



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OMNIBUS SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.

JULY-AUGUST 2013

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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 **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.

• JULY/AUGUST MEETINGS

The July meeting of the Omnibus Society of America will not be held due to the July 4th holiday extended weekend.

The August meeting of the Omnibus Society of America will be held on August 2, 2013, in the Anderson Pavilion of Swedish Covenant Hospital. The meeting will start at 7:30 pm.

Our program for the evening will be a presentation by long-time member Mike Charnota on the Chicago Transit Authority and predecessor companies.

CTA Board Approves Contract for Four University of Chicago Routes

5/8/2013

Agency will continue service on bus routes that provided nearly 1.2 million rides last year

The Chicago Transit Board today approved a new contract to allow the Chicago Transit Authority to continue to provide bus service on four routes serving University of Chicago campuses.

The CTA reached a new five-year agreement in which the University fully cover CTA's operating costs minus fare revenues for four popular routes: the #170 U of C – Midway, #171 U of C – Hyde Park, #172 U of C – Kenwood and #192 U of C Hospitals Express. The new agreement will be effective September 1, 2013 and continue through August 31, 2018.

The routes renegotiation is part of CTA's Crowding Reduction Plan implemented by the agency last December to reduce overcrowding on CTA buses and trains.

Specifically, the Plan added service on 48 bus routes and rail lines where ridership has grown and additional service was most needed. To defray the cost of the additional service, CTA said it would no longer subsidized

so-called contracted routes and said it would renegotiate nine such routes that the agency had been subsidizing. Contracted routes largely serve one group or destination.

"We are pleased that we are able to continue to work with the University of Chicago and provide employees, students, faculty and visitors with reliable and affordable transit options," said CTA President Forrest Claypool.

"Last year CTA provided nearly 1.2 million rides on these University of Chicago routes, and we believe continuing to provide this service benefits the University and the surrounding community."

Under the new agreement, buses operating along these four routes will continue to operate as scheduled:

- #170 U of C – Midway: travels between 57th Street/Stony Island and 59th Street/Drèxel during the morning and evening rush periods on weekdays only (year-round). More than 85,000 rides were provided in 2012.
- #171 U of C – Hyde Park: operates daily from early September through mid-June and only during the morning and evening rush periods during the summer months. Buses travel between 54th Street/South Shore to 60th Street/University and had nearly 370,000 rides in 2012.
- #172 U of C – Kenwood: nearly 520,000 rides were recorded along this route in 2012, which operates between Hyde Park/East End and 60th Street/University. Service is provided daily from early September through mid-June and then only during the morning and evening rush periods during the summer months.
- #192 University of Chicago Hospitals Express: service is provided on weekdays during the morning and evening rush periods between the Ogilvie Transportation Center and the University's campus and hospital. Nearly 210,000 rides were provided along this route in 2012.

"We believe it is crucial that our faculty, students, staff and neighbors have safe and efficient public transportation around campus and neighboring communities," said Marlon C. Lynch, Associate Vice President for Safety and Security at the University of Chicago. "We have spent more than a year working to find the best way to continue providing that service, and are very pleased to have reached this agreement with the CTA."

The CTA has successfully renegotiated eight of the nine contracted bus routes to eliminate agency subsidies for the routes.

CTA Readies for the Largest Bus Overhaul Project in Agency History

6/12/2013

Board approves \$1.7M contract for purchase of new bus interior lighting kits

The Chicago Transit Board today approved the purchase of new, longer-lasting and more environmentally friendly bus interior lighting as part of the CTA's major bus purchase and overhaul plan announced last year by Mayor Emanuel and CTA President Forrest Claypool. The bus initiative will provide CTA customers with an almost entirely new bus fleet within the next few years.

The Board awarded a \$1.7 million lighting contract to Specialty Manufacturing Inc. following a competitive, low-bid process. The new LED lighting will replace existing fluorescent and LED interior lights in the more than 1,000 buses that are being overhauled. The new LED lights are more reliable, safer for the environment, will remain brighter longer and are less expensive.

The CTA bus modernization program announced last year includes an overhaul of 1,030 buses currently in CTA's fleet that are at the "mid-life" stage to make them like new, in addition to the purchase of as many as 550 new buses, all of which will provide a modern, reliable and comfortable bus fleet to CTA customers.

Late last year, the CTA awarded contracts to Cummins NPower, LLC and New Flyer Industries Canada ULC with a combined value of \$185 million to perform bus overhauls, which will include rebuilding engines, transmissions, suspensions, heating and air-conditioning systems, exterior repair and repainting. The lighting work would be performed as part of the overhauls, which have begun in recent weeks and are expected to continue through spring 2015.

"A year ago, Mayor Emanuel and I outlined plans to modernize the entire CTA bus fleet and we've made significant progress," said CTA President Forrest Claypool. "The CTA's bus fleet now features 100 new articulated buses that were delivered within the last year. Earlier this year the Board awarded a contract for the purchase of as many as 450 new standard, 40-foot buses. And, we've begun the necessary work on the biggest component of that plan – overhauling more than half of our bus fleet."

Buses provide 58 percent of all rides taken on the CTA each year, serving Chicago and 35 surrounding suburbs. The CTA provided more than 314 million bus rides in 2012.

CTA Announces Artwork Plans for Red Line South Stations

6/18/2013

CTA seeks artists for Red Line South stations, Wilson Station to be rebuilt next year; Agency

also provides first look at artwork plans for seven rehabbed north Red Line stations

Mayor Emanuel and Chicago Transit Authority President Forrest Claypool today announced that the CTA has kicked off a search for artists to create public artwork for rail stations currently being renovated and improved as part of the Red Line South Reconstruction Project. In addition, the CTA will also seek an artist for the Wilson Red Line Station, which will be rebuilt next year into a modern Red-Purple Line transfer station.

Also as part of today's announcement, President Claypool unveiled renderings of artwork that will be permanently installed and displayed at seven North Red Line stations that were rehabbed last year. The Chicago Transit Board approved the contracts for the artwork June 12.

