



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OMNIBUS SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.

## **JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2014**

**RUN 01-2014**

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.

### **• JAN/FEB MEETINGS**

**The January meeting** of the Omnibus Society of America will be held on January 3, 2014, 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 video presentation by member William Reynolds. Bill will show videos of movies he has converted from Super 8 movies.

**The February meeting** of the Omnibus Society of America will be held on February 7, 2014, in the Anderson Pavilion of Swedish Covenant Hospital. The meeting will start at 7:30 pm.

Our program for the evening will be a slide presentation by Bruce Moffat.

## **OSA Happenings**

**John Le Beau** and William Reynolds have been elected to the OSA board at our December meeting.

**If any members** would like to receive their Green Pennant Special by email please let Melvin Bernero at [mbernero@prodigy.net](mailto:mbernero@prodigy.net) know and he will begin to email you The Green Pennant Special.

**2014 dues** for membership in the Omnibus Society of America are now being accepted. Dues for the year are \$30.00 and can be paid in person at any OSA meeting or by sending a check or money order to our post office box.

**Mayor Emanuel, Sen. Durbin, Rep. Schakowsky Unveil Revitalized CTA Loyola Red Line Station, Community Plaza**

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, U. S. Sen. Dick Durbin and U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky were joined by Chicago Transit Authority President Forrest Claypool, Loyola University Chicago President Rev. Michael Garanzini, S.J., Ald. Joe Moore (49th Ward) and other officials and community members to officially unveil the renovated CTA Loyola Red Line station. The collaborative \$17 million project included station and track infrastructure upgrades, a reconfigured pedestrian crossing and a new open-air community plaza adjacent to the station, creating a safer, more inviting environment for commuters and pedestrians. All projects were completed in time for the start of the 2013-2014 school year.

Durbin, a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, secured \$10 million in federal funding for the Loyola station and infrastructure project in the fiscal year 2010 Transportation and Housing Appropriations Bill, and \$1 million in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA-LU). The \$10 million in funding allowed CTA to make upgrades and repairs to the stationhouse and adjacent infrastructure. The remaining project costs reflect the construction of the adjacent plaza space, which was separately funded and overseen by Loyola University.

"This project was made possible through a public-private partnership involving the Federal Transit Administration, the CTA, Loyola University and the local community in order to make desperately needed improvements to this station," Sen. Durbin said. "Thousands of students and commuters use this station every day. These improvements ensure their safety and make certain that the station is able to continue serving the transportation needs of this community."

"It is so important to maintain and improve the transportation that our community and commuters rely on every day," said Rep. Schakowsky. "I applaud Senator Durbin for securing \$10 million in funding which allowed the CTA to make important upgrades and repairs to this station and to the viaduct over Sheridan Road."

"Modernizing our transit system is an investment in Chicago's future and will contribute to growing what is already one of the best-educated workforces in the world," said Mayor Emanuel. "Linking Loyola and other top-rated Chicago universities with world-class transit is critical to continuing to attract the best and brightest to Chicago."

The CTA and Loyola University Chicago coordinated planning and scheduling construction of the two projects, both of which began in August 2012.



"CTA rail stations are often described as gateways to the communities in which they sit," said CTA President Forrest Claypool. "The CTA Loyola station is a critical part of Loyola students' and employees' daily lives, and we're pleased to be able to provide an improved commuter experience for them and for residents and businesses around Loyola. I'd like to thank Sen. Durbin, Rep. Schakowsky, Mayor Emanuel and Gov. Quinn for their assistance in obtaining funding for the many Red Line projects we have under way for the good of our customers."

The project repaired existing infrastructure, upgraded the existing station and redirected pedestrian traffic away from the mid-block Sheridan Road crossing in front of the station for improved safety. The main entrance was relocated slightly north, along the embankment, to allow for a new pedestrian plaza and a more inviting path in and out of the station, with better visibility.

CTA customers using the upgraded Loyola station will now experience a refurbished ground-level station house with safer, more convenient access from the new plaza north of the station, as well as from Loyola Avenue on the west side of the station. The CTA also made critical repairs to the viaduct over Sheridan Road, providing concrete repairs, waterproofing, a new drainage system, painting/coating, track repairs along the viaduct and brighter lighting.

Other station improvements and added amenities include: new windows, flooring, lighting and interior finishes for a brighter, safer environment; additional bike parking; and installation of a new auxiliary entrance and turnstiles on the southwest side of the station, which was previously exit-only, to provide additional convenient access to the main stationhouse.

Loyola invested an unprecedented \$6.9 million in real estate acquisition, tenant relocations, and streetscape improvements because the university believes the improvements are in the best interest of the broader Rogers Park community,

"The Loyola CTA Station is the front door to Loyola's Lake Shore Campus and one of the busiest commuter stations on the north side," said Father Garanzini. "The important structural and safety renovations made to the station were critical to ensuring the safety and well-being of everyone who passes through it each day, and we are delighted with the end result."

The Loyola station work is part of CTA's Red Ahead program, a \$1 billion comprehensive initiative to maintain, modernize and expand the Red Line — Chicago's most-traveled rail line. Collectively, these projects are part of Mayor Rahm Emanuel's Building a New Chicago program, which is updating infrastructure that's critical to the city — and includes improvements that will help ensure that CTA continues to serve customers as effectively as possible. In 2012, the Loyola Red Line station had more than 1.8 million station entries.

## **Mayor Emanuel, Governor Quinn Announce Comprehensive Improvement Plan for CTA Blue Line O'Hare Branch**

12/5/2013

***"Your New Blue" includes station, track upgrades; largest Blue Line investment in 30 years***

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Governor Pat Quinn today announced a comprehensive improvement plan for the Chicago Transit Authority's Blue Line O'Hare Branch—an overhaul that will provide faster travel times and updated stations while creating more than 1,300 good-paying jobs.

