



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OMNIBUS SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.

MAY 2007

\$2.00

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.

### • MAY OSA MEETING

**The May meeting** of the Omnibus Society of America will be held on May 4, 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 "*Busses of the Buckeye State*" will be a slide presentation presented by Mel Bernero.

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.

On April 21, many OSA members and friends of John Lebeau gathered at Tiffany's Restaurant to celebrate his birthday as well as his impending retirement after 40 years as a PACE employee. We wish John Many happy return of the day as well as many years of happiness in retirement. Hopefullt John will get some of the zillion boxes of slides labeled so we can enjoy many more of his great slide shows.. Thanks John!!!!

OSA extends a hardy welcome to four new members this month:

- 210 Vincent Goryl
- 211 Peter Brody
- 212 Joey Goryl
- 213 Edward Bernett

### • CTA CORNER

## CTA chief Kruesi steps down

By Gary Washburn and Jon Hilkevitch  
Tribune staff reporters  
Published April 19, 2007, 8:48 PM CDT

With the rift widening between the city and the suburbs over transit funding, Mayor Richard Daley replaced the polarizing president of the Chicago Transit Authority with an administrator known to be tough, but conciliatory.

In Ron Huberman, Daley selected a proven star of his administration to seek more money for the troubled agency and upgrade the CTA system as Chicago prepares to bid for the 2016 Olympic Games.

Assuming approval by the CTA board, Huberman will succeed Frank Kruesi, the politically wired CTA president who has become a lightning rod for criticism.

The hard-edged Kruesi has presided over ridership increases and directed major rail projects in his more than nine years on the job. But he also has taken hits for introducing fare increases and for what has become his annual threat of massive service cuts unless the state boosts funding.

"I want to have a transportation system that meets the needs of riders and keeps our economy very strong," Daley said. "I want to be assured that riders and taxpayers are getting their money's worth. As you know, the General Assembly will demand that same assurance as a condition of providing the increased funding the CTA needs so badly."

What will become of Kruesi, 56, a one-time Springfield aide and roommate of the mayor when Daley was a state legislator, was not revealed.

Asked if his longtime friend might land a job in connection with the city's Olympic effort, Daley dodged.

"Frank is a very, very knowledgeable person in government," the mayor replied. "He was in state government for many years. He was in county government. He was in the federal government, and the city government, is very knowledgeable in regards especially to public transportation and other issues. He is one of my best advisers."

Kruesi made connections in Washington during a stint as a senior staffer in the U.S. Department of Transportation before returning to Chicago to head the CTA. Daley has said the federal government would have to fund transit infrastructure improvements if Chicago wins the 2016 Games, and he specifically has mentioned the need for a new rail line west of downtown that would run north and south.

But the CTA faces huge challenges this year. The current rail and bus system has unmet capital improvement needs that officials estimate at \$5.8 billion; an operating budget that could be \$110 million in the red if the state doesn't come to the rescue with more money; and what officials contend is a need for a long-term injection of funding just to maintain present service levels.

If Springfield ultimately agrees to provide more money, legislators will demand reforms and cost-cutting measures, Huberman said at a City Hall news conference where his appointment was announced.

"I am committed to finding new ways to tighten the belt of the CTA and finding new and innovative ways to deliver service more efficiently," he said. "The mayor has made it clear to me that everything is on the table."

In a humorous aside, Huberman, 35, said he has hands-on transportation experience—driving a bus for three years when he was a college student.

But Daley insisted Huberman's thin résumé in the public transit field is not a concern.

"He is very knowledgeable, very smart, very practical," Daley said. "He works with people well. He brings in very creative and innovative people. It is all about management. It is all about setting policies."

Huberman became a street officer for the Chicago Police Department in the mid-1990s, rising quickly through the ranks to become an assistant deputy superintendent and the department's technology guru. After catching Daley's eye, Huberman was appointed in 2004 to head the city's Office of Emergency Management and Communications.

As a federal investigation into contracting and hiring fraud was picking up steam, Daley made a show of naming Huberman his chief of staff in 2005, with orders

to clean up City Hall and to make city government more efficient.