"This project will help showcase our city's great and diverse artistic talents to our ridership in the very communities that inspired the works," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "This artistic initiative allows all CTA riders to gain a more personal understanding of the uniqueness, history and diversity of our city's neighborhoods as they travel throughout our city."

The CTA already has more than 50 works of art at 41 stations along the Pink, Red and Brown lines. This public collection of art will continue to expand with the addition of artwork at 16 Red Line stations on the North and South Sides of the city.

"Mayor Emanuel and I have committed to expanding public art at CTA stations to promote a friendly and inviting atmosphere that enhances the public transit travel experience," said President Claypool. "The artwork will reflect the unique, vibrant communities that surround each station and extend the benefits of our station improvements to every customer who walks through our station doors. I want to thank Ald. Cappleman, Moore and Osterman for their extensive involvement and assistance with this project."

The CTA today will issue a [Call for Artists](#) soliciting artist qualifications to create artwork for the Wilson station and for the eight Red Line South stations. Bids for the Call for Artists are due Thursday, July 18, 2013.

Artwork will be installed at Red Line South stations at Cermak-Chinatown, Sox-35th, 47th, Garfield, 63rd, 69th, 79th and 87th. Those stations, along with the 95th Street terminal, were temporarily closed on May 19 as part of the CTA's \$425 million Red Line South Reconstruction Project. All stations are being upgraded with new lighting, painting, electrical substation work and other improvements while the railroad is completely rebuilt. The Red Line South is expected to reopen in October 2013.

The 95th Street terminal will be completely rebuilt next year as part of a separate, \$240 million project. Artwork for that station is expected to be procured separately.

The Wilson station will be reconstructed into a modern Red-Purple transfer station in a \$203 million project slated to begin later this year.

For the Red North station projects, nearly 300 artists submitted their credentials and qualifications to be considered for the commissioning of the seven artworks. From these applications, an evaluation committee selected 31 artists/artist teams from all submissions based on artistic merit, qualifications and professional recognition of the artists, and the artists' written statements of interest. The selected artists were provided a summary of community input solicited by the CTA during three public meetings last fall, which was taken into consideration as the artists created and submitted station-specific proposals. As a result of this process, the following contracts were awarded:

- Jarvis, Thomas Denlinger
- Morse, Harold Mendez
- Thorndale, Jim Bachor
- Granville, Kyungmi Shin
- Berwyn, Dorothy Hughes
- Argyle, Lynn Basa
- Lawrence, DeeDee Morrison

The artwork for the seven north Red Line stations is paid for with Transit Enhancement Funds from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The total project budget is nearly \$621,000 and includes all costs including artist fees, fabrication, shipping/delivery, installation, administrative fees and a project contingency fund. Similar federal funds will be used for the commissioning of public artwork installed at Red Line South and Wilson stations.

One Month Down: Red Line South Reconstruction Project

6/19/2013

Alternative service providing smooth commutes

As the Red Line South reconstruction project ON June 19th marks the completion of the first month of work, Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) officials announced that the \$425 million project remains on schedule and within budget, and that alternative service is providing smooth commutes for customers.

"Mayor Emanuel and I are pleased to report that this massive investment in the Red Line South and the South Side is proceeding smoothly and our customers are a month closer to a brand new railroad that provides faster, smoother and more reliable commutes," said CTA President Forrest Claypool. "The CTA continues to provide plenty of alternative, convenient and discounted or free service to customers affected by the project and we continue to create jobs and economic benefits for the South Side and Chicago as a whole."

The Red Line South reconstruction began May 19, requiring a temporary shutdown of 10 miles of track to completely rebuild it. The five-month shutdown will allow the work to be completed in the quickest, most cost-efficient manner, and includes the rehabilitation of eight of nine Red Line South rail stations along the Red Line South. The ninth station, 95th Street Terminal, will be reconstructed in a separate, \$240 million project next year.

To accommodate customers affected by the shutdown, the CTA has provided extensive alternative service, including free shuttles between Red Line stations south of 63rd Street and the Garfield elevated rail station; free entry at Garfield Green Line station; Red Line train service running on Green Line tracks from Roosevelt to Ashland/63rd; expanded bus service on numerous nearby bus routes and 50-cent discounts on bus rides south of 63rd Street.

Project progress highlights include:

Railroad reconstruction

The project includes replacing all railroad ties, rails, third rail, drainage and communications systems, and ballast, the stone material that holds the ties in place. Station work includes lighting replacement or refurbishment, new signage, floor reglazing/repair, painting, cleaning and new elevators at the Garfield, 63rd and 87th stations.

About 95 percent of the old tracks have been removed and 80 percent of the third rail, signals and communications cable has been finished. At shuttered Red Line South stations, demolition and foundation work has progressed in areas where new elevators will be built.

Job creation

The CTA estimates that overall jobs created by this project will top 1,000, including 400 part-time bus operators, 100 traffic control aides, 400-plus construction jobs and more.

Alternative service/ridership

To help customers inconvenienced by the temporary Red Line South branch shutdown, the CTA undertook a major alternative service effort to provide customers with plenty of service alternatives that are being widely used by our customers.

In line with the CTA's expectations, customers are taking advantage of a number of alternatives during this period.

More than 9,300 customers on an average weekday are taking express shuttles from 95th, 87th, 79th and 69th to Garfield.

More than 6,700 customers are taking the local shuttle, which makes all stops between 63rd and 95th.

More than 1,300 customers take the express shuttle between Cermak/Chinatown and Roosevelt Road.

Customers are increasing use of the Green, Orange and re-routed Red Line, as well as several north-south bus

routes, including the #3 State, #4 Cottage Grove, J14 Jeffery Jump and #29 State.

During the first few weeks of the project, CTA closely monitored ridership patterns each day and made a number of tweaks to the alternative service to better meet ridership demand. For example, CTA added service on the #3 King Drive, #4 Cottage Grove, #J14 Jeffery Jump and #29 State Street bus routes to address an increase in ridership.