The \$492 million plan, called Your New Blue, includes several track and station improvement projects along a 12.5-mile stretch of the Blue Line O'Hare Branch between the Grand and Cumberland stations, as well as upgrades to the signal system between the Jefferson Park and O'Hare stations.

These improvements will provide faster, more comfortable and more reliable commutes for the more than 80,000 customers who each weekday use stations along the branch, which had 25 million rides last year. This project is the largest comprehensive investment for this line since the O'Hare branch extension was built from Jefferson Park to O'Hare in 1983.

"Like the Red Line South project we just completed on time and within budget, this Blue Line plan is far-reaching and long overdue, and will help meet increasing demand," said Mayor Emanuel. "This plan represents a huge investment in CTA riders and visitors traveling to Chicago via O'Hare and many vibrant communities along the North and Northwest Sides. It's also part of our latest efforts to modernize our transit system for the 21st century."

"Strategic investments to build 21st century transportation system throughout Illinois are a key part of my jobs agenda," Governor Quinn said. "By modernizing the Blue Line we are creating more than 1,000 jobs while making it faster, safer and more reliable for the millions of travelers that use it every year."

"The Blue Line is often the first or final impression of Chicago for the millions of tourists who rely on it to reach O'Hare. Several years ago, the City made significant progress updating the Blue Line and its aging track and stations with the help of federal Recovery Act dollars. Today's announcement renews the federal commitment to the Blue Line and the crucial role it plays linking O'Hare, downtown Chicago, and scores of neighborhoods in between. I commend Mayor Emanuel for his commitment to mass transit and look forward to many trips on the new and improved Blue Line."

Among the four-year plan's highlights:



- Extensive station renovations at the Grand, Chicago, Division, Damen, California, Logan Square and Jefferson Park stations.
- Concrete platform repairs and installation of a new elevator at the Addison station to make it ADA accessible.
- Repairs at the Irving Park, Montrose, Harlem and Cumberland stations.
- Track improvements to eliminate and prevent slow zones in the Milwaukee Subway (Damen to Belmont) and Dearborn Subway (Grand to Division), respectively.
- Track signal improvements between O'Hare and Jefferson Park, which will improve speed of travel.
- Traction power upgrades to improve service and reliability.
- Installation of new water management systems and repairs to ensure dry and clean subway stations.
- Special track improvements near the O'Hare station and in the Rosemont rail yard to help reduce delays and provide for more efficient operations.
- Upgrade of wireless infrastructure in the subway tunnels to provide customers and workers with faster and more reliable voice, data and web service in the subway. Current infrastructure was built in 2005 and is inadequate and outdated.

"Over the last several weeks, we've already seen the positive impacts the Red Line South reconstruction is having on customers' commutes," said CTA President Forrest Claypool. "This Blue Line plan will provide the same kind of customer-friendly improvements that lead to faster commutes and a better overall rider experience. Over the next four years, customers will see the benefits of this program incrementally, which will provide a better commuting experience in the near and long term."

Ridership on the O'Hare Branch is growing rapidly, with more than 25 million station entries in 2012. Weekday ridership has grown 25 percent over the past five years, and 33 percent over the past 10 years—outpacing the growth of the rail system as a whole. Annual ridership on the O'Hare branch increased by 6.3 million rides over the past 10 years, the second highest for any branch after Red North Main, which added 7 million rides.

The stations receiving the most significant upgrades have experienced some of the biggest ridership jumps on the Blue Line O'Hare branch. The O'Hare Branch's largest ridership growth has occurred between Logan Square and Grand, which has increased 44 percent over the past five years, and almost 60 percent over the past 10 years—making it the fastest-growing section among all branches of the system.

Funding for Your New Blue is expected to come from local, state and federal sources. The first projects are expected to get under way in 2014. Project schedules are still being finalized, but the project is expected to begin with track work, following by station renovations, power upgrades and then signal improvements.

The Blue Line plan is part of more than \$4 billion in transit improvements announced by Mayor Emanuel since taking office in 2011. In addition to the recently completed \$425 million Red Line South reconstruction, the CTA in 2014 will begin building a new terminal at 95th Street Red Line (\$240 million); rebuilding the Wilson station on the Red Line (\$203 million) and working with CDOT to build a new Cermak-McCormick Place elevated Green Line station (\$50 million) by the end of 2014. Funding for the Red Line projects is part of more than \$1 billion in federal, state and local funding announced in late 2011 by Governor Pat Quinn and Mayor Emanuel for the Red and Purple lines. The Governor's Illinois Jobs Now! capital program is providing more than \$700 million of the total investment.

## Quincy Street CTA station renovation to be funded through TIF

### Chicago Development News

December 17, 2013 by Kyle Harrison

Chicago City Council recently approved \$15.7 million in Tax Increment Financing to support improvements to the Chicago Transit Authority's historic Quincy Street elevated station in the Loop.

The Quincy elevated station, located at 220 S. Wells St., was built in 1897 and services the Brown, Orange, Pink and Purple transit lines. The station accommodates approximately 2.2 million riders annually, with a nearly 10 percent increase in overall ridership between 2010 and 2011.

Rehabilitation work on the station, to be entirely funded by the TIF, will include new lighting, stairways and roof repairs, as well as the installation of two elevators to make the station's east and west passenger platforms accessible to people with disabilities.

Construction is slated to begin in 2014.

## Will Chicago scale back its bus rapid transit plan?

December 20, 2013

By: Chip Mitchell WBEZ.org

After wrapping up a public-comment period in an ambitious Chicago bus project, Mayor Rahm Emanuel's administration faces tough choices about the design.

The city can stick to its plans and push for federal funds to build what would be the nation's most advanced "bus rapid transit" line. The project would transform Ashland Avenue, beginning with a 5.4-mile leg that would connect several passenger rail lines before they reach



the Loop and, planners say, spur economic development that benefits the entire Chicago region.