Daley declined to say who would succeed Huberman as chief of staff, considered the second-most powerful job in city government. But Terry Peterson, a former alderman who until recently headed the Chicago Housing Authority, is viewed as a top contender. Peterson was the campaign manager for Daley in his bid for re-election in February.

Also seen as a possible candidate for the job is Cortez Trotter, the city's chief emergency officer.

Kruesi, a behind-the-scenes operator in Chicago politics for years, who insiders say was behind Daley's decision to bulldoze Meigs Field, was not asked to resign, the mayor said. But the sometimes abrasive CTA chief is disliked and distrusted by some legislators in Springfield.

Suburban officials who viewed Kruesi as a roadblock to transit funding said Daley effectively took the issue off the table by shaking up the CTA's leadership.

"It's good to have new blood coming in, and we will reach out to the new team," said U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Ill). "With new leadership comes new ideas."

Kruesi insisted he made the decision to leave on his own and denied he has been toxic for the CTA in Springfield.

"This polarizing notion that people have, quite frankly, I'd say you're about nine, 10 months behind," he said. "That tone has changed dramatically."

Kruesi came under fire in 2003 for trying to engineer pension sweeteners for top CTA executives, including himself. When details became public, the agency's embarrassed board reversed itself and killed the deal.

Daley was asked Thursday if Kruesi's pension will be increased now as he leaves the CTA.

"I don't think so," the mayor replied. Pressed by reporters, he added, "I just said no."

## **DALEY RECOMMENDS HUBERMAN AS NEXT CTA PRESIDENT**

4/19/07

Mayor Richard M. Daley said today he will recommend that the Chicago Transit Authority Board name Ron Huberman President, replacing Frank Kruesi, who resigned after 9½ years as the transit agency's chief executive officer.

Huberman has been Daley's Chief of Staff for the last two years and previously served as Executive Director of

the Office of Emergency Management and Communications.

"Ron has done an outstanding job of making City government run more efficiently and effectively," Daley said at a City Hall news conference. "His Performance Management Initiative sets standards for every employee and holds managers strictly accountable for the performance of their departments. This has enabled us to maintain high-quality services to Chicago residents while holding taxes down.

"I'm challenging Ron to apply those skills to the CTA. I want him to examine the CTA from top to bottom, reduce costs wherever possible and make whatever changes are necessary to make it run more efficiently. "I want to have a transportation system that meets the needs of riders and keeps our economy strong, and I want to be assured that riders and taxpayers are getting their money's worth. And I know the Illinois General Assembly will demand that same assurance as a condition of providing the increased funding the CTA needs so badly."

Daley said Kruesi "has been a valuable member of my administration for many years, and I know I'll be calling on him for assistance in the future."

The Mayor noted that under Kruesi's leadership, the CTA's total ridership rose to its highest level since 1993 and rail ridership rose to its highest level since 1969. Under Kruesi's leadership, Daley noted, the CTA reconstructed the 54th/Cermak branch of the Blue Line and the Dan Ryan branch of the Red Line; secured state and federal funding for the reconstruction of the Brown Line, which is well underway; opened the Pink Line; added more than 1,200 buses in the fleet and made all buses handicapped accessible; rehabbed 600 rail cars; reduced bus emissions by 22 percent through new technology; and introduced the Chicago Card.

## CTA to Expand Bus Tracker

4/23/07

### *Service Management Tool Provides Bus Location and Estimated Arrival Time*

The Chicago Transit Board today approved three contracts totaling \$24.1 million that allows CTA to expand the Bus Tracker program to all 154 bus routes. The contracts with Clever Devices, IBM and Sprint/Nextel provide for the purchase and installation of hardware and system upgrades needed in order for the program to be functional on CTA's entire bus fleet. Once installed, the technological equipment also can be used to support other initiatives such as the Mobile Security Network.