Additionally, the CTA increased the number of signs and maps at stations and shuttle stops to help customers more easily navigate the alternative service, and launched a campaign to promote the free shuttles as a convenient alternative to normal north-south bus routes.

ANN ARBOR: Railcar unveiled for new commuter service between Ann Arbor and Detroit

Published: Tuesday, June 18, 2013

Ann Arbor Journal

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ANN ARBOR — One of the Michigan Department of Transportation's commuter railcars for the new MiTrain rail service between Ann Arbor and Detroit was unveiled at the Ann Arbor Mayor's Green Fair June 14.

"This is a train that's owned by the state of Michigan," said Ann Arbor Mayor John Hieftje. "And there are more cars like this one."

The new rail service is estimated to be ready in two to three years. It will provide 60 mph transportation between Ann Arbor and Detroit, with stops at Detroit Metro Airport and in Dearborn and Ypsilanti.

"It is the perfect regional project and I'm really excited about this," said Paul Tait, executive director of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments. "It's important to my county. It's important to my city, Ypsilanti."

As the Ypsilanti Courier previously reported, Friends of the Ypsilanti Freighthouse has been renovating the Freighthouse in Depot Town and MiTrain passengers in Ypsilanti may board the train from there.

The railcar that was unveiled was a refurbished bi-level that used to provide service in Chicago. Although it was built decades ago, it had been outfitted with many modern upgrades, including handicap accessibility and had a bicycle storage area.

"In a way, rail is kind of going back to the past but it's going to be going back to the past with Wi-fi," Hieftje said.

The railcars were originally purchased by Great Lakes Central Railroad from the Metra in Chicago. MDOT contracted to lease the cars from GLCR and to have the cars refurbished. Tim Hoeffner, director of the Office of Rail for MDOT said the refurbishment cost around \$350,000 per railcar, which for 23 railcars, would put total costs at just more than \$8 million.

The MiTrain service will be operating on the same tracks that Amtrak will use for its 110-mph rail service. MDOT has been paying to renovate the tracks and outfit them with ways for trains to go around one another.

MDOT announced its purchase of 135 miles of rail lines from Dearborn to Kalamazoo from Norfolk Southern's Railway Company in December. Hoeffner said the purchase and renovation of the rail lines cost roughly \$387 million. Of that, around \$350 million came from the Federal Railroad Administration's High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program. The remaining \$37.5 million came from MDOT and private partners.

The rail service will be funded through fares and government subsidy, but how large of a subsidy it will require has yet to be seen. Hoeffner said that most well established rail services cover 60 percent of their operating costs through fares.

Hieftje said the new rail service is vital to the economic development of Ann Arbor and the rest of Washtenaw County. He said unless the region starts investing heavily in public transportation options, he believes Ann Arbor's infrastructure will be experiencing gridlock by the year 2020.

"We've been building too many parking structures," he said. "...We need a solution of how to get people into Ann Arbor to go to work here without their automobile."

Charles Griffith, chairman of the board for the Ann Arbor Transit Authority, said AATA sees the train as an important part of the future of public transportation in the region. He also said that he thinks the train will increase AATA ridership.

"What I would anticipate is it would actually increase our need to service the train," Griffith said. "They're going to need reliable bus service around town."

Griffith said AATA is not anticipating that it will be operating the train service. He said it's more likely that the Regional Transit Authority for Southeast Michigan would do so.

In addition to the rail service between Ann Arbor and Detroit, there is a proposal to eventually have a rail service connecting Ann Arbor to Howell, called the Washtenaw and Livingston Line, or WALLY. The proposal would be an alternative to the proposed expansion of U.S. 23 into a three-lane highway, which would cost an estimated \$500 million.

"That's off in the future," Tait said. "There's still a lot of decision making and local politics."

Metra weighs extending service to Kendall County

Service to Yorkville might be better than stopping at Oswego, officials say

June 09, 2013|By Richard Wronski, Chicago Tribune reporter
Metra officials Friday recommended that the commuter rail agency consider extending service to Yorkville in Kendall County, rather than halting at slightly closer-to-Chicago Oswego, an issue that has been discussed for more than a decade.

Board members gave tentative approval to spending an additional \$440,000 for an ongoing study to determine the cost of extending the BNSF Line a couple of more miles to Yorkville.

Yorkville was the longtime home of former U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert, who earmarked about \$5 million in federal funds for the study in 2003.

Whether Metra ultimately brings service to Kendall County is not assured, however, since the agency has yet to formally approve any extension.

BNSF service now ends in Aurora. Three stops, in Montgomery, Oswego and Yorkville, could potentially be added. The cost of extending the line to Oswego alone has been estimated at more than \$100 million.

The level of ridership available in Kendall County remains a big question mark, however. Some wonder about extending service to a new area instead of bolstering existing lines, such as the lightly served Heritage Corridor or SouthWest Service.

"I believe it will be a good project, but we have a lot of hurdles to jump," said Metra board member Mike McCoy, who represents Kane County.

Kendall County and the communities being served would have to come up with funds to build the 8.6-mile-long extension from Aurora, along with the cost of stations and operating costs, officials said.

Kendall County is not part of the six-county Regional Transportation Authority, and as such does not pay any sales tax for the RTA. Joining the RTA would need approval in a countywide referendum.

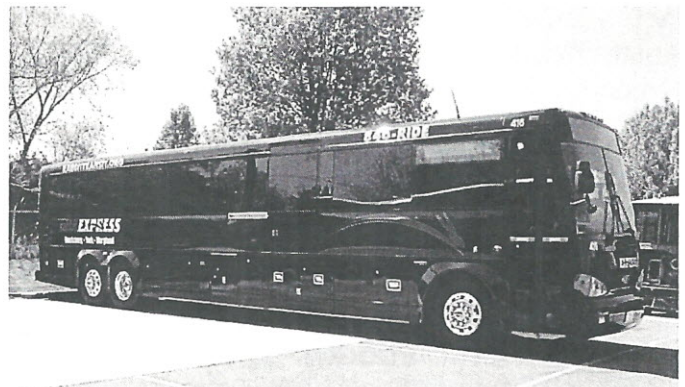
Glenford Peters, Metra's assistant chief operating officer, told board members Friday that extending service to Yorkville and building a rail yard and station there would be preferable to Oswego, about 21 1/2 miles east.