But there could be significant collateral damage, especially to the trucking operations of companies in an historic industrial corridor along the route.

The Chicago Transit Authority says the BRT line, which could eventually lengthen to 16 miles, would cut the average Ashland bus ride time roughly in half. But some companies in the Kinzie Industrial Corridor and a few large retailers nearby say they would struggle too much to make and receive deliveries and keep customers flowing in. The companies are pushing hard for the Emanuel administration to eliminate some of the project's key features for speeding up bus service.

Along the route's initial leg, which would stretch from Cortland Avenue to 31st Street, the competing interests are obvious.

Just outside Rush University Medical Center, one of four major hospitals in the Illinois Medical District, a half-dozen patients and staffers huddled in the cold one evening this week at a bus stop. They included Larry Coldiron, a Rush computer consultant who lives near Midway International Airport and gets to ride the CTA's Orange Line train for most of his commute. But his trip home starts with the Number 9 bus down Ashland — the city's most heavily used bus route. He said the 2.5-mile journey between the hospital and train usually takes 45 minutes.

"I've been doing this for 16 and a half years and it just keeps getting worse," Coldiron said.

The BRT project would bring big changes. The buses would have a lane to themselves on both sides of a landscaped median. To keep the buses moving through intersections, most opportunities to turn left from Ashland would be eliminated and many traffic signals would favor the buses. Passengers would board from platforms averaging a half mile apart. The CTA is also aiming for pre-paid boarding to eliminate lines in bus doorways. The project's environmental assessment says the BRT buses would move up to 83 percent faster than today's buses.

"I'd like to see it," Coldiron said. Service that fast could attract some of his coworkers who now drive and pay for parking around the hospital, he said.

That's exactly the idea, said Benet Haller, a top planner at the Chicago Department of Housing and Economic Development. "They would have more money to spend on other things — like food, retail goods and housing."

Haller said the BRT line would promote development in the medical district, where employment already totals 29,000, and in industrial areas along the route. He said it would also give a shot in the arm to many restaurants

and retailers, especially ones that lack their own parking lots. Haller said the economic impact could extend throughout the Chicago region.

"All of our expressways are, pretty much, at capacity," Haller said. "There's no real easy possibility to improve any of them. So, if we want to thrive, it's really going to come to reinvestment back in the central part of Chicago because it's the one part of the region in which there's a really robust transit network."

**THE CTA IS GUNNING TO BUILD** the initial leg by 2017. Agency officials say they will apply for Federal Transportation Administration grants to cover an estimated \$60 million in costs for detailed design and construction. Later phases would extend the BRT to Irving Park Road and 95th Street and cost another \$100 million, the agency says.

But there would be other costs, particularly to local businesses whose lifeblood is truck delivery. Those include Kennicott Brothers, an employee-owned flower wholesaler centered at 452 N. Ashland Ave., about a mile north of the medical district.

Dan Andrews, a Kennicott manager, says the company runs 13 vans from that location for deliveries to neighborhood florists, grocery stores and companies that help throw events such as weddings and parties. "Normally our customers will order in the morning," Andrews said. "We'll load up the van with orders for that day and then send them out."

Andrews is worried because the BRT design would leave just one lane on each side of Ashland for cars, trucks and regular buses, slowing down the Kennicott vans. "It would probably be like rush hour all day," he said.

The CTA acknowledges that the Ashland traffic would move slower. A spokeswoman says a peak-hour car trip that now takes 30 minutes would take 36 minutes with BRT in place.

Another concern for Andrews is the loss of intersections for turning left off Ashland. "With the BRT line, I'd have to take three right turns and then I would have to go through a residential area."

Andrews has more than deliveries to worry about. Many of Kennicott's customers pick up their flowers. "If they can't get to our location, they're going to choose either another vender or they might choose to be delivered to," he said, pointing out expenses associated with deliveries.

If Chicago sticks with its BRT plan, Andrews says his company might have to find a location away from Ashland Avenue. "It costs you a lot of money to move your company," he said.



Economic-development groups in the Kinzie corridor are speaking up for businesses like Kennicott. "These companies need every advantage they can to compete our city," said Roger Romanelli, executive director of the Randolph/Fulton Market Association.

"Nealey Foods has about 40 trucks every morning," Romanelli said, reeling off names of businesses potentially hamstrung by the BRT project. "These companies are critical to our economy."

Romanelli says slowing the traffic down and banning the turns would also be unfair to big retailers like Costco, which employs more than 100 people in a new facility at Ashland and 14th Street. He points out that diverting traffic to other congested arteries would not much help much.

The Emanuel administration, Romanelli says, ought to scrap the Ashland project and focus on existing buses. Romanelli suggests speeding up service by simply eliminating some stops and using transponders to give buses longer green lights. "BRT is not the only solution for Ashland Avenue," he said.

**A FEDERALLY REQUIRED 30-DAY PERIOD** for public comment about the environmental assessment ended Friday. Now Mayor Emanuel's administration has to decide whether to make adjustments that might please the plan's business critics but slow the bus service.

Randy Blankenhorn, executive director of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, describes the clashing interests. "Planners always want the 100-percent solution," he said, pointing to the goal of regional economic growth over the long term. "And local businesses are worried about the bottom line today and tomorrow."

Blankenhorn says the city should help companies find ways to bypass Ashland and maybe even allow a few more left turns across BRT lanes. "But you have to protect the integrity of the transportation investment you're making," he said.

On Ashland, that means a bus system fast enough to attract thousands of new riders.

## **RTA Far From Achieving "World-Class" Public Transit System, Experts Say**

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) has a lot of work to do if the northeastern Illinois public transit network it oversees plans on becoming a "world-class system" anytime soon, panelists said at a discussion on the topic Tuesday at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC).

