

Green Pennant Special

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OMNIBUS SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2013



Pace 6330 Oak Park and Stanley



Pace 6327 Cocoran and Austin

Two of Pace's new Eldorado Access buses now operating out of Pace West Division.

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 "osabus.org". At osabus.org 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.

• JAN/FEB MEETINGS

The January meeting of the Omnibus Society of America will be held on January 4, 2013, 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 London Bus DVD presented by Melvin Bernero

The February meeting of the Omnibus Society of America will be held on February 1, 2013, in the Anderson Pavilion of Swedish Covenant Hospital. The meeting will start at 7:30 pm.

At this point in time a program and presenter has not been finalized.

The front page of this issue shows two of the new EIDorado Access buses now operating out of Pace West Division.

New buses rolling on Pace routes

Vehicles cost \$400,000 each

December 13, 2012|By Richard Wronski, Chicago Tribune reporter

The first in a fleet of new stainless steel and fiberglass buses are plying Pace routes, officials say.

The 40-foot-long vehicles cost \$400,000 each and are the initial part of a 69-bus order that Pace will receive in full by spring.

Because of the stainless steel frames and fiberglass body panels, the new buses won't rust and the exterior panels can be replaced if damaged, Pace spokesman Patrick Wilmot said.

The vehicles also will meet the latest emissions standards.

"We've reached a point where diesel emission-control systems are far superior to what they were in the past," Wilmot said. "The image of a bus that emits thick black soot and particulate matter isn't around anymore."

Most of the buses will be used on arterial routes. But 15 "express-style" vehicles will travel on Pace routes that

operate on the Stevenson Expressway (I-55) and the Tri-State Tollway (I-294), Pace said.

The express-style buses have features that passengers will appreciate on longer rides, including high-back seats with extra cushioning and overhead luggage racks, Wilmot said. They also are Wi-Fi-capable.

The new buses will allow Pace to discontinue leasing the vehicles it uses on Routes 755 and 855, the "bus-on-shoulder" routes that operate on I-55 between the southwest suburbs and the Illinois Medical District and North Michigan Avenue in Chicago.

The buses are being built by EIDorado National of Riverside, Calif.

Pace has contracted with the company to supply up to 416 buses through 2016 at cost of just less than \$168 million.

EIDorado was the low bidder on the contract. Pace is using federal funding for the purchase.

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Pace sees big ridership growth on routes using I-55 shoulders

BY BOB OKON bokon@stmedianetwork.com December 2, 2012 4:16PM

Updated: December 3, 2012 7:01PM



The two Pace bus routes on Interstate 55 have seen big ridership increases in the first year they have been using the highway shoulder to bypass traffic tie-ups.

The routes start in Plainfield and Bolingbrook, and Pace plans to add one or two trips in 2013 because of growing ridership.

It still takes about 1-1/2 hours to get to downtown Chicago during the morning rush hours even with access to the shoulder. But that's faster than before, and the arrival times have become more predictable, a Pace spokesman said.

Ridership on Route 755, which goes to the University of Illinois at Chicago medical district and Union Station, had an average daily ridership of 143 in October, which is three times higher than ridership in October 2012.

The more heavily used Route 855, which goes to downtown Chicago and the North Michigan Avenue shopping district, had average daily ridership of 496 in October, up nearly 30 percent from the same month a year ago.

Pace considers the pilot program a success, spokesman Patrick Wilmot said.

"If it were up to us, we would be very happy to expand this elsewhere," Wilmot said. "It's expanded ridership. It's improved on-time performance. Safety has been outstanding as well. It has accomplished everything we wanted it to do."

One of the concerns about shoulder riding is safety.

Wilmot said there was one accident on Interstate 55 in the first year of the program. That happened when a car swerved in front of a bus. There were no injuries, he said.

Pace buses are restricted to a speed of no more than 35 mph on the shoulder, and they are required to drive no faster than 10 mph more than traffic in the lanes.

