



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 meeting information, as well as membership information.

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

The OSA is offering 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) on two separate DVD's; CTA "L"/Subway (color and black & white on one DVD); Transit Properties of Wisconsin (color and black & white on one DVD); Chicago Trolleybuses (color and black & white on one DVD and Bus Wraps (color on one DVD).

All 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.

• MARCH OSA MEETING

The mARCH meeting of The Omnibus Society of America will be held on March 2, 2007, in the Anderson Pavilion of Swedish Covenant Hospital, 2751 W. Winona Ave, Chicago, Illinois. The meeting will start at 7:30 pm.

Our program for the evening "New Jersey Transit in the Private Era," will be a slide presentation by Fred McGullum.

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

2/9/07 Chicago Transit Authority's 1-Day Fun Pass, 7-Day Pass, round trip transit card and reduced fare transit card will be available for purchase at the Metra facility at Ogilvie Transportation Center on selected Saturdays in February and March. The farecards are available in an effort to make purchasing CTA fare media more convenient for commuters attending events such as the 2007 Chicago Auto Show and St. Patrick's Day Parade.

Customers can purchase the 1- and 7-Day pass, round trip transit card and reduced fare transit card from CTA personnel at Ogilvie, located on Madison and Canal, on the following dates:

Saturday, February 10 from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Saturday, February 17 from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Saturday, March 17 from 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. (1- and 7-Day pass only)

CTA works closely with Metra to provide customers additional access to CTA fare media. Many public transit customers use both CTA and Metra to travel throughout the region and making fare media easily accessible improves the ease of taking public transit to work as well as to special events. A transit card vending machine is available at Metra's LaSalle Street Station and both a Visitor Pass and transit card vending machine is available near the Metra ticket counter at Union Station.

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CTA CORNER

Visitor Passes can also be purchased at vending machines at Chicago's O'Hare and Midway airports, CTA's Red Line Chicago station (at State), CTA's Blue Line Cumberland and Rosemont rail stations and at the Water Works Visitor Information Center at Chicago and Michigan. Value cannot be added to Visitor Passes and they cannot be shared.

Information on sales locations for Visitor Pass and CTA service information can be found on CTA's web site, www.transitchicago.com. Service information is also available by calling 836-7000 from any local area code.

02/07/07 The Chicago Transit Board today approved \$1.5 million to increase the number of fixed locations at rail stations and emergency response vehicles participating in CTA's Mobile Security Network pilot. Antennas will be placed at a combination of 39 select rail stations and garages and antennas and laptops will be added to 20 vehicles, including Chicago Police Department (CPD) Public Transportation Section cars.

"Expanding the number of vehicles and facilities participating in the pilot allows CTA to gather more data in order to evaluate the feasibility of using the mobile security network system-wide," said Chicago Transit Board Chairman Carole Brown.

The Mobile Security Network uses a wireless transmitter to send live images from existing cameras on CTA buses to laptops in vehicles such as police cars, CTA supervisory vehicles, and to CTA's Control Center.

The pilot uses 40 buses, Chicago Police Department (CPD) Public Transportation Section police cars, CTA's Incident Command bus, CTA supervisory and security vehicles and fixed locations at select rail stations and two garages. CTA is testing the feasibility of the system for approximately six months.

The vehicles used in the pilot are equipped with antennas and a network system that attaches to the laptop, allowing the individuals inside to view images on the laptop monitor. The pilot vehicles need only be within 600 feet of a wireless transmitter in order to receive images.

Images also can be transmitted from the existing fiber optic network that connects cameras at CTA rail stations. The receivers connected to the laptops allow vehicles such as police cars at street level to view images from the subway or elevated platform when they are near a wireless transmitter at a rail station.

"The mobile security network allows Chicago Police to view and assess the situation more quickly and take the appropriate action," said CTA President Frank Kruesi. "Adding mobility to our security camera system maximizes the capabilities of our existing cameras and helps to improve the overall safety and security of CTA customers."

CTA's security camera network currently has the capability to transmit live images from CTA rail stations to CTA's Control Center and the Office of Emergency Management and Communications. Presently there are more than 1,000 cameras at 49 stations on CTA's rail system. Cameras will be added at more stations as funding becomes available.

Additionally, the new rail cars currently on order will have seven cameras on each rail car. The prototype of the new rail cars is due to arrive in 2008, with delivery of rail cars for service expected to begin in 2010.

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CTA CORNER

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2/14/07 Today CTA officials updated current plans on how rail and bus service will operate when three-track operations begin this spring on the North Side. The agency outlined service impacts for Brown, Red and Purple Express trains traveling through the corridor between Armitage and Addison, and proposed plans to bolster several existing bus routes in anticipation of rail customers switching to bus service.

