



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OMNIBUS SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.

**SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2014**

**RUN 05-14**

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](http://osabus.org). At [osabus.org](http://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.

## • SEPT/OCT MEETINGS

The **September meeting** of the Omnibus Society of America will be held on September 5, 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 presentation by long-time member Myron Lane on Chicago and its suburban bus operators

The **October meeting** of the Omnibus Society of America will be held on October 3, 2014, in the Anderson Pavilion of Swedish Covenant Hospital. The meeting will start at 7:30 pm.

Currently we have no program lined up for this date.

## **CTA Provides Update on Proposed Red Line Extension from 95th to 130th Street**

8/10/2014

***As part of planning process, CTA announces it has narrowed down two desirable options to build transformational South Side project; announces \$5 million of funding***

The Chicago Transit Authority today announced that as part of its planning process to extend rail service to 130th Street on the far South Side, it has narrowed down to two preliminary options for the proposed Red Line Extension (RLE) Project. The CTA also today announced \$5 million of bond funds to move forward on the required federal planning process for the rail line extension.

The RLE project is Mayor Rahm Emanuel and CTA President Forrest Claypool's plan to extend the Red Line from the existing 95th Street Terminal to the vicinity of 130th Street. The 5.3-mile extension would include four new stations near 103rd Street, 111th Street, Michigan

Avenue, and 130th Street, each of which would include bus and parking facilities. The current estimated cost of the project is \$2.3 billion.

The benefits of the project would include providing rapid transit rail service to an area that does not have direct CTA rail service, which would improve access to jobs and education and fostering economic development.

Based on feedback received from the public this spring and summer via community meetings and comments provided to the agency, the CTA is now focusing on one "preferred alternative" with two possible variations from five proposals that have been under consideration. The CTA believes these options would best serve communities and residents on the Far South Side

Union Pacific Railroad Rail (UPRR) Alternative, East Option. Under this option, CTA tracks would be placed immediately east of the Union Pacific railroad right-of-way from 99th Street to 118th Street

Union Pacific Railroad Rail (UPRR) Alternative, West Option. Under this option, CTA tracks would be placed immediately west of Union Pacific's right-of-way from 99th Street to north of 118th Street.

The proposed alignment of the rapid transit line would be the same for the two East and West options north of 99th Street and south of 118th Street.

The full analysis for the preferred options, and separate, additional options that have been considered – the Union Pacific Railroad Alternative Right-of-Way (ROW) Option, the Halsted Rail Alternative and the Bus Rapid Transit Alternative in lieu of a railroad extension – will be part of the Draft Environmental Impact Study (EIS) currently being prepared by the CTA as part of the process of securing federal approval and funding for the project. Focusing on a preferred alternative in the draft Environmental Impact Statement will streamline the environmental planning process and accelerate the schedule for making the project eligible for federal New Starts funding.

The CTA expects to publish the Draft EIS by early 2015 for public comment and will hold public hearings to encourage feedback from the community. That feedback will be used to guide the selection of a final preferred option and the completion of the Final EIS, also a requirement of the federal project approval process. The CTA said \$5 million of bond funds will help complete the Draft EIS and begin preparation of the Final EIS.

For more information about the Red Line Extension Project, visit [www.transitchicago.com/redeis/](http://www.transitchicago.com/redeis/).



## **CTA Announces Details on Plan to Upgrade Three Blue Line Stations as Part of Your New Blue Modernization Program**

8/11/2014

***To complete major station improvements, California station will close 9/4 to 10/16; Damen station will close 10/20 to 12/22; CTA to provide expanded bus service on the nearby #56 route***

Two of the CTA's oldest rail stations will receive major renovations and a third will receive upgrades starting in September, as part of Mayor Rahm Emanuel's \$492 million Your New Blue modernization program for the O'Hare branch of the Blue Line.

The \$33 million station improvement plan for California, Western, and Damen will provide customers a safer, more comfortable transit experience, and are part of the ongoing modernization of CTA train and bus service across the city.