Metra last year approved \$1.8 million for an environmental and engineering study of extending the BNSF to Oswego. If Metra's board approves, the contract with Chicago-based Bowman, Barrett & Associates would increase to nearly \$2.3 million.

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Pennsylvania's rabbittransit takes delivery of three MCI® Commuter Coaches, will test electric cooling system

SCHAUMBURG, IL — May 8, 2013 — York County, Pennsylvania, rabbittransit, has taken delivery of three new MCI Commuter Coaches. One of the new coaches is the first to feature an EMP electrical cooling system rather than the standard belt-driven fan system designed to cool the engine. The EMP system is common on many transit buses. The agency has agreed to assist MCI in tracking data and fuel usage to compare the efficiency of both systems.



The agency is adding all three new coaches to its rabbitEXPRESS service, which offers weekday service between York and Harrisburg, between York and Northern Maryland, and between Gettysburg and Harrisburg.

"rabbittransit is excited to partner with MCI on testing the EMP on our commuter service," said Richard Farr, rabbittransit Executive Director. "In a day and age where resources are tight, we are interested in seeing what savings, both in fuel and maintenance costs, this technology can yield."

"The data collected by rabbittransit will allow us to compare fuel economy and performance gains, and we will share the data with customers to allow them to make a well-informed decision on which system provides the best advantages," said Paul Fazio, MCI Director of Product Development. "In normal stop-and-go transit duty cycles, the system offers about a 10 percent advantage in fuel savings. We're testing the system to learn how it performs on a three-axle coach traveling at highway speeds over long-distance routes as well as through city traffic, the typical application for our Commuter model."

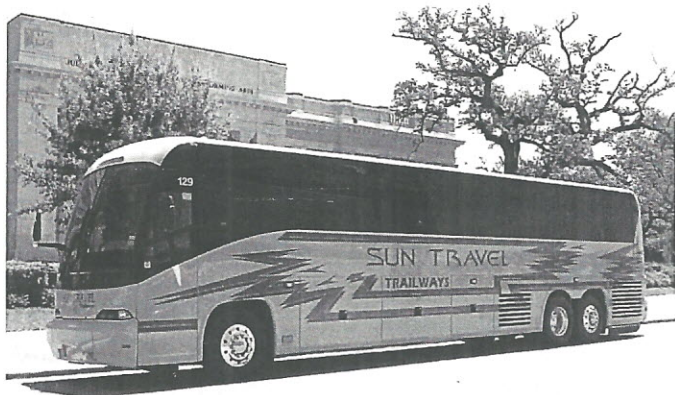
The MCI Commuter Coach already has the best MDBF (mean distance between failure) rate in its class and is 10 times more reliable than its closest competitor. Plus, it offers greater seating capacity than a comparable transit bus, at a cost that MCI says is 15% lower per seat, depending on specifications. The high-floor coaches also offer nimble performance and admirable safety at highway speeds, with a smooth, quiet ride.

The agency's new Commuter Coaches are wheelchair-lift-equipped and come with plush, forward-facing seats along with individual temperature controls, LED reading lights, 110-volt outlets and Wi-Fi connectivity.

With a fleet of nine MCI coaches, 58 fixed-route buses and 84 paratransit vehicles, rabbittransit offers a variety of transportation services to the residents of York, Adams, and Northumberland Counties. Nearly 7,000 people depend on rabbittransit each day to get to work, medical facilities, school and other life-sustaining activities. Visit www.rabbittransit.org.

Sun Travel Trailways takes shine to new MCI® J4500, celebrates 20th year

SCHAUMBURG, IL — May 13, 2013 — Harnessing its own star power, Sun Travel Trailways, Beaumont, Texas, has taken delivery of its very first MCI J4500, selecting the model for its eye appeal and dependability. "So far, so good," said Michael LaBrie, founder and president of Sun Travel. "We've run a lot of MCI D coaches because of the reliability — they're bulletproof and proven. We're expecting the same from our J4500 model."



The new J4500 brings Sun Travel's mixed-model fleet, including four MCI D-Series models, to 13 coaches. "Honestly, we're right where we need to be in terms of fleet size," said LaBrie. "Our goal is to continue to upgrade our fleet with newer models. Newer means fewer problems."

LaBrie started his company 20 years ago with a \$12,000 loan from his brother to buy a pre-owned Eagle. He rented it out to church groups, earning enough income to buy an MC-9 within eight months. Even at the very start of his business, LaBrie made drivers wear a matching shirt and tie uniform. He knew that professional, courteous drivers committed to strict safety practices and well-maintained, clean coaches could get him to where he is today.

LaBrie, a Beaumont native, got his start in the bus business early. His mother was the local Greyhound General Manager, and he unloaded luggage as one of his first jobs. Eventually, his mother started working for

him, arranging Sun Travel senior tours, working as a step-on-guide and establishing some of the company's superior customer service practices. "We're all about service and that's what this business is," said LaBrie. "Treat your customers the way you wanted to be treated. It works."

LaBrie joined Trailways five years ago to tap its expertise and member network. "I wanted to be a bigger part of this industry, and Trailways was the right fit for me. Most other members are family businesses and we share the same high standards."

All together, Sun Travel has 30 employees, a full three-bus bay maintenance shop.

LaBrie is active in his community and industry-related organizations, including the Better Business Bureau, United Motorcoach Association, the National Limousine Association, and the South Central MCA. He also serves as a board member for many local Beaumont organizations including Salvation Army and Some Other Place. Learn more at www.Suntravel.org.