The RTA is the oversight agency for the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), Metra and Pace, covering Cook,

DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will counties. The agency was created in 1974 and was reformed in 1983 and 2008.

Stephen Schlickman, who served as RTA's executive director from 2005 to 2010 and currently heads up UIC's Urban Transportation Center, said RTA's multi-agency structure "isn't working as well as it should be." He noted that regional public transit systems in other U.S. metro areas are typically organized as one agency. The region's current transit structure has four governing boards, for the RTA, CTA, Metra and Pace, with 47 members.

"There is a serious lack of accountability when you have such a complex structure," he stressed. "We have complexities, not only in governance, but also in service overlap, in capital planning and programming, in the equities in the allocation of our finances. These topics defy public understanding."

Most of the concerns the transportation experts raised at the UIC discussion echoed the initial findings of the 15-member state task force currently working to come up with a "fundamental overhaul" of the northeastern Illinois public transit agencies. Gov. Pat Quinn set up the Northeastern Illinois Public Transit Task Force in August in an effort to "ensure greater efficiency, accountability, coordination and transparency" at the transit agencies.

The task force was formed in response to the Metra scandal surrounding a controversial \$871,000 board-approved severance package to the company's former CEO Alex Clifford. Critics of the board say the costly severance package was "hush money" to keep the allegations Clifford raised of patronage deals and shady hiring practices within the agency quiet.

The overall goal of the task force is to offer "recommendations for creating a world-class transit system for the region." The 15-member panel issued its interim report October 16. The final report will be submitted to the governor and the General Assembly on January 31.

Among other things, the task force's preliminary findings show that "there is no region-wide plan to increase transit ridership."

At Tuesday's discussion, Randy Blankenhorn, executive director of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAA), said that the region will see its population increase by some two million people over the next 25 years, and the state's highway system simply can't handle those additional cars.

As such, CMAP set a goal in its comprehensive regional plan, Go To 2040, to boost the region's weekday transit ridership by 2.3 million in 2015 to 4 million by 2040.

But Peter Skosey with the Metropolitan Planning Council questioned how the region could "possibly keep up with the pace of growth that we have if we're [currently] underinvesting in our transit services."



The Chicago region, Skosey said, has seen a "profound" underinvestment in public transit capital spending over the past two decades. And meanwhile, regions like Los Angeles, New York, and Seattle have at least doubled their capital spending within that same time period, he said.

"In the Chicago region, it's about 25 percent less [than other regions] over the past 20 years," he stressed.

Skosey also noted that just 22 percent of the overall region and only 32 percent of the region's jobs are currently located within a half mile of public transit.

"Those are terrible stats," he said. "We should be doing far better than that."

Jacky Grimshaw with the Center for Neighborhood Technology chimed in, saying public transit does not equally serve everyone in the region, making it difficult for people without a car in underserved areas to travel and get to work.

"The core is well connected, but areas on the periphery are significantly less so," she explained. "Even transit riders in the better-served, core areas want and need improved service."

Meanwhile, Schlickman said the RTA's current structure allows the "public agencies to shirk responsibility" and "point fingers" when it comes to tough issues such as the Metra controversy, achieving a universal fare card system and eliminating the backlog of more than \$19 billion in facility and vehicular improvements, to name a few. Additionally, there is a "significant lack of coordination" among transit services.

"Most seriously, this structure prevents us from speaking from one voice," he stressed. "If we're going to take on and be effective in Springfield [on] a matter of increased funding for the region to deal with the backlog in capital funding and to expand the system to serve a growing population that we have, we have to speak with one voice."

Blankenhorn said he believes most people consider the northeastern Illinois transit network to be "a number of separate operating systems that coordinate on occasion" — and not a regional system.

"Coming from a regional planning agency, I think that's the biggest downfall for us," he stressed. "We don't even think about it in the right way."

Grimshaw said she hopes at least one of the improvements that will come as a result of the task force is a change in the appointing process for RTA board members. Currently, the RTA's 15 board members and its chairman are appointed from the six-county region.

"If I am appointed by the McHenry County chairman, I'm looking at how can I protect some chance of investment in McHenry County," Grimshaw explained. "I am not thinking of what's best for the region."

Skosey added that it's hard for the RTA to "do anything that is robust or innovative" in the region because a supermajority vote is usually required for board actions.

"If you do something bold and make a huge investment in one part of the region, well then some other part of the region isn't getting that," he said.

Also, the panelists said the mass transit network cannot become a world-class system when the RTA still disperses a large chunk of operating money to agencies using a funding formula based on a 30 year-old law. The funding method, which the panelists said needs to be changed, does not allow money to be doled out according to things like ridership or need, but instead from the sales tax based on where goods are bought.

"That makes no sense to me at all ... why would we think that because 30 years ago we thought the CTA should get 'x' percent of the dollars that that's how it should be today," Blankenhorn asked.

State task force members also agreed that the "current funding levels do not meet the operating and capital needs of the system, and the current process of allocating funding by formula does not support a coordinated, regional approach to ensuring a world-class system."

Frank Beal, executive director of Metropolis Strategies, stressed that improving mobility in the region also means embracing alternatives to the RTA, including taxi cabs and the ridesharing services Lyft and Uber, which are smartphone apps that connect riders to drivers, to name a few.

"You have this whole rich array of options, and my contention is that they're going to grow, and public policy ought to be encouraging and supporting the growth of these options," Beal said. "They're there because the automobile isn't doing the job for everybody, and public transit, as currently organized, isn't doing the job for everybody."

The panelists stressed that more work is needed in order to modernize the public transit system into one that people in the region want to use as their first option for traveling. Moreover, the experts said the system has to be able to move the most number of people in the most efficient way possible; and currently, it's nowhere near that goal.