In order to complete the major repairs and improvements planned for the California and Damen stationhouses and platforms, the CTA has previously said it will be necessary to close both stations to complete the extensive work. The Western station underwent a major renovation in 2001 and needs less extensive improvements and repairs, so the station will remain open throughout the construction period. The California, Damen and Western stations were all built in the late 1800s and are among the oldest on the CTA system. Station closures are as follows:

California will close for 42 days on Sept. 4 and will reopen Oct. 16.

Damen will close for 63 days on Oct. 20 and will reopen Dec. 22.

California and Damen will both get extensive stationhouse and platform upgrades and repairs that include structural repairs as well as improved lighting, signage, more turnstiles and new bike racks. Historic features of the stations will be preserved and restored.

All three stations will receive new, one-of-a-kind public artwork, to be installed following the completion of the station improvement project.

To assist customers affected by station closures, the CTA will add additional #56 Milwaukee bus service during weekday morning and evening rush periods, and add "owl" service during the overnight hours to link the closest stations in either direction of the shuttered station.

In addition, Divvy, a program of the Chicago Department of Transportation, is Chicago's bike sharing system and may be a great alternative for customers during this period. There are Divvy stations located near California, including California-Milwaukee and Rockwell-Milwaukee; and Damen, including Milwaukee-Wabansia, Damen-

Pierce and Leavitt-North. For more Divvy information and locations, visit <https://www.divvybikes.com/>.

Temporary street and alley closures and parking restrictions that are necessary to complete construction work will be announced closer to the project start date. The CTA will work closely with local elected officials and community members to communicate all project information and impacts to customers and residents.

The station work follows extensive track upgrades that are also part of the Your New Blue project. Track improvements began in March on the branch to increase speed and reliability of service and are expected to be completed in September.

In December 2013, the CTA and Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced Your New Blue, the most ambitious service improvement project on the Blue Line since it was extended to O'Hare Airport in 1984. The program will benefit the more than 80,000 customers who each weekday use stations along the branch, which had 25 million rides last year. Your New Blue will update a total of 13 Blue Line stations, make elevated and subway infrastructure upgrades, track signal improvements and traction power upgrades.

## **Mayor Emanuel and CTA Unveil Revitalized Harrison Red Line Station Following \$10 Million Rehabilitation Project**

8/13/2014

***Station work is latest in a comprehensive modernization of the Red Line begun in 2011***

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and CTA President Forrest Claypool today unveiled the newly revitalized Harrison Red Line station following the completion of a major modernization project to upgrade the 70-year old station to provide a brighter, cleaner and safer travel environment for the 1.4 million people who use the station each year.

The project work part of a larger, ongoing, comprehensive modernization of the Red Line under Mayor Emanuel's leadership. Since 2011, nearly one-third of all CTA stations have undergone renovation or are funded and scheduled soon for significant renovation or rehabilitation – an unprecedented number of stations to receive significant investment in just a few years' time. That includes more than 20 Red Line stations.

"Modernizing our transit system is an investment in Chicago's future," said Mayor Emanuel. "Providing students, employees and residents in the South Loop with world-class transit is a critical component to helping growing our region's economy and increasing the quality of life in Chicago."

Under the \$10 million rehabilitation project, which began in April, crews rehabilitated the three station entrances and the mezzanine area while making additional



improvements to the platform area for the 1.4 million people who use it each year.

"Our stations are the front door for the CTA and we're pleased to continue the unprecedented effort to rebuild and rehab CTA stations under this administration," said CTA President Forrest Claypool. "We're pleased to continue to invest in our stations and provide customers with a more comfortable, pleasant commuting experience."

In an effort to better reflect the surrounding community and the adjacent Jones College Prep High School, the CTA incorporated new colors and modern design elements into the station project plans that are unlike any other seen across the rail system, such as the newly constructed stairwell canopies and the random pattern ceramic tile installed along the stairwells, mezzanine and platform walls. The Harrison station is also the first stationhouse to be fully equipped with all new, brighter and more energy efficient LED lighting.

Other improvements made to the station included waterproofing to reduce pooling of water in mezzanine and platform areas; installation of new granite flooring; new lighting; and repairs to all three station stairways.