Shoulder riding only is allowed during the morning and afternoon rush hours. Travel times have not been reduced greatly, because Pace buses still are not allowed on narrower shoulders along the expressway in Chicago, Wilmot said. But it has made arrival times more predictable, he said.

"The on-time performance has improved significantly," he said.

The average travel time on Route 855 from Plainfield to North Michigan Avenue during morning rush hours is 1 hour and 40 minutes. The afternoon ride back is 20 minutes longer. The average morning ride on Route 755 to Union Station is 1 hour and 20 minutes. The afternoon ride back is 10 minutes longer.

Pace has been talking with tollway officials about allowing buses to use the shoulder on the Jane Addams Tollway, which is the stretch of Interstate 90 that runs from O'Hare International Airport to Rockford. No agreement has been reached.

The I-55 shoulder riding was allowed in a five-year pilot program that began in November 2011.

Pace contributes \$1.7 million to Joliet transportation center

By bob okon bokon@stmedianetwork.com November 21, 2012 4:16PM

JOLIET — The downtown transportation center gets another \$1.7 million contribution.

Pace bus services announced the contribution earlier this week for the center, which is designed to be a hub for buses, trains, taxis and even bike riders.

Pace joins the state of Illinois, city of Joliet, as well as the BNSF and Union Pacific Railroads that are all funding the facility. The project also will ease freight train passage through downtown Joliet.

The \$1.7 million "is going to be earmarked for the improvements that the city will be making for the Pace bus service," said City Manager Thomas Thanas.

A bus terminal and turnaround area will be a major part of the transportation center and will replace the existing main hub for Pace bus service outside of the Will County Courthouse. The improvements also will improve access at the nearby Pace maintenance garage and widen part of St. Louis Street, Thanas said.

Pace Chairman Rick Kwasneski announced the contribution at the Monday meeting of the Joliet City Council.

"We're really glad to be part of that facility," Kwasneski said.

The state of Illinois contributed \$32 million to what was originally a \$42 million project. Joliet is putting in \$7.5 million.

Railroad and state funding has increased as additional work has been planned for improvements and realignment of freight tracks, Thanas said. The price tag on the project now is closer to \$52 million, although the city contribution has not changed, he said.

The track realignment for freight service may be the least visible part of the project, but it has also been the most complex, planners said. The project will separate commuter and freight train activity downtown. Freight trains have had to stop downtown to wait for the commuter trains but will be able to move through more freely once the project is done.

The transportation center also is expected to be a major stop for future high-speed rail passenger service between Chicago and St. Louis.

DuPage bus service rolling well, official says

By Susan Frick Carlman scarlman@stmedianetwork.com December 11, 2012 1:04PM

Pace apparently is keeping pace.



Members of the DuPage County Board heard a report Tuesday morning suggesting the Pace suburban bus system is alive and well around here. Tom Marcucci, the

former Elmhurst mayor who represents the county on the Pace board of directors, shared the good news.

Of particular interest locally was the solvency of Route 714, which had been plagued with funding woes. Marcucci said the route — which loops 18 times every weekday between the Metra commuter stations at Fifth Avenue in Naperville and downtown Wheaton, making stops at College of DuPage and a half dozen other locations in between — is “up and running entirely on its own.”

A partnership comprised of Naperville, Wheaton, COD and the county had teamed up to help subsidize the route through the end of this year, if necessary, while Pace continued working to build ridership after federal funding ran out three years ago. The route, which is ridden by a significant number of low-income residents and people with disabilities, was deemed viable last spring.

Pace will operate in the coming year with a \$208 million budget, Marcucci said, that calls for no increases at the fare box. The sum anticipates 30 percent of its revenue from rider fares, he said, adding that it represents a much lower ratio than the income used to support the Metra train system.

“That means \$148 million is basically government support,” he said, referring to income streams that include federal grants and tax revenue distinguished by retail sales tax receipts that have been “over-performing” in the past year.

