



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OMNIBUS SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.

AUGUST 2007

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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://www.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.

#### • AUGUST OSA MEETING

The August meeting of the Omnibus Society of America will be held on August 3, 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 will be a slide presentation presented by Robert Madison titled "*Golden State Transit*"

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.

#### • JUST MY OPINION:

Over the last several months all we have heard from the RTA, CTA, PACE, and Metra is that they are broke and need umpteen million dollars from the State of Illinois to keep it all together.

I do not know how the rest of OSA feels, but I am sick to death of hearing how broke these authorities are. Last month we ran several articles from the Tribune and web sites, asking for more help. We also asked you to write, call or E-mail your legislators, which obviously has fallen on deaf ears because no one is doing anything and time is running out.

Not only are our transit systems suffering but our schools and medical institutions are hurting as well. These are all important facets for various elements of our society-they can not be disregarded.

Keep bugging those legislators they need to get their act together.

#### • CHBM

The Chicagoland Historical Bus Museum is currently housing the equipment at a Public Storage facility in Montgomery. I know many Omnibus Society members also belong to CHBM So I am going to put a bug in your ears. The Museum is paying \$60.00 per month per bus to store this equipment, and as you can when you multiply that times 20 buses we pay about \$1200.00 per month. We are holding our own but if you could assist us, we would like you to sponsor a bus, or get together with another member or two and sponsor one.



# Kane officials praise transit plan

By Lisa Smith

lsmith@dailyherald.com

Posted Thursday, July 26, 2007

Kane County would get \$16 million for transportation projects if state lawmakers approve a proposed sales tax increase to bail out public transit.

Along with the other collar counties, Kane County also would have a stronger voice on the governance board of the Chicago-based Regional Transportation Authority under the proposal.

"There are a number of positive things that are on the bill," Tom Rickert, deputy county transportation director, told the county board's legislative committee Wednesday. "But this is all up in the air. It could change tomorrow."

The measure was approved by the state Senate in March and is under consideration in the state House of Representatives. Tuesday is the deadline for a final vote before the measure heads to Gov. Rod Blagojevich's office for consideration.

Blagojevich, however, has vowed to veto any sales tax increases. But committee chairman Bill Wyatt said the county's lobbyist believes legislators have enough votes to override a veto.

The RTA, which oversees the Chicago Transit Authority, Metra trains and Pace buses, is asking lawmakers to approve a 0.25 percentage point sales tax increase in the collar counties that would generate \$120 million a year for transportation projects in the city and suburbs. Kane's share would be \$16 million.

County officials would decide how to spend the money, provided it is allocated toward roads or transit. Wyatt said Kane officials should begin to prioritize transportation projects that would benefit from the tax increase.

"We're going to need to show some immediate benefit to the taxpayers," Wyatt said.

An additional proposed 0.25 percentage point sales tax increase would fund the cash-strapped RTA directly. The proposal also would give the collar counties a stronger voice on the RTA and Metra boards.

Currently, two RTA board members are appointed jointly by the chairmen of the Lake, McHenry, Kane and Will

County boards. As proposed, those four counties would appoint three board members. The same change is proposed for the Metra board

By RICHARD QUINN, The Virginian-Pilot  
© February 22, 2007

VIRGINIA BEACH - Look, on Atlantic Avenue, it's a trolley, it's a BRT, it's... an Optima Opus?

Resort officials on Wednesday got a brief look at the Opus, a bus that eventually might replace the aging resort trolleys that roll along the Oceanfront during tourist season.

The 32 trolleys are past their prime, with rising maintenance costs and performance problems.

The city and Hampton Roads Transit are looking for a less expensive option, but have yet to decide whether that should be a quaint entertainment amenity or a reliable transit system.

The Opus is clearly the latter. A sleek, 30-foot bus with room for up to 54 people, it is already in use in metropolitan areas such as Cleveland and Chicago.

The bus that was driven Wednesday to Hampton Roads is part of an order en route to Miami.