As part of the Brown Line capacity expansion project, trains serving the Belmont and Fullerton stations will have to share three tracks instead of four to allow construction crews the necessary space to install elevators at each station and expand the platforms to accommodate longer trains. Operating trains on one less track at Belmont and Fullerton will allow the CTA to keep both stations open and maintain rail service during construction but will result in more crowded trains and longer commutes for customers on the Brown Line, Purple Line Express and north branch of the Red Line, particularly during the evening commute when 24 fewer northbound trains will operate during the evening rush period. During the morning rush period, nine fewer trains will operate.

The area impacted by three track operations has an extensive bus network that complements rail service. In addition to the Red, Brown and Purple Express Lines, there are more than 40 bus routes that could be used as alternate transportation, including nine lakefront express routes that provide direct service to and from the Loop during rush periods. In addition to recommending that rail customers consider traveling earlier, later or using an alternate route,

the CTA proposes to increase bus service on several routes that serve the same area as the Brown Line.

During the evening rush period (3 to 6:30 p.m.), CTA plans to increase service northbound from the Loop on the:

- #11 Lincoln/Sedgwick
- #22 Clark
- #147 Outer Drive Express
- #148 Clarendon/Michigan Express

During the morning rush period (6 to 9:30 a.m.), CTA plans to increase service southbound on the:

- #11 Lincoln/Sedgwick
- #22 Clark
- #134 Stockton/LaSalle Express
- #135 Clarendon/LaSalle Express
- #151 Sheridan

Additional bus routes that provide service or connections between the Loop and the North Side include:

- #8 Halsted
- #9 Ashland
- #X9 Ashland Express
- #20 Madison
- #X20 Madison Express
- #36 Broadway
- #49 Western
- #X49 Western Express
- #50 Damen
- #52 Kedzie/California
- #53 Pulaski
- #56 Milwaukee
- #66 Chicago
- #65 Grand
- #70 Division
- #72 North
- #73 Armitage
- #74 Fullerton
- #76 Diversey
- #77 Belmont
- #78 Montrose
- #80 Irving Park
- #X80 Irving Park Express
- #81 Lawrence
- #82 Kimball/Homan
- #84 Peterson
- #92 Foster
- #136 Sheridan/LaSalle Express
- #143 Stockton/Michigan Express
- #144 Marine/Michigan Express
- #145 Wilson/Michigan Express
- #146 Inner Drive/Michigan Express

- #152 Addison
- #155 Devon
- #156 LaSalle

CTA plans to stage additional buses at key locations to supplement these routes as necessary.

Because rail service levels will be reduced and trains will fill up early in the route, the agency proposes staging additional Brown Line trains that would travel only along the heaviest used portion of the rail route in order to provide some room for customers who board at stations closer to the Loop. In addition, rail service on the Blue Line, which is a convenient option for many, would be supplemented by adding service along the heaviest traveled portion of the rail routes.

Select Blue Line trains would operate between Jefferson Park and UIC/Halsted at key rush periods to accommodate the highest concentration of customers on that segment of the route.

Select Brown Line trains would operate between Belmont and the Loop during key rush periods.

Purple Line Express trains would operate on the outer track in the Loop – the same side currently used by the Brown Line – to make it easier for customers to board either route and exit the Loop at the first opportunity.

“The proposed plan is to boost bus service at those points where we expect rail customers to migrate,” said Chicago Transit Board Chairman Carole Brown. “But, we still encourage our customers to take a look at their travel patterns and experiment with some adjustments – maybe switching to bus service, or leaving earlier or later from work, or making a connection that would help speed their trips, or a combination of all of these.”

“Because buses and trains are more crowded the closer they are to the Loop, we would add buses to several routes at key segments to add capacity where and when it is most needed,” said CTA President Frank Kruesi. “Traveling at times when there is more capacity would also help. For example, if you normally catch a Brown Line train at 5 p.m. to get to home, leaving at a different time during three-track operation may make all the difference.”

“Although there will be some increase in travel time while trains operate through the construction zone, it is the wait time to board a train that will increase significantly. Thus, it is the wait time for an available train that will add to the length of the commute,” explained Kruesi. “There will be

fewer trains operating and additional customers using bus service.”

“The fact that there are multiple options to consider says a lot about the extent of our system and we want to make sure that our customers are aware of all of their options and can plan the route that works best for them,” added Brown. “For some customers it may be taking a bus to the Blue Line, or taking a bus from the Belmont station or taking a Lake Shore express route to the Loop. Maybe it will be staying on the Brown Line and traveling earlier in the morning, or taking the train in the morning and a bus to get home at night. Consult our system map or try the RTA trip planner and experiment with what works best for you.”