Pace Suburban Bus to upgrade express, Bus on Shoulder routes with 13 MCI® Commuter Coaches

SCHAUMBURG, IL — May 13, 2013 — Chicago's Pace Suburban Bus has awarded Motor Coach Industries (MCI) a contract for 13 MCI Commuter Coaches with an option for 37 more. Pace will use the new coaches to replace older buses and those leased from MCI, on its popular "Bus on Shoulder" service, which debuted in 2011 between Chicago and the southwest suburbs.

Pace recently announced it is increasing service on its Bus on Shoulder routes due to the dramatic ridership increases. Pace's Bus on Shoulder program, which began in 2011, currently uses 14 MCI Commuter Coach buses on the Interstate Highway 55 shoulder when traffic in regular lanes is flowing at less than 35 miles per hour. The buses using the shoulder cannot travel at speeds greater than 35 mph, or 15 mph faster than the flow of regular traffic — whichever is less. Special signage and roadway markings show where buses can use the shoulder, and the buses have markings indicating authorization to use the shoulder.

Shoulder riding has been cited to be one of the most affordable options for implementing bus rapid transit on highways because it is less expensive to modify shoulders than it is to construct new roadways, and it requires little capital investment compared with rail alternatives. Pace officials say the buses are reducing travel times through one of Chicago's most congested corridors, and more commuters are leaving cars at home.

Built to offer maximum performance and safety at highway speeds, the MCI Commuter Coaches feature plush, forward-facing seats along with individual temperature controls and reading lights, and a smooth ride for a tour-level riding experience that transcends

typical transit. The new coaches come equipped with wheelchair lifts and clean-diesel engine technology for near-zero emissions. Pace is also adding optional security cameras, special Bus on Shoulder graphics and "do not follow" warnings on the back of the bus.

"The Bus on shoulder program has been effective at helping combat the Chicago area's chronically jammed expressway system, and we are very pleased that Pace has once again selected the MCI Commuter Coach," said Patrick Scully, Executive Vice President of MCI. "We're proud that our Commuter Coach offers the best mean distance between failures among all types of bus models, reinforcing our Reliability Driven promise to offer the highest quality coaches, parts and service."

One of the largest bus services in North America, Pace serves tens of thousands of daily riders with fixed bus routes, ADA paratransit, ridesharing, Call-n-Ride and dial-a-ride programs in a service area covering roughly 3,500 square miles

Wade Tours saves fuel, impresses passengers with new MCI® J4500

SCHAUMBURG, IL — June 4, 2013 — You have to be confident in a motor coach to take it on a three-week, cross-country journey across the rugged American West, and that's part of why Wade Tours, Schenectady, New York, puts its trust in an all-MCI fleet, typically choosing its newest coaches for its signature National Parks tours. It's not so surprising that this July, the 87-year-old company will take to the road with a 2013 J4500 coach that's already scoring major points for its style and fuel economy.



"We love the new curb appeal and the design that MCI came out with," said Greg DeLorenzo, part of the family leadership team that's now in its fifth generation. "People who have ridden on it absolutely love it. They rave about the style, and they rave about how beautiful it is."

DeLorenzo says the coach has another rave-worthy attribute: its fuel economy. According to DeLorenzo, drivers are regularly registering close to 10 mpg with the new J4500, which features a clean-diesel Detroit Diesel/Allison powertrain. The coach also features options including 110-volt outlets, and the company has installed Wi-Fi. The newest J4500 joins a modern 29-

coach, all-MCI fleet. "We enjoy working with MCI," said DeLorenzo. "They've been a great partner to us, and we're very comfortable with MCI parts ordering and the mechanical aspects of the coach."

The company's signature America's National Parks tour, which leaves July 13, runs 21 days this year, though in some years it spans a full 30 days. "We have repeat customers who do this tour year after year," said DeLorenzo. "There is no better way to see this country than on a motor coach."

Wade Tours has been helping passengers see the country since 1926, when Edwin Wade started the company with single 1926 Studebaker. The company prospered, providing transportation to historic events including the World's Fair in New York City and the Winter Olympics in Lake Placid. Today, Wade Tours serves a wide variety of tour and charter customers, also running a full-service travel agency for trips all around the world.

For more information on Wade Tours and its history, please visit www.wadetours.com.

Universal Coach Lines woos demanding Chinese market with three new MCI® J4500s

SCHAUMBURG, IL — June 6, 2013 — When Canada won China's Approved Destination Status in 2010, Universal Coach Lines knew business might boom — after all, the Vancouver-area company had been ably serving the Asian market since 1996. Nearly three years later, business from China is indeed up about 200 percent. And to meet the demand, the company has taken delivery of three 2013 MCI J4500s.



"The Chinese market has been a real bright spot for us," said Lindsay Moir, Universal Coach Lines vice president. "It's a very demanding market. They demand the best, and they're always looking for the newest. These coaches allow us to put our best foot forward."

The new MCI J4500s feature many model-year improvements, including dramatic new LED headlights, a taller appearance and a host of performance updates, including a more fuel-efficient, clean-diesel powertrain.

Universal Coach Lines additionally opted for a Wi-Fi hub and 110-volt outlets to meet market expectations.

Moir, who values uniformity in the fleet, says the new MCI J4500s fit in well with the rest of the company's nearly 100 coaches — many of which are earlier-model J4500s. The company has turned to the J4500 time again because of its combination of curb appeal, reliability and relatively low operating cost — and because of MCI's after-sale support network.

"We've received fantastic service at every level, from the sales executives to the technicians," said Moir. "MCI is just an amazing organization."

Universal Coach Lines is the third-largest privately owned coach operator in Canada. It maintains coaches in its main facilities in Vancouver, Calgary and Los Angeles, plus it runs satellite offices in Victoria, British Columbia; Edmonton, Alberta; and Seattle. The company employs about 200 people and logs about five million miles a year, with about half of its business in serving passenger groups from Asia. It was also the second-largest provider of coaches to the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver and supplied transportation to the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City as well.