"We're putting technology to work to improve service reliability and customer satisfaction," said CTA President Frank Kruesi. "Last year nearly 300 million rides were

taken on CTA buses. Through this initiative we can improve bus service through the real-time data collected and make bus travel even more convenient for our customers and more attractive to potential customers." Through global positioning satellite (GPS) technology, CTA supervisory personnel will be able to map the location of every bus on every route throughout the entire system and make service adjustments based on the performance of the entire fleet, rather than only what they can see from their post on the street. Information such as gaps in service along the route or delays at a specific point will be viewed in real time and supervisors may make the necessary adjustments immediately and be better able to predict the impact of the adjustment.

The ability to see the location of buses and the level of service throughout the entire route as well as throughout the service corridor will provide the necessary information to help mitigate bus bunching and provide a more consistent level of service along the route.

For customers, the information technology will enable them to find out when the next bus is due to arrive, ultimately reducing wait times, improving service reliability and enhancing the overall transit experience. In August 2006, CTA began testing Bus Tracker on the #20 Madison route and at one bus shelter along the route. Throughout the initial pilot, field supervisors on the #20 Madison route were equipped with laptops and Control Center personnel were able to monitor on-time performance, track bus locations, monitor when buses leave the garage and begin their trips, and monitor intervals between buses. The software also provides text-messaging capabilities to bus operators from the Control Center and field supervisors.

Since the pilot's inception, customers have been able to access Bus Tracker via a dedicated web site, [www.ctabustracker.com](http://www.ctabustracker.com), to get estimated arrival times of buses along the route. CTA will gradually add routes to the Bus Tracker web site according to each of CTA's eight garages. As the program expands throughout the summer, customers will be able to access information for their bus routes. The web site also provides a route map with icons indicating the location and direction of each bus currently in service along the route and estimated arrival times for bus stops along the route. Customers can choose to activate an alarm that will alert them when a bus is approaching their stop.

The first routes to be added will originate from the North Park garage as dozens of the routes operate throughout areas that are most impacted by three-track operation. Bus Tracker will be operational throughout CTA's entire bus fleet early in 2008.

Later this year, customers will be able to find estimated arrival times for the following routes:

- #11 Lincoln/Sedgwick
- #22 Clark

- #36 Broadway
- #49B North Western
- #93 California/Dodge
- #96 Lunt
- #97 Skokie
- #X98 Avon Express
- #125 Water Tower Express
- #135 Clarendon/LaSalle Express
- #136 Sheridan/LaSalle Express
- #143 Stockton/Michigan Express
- #144 Marine/Michigan Express
- #145 Wilson/Michigan Express
- #146 Inner Drive/Michigan Express
- #147 Outer Drive Express
- #148 Clarendon/Michigan Express
- #151 Sheridan
- #152 Addison
- #154 Wrigley Field Express
- #155 Devon
- #200 Main Shuttle
- #201 Central/Ridge
- #205 Chicago/Golf
- #206 Evanston Circulator

To get the estimated arrival times of buses along the route, customers can access the Bus Tracker web site from their computers and web-enabled personal digital assistants (PDAs). BlackBerry™ users must have version 4.1 or higher.

The PDAs must have full Internet access capabilities through web browsers that support HyperText Markup Language (HTML) such as Internet Explorer®. Customers who use PDAs will be able to access the estimated arrival time display only. Cell phone users should contact their wireless service providers for information on their phone's internet capabilities.

Today's board action leverages previous investments in technology by using them as building blocks, with each phase of the project providing additional benefits for customers and the CTA. In 2003, CTA installed the automated announcement system which also gathers information using GPS technology to announce next stop and other route information to customers, as well as the automated vehicle location system which provides operational data that is evaluated to help improve the performance of CTA bus service.

Clever Devices was selected to expand Bus Tracker as it was the company chosen through the competitive bid process to supply the original equipment upon which the Bus Tracker program is built. Additional equipment and technology is supplied by Sprint/Nextel and IBM.

## • PACE PATTERN

### South Cook County - Will County Initiative

#### Service Concepts – March 2007

In March, Pace presented service concepts for the South Cook County – Will County area. Concepts for each route operating in the area and several new services are posted on this page.