The Chicago Transit Authority will hold several community meetings to continue its effort to solicit input from the community for upcoming three-track rail operation. Meeting dates and locations are currently being finalized and will be announced in advance of the meetings.

The newly installed Clark Junction signal system is being configured to manage the increased volume of train traffic on fewer tracks through the corridor and operational staff is being trained to coordinate traffic through the reconfigured junction. Three-track operation is tentatively scheduled to begin on Monday, April 2, 2007 and continue until the Brown Line capacity expansion project is completed in 2009, however, the start date will not be finalized until all signals and crossover work is completed and passes tests for reliability.

The construction is part of the Brown Line capacity expansion project which, when completed, will allow the CTA to accommodate more customers in this busy and growing corridor and will make all Brown Line stations accessible to people with disabilities.

2/14/07 The Chicago Transit Board today approved an intergovernmental agreement with Metra for the installation of CTA Transit Card vending machines at the Ogilvie Transportation Center and the Millennium station. Once installed, customers will be able to purchase magnetic strip transit cards as well as add value to magnetic strip transit cards and Chicago Cards. The machines are expected to be installed in late spring. Both Ogilvie, located at Madison and Canal, and Millennium station, located at Randolph and Michigan, connect travelers to downtown CTA bus and rail service.

“CTA is working closely with Metra to provide customers easier access to CTA fare media,” said CTA President Frank Kruesi. (cont on page 5)

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CTA CORNER

"Many public transit customers use both CTA and Metra to travel throughout the region, in fact, more than 90 percent of Metra customers begin or end their trips downtown. This action will make it easier for these customers who choose to use CTA to continue their trips."

"Making fare media easily accessible improves the convenience of taking public transit to work as well as to special events," said Metra Executive Director Philip A. Pagano. "With this installation, CTA transit card vending machines will be available at all downtown Metra stations."

Under the agreement with Metra, the CTA Transit Card vending machines will remain at Metra's facilities for one year and the agreement may be renewed on a yearly basis.

Currently, CTA's 1-Day Fun Pass, 7-Day Pass, round trip transit card and reduced fare transit card are available for purchase at the Metra facility at Ogilvie Transportation Center on Saturday, February 17 and Saturday, March 17 (1- and 7-Day pass only). The farecards are available in an effort to make purchasing CTA fare media more convenient for commuters attending events such as the 2007 Chicago Auto Show and St. Patrick's Day Parade.

Visitor Passes also may be purchased at vending machines at Chicago's O'Hare and Midway airports, CTA's Red Line Chicago station (at State), CTA's Blue Line Cumberland and Rosemont rail stations and at the Water Works Visitor Information Center at Chicago and Michigan. Value cannot be added to Visitor Passes and they cannot be shared.

Information on sales locations for CTA fare media and CTA service information can be found on www.transitchicago.com. Service information is also available by calling 836-7000 from any local area code.

02/15/07 As part of its continued effort to streamline operations and implement cost-efficiencies, the Chicago Transit Authority yesterday issued a Request for Proposals for professional real estate management services for CTA-owned and leased properties. The decision to outsource the agency's real estate management responsibilities is in response to a recommendation made by AECOM, a consultant enlisted by CTA to help identify additional cost-efficiencies in its operations.

A pre-proposal conference will be held at CTA's main office at 567 West Lake Street on March 1 at 10:00 a.m. to

discuss the parameters of the RFP and the outsourcing project. All proposals must be submitted by March 19 via one of the following methods:

<u>Delivery</u>	<u>Service</u>	<u>or</u>	<u>Drop</u>	<u>Off</u>
Chicago		Transit		Authority
Bid	Office	-	2nd	Floor
567	W.		Lake	Street
Chicago, IL 60661-1498				

<u>Via</u>	<u>Mail</u>
Chicago	Transit
Bid	Authority
PO	Office
	7554
Chicago IL 60680 7554	

The RFP covers five basic areas of service including Management Oversight; Operating and Support Property Management; Concession Property Management; Real Estate Information Management; and Transit Oriented Development. Services can be provided by one firm or a multi-disciplinary team.

The selected contractor will be responsible for: maintaining and operating the properties; negotiating and monitoring leases; purchasing and selling real estate; maintaining all documentation for properties; ensuring accurate budgeting of the properties; identifying and curing encroachments; and exploring transit oriented development opportunities on or near CTA-owned properties.

In 2005, CTA generated more than \$5 million in revenue from CTA-owned property such as retail concessions at rail stations and storefronts located near rail stations, Park & Ride facilities, Under 'L' parking, billboards and office space.

02/16/07 The Chicago Transit Authority will hold several community meetings to provide proposed service details for upcoming three-track rail operation. As part of the Brown Line capacity expansion project, trains serving the Belmont and Fullerton stations will have to share three tracks instead of four to allow construction crews the necessary space to install elevators at each station and expand the platforms to accommodate longer trains. Operating trains on one less track at Belmont and Fullerton will allow the CTA to keep both stations open and maintain rail service during construction.