The company prides itself on its customer service. "If a client that used us in 1996 is still in business, they're still using us," said Moir. "It's one of the joys of our business and one of the reasons we buy this type of equipment. We want the best for our clients, so we reinvest."

Pure mettle: Golden Age Adventure Travel bounces back from Hurricane Sandy with second 2013 MCI® J4500

SCHAUMBURG, IL — April 23, 2013 — When Hurricane Sandy struck the East Coast in late October, Golden Age Adventure Travel, New York City, lost every one of its four coaches to the related flooding. "It was hard," said Michael Art, owner and president. "And we struggled with the insurance company."



But Art, who had painstakingly built his business bus by bus and client by client, was undeterred by weather or red tape. Today, only six months later, his fleet is back

up to two new MCI J4500 coaches, the latest a 2013 model delivered in March.

"Having brand-new coaches helps us get clients," said Art. "The coaches are really beautiful, and customers love them." Golden Age's most recently delivered J4500 has power outlets at every seat and three-point seatbelts, along with standard model features that include performance technologies including electronic stability control and a suite of safety features that includes tire-pressure monitoring and a fire-suppression system.

MCI redesigned the model for 2013, giving it a taller look and stylish LED headlights. It also features more than 30 improvements, including brushless motors and an optimized, more fuel-efficient powertrain that can achieve 9 MPG at highway speeds. Art said he also appreciates his MCIs for their ease of service and parts availability.

Art, a native of Armenia and former coach driver, took charge of Golden Age in 2008, with the company going back to 1997. Clients include a wide variety of charter customers, including school groups, sports teams and others in the Tri-State area. The company has been effective at building relationships, as evidenced by one of its longest-standing clients, the State Ballet Theatre of Russia, members of whom first came to know Art when he was their driver at another company.

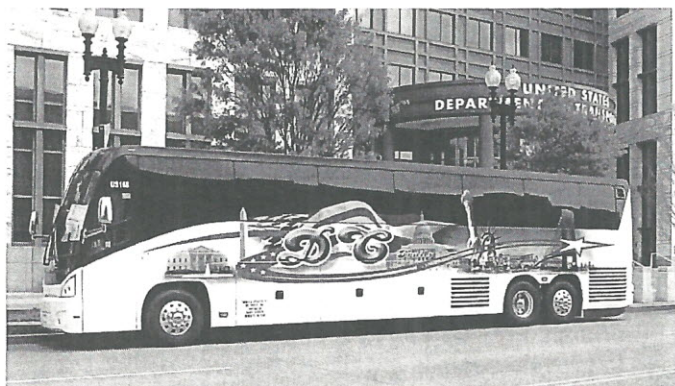
The company is rebuilding its GoldenAgeBus.com website as well as its fleet; Art says that Facebook offers the most current company information. He also says that the fleet should be back up to four coaches by next year. "Everything will be fine," said Art. "We have enough clients. We should be back in the same position by next year."

DC Trails' new 2013 J4500 takes center stage at DOT Earth Day Fair

SCHAUMBURG, IL — April 18, 2013 — DC Trails, a top Washington, DC, tour and charter company, presented its green transportation credentials when it parked its new 2013 MCI J4500 coach in front of the Department of Transportation's Washington, DC, headquarters for the agency's Earth Day Fair. The model brought to light how today's coaches are especially eco-friendly, releasing less carbon dioxide and using 82 percent less fuel per passenger mile than even a hybrid car. DC Trails' J4500 will also be representing the American Bus Association and Motor Coach Industries, manufacturer of the coach.

DC Trails' new wheelchair-lift-equipped MCI J4500 comes with the latest EPA-compliant clean-diesel engine technology that uses ultra-low sulfur diesel for near-zero emissions. The J4500 also features a lighter, high-efficiency cooling system and optimized axle ratios to improve fuel economy. Standard safety features include Electronic Stability Control that assists the driver in critical situations; a tire-pressure monitoring system that warns of low pressure, high tire temperatures or tire

failure; and an Amerex fire-suppression system. Options include side view and back-up cameras. Passengers enjoy plush seating for 54 with three-point seatbelts, cup holders, footrests, six 15-inch LCD monitors, 110-volt power outlets at each seat and Wi-Fi connectivity.



DOT's 2013 Earth Day Fair, themed "Move Green: Inside and Out," featured displays of green initiatives within and beyond DOT's LEED-certified building at 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE.

"It's an outstanding opportunity for us to present our coach at DOT's Earth Day Fair," said Bill Torres, President of DC Trails. "Every day, our fleet takes tourists around our nation's capital, and we're very pleased to offer them the luxury, comfort and environmental benefits found on the MCI J4500. It's gratifying to run a business that is making a contribution the way people choose to travel. A fully occupied motor coach can take up to 55 cars off the road, cutting down on congestion and creating a greener, cleaner highway system."

A military veteran and former motor officer assigned to the DC police special operation division (responsible for escorting the country's highest officials and foreign dignitaries), Torres founded DC Trails in 2000. Today its fleet of 60 coaches serves the entire U.S. and Canada, with trips to 43 states in the last year alone, totaling more than 2.5 million miles. DC Trails holds the highest safety rating with DOT as well as with the Department of Defense, which certifies the company to transport military personnel. Torres' wife, Liliana, co-founded sister company Quality Tour Transport in 1989. Together, they manage nearly 120 employees and a full-service maintenance shop. Learn more at www.dctrails.com.

Tornado Bus Companies takes delivery of five Van Hool TD925 Double Deck Coaches

"The key to our growth has always been quality customer service," says Juan Vazquez, President of Dallas, Texas, based Tornado Bus Company. "Our customers work hard for their money and it is a sign of our respect for them that we try to offer the best possible value in transportation."

Founded by Vicente and Juan Vazquez in 1986 (www.tornadobus.com) with a single van, Tornado has grown to 70 coaches. Operating out of terminals in 9 states they now offer scheduled service throughout the central and southern US. They provide international connections with other transportation companies such as Zima Real, Estrella Blanca, and Autobuses de Oriente.



