



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OMNIBUS SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.

## NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2009

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.

### • NOVEMBER MEETING

The November meeting of the Omnibus Society of America will be held on November 6, 2009, in the Anderson Pavilion of Swedish Covenant Hospital, 2751 W. Winona Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. The meeting will start at 7:30 pm.

Our program for the evening will be a slide presentation by John LeBeau.

### • DECEMBER MEETING

The December meeting of The Omnibus Society of America will be held on December 4, 2009, in the Anderson Pavilion of Swedish Covenant Hospital, 2751 W. Winona Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. The meeting will start at 7:30 pm.

Our program for the evening will be a slide presentation by Mike Mullenbach.

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.

## ELECTION NOTICE

It is that time of year again for our members to think about the upcoming election for Director's of OSA.

There will be one Director's position to be filled this election, that of David Zucker. Dave will be running for reelection.

The ballots is enclosed with this issue of The Green Pennant Special and must be received by the start of the December 4, 2009 meeting.

## CTA President Releases 2010 Budget Recommendations

10/12/2009

*Recession Results in Furlough Days, Elimination of 1100 Jobs and Internal Cuts Service and Fare Changes Proposed*

In presenting his [budget recommendation](#) for 2010, Chicago Transit Authority President Richard L. Rodriguez said today that a 30% loss of public funding contributed to a \$300 million shortfall and staff reductions, mandatory furlough days and strict controls on spending along with transferring capital funds to operating will be necessary to help fill the gap. The remainder will come from service efficiencies and fare increases, although the CTA will also continue to seek action from its unions and the General Assembly to identify additional savings and reduce the impact on customers.

The CTA identified three areas that have contributed to the shortfall: declining public funding, union contracts and pension obligations. In 2010, the CTA's public funding will be \$213 million lower than the RTA's original projections. The CTA's public funding is generated from sales and real estate taxes and both are down due to the recession. Current labor contracts call for a 3.5 percent union wage increase this year and pension bond interest and employer contributions are scheduled to increase.

"Faced with declining revenues, our challenge is to manage responsibly and make strategic budget decisions that will enable CTA to weather the recession, operate more efficiently, and still provide the critical services that so many working men and women rely on," said CTA President Richard L. Rodriguez. "We have evaluated numerous options to cover the shortfall. It was only as the very last resort that we were forced to consider fare and service changes, something I had hoped to avoid," he added.

I hope the changes we were forced to make protect our working riders, especially those who depend on the CTA to go to and from work and live their lives every day," he said.

By making those hard choices, Rodriguez said, the CTA was able to reduce expenses and generate enough new revenue to propose a balanced budget of \$1.285 billion dollars.

To minimize the impact of a slow economy on riders, the CTA has already cut \$50 million in spending this year through management improvements and efficiencies.



They included strict controls on labor costs, savings in materials and fuel, more efficient management of contracts, eliminating non essential travel and seminars, and a reduction in the cost of equipment maintenance services due to the retirement of problematic buses and introduction of new buses.

"We knew we had to dig deep internally. Non-union CTA staff will again forgo salary increases, in addition to taking up to 18 unpaid days. Job eliminations are also proposed – up to 100 non-union administrative positions will be cut as will more than 1,000 union positions. "During these difficult times, it was a tough decision to eliminate these jobs because I understand families will be affected, but we had no choice," said Rodriguez.

"These actions along with a fare increase will help reduce the impact on service. If there was a bus or train serving a stop or station before, there will continue to be service there," he added.

The CTA's proposal is designed to retain as much service as possible, while reducing costs and maximizing efficiency. The only route eliminations proposed are nine express routes that have corresponding local service," he said.

All parts of the region that have CTA service will continue to have it. Savings will be realized through less frequent service and service that might start later in the morning or end earlier at night.

Key elements of the plan include:

All rail routes and all bus routes will be maintained except for nine express routes that have a matching local route.

Night Owl service on both bus and rail remain unchanged, preserving service for those third-shift workers who have few options other than public transit.

To the extent possible, the impact to rush hour service was minimized.

Service will run less frequently on 110 routes.

Service spans will be adjusted for 41 bus routes. These routes will either start service later, end service earlier, or both.

In total, bus service will be reduced by 18 % and rail service by 9%.

These service changes will provide additional management and maintenance efficiencies by allowing CTA to retire 287 buses that are 15 years old and costly to maintain and to close Archer Garage, which is a 102-year-old facility that was not designed to support 2010 requirements

The CTA's fare proposal was designed to provide a range of options for customers, while protecting those who are hardest hit in this economy. By limiting the fare increase for regular bus service and establishing a surcharge for rail service and express buses, customers can choose to pay more for a faster mode of travel. In addition, the CTA will still offer multiple pass options that provide better value than single ride fares.

Key elements of the fare proposal include:

The proposed bus fare is \$2.50, which is a 25 cent increase (11%) from the previous cash fare and a 50 cent increase (33%) for those who paid with fare media.

For all rail service and 19 express bus routes the proposed fare is \$3.00. (33% increase for rail; 33 to 50% increase for bus depending on whether riders previously paid with cash or a fare card.) Rail service and express routes provide faster service, with fewer stops.

