406 Grumman 40102-6T



Pace 8237 Grumman 53102-8-1



Pace 8606 Gillig Phantom



RTA/Pace 8345 Grumman 53096-8-1



Pace 8700 Orion I



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Pace 8858 Orion I



Pace 2278 Orion I 35'



Pace 2072 Orion I 35'



Pace 2321 Orion I



Pace 2208 Ikarus 416



Pace 2386 Nova Classic



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Pace 2521 El Dorado Transmark



Pace 6292 NABI LFW-40



Pace 6044 Orion VI



Pace 6665 NABI LFW-35



Pace 6240 NABI LFW-40



Pace 6904 MCI D4000



result of an on-time performance analysis based on data provided by Pace's Intelligent Bus System (IBS). The agency recently recorded its best October ridership - 3.5 million riders - since 1998.

## • METRA MATTERS

### CANDID CAMERAS FOR TRAINS

By Richard Wronski, Tribune staff reporter  
Published December 16, 2006, 10:00 AM CST

The video taken from a Metra train cab is unnerving: In one scene, a woman, oblivious to the 130-ton engine bearing down on her, gingerly steps across the railroad tracks. In another, a youth clowning on a station platform suddenly darts in front of the train at the last moment in a deadly game of "chicken."

In February, the transit agency will begin installing digital video cameras on all its trains, enabling it to document the oblivious pedestrians, the taunting youths, and the motorists who, for whatever reason, feel compelled to drive around lowered gates and flashing lights, sometimes to their deaths.

The use of cameras on trains is a growing trend in the railroad industry, experts say, coming on the heels of improved digital technology and the need for railroads to protect themselves in the event of accidents.

Metra has been planning to install the cameras for many months.

Officials say the devices will provide valuable evidence after incidents like the one on Dec. 8 in which a Milwaukee District West Line train crushed a mini-van, killing two women and an infant. Authorities say the mini-van carrying eight people went around lowered gates at an Elgin grade crossing.

The driver, Epifania Alvarez-Navarrette, 25, has been charged with reckless homicide, driving without a license and other offenses.

So far this year, 18 people have been killed when Metra trains have hit vehicles or pedestrians.

In test videos, Metra has demonstrated that the kind of cameras to be installed next year clearly record the operation of gates and lights as trains approach crossings.

The cameras are intended not only as a tool in accident investigation but will also identify trespassing, security and vandalism problems along rail lines, said Richard Soukup, the agency's chief mechanical officer.

The videos may also be useful in educating the public against taking chances when dealing with trains and working with municipalities to keep people from trespassing on railroad rights-of-way.

But it was liability concerns that first prompted freight railroads to begin using cameras to provide a stronger defense in expensive grade-crossing accident lawsuits, experts said.

"Clearly, Metra's law department are the ones the most interested in this," said Ian Savage, a professor of economics and transportation at Northwestern University.

Makers of train-camera technology have actively promoted their products at railroad industry conferences. Metra plans to install more than 500 cameras on its engines and cab cars in 2007, at a cost of about \$3.5 million.

The color cameras with sound will store about five days' worth of video and will be strong enough to withstand shock and vibration, Soukup said. They will be synchronized with the "black box" event data recorders already aboard trains.

There will be two cameras on each train, which will activate any time the trains are moving. Not only will they will record the scene in front of a train, but also behind, because Metra trains run in both directions in the course of the day.

The cameras will be able to capture a collision but the video may not be as graphic as one might imagine, because the cameras are placed high up on the engine.

"You will see if you hit somebody but you won't see the actual impact because of the height," Soukup said. In its test along the Rock Island Line, Metra's cameras captured events that engineers witness every day but that would shock many people, especially parents, officials said.

Efforts such as the international Operation Lifesaver program attempt to educate people about taking risks at rail crossings, but the videos captured by the cameras may be more effective. Videos of youths trespassing on tracks might help pinpoint areas near playgrounds or schools.

They may also put pressure on police to better enforce laws against pedestrians and vehicles ignoring gates and signals, he said.

"We're going to be able to go to the municipalities and say, 'Look, you're going to have to do better on your gate enforcement and your crossings. We have people [on tape] going around your gates.'"

[rwrnski@tribune.com](mailto:rwrnski@tribune.com)



## DRIVER OF VAN HIT BY TRAIN FACES RECKLESS HOMICIDE CHARGES

**Associated Press**

*Published December 15, 2006, 2:37 AM CST*

CHICAGO -- The driver of a minivan hit by a Metra train last week has been charged with reckless homicide in the deaths of three of her seven passengers, according to Kane County court documents.

Police say Epfina Alvarez-Navarette, 25, of Carpentersville drove around lowered gates at an Elgin train crossing on Dec. 8 before her vehicle's passenger side was hit by an oncoming commuter train.

Elgin Police Sgt. Sean Rafferty said at the time that the train partially crushed the minivan and pushed it about 150 feet down the tracks before it came to a stop.

Alvarez-Navarette is still hospitalized in fair condition. Kane County authorities would not confirm the charges against her Thursday, but documents dated Wednesday indicate the charges have been approved.

Two of her sisters, Antonia Alvarez-Alejos and Raquel Alvarez, were killed, as was Raquel's infant son Fernando.

Antonia's 2-year-old son and Epfina's 3-year-old son were badly injured in the crash. Two of their other children were treated and released from the hospital.

## RTA

### RTA PASSES 2007 BUDGET WITH HOLE IN IT

**Tribune staff report**, Tribune staff reporter  
*Published December 15, 2006, 7:37 PM CST*

The Regional Transportation Authority board on Friday approved a 2007 budget with a \$226 million shortfall that officials hope state lawmakers will address early next year.

The board voted unanimously to pass the deficit budget at the RTA meeting in Chicago over the loud protests of senior citizens and people with disabilities who will pay higher fares next year for paratransit and special taxi services.

"No way. We can't pay," shouted the protesters, led by the group Metro Seniors in Action.

The \$226 million hole in next year's budget for operations of the Chicago Transit Authority, Metra and Pace includes an \$82 million shortfall in paratransit funding for Pace, which took over responsibility for paratransit services from the CTA in July.

Starting Jan. 1, disabled and elderly riders will pay 50 cents more for paratransit fares, to \$2.25 per ride; and a \$3.25 increase, to \$5, for taxicab access vouchers in Chicago.

A state law requires at least 10 percent of the program's cost be paid for with passenger revenue.

RTA chairman Jim Reilly said that if state transit funding is not approved by July to balance the 2007 budget, the CTA, Metra and Pace must begin reducing service, raising fares or both across the board.

### RTA LOOKS TO STATE TO FILL '07 BUDGET GAP

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