According to the task force, 18 percent of all work trips in the Chicago metro region in 1980 were on transit. By 2010, however, that number had dropped to 13 percent. Within that same timeframe, traffic congestion nearly tripled, the interim report reads.

"The world-class, global region that we are is dependent on our transit system," Grimshaw stressed. "We have to keep pounding and pounding that into the heads of the decision makers that are really holding us hostage."



## Electric bus trial starts in London



Two Chinese-built BYD electric buses enter service in London on Thursday (19 December). They are being operated by Go-Ahead London on two inter-station services, the 507 between Waterloo and Victoria, and the 521 between Waterloo and London Bridge.

The trial will help Transport for London develop plans for greater use of electric buses in central London. Matthew Pencharz, senior environment and energy advisor to the mayor of London, says: "Electric buses could help deliver the cleaner and greener bus fleet we need to cut carbon emissions and improve air quality. If these prove successful we plan to see more introduced over the next few years to run alongside the hybrid and hydrogen bus technology that is already tackling air pollution and carbon emissions across the capital."

The views of Pencharz are echoed by Mike Weston, TfL's director of buses, who adds: "We will be closely monitoring the performance of these vehicles while they are being trialled here in London. Should the performance and reliability of these buses meet London's challenging requirements, this could be a very important step towards adopting this new clean technology in the capital."

BYD Europe managing director Isbrand Ho told [busandcoach.com](http://busandcoach.com): "We are very excited to have two vehicles going into operation in London this week."

"We are convinced that widespread adoption of the BYD ebus could have a dramatic effect on lowering pollution levels in major cities so this development in London, one of the world's top cities, is of tremendous importance."

BYD is aiming to establish its own workshop facilities to support the trial vehicles and further developments in the UK market. The London vehicles have been upgraded from the Chinese originals, with new doors supplied by Centura which will now become the standard specification for BYD Europe vehicles.

The buses, which weigh in at 14 tonnes unladen, take

around four to five hours to fully charge overnight and should have a range of 250 kilometres, enough to run for a full day on both routes without the need to recharge. Another six electric buses will be added to the London fleet early next year.

## Montréal to become city of Electro Mobility

### *Volvo Group and Société de transport de Montréal in Strategic Partnership*

Volvo Group's North American subsidiary, Nova Bus, and the Société de transport de Montréal, STM, have entered into an agreement on an electrification project for the public transit system of Montréal, Canada. Nova Bus and STM signed a Memorandum of Understanding today in the presence of the Quebec Premier Pauline Marois, Olof Persson, President and CEO of the Volvo Group, and Michel Labrecque, Chairman of the STM board of directors.

The MoU formalizes the intention of testing three Nova LFSe electric buses and two charging stations in Montréal. The goal is to have the noiseless and emission-free buses operational for demonstration in the third quarter of 2015 and in regular traffic for three years, beginning in 2016. The three fully electric buses will be used in city operations in Montreal and charge rapidly at bus terminals. The energy storage system used in the vehicles is leveraging on the extensive Volvo Group knowledge and technology.

"We are proud to strengthen our partnership with Montreal and welcome the efforts of the Government of Québec for the electrification of transit in Montréal," Persson said. "We have developed the City Mobility Program to work with governments and city authorities around the world to solve the urban transportation challenges and offer silent, emission-free and safe solutions."

Montréal will be the first city in North America to take part in the Volvo Group City Mobility program. This program brings together key players to implement sustainable and integrated innovative pilot projects. The City Mobility program includes new technologies for improving energy efficiency and reducing emissions, developed by Volvo, such as hybrid and electric vehicles.

This strategic partnership aims to make Montréal a leading city with innovative solutions for electric transit. It is in line with the Government of Québec's Transportation Electrification Strategy for 2020 to significantly lessen its ecological print and the City of Montréal's target for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 30% in 2020, compared to 1990 levels.

"The STM strives to become the best public transit authority in the world in its category," Labrecque said. "Our active participation in this type of demonstration project enables us to test new technologies in real operating conditions and to assess their impact on planning, operations, maintenance, and above all, the



improvement of customer service. This is also our way of contributing to the greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets of the Government of Québec and the City of Montréal."

The deployment of the City Mobility Program is in progress in several cities around the world, such as Göteborg, Stockholm, Hamburg and Luxembourg.

"The Volvo Group has an in-depth understanding of complete transport solutions for sustainable cities, and we are pleased to share our expertise with our partners in Montréal. Together we can build an entirely new mode of travel," Persson said.

## **ABC Companies to manufacture Alexander Dennis Enviro line at Nappanee**

In addition to the official launch of the newly revamped Van Hool TX and CX coaches, more big news is coming from the ABC Companies' Xtreme Event taking place this week in Winter Garden, FL.

ABC Companies announced this morning, November 21, it has entered into a manufacturing agreement with Alexander Dennis Limited, Inc. to assemble the Enviro500 and the 40-, 45, and 60-foot Enviro400, low-floor, double-decker buses.

Assembly will take place at the ABC Companies refurbishment facility in Nappanee, IN, with the plan currently to begin production in Q4 2014.

Under a separate agreement, Alexander Dennis is naming ABC Companies as its exclusive distributor for the Enviro400 open-top tourist bus in the United States with the exception of Hawaii.

"Our agreement with Alexander Dennis effectively expands our footprint to offer American-built products for transit and tour operators throughout North America," said Dane Cornell, chairman and CEO, ABC Companies. "The Enviro500 has been operating in North America for over 10 years, and is now an ideal addition to the ABC Companies portfolio of award winning transit solutions."