Three-track operation is tentatively scheduled to begin on Monday, April 2 and continue until the Brown Line capacity expansion project is completed in 2009, however,

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CTA CORNER

the start date will not be finalized until all signals and crossover work is completed and passes tests for reliability.

Meeting dates are as follows:

- Monday, March 12 from 6 to 8 p.m. at Lane Tech High School Auditorium, located at 2501 West Addison Street (Addison and Western).
- Thursday, March 15 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Agassiz Elementary School Auditorium, located at 2851 North Seminary Avenue.
- Monday, March 19 from 6 to 8 p.m. at Truman College Cafeteria, located at 1145 West Wilson Avenue.
- Monday, March 26 from 6 to 8 p.m. at CTA Headquarters - 2nd Floor, located at 567 West Lake Street.

All facilities are accessible to people with disabilities.

The shift to three-track operation this spring in the rail corridor between Armitage and Addison (Red Line) will result in more crowded trains and longer commutes for customers on the Brown Line, Purple Line Express and north branch of the Red Line.

To the extent possible, the CTA recommends that customers plan to leave earlier or later, and allow extra travel time. Customers are asked to consider alternate service such as nearby bus routes, other CTA rail lines such as the Blue Line or Metra trains. CTA plans to increase the frequency of service on several existing bus routes serving the corridor to help accommodate rail customers who may choose to switch to nearby bus service.

Information on the Brown Line capacity expansion project can be found on CTA's web site at www.transitchicago.com or www.ctabrownline.com.

2/16/07 Chicago Transit Authority Chicago Card customers who claim to have paid extra money in fares in January 2006 due to a short supply of Chicago Cards at retail CTA sales outlets may qualify for refunds. The CTA recently settled a class action lawsuit alleging there were not enough Chicago Cards available to meet demand beginning January 1, 2006, the day a CTA cash fare increase went into effect. The CTA denies all liability in this case.

The class action lawsuit was settled January 29 in the Circuit Court of Cook County. In accordance with the terms of the settlement, CTA will credit up to a total of \$199,400 to Chicago Card customers who claim they paid higher fares because they could not purchase a Chicago Card between December 15, 2005 and January 31, 2006.

To obtain a refund, customers who claim they could not purchase a Chicago Card must submit a claim form to have the refunded value credited to their Chicago Card. Customers will be required to report how much additional money they paid in fares; dates and locations where they attempted to purchase the farecard; and the approximate number of attempts made to purchase the farecard at each location.

CTA settled the case to avoid a long and costly litigation process. Prior to the \$5 Chicago Cards fee waiver, CTA encouraged retailers to increase their supply of Chicago Cards to meet the anticipated demand. Retailers ran out of the cards quickly in the first few days of the cash fare increase due to a huge last minute surge in demand in late December. When retailers realized the demand was larger than their supply, they informed the CTA and ordered more cards.

Claims must be submitted to Edelman, Combs, Lattner & Goodwin, LLC by May 29, 2007.

The information about the settlement and the claim form are available on the CTA web site at [Full Notice and Claim Form](#) (PDF), or can be obtained by calling Edelman, Combs, Lattner & Goodwin, LLC, 120 S. LaSalle, Suite #1800, Chicago, IL 60603.

Claims can only be made by Chicago Card customers. If customers had a Chicago Card during the noted time period and have since upgraded to Chicago Card Plus, the CTA will credit the current Chicago Card Plus account.

• PACE PATTERN

Last Thursday, February 8, the public transit agencies in northeastern Illinois endorsed, with historically significant cooperation, the Moving Beyond Congestion plan, which calls for \$10 billion in new capital funding over five years, and \$400 million annually in new operating funding.

After the Regional Transportation Authority Board meeting, at which the 13-member board unanimously adopted the plan, Pace Executive Director T.J. Ross and the heads of CTA, Metra and RTA all announced their support of the plan and the transportation needs that this funding will help to meet. (Cont on page 7)

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CTA CORNER

The capital investment aims to maintain, enhance and expand the region's transit system. The RTA's plan proposes to better serve the mobility needs of the region's growing population and to combat increasing traffic congestion.

Rather than specifying a particular funding source, the plan offers a menu of funding options for reaction and consideration in the current legislative session.

An increase in operating funding allows Pace to expand its community-based service throughout the six-county region.