The bus didn't stop only in Virginia Beach. After resort officials toured it in the morning, Norfolk leaders - who are looking to replace their downtown Norfolk Electric Transit (NET) fleet - toured the bus later in the day. HRT says the eight NET buses are past their useful life.

Mike Perry, HRT's vice president of operations, said no decisions have been made and he hopes to bring at least one more vehicle to the region for a test drive.

In Virginia Beach, the Opus is a departure from the charm of the trolleys now in use. They're half the size of the controversial Bus Rapid Transit - or BRT - vehicles that the city nearly bought two years ago. The oversized buses lost support last year and the city went back to looking at new options.

The exterior of the Opus can be retrofitted to look like a trolley, but the interior is a commercial bus.

"It's definitely more comfortable than the trolleys," Councilman John Uhrin said. "It doesn't have much flavor."

Mike Eason, the city's resort administrator, added, "The problem is: Will people ride it or not?"

Another problem, regardless of which vehicle is chosen, is how to pay for them.

The Opus costs roughly \$350,000 per vehicle, Perry said. It would cost more than \$10 million to buy a fleet of



Vossloh Kiepe GmbH

**vossloh**  
Electrical Systems



Kiepe Traction Equipment for Low-Floor Trolley Buses

**Philadelphia, PA, USA**



# Low-Floor Trackless Trolley Buses

The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) is the nation's fifth largest public transportation system and one of only two truly multi-modal transit properties in the United States operating bus, subway, commuter rail, trackless trolley, regional rail and paratransit vehicles. In order to provide sustainable public transportation services, SEPTA is adding modern zero-emission trackless trolley buses to its fleet.

## Project characteristics

- Low-floor design made possible by compact Kiepe propulsion system
- Zero-emission
- Semi automatic current collector with pneumatic retriever units
- Emergency power unit (EPU)

The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) is replacing its trolley buses, known in Philadelphia as trackless trolleys, with new ADA accessible, zero-emission vehicles. A fleet of modern low floor buses with Vossloh Kiepe, Germany electrical equipment is being built to the Authority's specifications.

These low-floor vehicles are designed and built in close cooperation with New Flyer of America Inc. of Crookston, MN, USA. A total of 38 trolley buses are on order with an option for 23 extra vehicles. The Pilot bus is due to be delivered in 2007 with the balance of the fleet to follow in 2008. These air conditioned vehicles will fulfill the highest requirements regarding passenger and operator comfort.

Major components of the propulsion system are manufactured in the USA allowing the buses to comply with the Buy America Requirements.

A mobility aid ramp (MAR), in conjunction with the kneeling function of the bus, permits comfortable boarding of special needs and disabled passengers. A retractable bicycle rack is provided on the front of the bus.

A reliable and fast electric dewirement detection system is implemented. Supported by pneumatically-propelled retriever reels, this system adds to the proven Vossloh Kiepe current collector design.

A diesel engine powered emergency power unit (EPU) provides power when the overhead line is not available, so that route deviations may be made.

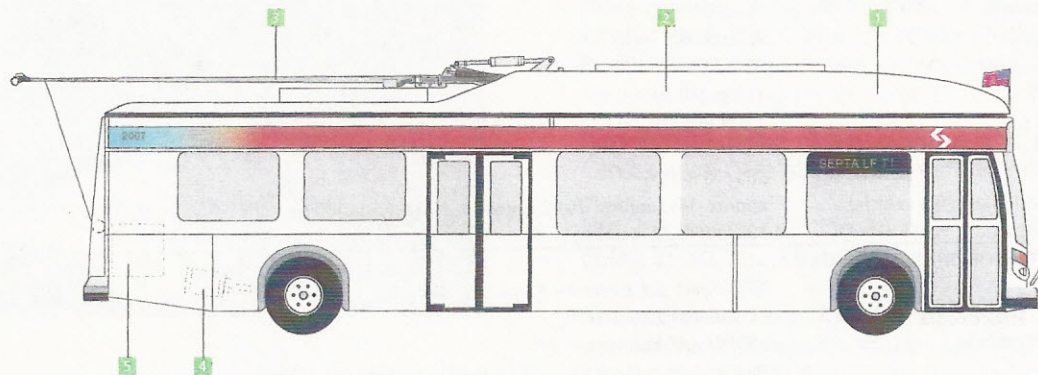
Electronic data transmission via the proven CANopen and J1939 systems helps to reduce the amount of cabling and boosts system reliability. Moreover, a user-friendly and efficient diagnostic system is available.