"Tornado Bus Company started with van transportation in Houston, TX, back in 1986. My brother, Vicente, and I began by providing two trips a week and as it continued to grow, our plans and ideas began to change. In 1993 we bought our first coach."

They recently opened an 8.5 acre facility, minutes from downtown Dallas. The new headquarters includes more than 3800 square feet dedicated to the convenience and comfort of passengers. "The waiting area is set up with five 55" TV's for our customers' entertainment and four 55" monitors showing arrival and departure times. We provide over 400 parking spaces and 5 handicap parking zones. Attached to the terminal we have another facility which is occupied by our Maintenance and Operations Departments," Juan points out. "We're proud of the fact that our entire fleet meets modern EPA standards and every coach is ADA equipped. We accomplished those things before they were required."

Tornado recently took delivery of 5 Van Hool TD925 81 passenger double deck coaches. The coaches are powered by Cummins ISX engines coupled to Allison B500R transmissions. The coaches are all ADA compliant and have luxury entertainment systems. Alfredo Ramos, CFO, says that the TD925 fits Tornado's corporate philosophy perfectly. "These beautiful coaches offer passengers a great travel experience, and the fact that they transport 81 passengers comfortably in a single bus, allows us to offer our customers real value."

On April 25, Tornado hosted an Open House for their employees to introduce the new coaches. ABC Companies, Van Hool's exclusive US Distributor had a number of people in attendance. ABC's Senior Account Manager Bob Holloway said, "All of us at ABC are proud to be part of Tornado's growth. Juan Vazquez is really creative, and brings an exciting vision to the bus industry. He is devoted to his employees and his customers, and it shows in the way the business has

grown. It is both fun and exciting for ABC to serve Tornado."

New generation of Nova LFS to hit the streets of Chicago

Nova Bus has secured a \$148 million order for 300 Nova LFS Smart Bus™ for Chicago Transit Authority. Contract options could bring the total up to 450 vehicles.

Delivery of the 40-foot vehicles is expected to begin in early 2014. As part of CTA's bus modernization plan, the new LFS Smart Bus will replace older models of Nova LFS that CTA has had in service for 14 years.

"We look forward to helping CTA modernize their fleet to provide a reliable and world-class service," said Jean-Pierre Barakat, President of Nova Bus. "We thank them for their renewed trust in our company and vehicles."

"Continued investment and upkeep of our bus fleet is critical in keeping the city of Chicago moving," said CTA President Forrest Claypool. "These new buses will replace existing buses nearing the end of their useful life and will ensure the CTA continues to provide safe and reliable service through a modernized fleet."

CTA operates one of the nation's largest public transportation systems, with a fleet of 1,781 buses serving all of Chicago and 35 surrounding suburbs. Buses provide 58% of all rides taken on CTA each year: in 2012, bus ridership reached 314 million recorded trips.

Integrating smart innovation

CTA's new Nova LFS buses include many improvements compared to models delivered 14 years ago. Their passenger environment was optimized based on client and focus group feedback. The design, inspired by aerospace and rail transportation, offers a comfortable ride and easy maintenance for operators.

"Our goal is to combine the best of manufacturer and operator field expertise," added Mr. Barakat. "Each city has its own reality. Buses operate 24/7 in highly variable conditions. Consequently, we continuously work in partnership with our customers to provide proven and tailored buses that are built to last."

CTA's new vehicles are more fuel efficient and environmentally-friendly. They comply with 2013 EPA requirements and 2014 Fuel Efficiency and Greenhouse Gas emission standards.

The buses integrate the Nova eCooling system which eliminates engine overheating. Its operation demands minimal energy and reduces fuel consumption and GHG emissions.

Optimizing accessibility and safety

CTA's Nova LFS buses are fully accessible. Their front entrance and aisle, combined to a gradual boarding ramp, make it convenient for wheelchair and mobility devices users to get on and off the bus.

The reinforced structure also provides high protection to riders and operators. Test results show that the Nova LFS surpasses the industry's vehicle crashworthiness requirements.

Nova LFS buses are currently in service all across the nation, from New York City to Honolulu.

Driving economic growth

While meeting transit needs, CTA's new vehicles will also boost Chicago's local economy and create jobs. Seats for the 300 buses will be manufactured in Chicago by Freedman Seating Company, a 120-year-old company based in Humboldt Park.

"Everyone at Freedman Seating is proud and excited to have earned a place in this important program," said Craig Freedman, President of Freedman Seating. "Our selection to provide seats is a win not only for the City but a win for FSC's 550 dedicated associates. The City will be getting the latest in transit seat design and innovation, built right here in Chicago. For over 100 years Freedman Seating has created jobs for the community but these jobs have a special place in our history. We are all looking forward to riding CTA buses and sitting on seats designed, tested and built locally".

Additional bus components will also be supplied by Illinois-based businesses, such as door systems by Vapor Bus International from Buffalo Grove.

The buses will be assembled in Nova Bus' Upstate New York plant. Each Nova LFS will contribute to the creation or retention of a total of 1.1 quality manufacturing jobs and 5 indirect jobs.

North Country Chamber of Commerce President Garry Douglas welcomed the announcement: "This order is great news not only for Nova Bus but for the many suppliers in the region who will take part in delivering this contract. We now look forward to continuing to work with Nova as a central player in Plattsburgh's emergence as North America's premier center for the production of 21st century transportation equipment. Onward and upward for Nova and our transit cluster!"

Nova Bus is also part of the Volvo Group, which employs about 12,000 workers in the United States in six production facilities.

New Flyer expands presence in U.S. bus industry with NABI acquisition

By The Canadian Press

WINNIPEG - New Flyer Industries Inc. (TSX:NFI.TO - News) is expanding in the United States with the acquisition of North American Bus Industries, which has a manufacturing plant in Alabama, parts distribution centre in Ohio and a service centre in California.