Reduced fares will not change.

Current transfer fees and policies will stay the same.

There will no longer be a surcharge to pay with cash.

Pass prices are proposed at \$8 for a 1-Day pass, \$18 for a 3-Day pass, \$30 for a 7-Day pass and \$110 for a 30-Day pass. All provide unlimited rides.

The service and fare changes are scheduled to go into effect on February 7, 2010.

In the meantime, the CTA will also continue to pursue other opportunities to identify savings or additional revenues. These steps will include meeting with unions to ask their cooperation and discussing legislative options with state elected officials.

"This is a difficult budget. This economy is taking its toll on everyone and every organization. We've tried to manage responsibly and develop a budget that makes the necessary cuts but still maintains the core of the CTA system," said Rodriguez. "The CTA is committed to its customers. We will continue to look for the most efficient operating methods and call upon the resourcefulness of staff to help reduce costs and increase revenue. I am confident that we will get through these tough times and emerge a better, healthier, more efficient agency."

The Chicago Transit Board will consider the proposed budget at its November meeting. It will also be presented to the Cook County Board in November, as required by the RTA Act. The Chicago Transit Board must submit a balanced budget to the RTA by November



15th and the RTA must approve budgets for the service boards by year end.

## **Plainfield-Near West Side bus service**

October 19, 2009

Express bus service is coming to Plainfield -- a new route from the southwest suburb to the Near West Side will start Nov. 30.

Pace is getting RTA and federal funding to start the new service on I-55, connecting Plainfield to the Illinois Medical District and the University of Illinois at Chicago. The district includes Stroger Hospital and Rush University Medical Center.

"A lot of medical professionals live in the Plainfield area and have been seeking ways to get to their jobs," said Pace spokesman Patrick Wilmot. Plainfield lacks a Metra station. "This has the potential to attract a lot of people who are currently driving alone and spending a lot of time in traffic."

Plainfield has dedicated land adjacent to the village hall as a "park and ride."

The express service could be a precursor to "bus rapid transit" service that would run along the I-55 shoulder. "This will help us to develop the market," Wilmot said.

The new route 755 also will stop at a Bolingbrook "park and ride," then at the Ashland station on the CTA Orange Line, Ashland and Polk, and Racine and Harrison. Pace plans three inbound and three outbound trips.

Pace route 855 already goes from a Bolingbrook "park and ride" to the Loop and Michigan Avenue. Pace plans to extend certain trips on that route to Plainfield, too, starting Nov. 30.

More information on the routes will be available next month. Express bus fares are \$4. A monthly pass would reduce the cost.

The RTA also is looking into setting up bus rapid transit service on Cermak, from the CTA Pink Line station to west suburban Oakbrook Terrace. The rapid service is faster than regular buses, with fewer stops, dedicated lanes and possibly traffic signal priority, which allows buses to change the timing of traffic lights.

## **SEPTA moves a step closer to "smart cards"**

By Paul Nussbaum  
Inquirer Staff Writer

After months of delay, SEPTA closed the bidding yesterday for a new "smart card" fare system.

Several firms presented proposals for an electronic system to replace tokens and paper tickets for buses, subways, trolleys, and trains.

Firms that said they submitted bids are Affiliated Computer Services Inc. of Dallas and Cubic Corp. of San Diego. Also believed to have submitted a bid is Accenture Inc. of New York. All have been active in producing automated fare systems in other cities.

With the new system, SEPTA passengers would be able to wave a card at a sensor on a turnstile or fare box and be on their way. SEPTA says it wants a system that will allow passengers to use credit cards, prepaid SEPTA cards, and even cell phones to pay for trips.

SEPTA hopes to award a contract for the system by next spring, said John McGee, the agency's revenue and ridership chief. It will be several years before a system can be built and installed.

The system is expected to cost about \$100 million, although SEPTA urged bidders to offer innovative financing proposals, such as public-private partnerships, to reduce the cost to the agency.

SEPTA seeks federal stimulus funding to help pay for the system. The agency has applied for about \$100 million from a \$1.5 billion federal grant program for national and regional transportation projects. The Obama administration will announce the winners of those grants on Jan. 15.

McGee said there were multiple submissions for the system but he declined to identify the companies. He said SEPTA would spend several months evaluating the complex bids.

"We've entered a new phase," he said. "Our goal is to make an award as early as we can."

Michael Nash, a vice president at Affiliated Computer Services Inc., one of the bidders, said his company was "looking forward to following through with the process," but he declined to discuss specifics of the company's proposal.

SEPTA had originally set March 17 as the cutoff for bids but postponed the deadline four times as potential bidders raised questions about financing, intellectual-property concerns, and other issues.

If SEPTA doesn't get federal stimulus funding, paying for the system could be a major hurdle because



anticipated Act 44 state financing for transit systems is threatened in Harrisburg.

State legislators have not come up with a way to replace about \$450 million a year for transportation projects that may be lost without expected revenue from adding tolls to Interstate 80.

Without income from tolls - which the federal government has not allowed - SEPTA stands to lose about \$110 million a year for capital projects, such as the new fare system, starting in July.

"We remain optimistic that the Act 44 challenges, especially on the capital side, will be solved over the next year," McGee said.