The low-floor trolley bus design is made possible by the compact Vossloh Kiepe roof-mounted equipment enclosure. This container is easily accessible for maintenance and safely protected in the event of traffic accidents. The aluminium housing includes the most important electronic units for the traction and the on-board power supply, and has been designed to facilitate rapid replacement of key modules, thus ensuring the highest degree of vehicle availability. The modern technology also offers ABS and TCS as well as a vehicle roll-back protection and allows powerful driving up to an electronically limited maximum speed of 70 km/h (43 mph).



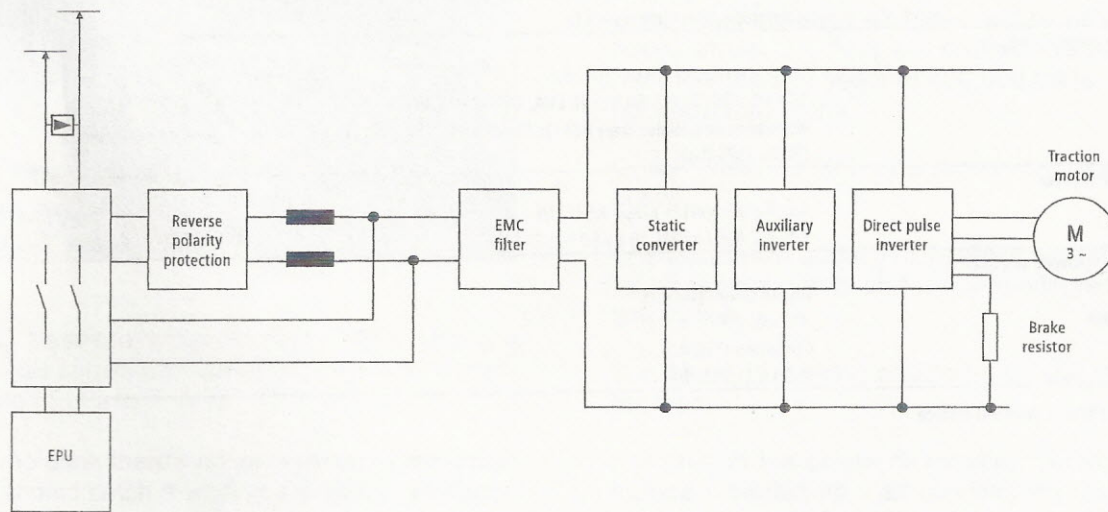
Vossloh Kiepe roof-mounted equipment enclosure DGG 343

## Arrangement of equipment



- |  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1 Brake resistor   | 3 Current collector        |
| 2 Roof-mounted equipment enclosure                                 | 4 Traction motor           |
| • Direct pulse inverter  | 5 EPU diesel generator-set |
| • Static converter   |                            |
| • Auxiliary inverter for heating, ventilation and air-conditioning |                            |
| • Line filter, EMC filter  |                            |
| • Main contactors and main fuses                                   |                            |