With additional funding, Pace seeks to solve a current-year \$23 million deficit for the suburban bus operation, and a \$100 million ADA paratransit operations need. Any operations funding in addition to those amounts would go towards expanding service to suburban areas that currently lack transit service, and making service more frequent in areas that have it. New capital funding would go towards modernizing Pace's bus fleet, purchasing additional vehicles for expansion of community-based service, and creating infrastructure improvements such as transit signal priority and real-time passenger information at transit centers. Customers (and potential Pace riders) could look forward to an end to ADA service boundary issues, better information about when buses are arriving and departing, and shorter commute times on arterial streets.

An infusion of capital funding from the State could help Pace construct federally authorized Bus Rapid Transit projects. BRTs often use dedicated right-of-ways, similar to the one in this artist's rendering.

"If the suburbs are asked to contribute more, we need to make sure additional transit service stays in the suburbs," said Ross. "Because the overwhelming majority of new people and new jobs are in the suburbs, the suburbs should be the focus of service expansions and enhancements."

The final Moving Beyond Congestion report comes at a time when the Chicago area faces the second-worst traffic congestion in the country, costing nearly \$5 billion annually in lost time and wasted gas. (The full report is available on the MBC Web site.) The five-year strategic plan released last week follows the November release of MBC's 30-year vision for investing in public transit in northeastern Illinois, which was amended based on comments received at a series of public hearings.

The five-year plan includes many expansion projects that are in the planning and design phases, but most of the money is needed to maintain and enhance existing service. "This plan could be the start of what all residents of northeastern Illinois need and deserve—a comprehensive public transportation system," said Pace Chairman Richard

Kwasneski. "It will allow Pace to provide more innovative services to the suburbs."

Pace and the other service boards have not received any state capital funding since Illinois FIRST expired in 2004, which significantly jeopardizes the infusion of federal funding that northeastern Illinois is slated to receive from SAFETEA-LU.

RTA Chairman Jim Reilly commended the CTA, Metra and Pace for their extraordinary cooperation and coordination during the MBC strategic planning process. That process garnered extensive input from local and county governments and organizations from across the region representing all facets of the metropolitan area.

"You can't only keep building roads to counter increasing traffic congestion. To get people out of the cars and onto transit, you have to keep transit attractive in terms of travel time, convenience and price," RTA Executive Director Steve Schlickman said. "This five-year plan gets the existing system in good condition so we can move ahead with new service and stay ahead of congestion growth."

FIRST LOOK SHOWS 2006 WAS A GOOD YEAR FOR PACE

January 18, 2007 3:30:00 PM

Ridership returns to pre-9/11 level of 38 million; up 5 percent over last year

Preliminary reports show 2006 Pace ridership around 38 million, an amount indicating a return to levels not seen since 2000 and an increase of about 5 percent over last year. While that's good news for the suburban agency, Pace Chairman Richard Kwasneski said "the interesting part is that the numbers may be the same but there's a difference." The traditional stalwart of the transit system, fixed route ridership, is flat or down slightly due in part to a change in CTA transfer policy.

Gains can be attributed primarily to the addition of City of Chicago ADA riders, which estimates indicate will more than double the number of Pace paratransit riders with only six months of service. To a lesser degree, non-conventional modes of transit - various vanpools and special events services - are contributing to the increase.

The Bears Shuttle which expanded to seven south and west suburban locations went from ridership of 8,962 in 2005 to 13,230 in 2006. Ridership was nearly 1,900 for the New Year's Eve Bears game, a high for the season. There were 85 vanpools added in 2006, and an average of about 130 calls a month inquiring about the program. (cont on page 8)

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PACE PATTERN

Visits to the Pace website, www.pacebus.com also show a growing interest in Pace's family of services. There were 10,000 more visitors to the site in December 2006 compared to December 2005.

Looking at the year ahead, Kwasneski acknowledged funding is the big issue. "We're going after the ability to maintain, enhance and build a suburban system. We know new markets are out there, especially in growing areas like the collar counties, but we need funding to go after them."

This year Pace is unveiling service changes as a result of its South Cook County-Will County Initiative. Different planning methods, extensive market research, and what Kwasneski describes as "a speed advantage we didn't have before" - Transit Signal Priority - should make this an interesting change to watch. What's learned here and through 2006 numbers will guide other planning efforts.

More Pace statistics will be available later following a complete analysis of 2006 data.

• METRA MATTERS

Face-lift due soon for Metra station

South Loop facility aims to complement Grant Park area

By Richard Wronski Tribune staff reporter

February 8, 2007

Work will begin this spring on a new South Loop Metra station that will replace a rickety, rusty eyesore with a new beaux-arts structure that will complement its Grant Park surroundings and the Museum Campus, officials said Wednesday.

The entrance to the \$10 million station will be from the 11th Street pedestrian bridge. The project, being done by the City of Chicago and Metra, involves constructing new platforms and two elevators, making the station accessible for the disabled, officials said.