In addition, over the next eight weeks, CTA crews will be making additional improvements to the station's customer information systems, with the addition of new CTA Train Tracker displays in both station mezzanines and along the platform. Crews will also install a new surveillance cameras, blue light telephones and new public address system speakers.

For the project to proceed quickly and safely, the majority of the rehabilitation work was performed in phases, which entailed the temporary closure of each station entrance for 42-days, while crews rehabilitated the stairways, mezzanine areas and portions of the platform – though not at the same time – plus five weekend-only closures of the entire station.

This project was funded solely with tax increment financing available through Mayor Emanuel's *Chicago Neighborhoods Now* program.

Additional recent Red Line improvement projects include the new \$240 million 95th Street Terminal and the \$203 million Wilson station, both of which will begin construction this fall, and the completion of the \$425 million Red Line South Reconstruction Project last fall, which rebuilt the entire 10-mile South Side branch of the Red Line.

## **CTA Fills Eight Retail Locations with New Concessions**

8/13/2014

The Chicago Transit Board today approved eight new concession leases at rail stations on the Brown, Green, Red, Orange, Purple and Blue lines, including a new, locally owned eatery at the Green Line Halsted station.

In the past three years, the CTA has added 52 new retail concession spaces, including those announced today. The agreements are part of CTA's continued effort to improve customer convenience and amenities while generating long-term revenue for the transit agency.

The Halsted station will be home to the new locally owned Praise Chicago Restaurant, which will hire local youth and teach them skills to pursue careers in the culinary arts. Praise Restaurant founder Darryl Fuery has worked in restaurants, hotels and catering for 24 years. Through his new restaurant, he and his fellow owners, who are local professional chefs, will provide hands-on training in the restaurant business.

Praise Chicago will sell a number of fresh food items from 6 a.m. through 7 p.m., including omelets, pancakes, sandwiches and other healthy, freshly prepared meal items.

"It's been my goal to combine my passion for food with my interest in helping young people," said Mr. Fuery. "Finding a space within the CTA also provides commuters fresh, delicious meals and special recipes prepared by area youth and supervised by a talented team."

This latest addition on the Green Line will compliment other small businesses that have opened in CTA stations in the last three years.

"The CTA has boosted efforts to add a diverse offering of concessions for our customers' convenience, said CTA President Forrest Claypool. "CTA has been pleased to add gourmet food vendors to its rail stations to further improve amenities for customers and to partner with local entrepreneurs."

The other new concession leases announced by the CTA today include new Dunkin' Donuts at Chicago, Davis, and Western on the Red, Purple and Brown Lines. The Blue Line will receive several new leases including a convenience store at Harlem, a newsstand at Washington and a Greyhound ticket booth at Cumberland. The Kedzie Orange Line will have a newsstand.

The total revenue to CTA from the new leases is estimated at \$1.8 million.

## **CTA Moves to Next Phase of Major Upgrade of Brown, Purple Line Work**

8/13/2014

***\$71.2 million Ravenswood Connector rehabilitation project moves to next stages with contract awarded for extensive track renovation and reconstruction***

The CTA launched the second phase of a major \$71.2 million Brown and Purple Line renovation project Wednesday with a \$40.3 million contract award to Kiewit Infrastructure Co., which will upgrade tracks along the Brown and Purple Line between Armitage and the



Merchandise Mart to eliminate slow zones and create a smoother, more reliable ride for customers.

Kiewit crews will begin work this spring to improve tracks along the Ravenswood Connector, which carries about 700 Brown and Purple Line trains each weekday. The trackwork begins as CTA ironworkers have been making repairs and upgrades on the elevated structure of the Connector for nearly a year, work that will continue. Specifically, CTA crews have been renewing key elements on the more than 100-year-old structure by replacing flange angles, which are critical brackets that strengthen the elevated structure and support the tracks. The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2015, and the result of the two-year effort will be improved speed and reliability for Brown and Purple Line trains.