## Power circuit schematics





Technical data	
Design	2-axle low-floor trolley bus
Type	E40LFR
Manufacturer of chassis and vehicle body	New Flyer of America Inc.
Traction electronics	Vossloh Kiepe
Maximum speed	70 km/h (43 mph)
Line voltage	DC 600 V (+ 25 %, - 30 %)
Vehicle length	12.2 m (40 ft)
Vehicle width	2.6 m (8.5 ft)
Gear ratio	11.73 : 1
Tires	305 / 70 R-22.5
Weight of vehicle (tare / full vehicle)	approx. 14 t / approx. 20 t (approx. 31,500 lbs / 44,100 lbs)
Vehicle capacity	39 seated, 39 standing
<b>Traction inverter</b>	
	IGBT direct pulse inverter Kiepe DPU 450
Input voltage	DC 600 V (+20 %, -30 %)
Output permanent/max.	250 kW / 600 kVA for t < 30 s
Version	Mounted on an insulated Kiepe DGT 124 frame for the Kiepe DGG 343 roof-mounted equipment enclosure
Design	Pulse inverter operated directly on the overhead line
Cooling	Forced air cooling
Weight	90 kg (200 lbs)
<b>Traction motor</b>	
	Force-ventilated three-phase asynchronous motor
Rated output	240 kW
Dimensions	763 x 510 x 430 mm (length x width x height)
Weight	585 kg (1,300 lbs)
<b>Current collector</b>	
	Kiepe OSA 291 and Kiepe PRE 100
Characteristics	With pneumatic quick-lowering, triggered by the electric dewirement detection, maximum height (static) and monitoring of the rope drum (dynamic). Automatic lowering possible
<b>On-board power supply</b>	
	Static converter Kiepe BNU 521
Outputs	3/N AC 400 / 230 V, 50 Hz: 20 kVA, DC 24 V: 280 A
Type	Mounted on an insulated Kiepe DGT 124 frame for the Kiepe DGG 343 roof-mounted equipment enclosure
Weight	170 kg (375 lbs)
<b>Auxiliary inverter</b>	
	Auxiliary inverter Kiepe KGU 101
Output	3/N AC 400 / 230 V, 10 to 50 Hz: 26 kVA
<b>Emergency power unit (EPU)</b>	
	Diesel generator-set
Rated output	100 kW
Engine	Cummins QSB 4.5
Weight	750 kg (1,650 lbs)

Subject to change without notice

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new buses. The city and HRT are talking about splitting that cost.



## 35 new Sun Metro buses now in service

By Jake Rollow / El Paso Times

Article Launched: 02/28/2007 12:00:00 AM MST



Tim Omick, El Paso's director of mass transit, exited a new bus that was shown off Tuesday in front of City Hall. (Victor Calzada / El Paso Times)

El Pasoans who think there's no sweeter scent than that of a new car should catch a whiff of the recent additions to Sun Metro's fleet.

The first of 35 new buses was slated to hit the streets on Tuesday, bringing expectations of improved service and beginning the latest phase of Sun Metro's overhaul.

"I think this will greatly improve our service," Sun Metro Director Tim Omick said.

He said he expected the new buses would lead to fewer breakdowns and more on-time performance. Omick said buses have been arriving at about 85 percent of stops on schedule and that the new buses should boost that number, but he did not know by how much.

Sun Metro's goal is to make 90 percent of its stops on time.

Still, Omick would not say the turnaround of Sun Metro is complete. The bus service experienced what city officials deemed an operational meltdown last summer when buses broke down, ran late and had insufficient air conditioning. In the months since the private transit management company First Transit, which employs Omick, was hired and 25 repowered buses entered the fleet. Riders have noted improvements, but continued to express frustration with service.

"I'm not prepared to say we're out of the service crisis," Omick said. "We still have a very fragile transit system."

But, he added, "putting 35 new buses into the system is going to aid our reliability significantly."

Kevin Bunce, Sun Metro's assistant director of transit operations and maintenance, said 10 of the new buses have arrived in El Paso and will go into service within a week. The rest of the new vehicles will begin operation by the end of March, he said.

Omick said the new buses will give Sun Metro 85 new or relatively new buses, referring to the 25 repowered buses that re-entered the fleet last fall and the 25 buses that were new in 2004.

The new buses have a lifespan of 12 years or 500,000 miles, Bunce said.

Bunce said although 42 buses will be retired as the new buses arrive, the fleet will still include buses that have run more than 12 years or 500,000 miles. He said he did not know how many.

Omick said current operations call for 130 working buses.

The buses cost about \$13.7 million, which has been paid for by federal grants and a city-sponsored loan of about \$10 million.

Sun Metro is seeking additional federal money to repay the loan.

Features of the buses never seen before at Sun Metro include beefed-up air-conditioning units -- with compressors of 30 cubic feet instead of 26 cubic feet -- and two-toned floors and yellow grab-rails aimed to assist people with visual disabilities, Bunce said.