The Interstate 55 route that features a bus-only express lane, greeted by media skeptics early on, has also been among the year’s success stories, Marcucci reported.

In addition, the Pace van pools that serve specific neighborhoods now number 756, and “all-time high,” he said. The coming year’s \$111 million capital program includes new vehicles for that program, in addition to regular buses and vans accessible to people with disabilities.

Marcucci acknowledged that the federally mandated service for riders who have physical challenges is not profitable for Pace, but it is nonetheless extremely valuable from a societal perspective. The rides go well beyond transporting patrons to doctor appointments, he said, noting that they also provide users with a way to get to school, which enables them to secure employment and become taxpayers.

One of North America’s largest bus networks, Pace covers a service area of some 3,500 square miles.

MTA New York City Transit goes for comfort, safety, reliability with 54 2012 MCI Commuter Coaches for Express Service

SCHAUMBURG, IL — November 27, 2012 — Providing Manhattan-bound commuters with a safe and worry-free ride, MTA New York City Transit and MTA Bus Company

have relied on MCI Commuter Coaches for more than a decade, operating more than 900 MCI coaches in its fleet of 5,600 buses. Its newest MCI coaches, delivering over the next few months, feature the same amenities to which passengers have become accustomed, including plushy upholstered forward-facing reclining seats, 29 inches of leg room, personal reading lights and air flow controls.



The new coaches also come equipped with advanced features such as Electronic Stability Control and a fourth-generation ACTIA multiplex system for simplified diagnostics. Like all MTA New York City Transit MCI Commuter Coaches, these latest models are ADA compliant and come equipped with the newest clean-diesel engine technology with a Cummins ISL engine and Allison transmission powertrain.

“We’re very pleased to be delivering 54 Commuter Coaches to MTA New York City Transit,” said Patrick Scully, Vice President of Sales and Marketing, MCI Public Sector. “MCI Commuter Coaches provide the most reliable and cost effective vehicle solution to New York City Transit while simultaneously providing the highest level of passenger comfort for NYCT’s riders.”

Delaware Express wraps up four-coach order with 2013 J4500

SCHAUMBURG, IL — November 21, 2012 —

Operating in a small state doesn’t mean one can’t think big. Dedicated to offering its customers some of the newest, best-equipped vehicles in the region, Delaware Express recently took delivery of a new 2013 J4500, wrapping up a four-coach order. The restyled coach caught President Gerry Frenze by surprise. “We didn’t know that we would be one of the first getting the 2013,” said Frenze. “It’s good to be on the cutting edge.”

Indeed, the newest J4500 has some leading amenities and options, including Wi-Fi, satellite television and 110-volt outlets, plus a wheelchair lift. The newest J4500 is furthermore distinguished by wood-grain flooring and hydrographics in the interior on the parcel rack doors, driver’s dash area and front entrance area and door. The previous three J4500s have come with similarly high-end amenities; those coaches additionally have galleys (by Creative Mobile Interiors, Ohio) instead of the wheelchair lift, along with a 50-seat configuration that’s roomy

enough to accommodate the college athletes who make up a significant portion of Delaware Express riders. Delaware Express serves teams at the University of Delaware, Wilmington University, Delaware State University and Goldey-Beacom College.



Delaware Express' newest coaches feature flashy exterior graphics in a blue and green motif that underscores the company's commitment to expanding its green fleet options. The company started switching over to low-emission engine technology with the 2011 delivery of two MCI J4500s. Frenze says that he's seeing a fuel economy gain in the newer EPA-compliant engines, making them attractive beyond the ability to market them to eco-conscious customers.

Marketing is something that Delaware Express has excelled at from the very beginning. Frenze started his company in 1984, after noticing, as a marketing student at the University of Delaware, that the school spent a significant amount of money on transportation — and at the same time, bus service was undergoing deregulation.