Details on the construction schedule and how service will be affected are still being finalized, and will be announced closer to the start of the work. Temporary weekend track closures, similar to those seen recently on the Blue Line O'Hare branch as part of the Your New Blue rehabilitation project, are expected to be part of the construction plan. As with all large-scale projects, the CTA will strive to minimize impacts to service.

In the interim, CTA in-house forces have also made some track repairs since last fall. Currently, track crews are working on rail tie replacement for immediate train-speed improvements south of Armitage. That work entails temporary slow zones on some sections of track that will lengthen normal travel times.

Separately, and as part of system-wide slow zone remediation work the CTA has under way, the CTA will perform track improvements August 16-18 on the Brown Line tracks between the Rockwell and Francisco stations along the bridge over the Chicago River's north branch. Because of that work, the CTA will temporarily suspend train service between Western and Kimball beginning Saturday, August 16 at 2:40 a.m. Service will be resumed in time for the morning rush period on Monday, August 18, at 4 a.m. The CTA will provide bus shuttle service that will make stops at the Western and Kimball stations, and the #81 Lawrence bus stops on Lawrence at Rockwell, Sacramento, and Kedzie. Train service between Western and the Loop will be unaffected.

For more information about the Ravenswood Connector, visit [transitchicago.com/ravenswoodconnector](http://transitchicago.com/ravenswoodconnector).

## Free Rides for Students on the First Day of School

8/22/2014

***CTA for fourth straight year provides rides to promote attendance; thanks Sun-Times Media Productions for its sponsorship of the program***

The CTA will provide students with free CTA bus and train rides on the first day of school, September 2, in what is the fourth year of the CTA's "First Day, Free

Rides" program. Adults accompanying students will also ride for free that day.

The First Day, Free Rides program is in the third of a three-year sponsorship by Sun-Times Media Productions, LLC. The program was originally launched in September 2011.

"Mayor Emanuel and I believe that affordable, reliable public transportation plays an important role in education," said CTA President Forrest Claypool. "Encouraging school attendance on Day One sets the tone for the rest of the school year. We thank our partners at Sun-Times Media Productions for their support of such an important initiative to promote attendance on the first day."

"The Sun-Times is pleased to work with the Chicago Transit Authority on this important initiative. Getting students to their schools safely and on time the first day of class is an incredibly important step in getting kids ready for a productive year," said Jim Kirk, publisher and editor in chief of the Chicago Sun-Times.

Last year, CTA provided more 147,000 free student rides on the first day of school and provided about 25 million student rides throughout the academic year.

Students who are enrolled in school are eligible to receive discount fares to ride the CTA Monday through Friday from 5:30 a.m. – 8:30 p.m. when school is in session. Last year, Mayor Emanuel and the CTA lowered student fares by 10 cents to 75 cents to make transit even more affordable during school hours from 5:30 a.m. – 8:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Beyond school hours, elementary students ages 7-11 pay reduced fares of \$1 on the bus and \$1.10 on rail and individuals 12 and older pay full fares.

## Pace revises, improves schedules for popular Bus on Shoulders routes

August 6, 2014 11:00:00 AM

Media Release Office: (847) 228-4295

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### Route 855 to split on August 18 into three routes providing faster, more direct service

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, IL Proving once again that customer feedback can be an invaluable resource, Pace is revising its popular Bus on Shoulder routes in response to suggestions from customers to provide faster, more direct service between downtown Chicago and free park-n-rides in the southwest suburbs. As of August 18, Route 855 will be split into three routes- routes 850, 851, and 855 based upon which park-n-rides the route serves. The change means fewer stops for customers, faster travel times and an easier time discerning which bus to take during the evening rush. The three new/revised routes- along with the existing Route 755- also will have additional service added in response to continued ridership growth.

"The service changes feature faster travel times to and from Chicago, and we believe that dividing the current



Route 855 into three parts will simplify the route and become easier to understand for new or infrequent riders," said Pace Chairman of the Board Richard Kwasneski. "This is another example of Pace taking seriously the feedback we receive from customers and putting it to use to help commuters save money and avoid the hassles of dealing with traffic on I-55."