## **Van Hool introduces 2 new coach models on the American market**

- **Van Hool confirms strategic importance of the American market.**

- **Van Hool and ABC: 25 years on the American market and more than 9,000 coaches sold.**

Koningshooikt (B), Winter Garden (FL, USA) – Van Hool NV, an independent manufacturer of buses, coaches and industrial vehicles, and ABC Companies, Van Hool's exclusive distributor in North America, are launching two new coach models on the American market, the Van Hool TX and the CX. This product launch, which will take place at Winter Garden, Florida, USA, adds lustre to the 25th anniversary celebrations of this collaboration

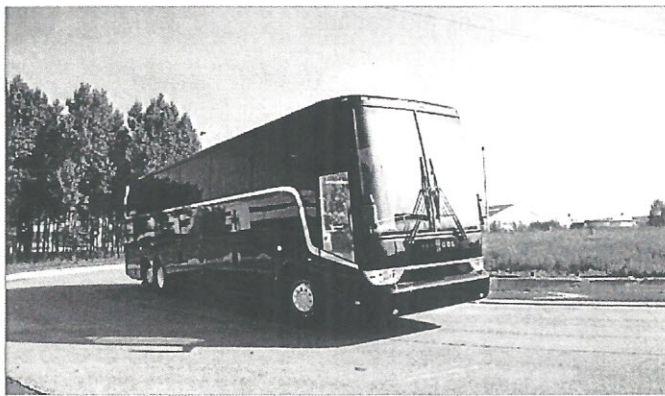
between Van Hool and ABC Companies (in which Van Hool owns a 35% stake).

"The introduction of 2 new coach models on the North American market clearly demonstrates our commitment to our customers. Together with ABC Companies, our distribution partner, we keep our finger firmly on the pulse of the North American market and are able to respond immediately to its demands," says Filip Van Hool, CEO at Van Hool NV. "That has led to us making significant investments in the building of a new production plant in Macedonia. Construction of this factory started exactly one year ago and there we mainly produce the vehicles for the American market. Today it gives us great pleasure to present the result at Winter Garden in Florida."

"North American operators face a myriad of business challenges -- from complying with changing safety mandates and maximizing equipment performance to optimising total cost of ownership and reducing maintenance and downtime," states Dane Cornell, Chairman and CEO, ABC Companies. "The revamp of our flagship T and C coach models reflects a committed strategic shift in Van Hool product development, designed to more closely align our equipment offering with our customers' priorities."

The new product introductions offer retooled designs that integrate a host of new safety, performance, and passenger features (many as standard offerings) with an evolved body styling and quality fit and finish details.

### **New Van Hool TX 40' & 45' Coach Standard Feature Highlights:**



For high-end tour operators, the new TX 40' & 45' coach models integrate global leader Van Hool's most advanced European technology and design, now offering many new standard features including these highlights:

- Taller overall height (12' 2-1/4") expands underfloor baggage capacity to 464.39 cu. ft.
- Baggage door seals mounted on luggage doors for less maintenance
- Detroit Diesel DD13 (450 HP) EPA 2013 Engine
- Goodyear Marathon LHS II + HL 315/80 R22.5 tires
- Power driver's toll-window, heated, with tinted tempered glass
- New passenger courtesy shelves in restroom back wall



- Exterior lighting upgraded to include integrated light clusters and daytime running lights and static aiming lights integrated in front bumper
- Interior LED light strips cover full length of ceiling left and right
- Standard back-up camera with in-dash display
- 56 Van Hool Bodyline reclining passenger seats offer straighter back cushions and headrests, plus 2 up-folding armrests (fixed on wall side) and 3-point seat belts FMVSS 210 compliant
- NEWLY OFFERED STANDARD SAFETY FEATURES:
  - Daytime Running Lights
  - Static Aiming Lights
  - Kidde Fire Suppression System
  - Back-up Camera
  - 3-point Seat Belts FMVSS 210

#### New Van Hool CX 45' Coach Highlights:



The new CX45 offers a significant style upgrade and includes a wide range of expanded passenger and driver-friendly features for tours, charters and commuter operators including:

- Updated front and rear bumpers featuring integrated light clusters at headlight and taillight positions, and added daytime running lights
- LED luggage compartment lighting
- Detroit Diesel DD13 (EPA2013) engine
- Goodyear Marathon LHS II +HL 315/80 R22.5 tires
- Eberspacher Hydronic L30 Auxiliary heater
- Upgraded Driver Seat – ISRI 6800/348 (US, self-levelling/adjustable air suspension, plus adjustable arm and headrest, 3-point automatic seat belt)
- 56 seats/Van Hool Bodyline reclining passenger seats w/straighter back cushion and headrest, spring-loaded footrests, 2 up-folding armrests (fixed at wall side) and 3-point seat belts FMVSS 210 compliant
- NEWLY OFFERED STANDARD SAFETY FEATURES:
  - Daytime Running Lights
  - Static Aiming Lights
  - Kidde Fire Suppression
  - Back-up Camera
  - 3-Point Seat Belts FMVSS 210

Foxy Travel adds new MCI® J4500 to fleet, names it for friends

**SCHAUMBURG, IL — October 10, 2013** — Even those familiar with Foxy Travel's habit of naming its new

coaches in honor of friends and family may wonder why the Linwood, Massachusetts, company's sparkling new 2014 MCI J4500 is known as "Mike and Diane." The answer boils down to what Foxy Travel is all about: family, in the broadest sense of the word.



Foxy Travel President Keith Menard, son of founder Donald Menard, allows that the late Mike and Diane Ritchie, owners of Ritchie Bus, weren't related to his family by blood, but they acted like they were, despite being competitors. "There wasn't anything they wouldn't do for us," said Menard. "They made much of our early success possible. We really felt this new coach in all of its latest, greatest glory would be a fitting tribute."

The new "Mike and Diane" J4500 is equipped with a fuel-saving powertrain featuring the latest generation of Cummins engine, electronic stability control, tire-pressure monitoring, a fire-suppression system and all the interior style and comfort the model is known for. Foxy additionally opted for 110-volt outlets to accommodate passengers with personal electronics, and the company provides Wi-Fi on an as-needed basis. The redesigned coach has impressed passengers with its heightened curb appeal, which includes new LED headlamps and a smooth rear cap.