They also have electronic signs on their left sides, so that riders can identify the buses' route numbers from both sides of the street.

Like some of Sun Metro's other buses, the new vehicles are 40 feet long and contain 39 seats, two of which are made to accommodate passengers with wheelchairs.



Sun Metro reports that the ramps and system by which the new buses kneel to curbs are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Riders expressed both optimism and skepticism when told of the new buses on Tuesday.

Maria Garcia's face lit up when she heard the news while waiting for a bus at San Jacinto Plaza.

"I hope they will run on time," she said. "That they will serve us."

But standing behind Garcia, in a 20-person line for a No. 14 bus that riders said was late, Isabel Mireles was less optimistic.

She said she's been riding Sun Metro for years and heard the promises of improved services before the repowered buses entered the fleet in the fall.

"Service is very bad," Mireles said while wincing. "Every year they say the same thing."

### **More passengers riding Metra, Amtrak in Illinois**

Posted Monday, February 19, 2007

More Illinoisans are traveling to work and vacation by train, according to state and Metra officials. The announcements come as Metra and Amtrak lobby for more money from state and federal governments. Metra, which operates Chicago's commuter rail system, recorded 84.3million passenger trips in 2006, the most in the company's history, and a 5.2 percent increase over 2005, officials said. Meanwhile, passengers increased by 69 percent on newly expanded Amtrak routes between Chicago and St. Louis, Carbondale and Quincy, state officials said.

The Regional Transportation Authority, which oversees funding for Metra, the Chicago Transit Authority and Pace bus system, wants the Illinois General Assembly to fund \$10 billion in capital investment over the next five years and an additional \$400 million a year to operate the three agencies. "This surge in ridership highlights the need to continue to maintain and expand our commuter rail system," Metra Executive Director Phil Pagano said in a statement.

Amtrak is trying to prevent \$400 million in proposed funding cuts that are included in the Bush administration's fiscal year 2008 budget. "This increase in ridership tells me that the federal government is headed in the wrong direction when it tries to slash funding for Amtrak," Gov. Rod Blagojevich said in a statement Sunday. Expanded rail service, more stations, rising gasoline prices, and Chicago Bears games were key factors behind Metra's passenger surge, said Lynnette Ciavarella, director of planning and analysis.

Still, lawmakers have other funding priorities like health care and education, and transportation might get lost in the shuffle, said Metra Chairwoman Carole Doris. "Transit is not at the top of the list," Doris said. For Amtrak, the Chicago-to-St. Louis line had the biggest increase in passengers. More than 64,200 passengers rode the line in November, December and January, a 95 percent increase over the same period a year earlier. Passengers increased by 68 percent on the Carbondale line and 38 percent on the Quincy line, officials said. Illinois' General Assembly doubled funding that the Illinois Department of Transportation gave to Amtrak in fiscal year 2007, to \$24.2million, to pay for the extended services that began Oct. 30. "These numbers demonstrate the demand for Amtrak in Illinois and tell us that we did the right thing when we doubled state support for passenger rail," Blagojevich said. Dailyherald.com.

### **New commuter rail cars could be ready by 2009**

chicagotribune. Com

Associated Press

2:57 PM CDT, July 28, 2007

CHESTERTON, Ind.

More than a dozen new commuter railroad cars could be ready for use in northern Indiana by 2009.

The Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District board approved on Friday spending \$1.2 million for engineering and inspection services for 14 new cars first ordered last spring. Once the 111-seat cars are inspected they could be ready for use by spring 2009.

The cars will be used to create two new six-car trains, with two cars remaining as spares. The South Shore line currently has 68 cars so the increase in seats will be a relief for passengers who often have to ride on overcrowded trains.

Rush-hour trains to and from Chicago are so crowded that some people getting on board at later stops must stand.

"The reason why getting these cars is so important is that we have a resurgent interest in commuter rails in northern Indiana," said John Parsons, NICTD spokesman.

Information from: The Times, <http://nwitimes.com>

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