## **Cap Metro's commuter rail won't open this year**

**32-mile line from Leander to downtown will launch in 2010 at the earliest - two years after original projections - agency officials say.**

**By Ben Wear**

AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

Tuesday, September 29, 2009

Capital Metro's commuter rail line will not open until sometime in the first quarter next year, at the earliest — two years after original projections — agency officials said Monday.

Malfunctioning crossing gates and problems with 30 control devices, among other glitches, still plague the 32-mile line from Leander to downtown Austin.

Additional work, according to Doug Allen, agency executive vice president and chief development officer, will add \$750,000 to \$1 million to the project's cost. Agency officials have said the project, originally budgeted at \$90 million, has cost \$105 million so far. That number, however, does not include some costs directly related to the passenger line, such as a \$7 million park-and-ride lot at the Leander station.

"I know the criticism we're receiving," said Fred Gilliam, Capital Metro's president and chief executive officer. "But I assure you we're doing everything possible to where we won't cost a life. But safety is more important than a schedule. I regret we ever established the schedule."

Before a November 2004 referendum authorizing the building of Central Texas' first urban rail since the World War II era, voters were told the line could be open early in 2008. That was later delayed to fall 2008, then March of this year, then put off indefinitely.

The agency had been issuing monthly updates on progress since then, and in August, it appeared that perhaps an opening might be approaching.

But then the Federal Railroad Administration, in a test on the line, found a flaw in the line's "vital logic" meant to compensate for human error.

The rail line announcement Monday came shortly after the Capital Metro board, with sales tax revenue continuing to fall, approved a \$164.7 million operating budget for 2009-10.

That budget assumes that there will be 5.4 percent fewer hours of regular bus service and almost 15 percent fewer miles of bus service than the current year's approved budget.

In passing the budget 4-1, the board reopened the issue of whether to move to January a fare increase planned for next August.

The agency staff had recommended this summer that increases be moved to January and that some of them be larger than previously approved. But after public criticism, Capital Metro staff recommended instead that the agency supplement the operating budget with \$2.6 million of federal stimulus funds that had been targeted for further improvements to the commuter rail line.

That in turn drew criticism from the Downtown Austin Alliance and the Alliance for Public Transportation.

Board Chairwoman Margaret Gómez, saying she doesn't like using "one-time money for continuing expenses," proposed that the budget vote include instruction to agency staff to bring the January fare increase back before the board.

For now, the stimulus money remains in the operating budget, and the possibility of a January fare increase remains unresolved.

Austin City Council Member Chris Riley, who is also a member of the Capital Metro board, voted against the budget.



The service cuts in the budget are not limited to the agency's primary "fixed route" bus services. Overall, the agency would have 7.3 percent fewer hours of service and 14.5 percent fewer miles than in the budget approved last September.

However, the agency cut bus services as it went along this year, primarily by running fewer buses per day on some routes, and in other cases never starting some suburban express runs that the heavy ridership in the summer of 2008 had indicated might be necessary. Falling gasoline prices last fall reversed that brief surge in ridership, which fell to 32.5 million this year.

Eliminating the downtown Dillo service, which will occur at the end of this week, by itself cuts fixed route service hours by 2.7 percent, Capital Metro planning director Todd Hemingson said.

The \$164.7 million operating budget includes \$6.6 million for the MetroRail line. That amounts to about 4 percent of the 2009-10 budget. The agency is also making annual \$4.4 million payments on money borrowed for the six rail cars.

Capital Metro has been hit hard by the recession's effect on its 1 percent sales tax revenue.

The agency estimates it will take in \$134.1 million in sales tax this coming fiscal year (which begins Thursday); down 17 percent from the \$161.7 million it estimated would come in the current year when the 2008-09 budget was approved last September.

Instead, the agency will receive about \$140.4 million in sales tax revenue this year, it estimates. So \$134.1 million in 2009-10 would amount to another 4.5 percent drop.

And the agency's investment revenue, which was \$3.4 million annually just two years ago, will drop off to \$280,000 next year, the agency estimates, because it has depleted its reserves on rail and other capital expenses and has less than \$10 million to invest.

The agency, in the proposed budget, would allocate about \$6.8 million in an effort to begin restoring the reserves to an acceptable level for normal operations.

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## Work to start Monday on Pennsauken rail link station

By Paul Nussbaum

INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

Construction will start Monday on a new train station in Pennsauken to connect two of South Jersey's primary passenger rail lines: the Philadelphia- to-Atlantic- City line and the Camden-to-Trenton River Line.

New Jersey Transit chief Richard Sarles announced the start of work at a rare South Jersey meeting of the NJTransit board, which convened in Camden today for the first time in eight years. The board usually meets in Newark, but ventures to a different location once a year.

Sarles also outlined progress on proposals to add service and stations to the Atlantic City rail line and to create "bus rapid transit" service on congested highway Routes 55 and 42.

A ceremonial groundbreaking Monday will mark the official start of work on the Pennsauken Transit Center, a \$40 million project on Derousse Avenue, where the Atlantic City line passes over the River Line. It is scheduled to open by late 2012.