Frenze, who says he had never even ridden a bus before he began his company, used his marketing expertise to first build a shuttle and limousine business. He moved into motor coaches when the events of 9/11 took a serious bite out of his core business. Once he made the move, he built more than a fleet — he built alliances. Today, Delaware Express is part of GO! Transport and GO Ground Options, which required getting TSX safety certified.

With a fleet of 23 coaches and 45 shuttle vehicles, Delaware Express has about 130 employees and facilities that include a maintenance shop and fueling station. Motor coach services account for about half of the company's business, with the other half comprising the shuttle and car service upon which Delaware Express was founded. To learn more, visit www.delexpress.com.

Howard Bus Service takes delivery of Canada's first redesigned MCI® J4500

SCHAUMBURG, IL — November 7, 2012 — When Dale Howard, president and owner of Howard Bus Service Ltd., Athens, Ontario, planned a four-day fall

colors tour through the Adirondacks, he didn't know he'd be doing it with Canada's first redesigned MCI J4500 coach for 2013, delivered in mid October. Howard, of course, was pleased with the golden opportunity.



"I always like new design," says Howard, who runs both Howard Bus Service and its sister company, Howard Travel. "The [J4500's] cat eyes are neat, because no one else has them yet. The drivers say it's getting a lot of looks on the road."

Style isn't the coach's only calling card. Howard also says the lighting is noticeably brighter, thanks to the switchover to all-LED lamps, and he's impressed with the smoother handling and quieter Cummins-engine ride. The company, which has four other MCI J4500s in its five-coach fleet, also opted for 110-volt outlets.

Howard is also enthusiastic about moving to the greener powertrain found on MCI's 2013 J4500. Though he hasn't had the coach long enough to evaluate the model's claims for improved fuel economy, he's seen gains in his 80-vehicle school bus fleet, where he's been switching over to greener vehicles for several years now.

This isn't the first time Howard has scored an MCI debut. The company says it was also the first in Ontario to take delivery of the MC-9 back in 1979, and its relationship with the nation's leading coach builder goes back to 1977, when Howard bought its first MCI, an MC-8.

Howard Bus Service got its start in 1955, when Ron Howard, Dale's father, started transporting children to school in the rural Ontario region. At first, he used his own car. As demand grew, he moved into school buses.

Today, with Ron Howard still making daily visits as his son runs the operation, the company includes vans and limousines along with its school buses and coaches. The company has its own six-bay maintenance shop and employs about 130 people. Among those are Dale's sons, who pitch in while home from college.

Staying young: Peter Pan first in nation to order redesigned MCI® J4500 coach

SCHAUMBURG, IL — November 6, 2012 — When your name is Peter Pan, it's almost a given that you'll strive for a youthful appearance. It should come as no surprise that when Peter Pan Bus Lines, Springfield, Massachusetts, heard its most relied-upon coach model was about to undergo a major redesign, it was first to place an order.



One of the largest privately owned motor coach companies in the U.S., Peter Pan has now added these new 2013 MCI J4500s to its fleet, assuring that its passengers will be among the first on the block to enjoy the model's cutting-edge good looks, more leg room and a smoother ride, along with new clean-diesel engine technology that helps the coach reduce emissions and burn less fuel. The coaches additionally feature wheelchair lifts, three-point seatbelts, Wi-Fi, and 110-volt outlets at each of the 54 seats that make it easy for passengers to use their laptops and other devices.

Peter Pan has a record of firsts when it comes to MCI coaches. Peter Pan was also the first operator to purchase the first J4500s, with an initial order of 12, in 2001 when MCI launched the model. Ranked the best-selling coach in the U.S. and Canada for eight years running, the model is popular for its many passenger amenities, including an easy-boarding patented spiral entryway, tiered theatre seating and its easy maintenance. Made by the nation's leading builder of motor coaches in the U.S. and Canada, both the original and 2013 MCI J4500s were designed with the help of BMW Group DesignworksUSA.