In fact, the coach has proven so popular that Menard jokes that he hasn't seen it since the day it was delivered because it's constantly been out for multi-day tours. "The coach hasn't been back long enough to see if we like it," kids Menard, who runs the company with family that includes his wife, mother and an uncle.

Donald Menard, who is technically retired at age 76 but still routinely puts in 60-hour weeks, started Foxy Travel in 1981. The company purchased its first coach, an MCI, in 1988. The fleet has been almost exclusively MCI-made ever since. Menard says the service he's enjoyed from sales representative Roy Furo and the rest of the MCI support team is part of what's kept him loyal. "Roy has been more than a sales person to us. He's been with us every step of the way."

Today, the fleet stands at eight coaches, including a recently purchased "Re-energized" J4500 that Menard considered a great deal for its combination of low mileage, new powertrain and appealing options at a pre-owned coach price. There are three other J4500s, two D-Series coaches and an older 46-passenger MCI 102D3 which Menard says is still a "great bus."



The fleet performs a mix of charter and tour work. The company also arranges cruises and international travel.

Foxy Travel takes pride in the condition of its coaches, and each coach is hand-washed every night — occasionally, though not routinely, by Menard's seven-year-old Liam, who's already showing an interest in becoming a third-generation bus man.

Family is something Keith Menard thinks a lot about, and it's reflected in his business model. He's designing coach tours to appeal to the younger travelers who come to Foxy to book cruises and beach vacations, incorporating "family day" trips, tubing excursions and more. "I think recently, people are realizing there's a lot of value in motor coach trips, from the environmental benefits to not feeling like they have to yell at the car ahead of them. People see that they get to go and enjoy the ride."

For more information on Foxy Travel, visit [www.foxytravel.com](http://www.foxytravel.com).

## Peter Pan adds record 42 new MCI coaches to fleet

**DES PLAINES, IL — November 22, 2013** — Peter Pan Bus Lines, one of the largest privately owned motor coach operators in the United States, is setting a new company record by expanding its coach fleet with 42 MCI models within 12 months. By the end of 2013, the Springfield, Massachusetts, company will have added 30 new MCI® J4500 coaches as well as 12 MCI® Commuter Coach models.



Peter Pan is adding new coaches in response to growing demand for intercity travel throughout the Northeast and to further update its fleet. "This busy and exciting period represents a substantial modernization of our equipment along with our commitment to having America's most modern fleet," said Peter Picknelly, Chairman and CEO of Peter Pan. "We're dedicated to offering our riders attractive fares, accessibility, direct routes and amenities that allow passengers to use mobile devices to stay connected and productive. The eye-catching J4500 is appealing to our ridership as well. We continue to experience a rise in ridership despite competition or other modes of transportation."

Redesigned last year with new, angled LED headlights and a heightened presence, the J4500 model also has a smoother ride, along with new EPA-mandated clean-diesel engine technology and system enhancements that help the coach emit less emissions and conserve fuel.

Peter Pan's newest coaches, powered by Cummins engines and Allison transmissions, also feature wheelchair lifts, three-point passenger seatbelts, Wi-Fi connectivity and 110-volt outlets at all 54 passenger seats. In addition, all Peter Pan coaches feature a GPS system deployed to improve fuel efficiency by eliminating unnecessary idling and monitoring speed along with braking.

Peter Pan's relationship with MCI began in the early 1970s, after the company saw the durability of MC-5 coaches being operated out of its Springfield facility shared with Greyhound. The majority of Peter Pan's coaches are MCI J and D models.

"MCI is proud to be an integral part of Peter Pan's growth, and to have our coaches operating within their fleet as the 'backbone' of their operations," said Patricia Ziska, MCI Vice President of New Coach Sales. "The trust and relationship with the Peter Pan executive management team is invaluable to MCI and we appreciate their selecting MCI as their leading coach and parts supplier over these many years."

"We applaud Peter Pan's success, its fleet-modernization goals and preference for the top-selling J4500," said Patrick Scully, MCI Executive Vice President of Sales and Marketing. "At MCI, we constantly strive to bring to market the latest innovations in safety and coach performance improvements. Our newest J4500 is our best effort yet, offering greater fuel economy, easier maintenance and an exceptional ride. We're grateful Peter Pan has made the J4500 its number-one coach as well."

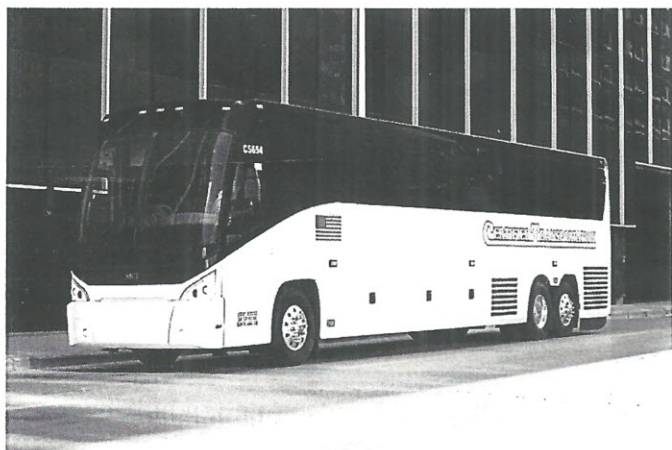
In addition to its Springfield headquarters, Peter Pan operates office and garage facilities in Boston and Central Connecticut, employing 500 people companywide. Peter Pan operates premier regular-route service and support to over 100 communities throughout the Northeast corridor, with daily express service to cities including Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington, D.C. The company also operates nationwide charter and tour services and serves more than 4 million passengers a year and logs over 25 million miles annually. Learn more at [www.peterpanbus.com](http://www.peterpanbus.com).