Under the new service plan, the new Route 850 North Bolingbrook East Loop Express will serve the existing Pace Park-n-Ride Canterbury in Bolingbrook and a new stop nearby at Boughton and Pinecrest. Route 851 South Bolingbrook East Loop Express serves Paces Old Chicago Park-n-Ride in Bolingbrook and a new Park-n-Ride at the White Fence Farm restaurant in Romeoville. The revised Route 855 Plainfield East Loop Express stops at the existing Pace Park-n-Ride facilities in Plainfield and Burr Ridge. All routes serve the same stops in downtown Chicago. On outbound trips only, new bus stops on Michigan Avenue have been added at Monroe, Jackson and Van Buren to replace the existing stop at Monroe and Wabash. The change provides additional access for passengers wishing to board buses further south than they can now.

To inform riders of the changes, notices are posted in buses and were sent directly to customers who have opted in to Pace's e-mail subscription service. Additionally, Pace staff will be at the Park-n-Rides and riding the buses on scattered shifts during the AM and PM rush periods to distribute information to passengers and answer questions.

As of June, 2014, average daily ridership on Route 755 was 262, and Route 855 averaged 723 daily riders. The combined daily ridership of just under 1,000 per day is more than 226% higher than the average daily ridership in June, 2011, prior to the beginning of the Bus on Shoulders pilot project in November, 2011. In addition to significantly higher ridership, on-time performance consistently in the low to mid- 90% range compared with 68% pre-BoS and the routes maintain an impeccable record of safe operations. In light of these strong results, the Illinois General Assembly passed legislation earlier this year making the Bus on Shoulder Pilot Project permanent, and also permitted the expansion of the program to other highways and tollways in the region. Work is underway with the Illinois Tollway for express operations on the shoulder of I-90 to begin in 2016, and early discussions with the Illinois Department of Transportation have taken place about future expansion opportunities.

The service revisions to routes 755 and 855 are part of a larger package of service improvements occurring throughout the Pace service area. More than two dozen bus routes throughout the system will receive additional trips or have slight timing changes to improve on-time performance. Additionally, the all-new Tinley Park Call-n-Ride debuts on August 25 serving employment, education and retail destinations with connections to Metra's 80th Avenue Station and two Pace bus routes.

## **Wrap it up: Older buses look new again**

The problem: after eleven years of wear and tear from road salt, weather and more, Pace buses that entered the fleet in 2003 are showing their age. The solution: an exterior vinyl wrap refreshes the appearance of the bus while saving money versus repainting.

Pace is in the process of wrapping approximately 50 buses in the old scheme of a white bus with a yellow stripe down each side outlined in blue. When completed, the buses are nearly identical to the current livery of a blue bus with white logos.

The cost to wrap a bus versus repainting saves \$8,000 per bus and the wrapping process takes just seven hours. To repaint a bus would require to be out of service for 24 days.

The result is a bus that looks considerably more attractive and more closely resembles the newer, blue buses that now make up the majority of Pace's fleet. The first blue buses joined Pace's fleet in 2005 as part of a rebranding campaign that included a new agency logo and color scheme.

Wraps have been used by Pace for many years for advertisements and promotions of special events service.

## **Bus on Shoulders officially permanent**

On Monday, August 11, Governor Pat Quinn signed legislation making Pace's Bus on Shoulders Program permanent and also paves the way for shoulder operations on other highways and tollways in the region.

Pace's Bus on Shoulders program launched in 2011 as part of a five year pilot project with support from IDOT, RTA and the Illinois State Police. Routes 755 and 855, which connect Chicago with the southwest suburbs via Interstate 55, the Stevenson Expressway. The original legislation permitted Pace buses to use select portions of the shoulder during periods of heavy congestion and established guidelines for travel, such as limiting speeds in the shoulder to the lesser of 35mph or 15mph over the speed at which traffic is flowing in the regular travel lanes.