Before you review the service concepts, please take a few minutes to learn how the concepts were developed and structured and where the Initiative goes from here: [view the presentation](#) that Pace delivered at nine public forums around the area in March. Pace still welcomes your comments on changes shown here or other changes that you feel should be considered: [e-mail Pace Passenger Services](#) or call them at (847) 364-7223.

**A second round of forums will take place in early June to discuss a more detailed service plan for the South Cook County – Will County area.**

**Please keep in mind that the service concepts are not restricted to current funding levels. Pace would require additional operating and capital funding to implement all of the proposed changes shown here.**

#### Elgin Area Restructuring Initiative

Pace, in conjunction with the Chicago Transit Authority, Metra and Elgin Area communities, conducted an Initiative of all transit service in the area. The goal of this Initiative was to improve transit in the Elgin Area area to better meet passengers' needs.

The Initiative was coordinated between Pace and other transportation service providers in the Elgin Area area, as well as local governments, community organizations and area employers.

This was an opportunity to improve and maximize these services, make them faster, more effective and more efficient while enhancing the image of public transportation as a viable alternative to the automobile.

The team of transit planners looked to meet the needs of the communities by going directly to them to learn what their transportation needs are. This was accomplished through a community-based process that fosters ongoing public involvement through meetings and public workshops.

## • METRA MATTERS

### **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.

Metra operates commuter rail service on 11 lines to 239 stations covering 565 miles of territory.

### **Auditor General calls Metra 'cost-effective, reliable'**

Chicago, March, 15, 2007 -- Metra received commendation from the Illinois Auditor General today for running a cost-effective, reliable and safe commuter railroad, conclusions drawn at the end of a two-year audit of the agency's operations.

When compared to other agencies in its peer group across the country, the audit concluded, Metra performs well by managing costs, maintaining its fleet, and achieving a high level of customer satisfaction.

"Metra has always strived to be one of the premier railroads in the nation," said Metra Executive Director Philip A. Pagano. "This audit confirms that this agency has been successful in reaching that goal. We have taken great care to maximize resources in order to provide the best service to the millions of riders in the six county area."

Pagano credits the entire organization including Metra's Board of Directors, employees, labor union leaders and critical partners, the BNSF and Union Pacific railroads, for the safe and efficient service they provide each day. Illinois Auditor General William G. Holland performed the audit of Metra as part of a state-mandated review of the Regional Transportation Authority and its three service boards, the Chicago Transit Authority, Metra, and Pace. Auditors reviewed the overall financial condition and operations of all four agencies making recommendations for the system as a whole and individually to each service board.

In its conclusions, the audit points out the severe capital and operating financial challenges facing the multibillion-dollar RTA system, including Metra. The audit also outlines recommendations the service boards can take to improve their individual performances.

Specific to Metra, the audit recommendations call for streamlining of internal mechanical reports and other documents, continued work to maximize non-fare revenue, and exploration of working with its sister agencies in the area of joint purchases.

Metra Chairman Carole Doris said Metra stands ready to implement various recommendations to further maximize efficiency and cost effectiveness, and in some cases already has.

"We are proud of what we have accomplished turning a broken down, fragmented commuter rail system into a reliable mode of transportation vital to this region's economy and quality of life," Doris said. "Still, we recognize there is always more that can be done."

Doris added, "Metra will continue to be a partner in the 'Moving Beyond Congestion' campaign to seek funding for public transportation in the six-county area because the audit verifies the necessity of such a unified initiative."

## **Chicagoland Historical Bus Museum**

Chicagoland Historical Bus Museum has been forced to move to a new location. As of April 28<sup>th</sup> we are located in Aurora at the Self Storage at Route 30 & 34. The move will enable us to keep the collection together but will cost \$60.00 per vehicle per month which comes to about \$1440. We are looking for sponsors to help with the cost of storage. If you are interested please see John Lebeau, Fred McGullam, or Jeff Rutan. Thank you for helping us preserve a piece of Chicago Transit history.