Gone will be the shabby wooden Roosevelt Road station and pedestrian walkway serving the Metra Electric and South Shore Lines. The structures are believed to be about 100 years old.

Grant Park advocates hailed word that the Department of Transportation had signed a contract for the new station.

"We've been getting complaints about the pedestrian bridge and station for over 15 years," said Bob O'Neill, president of the Grant Park Advisory Council.

"This is Chicago's front yard. [The old station] looks like something out of an old Wild West movie. When you walk on it, it's even in worse shape. People have said to me that it is really an embarrassment."

The new station is designed to blend with the nearby public architecture of Grant Park and Museum Campus, said Brian Steele, a spokesman for the Department of Transportation.

Construction is expected to take about 18 months and will not affect vehicle traffic or Metra users because most work will be done during non-rush-hour periods, Steele said.

The Grant Park Advisory Council and others have pushed for several years to replace the old station, but progress was delayed by lack of funding.

Finally, in November, the Illinois Department of Transportation came through with a long-promised \$2.8 million grant.

The money will be used to relocate Metra tracks to facilitate construction, said Judy Pardonnet, a Metra spokeswoman.

Current ridership figures are unavailable, but the Metra station is well-used by commuters, South Loop residents, Museum Campus visitors and Bears fans, Pardonnet said.

Recent additions to the area include a dog park, skate plaza, and the Agora sculptures.

"There's a lot going on in that area now," O'Neill said. "There needs to be a world-class station for a world-class park. It's elegant. It's one more piece to finish the south end of Grant Park."

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Metra-Milwaukee link seen

Wisconsin line may tie into suburban rail

By Dan Gibbard, Tribune staff reporter. Freelance reporter Andrew Schroedter contributed to this report

February 6, 2007

A Wisconsin agency pushing a \$200 million Kenosha-to-Milwaukee commuter rail line that would link with Metra has come up with a funding plan and hopes trains could be running as soon as 2010, officials said Monday.

The 33-mile, nine-stop line would use existing tracks and share a station with Metra in Kenosha, said Carl Mueller, a spokesman for the Southeast Wisconsin Regional Transit Authority. The commission hopes to sell up to \$50 million in bonds and pay them off by raising the \$2 car rental fee in the affected counties to \$15, Mueller said.

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METRA MATTERS

"The growing consensus is that it will both provide economic stimulus to the cities along the route ... [and provide them] with a reliable direct link to Chicago and its northern suburbs," Mueller said. "We're becoming one big metro area."

Officials with the group estimate annual ridership at 1.4 million and hope the line could begin service between 2010 and 2012. With 14 round trips on weekdays and seven on weekends, riding would be more convenient and cheaper than Amtrak, Mueller said.

The Wisconsin legislature and Gov. Jim Doyle would have to approve raising the car rental fee. That decision will be made in May, Mueller said, and Southeast Wisconsin RTA plans to submit plans for federal funding this summer.

The project would use existing stations in Kenosha and Milwaukee and build seven new ones, with one linking to Milwaukee's Gen. Mitchell International Airport. The KRM, as officials call it (for Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee), would operate its own trains.

The lion's share of the cost would come from federal funding: \$100 million in Federal Transit Administration "New Starts" money and up to \$27 million from a congestion mitigation program, Mueller said.

"We're increasingly but still cautiously optimistic," Mueller said. "The vast majority wants it, but everyone wants someone else to pay for it."

Metra officials said they are aware of the proposal but are not involved in it.

"We have enough projects in our own service area," spokeswoman Judy Pardonnet said.

On the other hand, she said, "If they do it and it brings us additional riders, we'd certainly appreciate it. We'd always take more riders."

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Metra saw record ridership in 2006

Chicago, Feb. 16, 2007 - Metra trains provided nearly 80 million passenger trips last year to commuters in the six-county region, the most annual riders in the agency's 23-year history. The 79.9 million passenger trips represent the highest number of rides provided by commuter rail in Northeastern Illinois in 38 years.

The figures, based on tickets sales, were presented Friday to the Metra board of directors. Add in numbers from the South Shore Line, which runs between Chicago and South Bend, Ind., and the region's commuter rail services provided a record 84.3 million rides in 2006. That beats the previous Metra-South Shore record set in 2001 by nearly 2 percent.

"Metra provides a critical service to residents and workers in Northeastern Illinois that is vital to our economy and quality of life," said Philip A. Pagano, Metra Executive Director. "This surge in ridership highlights the need to continue to maintain and expand our commuter rail system."

Since dipping to 58.9 million passenger trips in 1983, when Metra was formed, the number of commuter rail riders in the region has jumped 43 percent. Compared to 2005, Metra saw an increase of 5.2 percent.

The 2006 ridership increase can be attributed to a host of factors, including several expanded schedules and nine new stations that debuted last year. Two other chief influences were the still-rising costs of gasoline and a rebound of employment rates to pre-Sept. 11 levels.