The project is being funded with money from the federal stimulus program. Sarles gave the green light for the start of work following the recent go-ahead from the Federal Transit Administration, which found the project presented no significant environmental impact.

The new Pennsauken station will allow riders to board either the north-south River Line or the east-west Atlantic City Line or to transfer between the two lines. The station will also be served by NJTransit buses.

Two 300-foot-long platforms will be built on either side of the Atlantic City line tracks, with stairs and two elevators to provide access to the River Line below.

The work is to be done in two phases. The first \$2.08 million contract covers River Line elements of the project, including a 200-foot platform with a 60-foot canopy. The contract was awarded to Northeast Remsco Coast Inc. of Farmingdale, N.J., and Arora & Associates of Lawrenceville, N.J.

The second-phase contract has not been awarded yet. It will include the Atlantic City line platforms, a 280-space parking lot, ticket vending machines, passenger communication equipment, and resurfacing, curbing, and lighting improvements to Derousse Avenue.



On two other projects in South Jersey, NJTransit is hiring consultants to study the best ways to proceed.

One is expansion of service on the under-used Atlantic City rail line. NJTransit will consider adding stations - at Woodcrest in Cherry Hill and at the Atlantic City airport - and running trains more frequently.

The other is "bus rapid transit" service on the busy commuter highways southeast of Camden, Routes 55, 42, and Interstate 676. The study will examine the possibility of dedicated lanes and traffic signal timing to allow buses to travel more quickly.

Sarles declined to predict when either project might be finished. The studies will start early next year.

## **PATRICK-MURRAY ADMINISTRATION, MAYOR MENINO LAUNCH SILVER LINE DIRECT CONNECT SERVICE TO SOUTH STATION**

### **ARRA Stimulus Funds Used to Construct Key Transit Improvement**

Boston, MA -- As part of the Patrick-Murray Administration's Massachusetts Recovery Plan to secure the state's economic future, Transportation Secretary James A. Aloisi, Jr and Mayor Thomas M. Menino today officially launched the addition of a new Silver Line route between Dudley Station and South Station to improve bus transportation service along the Silver Line Washington Street corridor.

"Now is our chance to make new connections for neighborhoods in Boston and throughout the state," said Governor Deval Patrick. "From the new regional transit center in Greenfield to the launch of the Silver Line Direct Connect project today, we are doing everything we can to make access to public transportation better and build stronger communities."

The \$1.7 million project funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act creates a new route, SL4, that will for the first time provide a direct connection between the Roxbury and South End neighborhoods and South Station, improving connections for residents and visitors to the Financial District, South Boston Waterfront, and Logan Airport.

"This injection of stimulus funds allowed us to partner with the City of Boston on a creative transit solution that will improve service and access for residents, visitors, and businesses," said Secretary Aloisi, who joined Mayor Menino today on an inaugural bus ride from

Dudley Station to South Station. "We have demonstrated that you can do more with less by connecting people directly to South Station and from there to the South Boston Waterfront and Logan Airport - the disparate parts of the Silver Line finally are connected."

"The extension of the Silver Line will connect residents from Roxbury, the South End, and Bay Village to the South Boston Waterfront, Logan Airport, and the financial district," said Mayor Menino. "I commend Governor Patrick and Acting General Manager Mitchell for establishing an immediate measure as we work toward a permanent solution."??

With cooperation from the City of Boston, the Executive Office of Transportation and the MBTA designed Silver Line Route SL4 in the direction of Downtown to serve the existing stops along the Washington street corridor, up to Chinatown Station. Route SL4 then turns right onto Essex Street into a dedicated bus lane along Essex Street. Outbound service will serve all stops from Tufts/New England Medical Center Station to Dudley Station. Additional amenities include: new stone curbing and sidewalks with accessible ramps, and a state-of-the-art Mini Station at South Station complete with seating, new lights, heat, CharlieCard access, and trip countdowns to improve customers' waiting experience.

"This project will enhance commuters' abilities to travel from Boston's neighborhoods to the downtown shopping area, provide quicker options for getting to Logan, and bring more foot traffic to our rapidly growing waterfront. I commend the Patrick Administration and Mayor Menino, as well as my colleagues in Congress for continuing to make this project a priority," said Senator John F. Kerry.

"This new Silver Line Direct Connect route will make travel in Boston safer and more efficient for our residents," said Senator Paul G. Kirk, Jr. "Effective public transportation is more important than ever as we face budget shortfalls and rising energy costs and these federal funds will give commuters a much needed direct link from Dudley Square to South Station, Logan Airport and beyond."

"This project is another example of the stimulus bill at work," said Congressman Mike Capuano. "In addition to putting people to work, the Commonwealth is establishing an important mass transit link between Dudley Station and South Station."

"We are aware through customer feedback that transit options are critical for customers", said MBTA Acting General Manager William Mitchell. "The Silver Line SL4 route provides customers with options: whether



they work in the Financial District, the Waterfront, or need to connect to the Commuter Rail, this one seat ride from Dudley to South Station will get them there."