In addition, all Peter Pan coaches feature a GPS system that the company uses to eliminate unnecessary idling and help monitor speeds and braking to improve fuel efficiency by up to 8 percent.

"We're very impressed with the new J model," said Peter A. Picknelly, CEO and Chairman of Peter Pan Bus Lines. "MCI has taken what is already a terrific vehicle and modernized it further. The graffiti-proof lavatory is a real winner, and the spiral entryway makes a nice first impression and has strong customer appeal. We are very pleased to be the first recipient."

"It's a good-looking and durable coach," said Tom Picknally, Senior Vice President, Maintenance, who

adds that the company has been buying MCI coaches for some 40 years. "Our routes face a wide array of challenges from weather, to road quality, to interior wear, and MCI has done a good job meeting our criteria in the models they offer."

"MCI is honored to mark another first with Peter Pan," said Patricia Ziska, MCI Vice President of Sales and Marketing, Private Sector. "As the one of the leading operators in the nation, Peter Pan has some of the highest standards, and they demand highly reliable coaches. We're very pleased that our J4500 suits their operation. By taking the first J4500s in 2001, Peter Pan set in motion the model's best-selling ranking, and we anticipate that to repeat in the years to come."

According to Picknally, Peter Pan's relationship with MCI began in the early 1970s, after the company had a chance to see the durability of the MC-5 coaches operated by others in the Northeast and opted for the 40 foot MC-8.

In addition to its Springfield headquarters, Peter Pan operates office and garage facilities in Boston and Central Connecticut, employing 1000 people companywide. Peter Pan and Greyhound cooperatively operate a fast-growing new bus service, BoltBus, to provide "city center to city center" service using internet-based sales and non-terminal pick-up locations. BoltBus vehicles feature Wi-Fi, electrical plug-ins and increased legroom. Peter Pan and Greyhound are also planning the future launch of a new jointly operated bus line, Yo! Bus, which will offer affordable service for customers in New York and Philadelphia who like the convenience of a Chinatown stop.

Today, the company serves over four million passengers a year and logs over 25 million miles annually. Learn more at www.peterpanbus.com.

Cardinal Bus Lines adds 2½ Prevosts to fleet

December 03, 2012

Sainte-Claire, QC, December 3, 2012 – Cardinal Bus Lines, a third-generation coach and charter bus company headquartered in Middlebury, Indiana, has added several new Prevost coaches to its 44 bus fleet.



The Shoup family has been transporting Americans in the midwest since the Model T era, when Branston Shoup purchased Middlebury Bus Lines in 1923. John Shoup took over and in the 1950s, acquired Cardinal Buses. John is now retired, and his sons Matt and Dan head up operations for the 125 employee company, providing northern Indiana and southwest Michigan travelers with charter coach service across the U.S. and Canada.

Matt Shoup explained that two new 2012 H3-45 models joined Cardinal's ranks in March. "Prevost has served us well in the past," he recounted, "so when we needed to upgrade our fleet, it was only natural that we would turn to them again." The new H3-45s "offer all the standard Prevost benefits," Mr. Shoup said, "and the feedback we've had from passengers and drivers is very positive. In addition to Prevost's many safety features, the new models have amenities our travelers crave, like DVD capability, 110v power, and Wi-Fi. In fact," he added, "every bus in our fleet is equipped that way these days."

Well, every bus except one...Cardinal's "Prevost H3-17."