While Metra's recently expanded lines saw the greatest percentage increases, gains were seen across the system. The busiest route continues to be the BNSF Railway, between Aurora and Chicago Union Station, which saw 15.8 million trips in 2006. Ridership on the BNSF rose 2.7 percent compared to last year.

The two largest gains were on the SouthWest Service between Chicago Union Station and Manhattan, and on the North Central Service between Antioch and Chicago Union Station. The NCS jumped 19 percent over last year providing 1.2 million rides while the SWS went up 17 percent providing 2.1 million rides.

• RTA CORNER

Transit funding roadblocks predicted for Springfield

By Joseph Ryan Daily Herald Staff Writer

Posted Friday, February 09, 2007

Key politicians plugged their ears Thursday to cries from business, labor and transit advocates to relieve congestion through \$5 billion in new taxes for road, train and bus repairs and upgrades.

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RTA CORNER

At the same time, sparring between Chicago and suburban leaders appears to be undermining once-budding local support for one of Illinois' biggest transportation packages ever.

Metra, Pace, the CTA, big unions and the state chamber of commerce argue the problem is too big for politicians to ignore or for regional leaders to squabble away a solution.

"We have to join forces to build support in Springfield," said Regional Transportation Authority Chairman Jim Reilly at a Thursday news conference.

The RTA wants \$10 billion over five years to maintain and expand Metra, Pace and CTA systems. It also wants another \$400 million yearly to run the buses and trains, nearly a 50 percent increase in public tax support.

The agencies are \$226 million in debt this year and threatening shutdowns and drastic fare hikes if at least that figure isn't covered. Road builders are asking for another \$2 billion or more a year for long-neglected road repairs and expansions.

Reilly acknowledged Thursday the importance of having the governor's backing, but the governor isn't giving it.

"We have many competing interests to balance and it would be shortsighted for the RTA to rely solely on the state to fill their budget needs," said Gov. Rod Blagojevich spokeswoman Abby Ottenhoff.

House Speaker Michael Madigan and Senate President Emil Jones Jr., both Chicago Democrats, have prioritized state employee pension and education funding, respectively. Even some once-supportive suburban lawmakers now say the political climate is not right for a massive spending bill on transit and roads.

"The RTA needs to get in line, and they are not at the head of the line," said state Sen. Kirk Dillard, a Hinsdale Republican.

As Capitol leaders seemed to turn their backs on the proposals, the ever-present struggles between the suburbs and Chicago threatened local support.

Collar county board chairmen signed a letter endorsing the efforts of Metra, Pace and the CTA to get more funding but stopped shy of commenting on inherent tax hikes.

"We will not pay to bail out the CTA. They are a mess," said Lake County Chairman Suzi Schmidt.

DuPage County Chairman Bob Schillerstrom said "the average guy on the street" doesn't yet understand what the proposals would do for him.

"If we talk tax increases before we know that, it is dead on

arrival," he said

The RTA proposal would fund Metra's long-sought STAR Line from O'Hare to Joliet and upgrades to the Union Pacific West and Northwest lines. Pace would get funding for several dedicated bus lanes, including one on Golf Road.

Much of the transit expansion money would go to maintaining the system and new buses and train cars. A separate proposal for road funding doesn't detail the projects to be funded.

Funding options include a wide range of sales, gas, income, business or property tax increases to higher tolls. No politician or proposal advocate would endorse any of them Thursday.

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• FOREIGN NEWS

ŠKODA ELECTRIC s.r.o., a subsidiary of ŠKODA HOLDING a.s., has won an extraordinary contract for 150 low-floor trolleybuses.

ŠKODA ELECTRIC s.r.o., a subsidiary of ŠKODA HOLDING a.s., has won an extraordinary contract for 150 low-floor trolleybuses. For ŠKODA ELECTRIC, the long-term contract worth CZK 1.5 billion represents a return to its traditional market. In terms of the number of trolleybuses ordered, the contract is one of the biggest in Europe's trolleybus industry.



Lowfloor trolleybuses ŠKODA 24 Tr IRISBUS

The customer is Riga Satiksme, the transport enterprise of the City of Riga. The customer chose the low-floor, two-axle, 12-meter-long trolleybus known as the ŠKODA 24 Tr. The vehicles for the capital city of Latvia are equipped with air conditioning for the driver as well as the passengers, a ramp for the disabled, and automatic collectors. The delivery of the trolleybuses will take place from 2007 to 2011. ŠKODA ELECTRIC will deliver the first vehicles in August-September of this year, and the customer will

receive another 20 trolleybuses in 2007. The trolleybuses will be manufactured in cooperation with IRISBUS IVECO.