Silver Line Washington Street customers are now provided two options into downtown Boston where they can connect easily to their destinations, and other modes of the transit system. The existing Silver Line service between Dudley Station and Downtown Crossing with stops at Temple Place and Boylston Street, has been renamed **Route SL5**. Route SL5 frequency will not be reduced. The recently added Route **SL4** - Dudley to South Station will operate every 10 minutes during the weekday morning and evening rush hour. Daytime service on weekdays and weekends will operate every 15 minutes, and late evening service will operate every 20 minutes. **Note: Silver Line Route SL4 does not make stops at Temple Place and Boylston Street.**

"This addition to the 'Silver Line' route is an important option for riders from the South End and Roxbury. South Station is a destination that many want. It is being done in a way that does not detract from the service to Temple Place and is not in any way disruptive to residences and businesses along the route," said State Representative Byron Rushing. "This is public transportation flexibility at its best. The ridership along Washington Street has exceeded expectations. I hope this addition will increase that popularity."

"This one seat ride from Dudley station to South station is another step forward in our march to re-establish direct transportation access for residents of Roxbury and North Dorchester to the Financial District and to our Waterfront," said State Representative Marie P. St. Fleur

Silver Line ridership continues to grow with 29,670 boardings per weekday. There are 14,709 weekday boardings on Silver Line Route SL5 - Dudley to Temple Place. There are 14,961 weekday boardings on Silver Line Waterfront Routes SL1 & SL2.

### **Community Education Centers takes delivery of two MCI® ISTVs**

**SCHAUMBURG, IL — August 13, 2009** — Motor Coach Industries has delivered two MCI Inmate Security Transportation Vehicles, known as ISTVs, to Community Education Centers, Inc. (CEC), a leading provider of offender reentry and in-prison treatment centers. Based in West Caldwell, New Jersey, with operations in 20 states, CEC's services also include managing mid-sized, county and regional jails.



CEC's new MCI ISTVs seat 61 inmates with multiple segregation areas and come with GPS tracking and a surveillance system. The coaches, which are built on the MCI D4000 platform, additionally feature Detroit Diesel engines and Allison transmissions. The vehicles are in use at Johnson County Jail, Cleburne, Texas, a CEC-managed facility.

"Our transportation capabilities and responsibilities are continuing to grow, which is a direct result of the professionalism and experience of our transportation officers as well as our transportation fleet," said Mike Pelletier, CEC vice president of operations. "Most recently, we purchased two MCI transportation buses, providing us the highest level of security and safety in the prisoner transport industry. We feel that these latest acquisitions enhance our ability to provide safe and secure transportation services to our customers with the utmost confidence due to the quality and history surrounding MCI."

CEC transports more than 100,000 offenders more than a million miles each year, providing transportation services 24 hours a day with a fleet of 18 vehicles that also include vans, other buses and the additional MCIs. The fleet has the capability of separating offenders by gender, classification and jurisdiction and is manned by highly trained professionals who focus on safety and security. Visit [www.cecintl.com](http://www.cecintl.com).

### **Arrow Stage Lines takes two new MCI® D4505 coaches, first with seat belts**

**SCHAUMBURG, IL — September 24, 2009** — Arrow Stage Lines, one of the largest and longest-standing family-owned motor coach companies in the United States, is taking delivery of two new MCI D4505 models equipped with three-points seat belts. The new coaches also have wheelchair lifts, surveillance cameras and other security and performance technologies that are standard on newer MCI models, including Electronic



Stability Control, Smartwave tire-pressure monitoring and Amerex Fire Suppression systems.



Arrow plans to use the new coaches in scheduled-line service, shuttle-contract and employee-commuter services. "The number-one reason we added the seat belt option is safety," said Luke Busskohl, marketing manager and fourth-generation family member of the firm. "We want to have the safest coaches for our customers." Additionally, Arrow created a customized passenger safety orientation DVD that drivers play prior to each departure. "We decided to develop our own video to further our brand and safety policies."

Keeping ahead of market trends, Arrow is using communication technology to reach current and potential customers. The company launched a new website, updated marketing materials and is about to roll out a new video and an online chat system. "We're reaching out to a younger generation," said Busskohl, who is also increasing awareness through Facebook, new media and public-relations opportunities.

Arrow is the first operator in the nation to equip a coach with the "Get Motorcoachified" marketing campaign decal developed by the Motor Coach Council, [www.motorcoachcouncil.org](http://www.motorcoachcouncil.org). The coach is operating out of Arrow's Nebraska facility with favorable results. "It's getting noticed," said Busskohl, who also displayed the model, an MCI J4500, at IMG's recent annual meeting in Branson, Missouri.

Founded by the Busskohl family in 1928, Arrow currently operates a fleet of 210 vehicles including 167 full-size motor coaches as well as school buses, minivans and vans. The company operates in 13 locations including Omaha, Nebraska; Kansas City, Missouri; Denver, Colorado; Las Vegas, Nevada; and Phoenix. To learn more, visit [www.arrowstagelines.com](http://www.arrowstagelines.com).

## **Hagey's 73-year heritage includes MCI coaches and two new J4500 models**

**SCHAUMBURG, IL — September 5, 2009 —**

Strengthening a relationship with MCI that goes back almost as far as its group-travel business, Hagey Coach and Tours has taken delivery of a new J4500, with another due in October. The delivery will mark the eighth J4500 for the company, bringing its fleet to a total of 20 MCI motor coaches, 150 school buses and 20 vans.