The Winnipeg-based company announced Friday it will pay \$80 million cash to acquire NABI from Cerberus Capital, a private equity firm that had been involved in restructuring the American bus maker and parts supplier.

"NABI represents a compelling growth platform for us," New Flyer's president and chief executive officer Paul Soubry said in a statement.

The company plans to operate the NABI bus and NABI parts operations under the names NABI Bus, LLC and NABI Parts, LLC, respectively, within the New Flyer group of companies."

New Flyer will partially fund the deal with \$65 million raised through a previously announced investment by Marcopolo SA, which will hold about one-fifth of the company's common stock. New Flyer will also draw an additional \$20 million on its secured credit facility.

The transaction was expected to close later Friday.

New Flyer is a leading manufacturer of heavy-duty transit bus with some 2,200 employees in Canada and the U.S.

Now you can take a real sleeper coach: Megabus launch bus with beds which will travel from London to Scotland for £15

New 'sleepercoaches' sees Scotland a mere nap away for Londoners

Journey London-Edinburgh or Glasgow in under eight hours

Cut-price tickets include bunk bed, toothbrush, eye mask and a onesie

By Daily Mail Reporter

PUBLISHED:14:12 EST, 18 April 2013| **UPDATED:**18:01 EST, 19 April 2013

A budget coach firm is to run a sleeper service linking London and Scotland – with each passenger given a free onesie to relax in.

A fleet of double-decker vehicles with seats that turn into bunk beds will operate between Victoria and 11 Scottish locations from £15 one way.

The Megabus services start this summer and will take less than eight hours to travel from London to Glasgow or Edinburgh.

Passengers will be able to unfold their seats into bunk beds and will be provided with free drinks, pillows, toothbrush, toothpaste, eye mask and a choice of all-in-one sleep suit or blanket.

Megabus owner Stagecoach has invested in a fleet of ten vehicles, each costing £500,000 and fitted with 53 leather seats that convert into 42 bunks.

More than 1,700 beds will be available on services each week, linking London with Aberdeen, Aviemore, Cumbernauld, Dundee, Dunfermline, Edinburgh, Falkirk, Ferrytoll, Glasgow, Inverness and Perth.

Prices will range from £15 to £60 each way. Although the mode of travel may not appeal to everyone, Stagecoach boss Sir Brian Souter said: 'It used to be just pop stars who had beds on board their tour buses,

now everyone can benefit from a comfortable, great value overnight journey.'

Metra CEO Clifford Resigns

By Richard WronskiTribune reporter

12:53 p.m. CDT, June 21, 2013

Alex Clifford, hired to clean up Metra after the Phil Pagano scandal, resigned as CEO today after a protracted negotiation with the commuter rail agency's politically appointed board of directors.

Clifford agreed to accept a \$442,237 buyout covering salary for the remainder of his contract, severance payment and other benefits, according to Metra chairman Brad O'Halloran.

Clifford also might be entitled to an additional payout of as much as \$300,000 if he cannot find another job within 13 months, O'Halloran said.

Clifford's departure has been anticipated for months, with board members divided over retaining him. Friday's action followed a special closed-door meeting of Metra's board, one of several the board has held in recent months.

Clifford attended the beginning of the Metra board this morning but left after the agreement was discussed during the closed session. He apparently left Metra headquarters immediately and was not available for comment.

Clifford's three-year contract was set to expire in February 2014. He needed the support of a "supermajority," or eight of the board's 11 members, to have his contract renewed.

The vote to approve the separation agreement was 9-1, with Larry Huggins of Chicago voting "present." Board member Jack Schaffer, of McHenry, a strong supporter of Clifford, responded, "Hell no," during the roll call.

O'Halloran had called for a review of Clifford's tenure at the agency soon after being named chairman several months ago. He refused to comment on the action, as did board members Jack Partelow of Will County and Arlene Mulder of Arlington Heights.

O'Halloran referred questions to board counsel Andrew Greene, who would only refer reporters' questions to a 13-page separation agreement.

O'Halloran, of Orland Park and a village trustee there, had said after being named chairman that his goal was to make the agency more open and "transparent."

Clifford, a native of the Los Angeles area, was hired to put the commuter rail agency back on track following the 2010 suicide of Pagano, its disgraced executive director.

Pagano, 60, stepped in front of a Metra train near his Crystal Lake home on May 7, 2010, after an

Omnibus Society of America
PO Box A3051
Chicago IL 60690

investigation revealed he had taken \$475,000 in unapproved vacation pay and forged memos to cover it up.

Clifford took over in February 2011 under a three-year contract that paid him \$252,500 annually. A Marine Corps veteran, he came from LA's Metropolitan Transportation Authority, or Metro, where he served as general manager of one of the bus service sectors.

Schaffer, a board member when Clifford was hired and one of his staunchest supporters, said in April: "We said we wanted this place to be squeaky clean. No funny business, no political hiring's, no contracts going where they shouldn't go."

"We made it pretty clear we wanted Dodge City cleaned up. Alex has done a great job, and we would be crazy to get rid of him," he said.

But the Tribune reported in April that Clifford did not have the support of enough of Metra's 11 politically appointed board members to have his contract renewed.

The change at the top will affect Metra's 300,000 daily riders, who have seen hefty fare increases in the last two years. Under Clifford, there have been reforms and customer friendly upgrades as the agency finally rolled into the 21st century, transportation experts say.

Earlier this year, Clifford presented the board with a long list of accomplishments, taking credit for financial savings, administrative achievements and customer service enhancements. The agency also has ended the practice of diverting money intended for equipment and infrastructure to day-to-day-operations, Clifford pointed out.

Metra has exceeded its 95 percent on-time performance goal, even after ending a practice that inflated the numbers, Clifford said.

During an April interview with the Tribune, Clifford said he had rejected pressure to hire employees based on patronage.

"I've said 'no' more than one time," he said, adding that patronage "is not going to happen under my watch. It hasn't happened once, and it won't happen."

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