Lowfloor trolleybus SKODA 24 Tr IRISBUS

The City of Riga currently operates almost 300 ŠKODA trolleybuses; the first were delivered in 1955, and in 1998 ŠKODA delivered thirty 14 Tr trolleybuses as a result of a World Bank tender. The last deliveries – six ŠKODA 15 Tr trolleybuses – took place in 2001.



Lowfloor trolleybus SKODA 24 Tr IRISBUS

The acquisition of the contract was preceded by a preparation phase lasting almost two years. The loan of a ŠKODA 24 TR trolleybus to Riga contributed considerably to ŠKODA ELECTRIC's success in the tender. The month-long operation of the vehicle was testimony to the product's quality. The new contract has confirmed ŠKODA ELECTRIC's promising export ambition. The company is participating in other tenders for trolleybus contracts in Moscow, in other cities in the Baltics, and in Rumania.

České Budějovice continues renewal of its trolleybus fleet

SKODA ELECTRIC, a subsidiary company of ŠKODA HOLDING a.s., will be supplying the South Bohemian city with another five SKODA 25 Tr articulated trolleybuses.

FOREIGN CORNER

The transport company in České Budějovice is using its option to purchase five vehicles at a cost of CZK 66.5 on the basis of its good operational experience with the trolleybuses.

The transport company in České Budějovice began to deploy the low-floor articulated trolleybuses in 2005 when SKODA ELECTRIC won a tender for supply of eight articulated trolleybuses, two of which were jointly financed from the structural funds of the European Union. All five trolleybuses ordered in terms of the above-mentioned option will be delivered to the customer by SKODA ELECTRIC by the end of June 2007.



Trolleybus SKODA 25 Tr - České Budějovice

SKODA ELECTRIC supplied 43 articulated and so-called solo trolleybuses in 2006. Vehicles with a modern bodywork design are operated in nine cities around the Czech Republic. New trolleybuses from SKODA ELECTRIC have also appeared abroad. SKODA ELECTRIC also manufactures vehicles for the Slovak cities of Bratislava and Prešov on the basis of long-term contracts. Last year SKODA ELECTRIC won important orders for supply of trolleybuses for Brno, Zlín and Ústí nad Labem.

NABI receives 35-LFW order from Rockford

Ontario, CA—Rockford Mass Transit District of Rockford, IL recently awarded North American Bus Industries, Inc. (NABI) an order for 20 35-foot low-floor (model 35-LFW) diesel buses. Total contract value is approximately \$6 million.

"The biggest benefit NABI's new bus equipment will provide is the easily accessible low floors," said Dan Engelkes, Maintenance Manager for Rockford Mass

Transit District. "Updating our fleet to low-floor buses will allow for easier customer boarding and alighting."

These 20 new NABI low-floor buses will replace 19 buses of Rockford's existing 39 bus fleet and will add one bus for service expansion, bringing its total fleet to 40 buses. All 20 diesel buses will utilize a 2007-certified Cummins ISL 280 engine outfitted with a diesel particulate filter.

"Rockford is a new customer for NABI, and we look forward to this opportunity to serve the mid-west," said Bill Coryell, NABI Vice President of Sales. "Our low-floor 35-foot vehicle is easily accessible and will aid Rockford in providing safe and efficient transportation services to its customers."



NABI will deliver the 35-LFW buses in early 2007. Illustrated is a 35-LFW for Pace.

In prior issues of The Green Pennant Special, we had posted photos of RTA and Pace equipment. This month we step into the archives and show some older CTA equipment.



CSL 3460 White



CSL New Twin Coaches



CTA 635 63rd & Halsted northbound



CTA 1746 & 9286 North & Narragansett

Omnibus Society of America Photo DVD Order Form

The Omnibus Society of America is producing photo DVD's of slides and prints from the collection of Melvin Bernero. Each DVD contains close to 300 images of transportation related subjects, both streetcar, bus and subway/elevated.

At the moment, we are offering the following photo DVD's: CTA Bus (color and black & white images on one DVD); CTA Subway/'L' (color and black & white images on one DVD); Transit in Northern Illinois (color and black & white images on one DVD); Chicago Trolleybuses (color and black & white images on one DVD and CTA/CSL Streetcars (black & white images on 2 DVD's). Other subjects will be added as time permits.

Each DVD is selling for \$15.00 with \$3.50 shipping and handling and all funds raised goes to help support the Omnibus Society of America. Please allow 3 to 4 weeks for delivery.



CTA Subway/Elevated



Transit properties of Wisconsin



Chicago Trolleybuses



CTA/CSL Streetcar Volume 1 & 2



CTA Buses in Color



Transit in Northern Illinois

<u>Quantity</u>	<u>DVD Title</u>	<u>Amount</u>
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