"I always wanted to expand," said Don Hagey, who learned both the school bus and coach business alongside his late father Clarence, and late brother Gerald, working his way up from washing buses when he was 12 years old to eventually owning the school-bus and motorcoach business. "My goal was 20 coaches and 100 school buses." Hagey has surpassed his goals, but not his ambitions. "I'm still interested in expanding. The opportunities are there; you just have to work at them."

### **Hagey's history**

Based in Souderton, Pennsylvania, outside of Philadelphia, Hagey got its start in 1936 when Clarence Hagey operated one school bus taking local students to a one-room school house. Route service to local factories followed. Hagey established the motor coach end of the business right after the war in 1946, when the company bought its first motor coach and started offering trips to popular New York City spots, Washington, DC, and Florida.

Don Hagey and his wife Linda took the helm of Hagey Coach and Tour in 1994 when they purchased the motorcoach tour business from the Gerald Hagey family. The late Gerald Hagey operated the division since 1954.

The Hagey family has been buying MCI models for as long as they can remember. "We've been operating MCIs for a long time. We bought our first J4500 in 2002. I like the stairwell and its appearance. It's a good-looking coach produced by a U.S. company. It's easy for us to get parts. And our customers like the coach."



Hagey applies high standards to all aspects of the business, from parts to personnel. With a fleet that operates 24 hours and seven days a week, Hagey keeps ample parts in inventory. It also uses wireless and computer systems to increase the productivity of its maintenance operation. "I'm big on preventative maintenance. Anything you can fix in the yard is easier than on the road," said Hagey.

The senior Hagey, who grew the business with his wife Linda by his side, manages the company like a professional team — with many key players members of the family. Nephew Brian Hagey, general manager, works closely with brothers Blake in dispatch, and Blaine, a driver. Don's son Jesse is a talented technician, bringing his know-how to the service center. Tanya, Don's daughter, is in Human Resources. Hagey also employs experienced and dedicated long time Managers Robert Nolan, Shannon Bauman, Glenn Godshall and Donna Moses. "We work as team and meet regularly to assure that customers are taken care of in a professional manner," said Hagey. "Our customers are number one. And we're very particular about our drivers. They have to be professional in every aspect."

Hagey conducts an extensive training program for all of its drivers and selects motor coach drivers for their skills and qualities in handling group tours. All together, Hagey has 35 coach drivers and six staff members responsible for the company's motor coach operation. Many of Hagey's coaches, all of which seat 54 passengers and have card tables, are equipped with wheelchair lifts and feature the latest passenger amenities. Says Brian Hagey, "We have high standards for service, and our customers recognize us for that."

To learn more visit [www.Hagey.com](http://www.Hagey.com).

## Frontier Bus Lines marks milestone with first new MCI® J4500 coach

**SCHAUMBURG, IL — October 1, 2009** — Frontier Bus Lines is chartering a new chapter in its 24-year history. The Red Deer, Alberta, company has taken delivery of its first new coach, an MCI J4500, after building a successful business with a fleet of pre-owned coaches. "It's very exciting to have our very first new coach," said Laura Budd, who runs the business with her husband, Keith. "Our customers absolutely love it."



Keith and Laura Budd bought Frontier in 1985, when it had one coach. Over the years, they have grown the business through personalized service and by prudently buying pre-owned coaches, mostly MCIs. The delivery brings the company fleet to 11 coaches. "The timing was right for a new coach, and the J4500 model has always been a coach Keith has liked," said Laura. "The graphics on the coach are gorgeous, and we've been getting lots of compliments."

Frontier is located in the picturesque Aspen Parkland, a region of rolling hills and mountain plains in central Alberta. The exterior decal on Frontier's new J4500, created by MCI's graphics department at the factory, depicts the local beauty of the area known as Kootenay Plains. Additionally, one of Frontier's D-Series coaches bears a decal featuring the area's Bow Lake.

Offering charter and tour services to schools, hockey teams and international visitors, Frontier says its business stays steady all year long. Frontier also operates a three-bay service shop on property it bought 20 years ago and employs more than 14 full- and part-time drivers.

## Caribou Coach Stepping up to Outrun Greyhound

Written by James Murray  
Monday, 07 September 2009 17:05

The bus routes in Northwestern Ontario that Greyhound Canada says they don't want may not be idled after all. Caribou Coach is looking to operate them. The move by Greyhound Canada to cancel service in Northwestern Ontario and Manitoba has brought interest from the company into taking over the routes.





More details on the threatened cuts to Greyhound Bus service in Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario are being reported in The Guardian, a newspaper in the UK. The paper's business section reports, "The Scottish transport operator FirstGroup has been accused by Canada's government of acting like a "bullying multinational" by slashing rural routes on its Greyhound Canada bus network, in a cost-cutting move that risks leaving far-flung towns bereft of regular links to the rest of the country.