## Certified Transportation sets trend, follows tradition with 2014 MCI® J4500

**DES PLAINES, IL — November 22, 2013** — When Stacy Stell of Certified Transportation in Santa Ana, California, traveled to MCI's Winnipeg plant last month to pick up the company's newest coach, an MCI J4500 ordered by her father, David Gregory, she was following in his footsteps. Indeed, he first made the same journey 41 years ago for his father's transportation business.



Both coach and company have changed a bit over the years. Certified Transportation, founded by David Gregory and his late brother, Rick, in 1990, is a tour, charter and school bus company that has grown far beyond its school-bus origins. The 2014 MCI J4500 has evolved as well, offering top design, riding comfort, safety and powertrain performance. Redesigned last year, the model looks taller and more modern, with new LED headlamps and a new smooth rear cap. Three-point passenger seatbelts, electronic stability control, a SmartWave® tire-pressure monitoring system and a fire suppression system are standard safety features. The model delivers improved fuel economy through powertrain optimization.



Certified Transportation ordered its J4500 with a wheelchair lift, a state-of-the-art entertainment system, Wi-Fi and power outlets for passengers' devices. "We're going to a younger fleet with newer clean-diesel engine technology, adding the amenities that our passengers value, such as Wi-Fi," said David Gregory. "Our passengers love the look of the J4500, and we went with it for the quality, appearance, comfort, reliability and history." Certified Transportation's new J4500 replaces an older MCI D-Series coach. All together, Certified Transportation operates a fleet of 14 coaches, including seven MCIs.

Gregory's success isn't surprising. The family's transportation experience dates back to about 1916, when his grandfather began to transport passengers via a Model T from local train stations to Hollywood hotels. Gregory grew up around the bus business, cleaning coaches at age 12 for his father's company. By age 22, in 1972, his father had enough faith in his abilities to send him all the way to MCI's Winnipeg plant to pick up the company's new MC-7 coach.

Gregory formed Certified Transportation with four pre-owned school buses offering school field-trip service in Orange County. His first year's income were about a quarter of million dollars. Today, with 61 school buses in addition to coaches, and a staff of 85 employees, Certified Transportation creates its own tours and works with wholesalers as well on groups and charters. Gregory's children are just as involved in his business as he was in his father's. Daughter Stacy is a driver-trainer

and instructor at the company, and works with Gingi Borg who was named "Trainer of the Year" at the California Bus Association annual meeting last month. Son Eric, Operations Manager, serves as board member of the CBA. David's wife Elsie and two other children are involved in the business as well.

The company also is a member of the America Bus Association and United Motorcoach Association. To learn more, visit [www.ctsbus.com](http://www.ctsbus.com).

## **Pace to modify several Lake County bus routes effective December 22**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 11, 2013 3:30:00 PM

Schedule changes, new and improved connections and other route modifications ahead

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, IL A service restructuring effort spanning several months that involved collaboration among Pace, Lake County, the College of Lake County and other local stakeholders- along with surveying and other public input- will culminate in modified bus service throughout Lake County that begins December 22. Although the scale and scope of changes varies from route to route, the overall goal of the project was to respond to changes in demand by updating the decades-old service model for the county's bus service. Many of the timing and routing changes are designed to improve on-time performance, which has been plagued by rail crossings and an overall increase in traffic on the county's roads.

"Improving on-time performance and service reliability is critical to attracting and retaining riders," said Pace Chairman Richard Kwasneski. "We worked with riders and other stakeholders to build a plan that will improve on-time performance, ease connections between bus routes and increase service on corridors with heavy demand."

The service changes were discussed at a pair of public hearings held in August. Distribution is underway for passenger notices detailing the changes for each route along with updated bus schedules. Passengers can also view the new schedules and notices at [www.PaceBus.com](http://www.PaceBus.com). Additionally, Pace staff members will be posted in downtown Waukegan at various times during the week of December 9 to distribute information and schedules and to answer customers questions. More service changes will occur in March as part of a second phase of the service restructuring effort.

The changes can be summarized as follows. Routes marked with an asterisk have more substantial changes than those not marked:

Route 272 Milwaukee Avenue North: weekday schedule changes

Route 561 Castlecrest via McAree: schedule changes

Route 562 Gurnee via Sunset: schedule changes



Omnibus Society of America  
PO Box A3051  
Chicago IL 60690

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Route 563 Great Lakes Naval Station: schedule changes and minor routing changes

Route 564 Jackson/14th: schedule changes and minor routing changes

\*Route 565 Grand Avenue: extended to the College of Lake County, more frequent service, later evening service and a routing change at Gurnee Mills

Route 568 Belvidere: schedule changes and minor routing changes

\*Route 569 Lewis: service frequency reduced from 30 minutes to 60 minutes during midday

\*Route 570 Fox Lake Gurnee Mills via CLC: will no longer operate between College of Lake County and Gurnee Mills (this connection to be provided by new Route 565 extension), new route name: Fox Lake CLC

Route 571 Zion: schedule changes and route adjustments in Zion and downtown Waukegan

\*Route 572 Waukegan Grayslake Westfield Hawthorn: will no longer operate south of College of Lake County (eliminated route portion to be covered by new Route 574), more frequent service, new extension to Waukegan Metra Station, new route name: Washington

\*Route 574 Hawthorn College of Lake County: all-new route covers former southern portion of current Route 572 routing and will provide service once per hour Monday-Saturday

Round Lake Area Call-n-Ride: schedule changes

Vernon Hills Mundelein Call-n-Ride: schedule changes

\*Downtown Waukegan bus stop changes: passengers must board and exit buses at posted bus stop signs. Also, routes 565, 571 and 572 will be extended to serve the Waukegan Metra Station.