After retiring from the Middlebury school system in 2002, longtime educator and school administrator Don Weirich joined Cardinal Bus Lines as a part-time driver. Earlier this year Mr. Weirich (who was Matt Shoup's school shop teacher a few years back) decided to put his hands-on expertise to work in a whole new way. And so was born the "1/2 a Prevost"—a 17 foot scaled-down replica of a 2012 H-45 model. Mr. Weirich started this ambitious project by purchasing a golf cart and stretching it to 17 feet, bumper to bumper. He then moved the steering in front of the axle ("just like a bus"), built the body, and went on to do other extensive mechanical and body work. Some four and a half months later, he unveiled what he has billed the "H3-17" to the world, complete with the striking deep burgundy graphics that set Cardinal buses apart on the open road. While this attention-getting "mini-me Prevost" has become a real hit at local promotions and parades, Matt Shoup said, it's not quite ready to join its siblings on the interstates. "But we've got plenty of other Prevosts ready to give our customers a comfortable, safe ride."

Nova LFS Artic buses head to Houston

Nova Bus will deliver 70 articulated buses to the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County, in Houston, TX, over the next year. The order is valued at approximately \$48 million.

Gilles Dion, President and CEO of Nova Bus, says this is "a tremendous opportunity to expand Nova Bus' presence in the Southwest".

METRO is the region's largest public transit system. It operates more than 1,200 buses and 370,000 times a day people use a METRO service.

"We've been privileged to be able to demonstrate our product quality and customer support during the 6-month

trial period, and we look forward to making this partnership a mutual success," he added.

METRO's new high capacity buses will be used to renew Harris County's bus fleet and will be put into regular service. The articulated vehicles will be able to carry up to 112 passengers along any city streets, thanks to their similar maneuverability to 40-foot buses. Nova Bus' LFS Artic buses are currently in operation in large urban centers including New York City and Montreal.

The vehicles will come equipped with Nova Bus' proprietary electric engine cooling system, resulting in significant fuel savings, reduced greenhouse gas emissions and competitive life cycle costs. The vehicles will also feature Nova Bus' latest transit bus interior, a design based on client and focus group feedback as well as inspired by other industries such as aerospace and rail transportation.

The order will be assembled at Nova Bus' plant in Plattsburgh, NY. Nova Bus is part of the Volvo Group, which employs approximately 12,000 workers in the United States in seven production facilities.

Nova Bus, proud new partner of LYNX

Nova Bus has confirmed a new partnership with LYNX in Central Florida. Delivery of two articulated hybrid buses is scheduled for 2013. The buses will be assembled in Nova Bus' Upstate New York plant.

"This new alliance highlights Nova Bus first breakthrough in the Florida State public transit industry," said Gilles Dion, Nova Bus President and CEO. "We're pleased to welcome LYNX among our business partners and we look forward to seeing Nova Bus' articulated hybrid vehicles in Central Florida."

Nova Bus began building hybrid buses in 2006 and has since delivered vehicles all across North America.

The LFS Artic HEV model ordered by LYNX combines the ability to handle the highest-volume routes with the quiet, ultra-low emissions hybrid drive. The fuel consumption and carbon footprint of this vehicle is significantly lower than a conventional diesel bus. In addition, the LFS Artic HEV provides savings on brakes and engine maintenance costs from regenerative braking.

While the hybrid system offers a greener alternative to transit needs, operators can also count on the Nova LFS Artic's proven performances and the company's customer-focused approach and after-sales service. North American cities such as New York, Montreal and Austin, TX, have opted for Nova LFS Artic buses.

Breakthrough order for Nova Bus in Toronto

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Nova Bus has secured an order valued at \$143 million for up to 153 articulated buses for the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC). Delivery of the first 27 LFS Artic is scheduled for 2013.

"Being selected to provide Canada's largest transit authority with the latest generation of articulated vehicles is a tremendous opportunity and another milestone in strengthening our position in North America," said Gilles Dion, President and CEO of Nova Bus. "We are proud that the TTC has opted to partner with Nova Bus. We look forward to building a long-lasting relationship and

providing them with vehicles that contribute to the development of public transit in the Greater Toronto Area."

The corrosion- and fatigue-resistant stainless steel structure of the LFS Artic, as well as its proven track record and overall design were key features for the TTC. Nova Bus vehicles for the TTC will be entirely assembled in Canada and feature a high level of Canadian content.