"Greyhound, which was bought by FirstGroup as part of its \$3.6bn (£2.2bn) takeover of the US group Laidlaw two years ago, has announced that it intends to withdraw from a large chunk of Canada, including the province of Manitoba and north-western parts of Ontario. Without government support to cover losses, the company said it might go further by cutting services in western Canada, which could include routes to cities such as Vancouver, Alberta and Edmonton". (Source: [www.guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk))

The cuts threatened by Greyhound to end service in Northwestern Ontario and Manitoba have brought criticism from across the district. However if the Northwestern Ontario company were able to step in and replace Greyhound service would remain.

The company states, on an online petition:

"We the undersigned hereby lend our support to Caribou Coach Transportation Company Inc. in its application to the Highway Transport Boards in Ontario and Manitoba for the purposes of operating scheduled services between the cities of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Thunder Bay, Ontario, and Sault Ste Marie, Ontario and including the towns

and municipalities located along highways 1 & 17 between Winnipeg and Sault Ste Marie. We the undersigned also request that Greyhound Canada work with Caribou Coach in order to facilitate and assist in developing a seamless transition of services.

"This service would include: Regular Scheduled Services including, but not limited to the following municipalities in Ontario and Manitoba: Dryden; Ignace; Kakbeka Falls; Kenora; Marathon; Nipigon; Sault Ste Marie; Schreiber; Terrace Bay; Thunder Bay; Upsala; Vermilion Bay; Wabigoon; Wawa; White River & Winnipeg, Manitoba".

Progressive Railroading 9/9/2009

### **Wisconsin to form regional authority for southeastern transit services.**

Yesterday, Wisconsin Gov. Jim Doyle announced the state has crafted a framework proposal with southeastern Wisconsin legislators to create a Regional Transit Authority (RTA) that would govern rail and bus service improvements in Milwaukee, Kenosha and Racine.

The state plans to phase in the RTA; Milwaukee, Kenosha and Racine would initially function as sub-RTAs, with varying sources of previously approved funding. Over time, the sub-RTAs would merge into a common RTA board, with representation proportional to population.

The RTA would be independently governed and "support a truly regional approach to improving and expanding transit in this area," Doyle said in a prepared statement.

The RTA's primary goal: better position the proposed \$200 million Kenosha-Racine- Milwaukee (KRM) commuter-rail line to obtain New Starts funding from the Federal Transit Administration. The nine-station, 33-mile KRM line would feature diesel-multiple units (DMUs) operating on existing Canadian Pacific and Union Pacific Railroad track. DMUs would travel at speeds up to 59 mph and complete a trip between Milwaukee and Kenosha in 53 minutes.

**MINNESOTA'S NEW STAR TO BEGIN SERVICE NOV. 16**

### **NORTHSTAR COMMUTER RAIL NEARLY READY FOR CUSTOMERS**

Contact: Steven Dornfeld  
(651) 602-1518



ST. PAUL – Aug. 31, 2009 – The Metropolitan Council today announced that the Northstar commuter rail line will begin passenger service on Monday, Nov. 16.

Northstar, the state's first commuter rail service, will offer five morning trips from Big Lake, Minn., to downtown Minneapolis and five return trips in the afternoon along a 40-mile corridor, with stops at Fridley, Coon Rapids, Anoka, Elk River and Big Lake. One reverse commute roundtrip also will be offered on weekdays, and three weekend roundtrips are planned on Saturdays and Sundays.

Metropolitan Council Chair Peter Bell announced the launch date during a news conference today at Downtown Minneapolis Ballpark Station, where he introduced the marketing theme for the new service: "Meet Minnesota's New Star."

Bell was joined by Dan Erhart, chair of the Northstar Corridor Development Authority; Peter McLaughlin, chair of the Counties Transit Improvement Board; Khani Sahebjam, MnDOT's deputy commissioner and chief engineer, and Brian Lamb general manager of Metro Transit.

The \$317 million project was designed and constructed by the Minnesota Department of Transportation. It is owned by the Met Council and managed by Metro Transit, an operating division of the Council.

"Northstar is an important element in the Met Council's plan for developing a network of bus and rail transitways to serve heavily traveled corridors," Bell said. "This year we also will complete the first phase of bus rapid transit improvements in the I-35W and Cedar Avenue corridors. And next year, we hope to start construction of our second light-rail line in the Central Corridor. By 2014, we will have completed six transitways totaling 115 miles in length, as we build a transit system for today – and for tomorrow."

"Today's announcement is huge news in the Northstar corridor," said Erhart, an Anoka County commissioner. "For more than a dozen years, local elected officials, business people and residents stayed focused on one thing – building Northstar commuter rail. Now, thanks to their commitment and the hard work of our partners, we're only 11 weeks away from service launch."

"Building on the success of Hiawatha, Northstar is the second step in the creation of a transit system for the 21st century. The Downtown Minneapolis Ballpark Station is the beginning of the new Minneapolis Transit Hub that will connect light rail, commuter rail and high speed rail serving the region and the State of

Minnesota," said McLaughlin, a Hennepin County commissioner.

Sahebjam said, "Northstar, I hope, is the first of many passenger rail services within the state and crossing state lines to connect Minnesotans with the rest of the nation. In fact, we are in the midst of a comprehensive study of passenger rail opportunities, including the potential expansion of Northstar to St. Cloud."

#### *Celebrations Planned*

To mark the launch of commuter rail service, communities will host local celebrations on Saturday, Nov. 14, at rail stations in Big Lake, Elk River, Anoka, Coon Rapids and Fridley. A single five-car train will serve each station that day, giving citizens a free ride to Minneapolis to experience the Northstar Line before revenue operations begin two days later. Train tickets for these grand opening events will be distributed in a lottery system. Details will be released soon.

#### *Opening Day*

The exact train schedule is still being set with test trains operating in the corridor now.

Trains will arrive in downtown Minneapolis in time for commuters to reach their offices for work shifts that begin at 6:30 a.m., 7 a.m., 7:30 a.m., 8 a.m. and 8:45 a.m. Afternoon trips are expected to operate at half-hour intervals beginning at about 3:45 p.m.

Each train will consist of a locomotive and four passenger cars, with each car seating about 140 customers. Passenger cars have three seating levels, work tables, electrical outlets and an on-board restroom. Each car can accommodate two bicycles and is fully accessible for persons with disabilities.

Each suburban station has adjacent park-and-ride facilities, and platforms are equipped with cameras, emergency telephones, enclosed shelters, heating and other amenities. Connecting bus service will be available at four suburban stations, including Northstar Link coach buses, which will bring commuters from St. Cloud to Big Lake for their Northstar trips to Minneapolis.

When Northstar trains arrive in downtown Minneapolis, customers will be able to make quick connections to the Hiawatha light-rail line, which has been extended north to the new Ballpark Station adjacent to the Twins' Target Field. Access to regional bus routes and to the Minneapolis skyway system is a short walk away.

Fares for Northstar service range from \$3.25 to \$7 each way depending on the distance traveled. Fares are lower



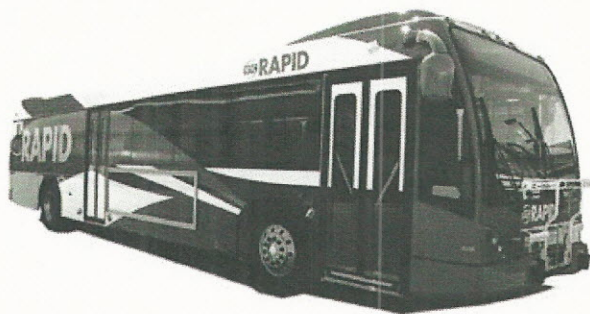
on weekends. Customers using Metro Transit Go-To cards get a 10 percent bonus with their purchases. (For example, \$11 if fare value for \$10.)

"We have just 11 weeks left for practice trips and training and then it will be time to introduce Minnesota's new star to its customers," said Brian Lamb, Metro Transit general manager. "Metro Transit is looking forward to Nov. 16 when we can say: 'All Aboard.'"

The Metropolitan Council is the regional planning organization for the seven-county Twin Cities area. It runs the regional bus and light rail system, collects and treats wastewater, manages regional water resources, plans regional parks and administers funds that provide housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income individuals and families. The Council is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the governor.

## **Washoe transit officials hope rapid bus system will take people out of their cars**

A new, high-speed bus service is operating along much of South Virginia Street, with transportation officials and some riders confident it will ultimately prompt more folks to leave their cars behind.



Alexis Selover boarded an RTC Rapid bus Monday, when officials gathered outside Meadowood Mall to celebrate the start of the long-awaited rapid transit system.

"It was awesome," said Selover, 21. "It was so fast and really, really smooth. It's going to make my commute a lot easier."

Selover, a regular bus rider, said the speed and convenience of the new service might convince more people to turn to transit as a realistic alternative to the car. She said such a change would be a plus for the environment.

"I hope that more people will use it," she said. "I think they will."

That's the idea, said Roger Hanson, senior transit planner for the Regional Transportation Commission. On Sunday, the first day RTC Rapid and its counterpart, RTC Rapid Connect, started service, there was a more than 17 percent increase in the number of riders, Hanson said.

And that could be good news not only for the new transit service but for all traffic, Hanson said.

"If that type of number holds true, we're obviously taking more cars off the road," he said.

Initially, the new service is using existing buses that have been re-branded. Next year, the RTC will put in service new 60-foot articulated buses powered by hybrid diesel-electric power.

Circling between the downtown Reno transit center and Meadowood Mall, RTC Rapid will stop at only 14 places compared to more than 40, stopping every 10 minutes during peak hours. The other new service, RTC Rapid Connect, will stop at the 40-plus places served by RTC Ride's busy Route 1, which was discontinued.

Monday's kickoff celebration was held the same day the RTC celebrated its 30th anniversary. Lee Gibson, the agency's new executive director, said the rapid bus service will be important in shaping future mass transit in the Truckee Meadows. As an official with the RTC of Southern Nevada, Gibson helped start a successful bus rapid transit system serving the Las Vegas area.

The two new "milestone" bus services, Gibson said, are "going to help us really achieve that high level of service that will really encourage people to use mass transit."

Jeff Harris, 54, boarded his first RTC Rapid bus early Monday morning and was getting on another as officials celebrated nearby shortly before noon.

"I like it. It's fast, it's convenient," the Reno man said. "Instead of making all those stops, you're just there."