Since that time, combined average daily ridership on the two routes has grown by more than 226%, and on-time performance has increased from 68% before the pilot project to a consistent 92-93%. "When we began this project in 2011, we set out to do three things: increase ridership, improve on-time performance, and operate safely," said Pace Chairman of the Board Richard Kwasneski. "We've achieved all of these benchmarks and are grateful to Governor Quinn, the General Assembly, our project partners IDOT and RTA and our customers for their support throughout the planning and implementation process."



Thanks to this legislation, we can take what we have learned on I-55 and bring express bus service to the shoulders of other highways and tollways in the region. "

State Representative Bob Rita sponsored the new legislation in the House, and Senator Martin Sandoval was the Senate sponsor. Governor Quinn was supportive throughout the process.

Other highways in the pipeline for program expansion include I-90 and the Elgin-O'Hare Expressway in partnership with the Illinois Tollway, and on the Edens, Bishop Ford and Eisenhower expressways and I-57 in collaboration with IDOT.

## **MBT Worldwide goes for modern economy with three Setra® S 407 coaches**

**DES PLAINES, IL — June 26, 2014** — When it comes to motor coach transportation, Boston-area MBT Worldwide likes to keep its coach fleet modern, and costs moderate, passing savings on to customers. The company, which runs a wide variety of vehicles, added three new Setra S 407 coaches last month for that very reason.



"We like the look of Setra's European styling and the value," said Russell Libby, owner, who runs MBT Worldwide with other family members. "It's the right fit for our customers. We're able give them a brand-new ride at an attractive price."

The Setra S 407 Comfort Class, like the luxury Setra S 417, distributed by MCI in the U.S. and Canada, offers German engineering and a clean-power Mercedes-Benz BlueTec engine. Safety features include an Electronic Stability Program, all-wheel disc brakes, and ABA braking with anti-slip control. Passengers will enjoy many onboard amenities from extra comfortable seats to video monitors.

Libby, who was an electrician prior to joining and later buying out his father-in-law's airport flight-crew shuttle business, is a stickler for a well-maintained fleet. MBT's 10 coaches, mostly MCI and Setra models, are cared for by MBT mechanics at the company's own maintenance shop. When issues arise, Libby counts on MCI's aftermarket support and in-field representatives. "The guys out on the road are super-willing to help us out."

People feature prominently in the success of MBT, which serves a wide variety of clients, including schools, athletic teams and corporations. Libby credits his nephew, Craig, along with other family members and staff for the company's 30-plus-percent annual growth rate. "Without the people, it just can't happen," said Libby, who even seeks out drivers' opinions on pricing trips. "We have one of the best core groups of drivers. I know I don't have all the answers, but we all work together to resolve situations that come up. Living requires learning something new every day."

Libby's optimism extends to his industry view. "It's an exciting business because most of what we do centers on happiness, with weddings, social events or travel to great destinations. It's very rewarding."

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

## **IMG Operator of the Year Southern Coaches orders two MCI® J4500 coaches**

**DES PLAINES, IL — August 22, 2014** — When the International Motorcoach Group (IMG) named Southern Coaches, Dothan, Alabama, as its 2014 IMG Operator of the Year, John Adams, President of the 25-year-old family-owned charter company was pleasantly surprised. "I never expected to receive such an honor," said Adams, whose office managed to keep the award a secret from him. "To be selected by your peers for upholding and excelling at IMG's high standards is tremendously meaningful." As an invitation-only organization, IMG member companies have a reputation for being highly successful, trusted transportation providers with a shared commitment to "Setting the Standard."



In business since 1989, Southern Coaches has shown an uncompromising commitment to safety and service with some of the best equipment around — which will soon be augmented by two new 2015 MCI J4500s to be delivered this fall. Southern Coaches placed the order for the two new J4500 coaches earlier this month at IMG's Strategic Alliance Meeting in Branson, Missouri, where Adams accepted the IMG award.



The new J4500s will make Southern Coaches one of the nation's first operators to offer passengers MCI's most updated coach, which features a new ZF independent front suspension and Bendix adaptive braking, which gives the J4500 a tighter turning radius, a more responsive ride. The J4500, which also recently underwent a design change, additionally offers standard features including flat-screen video monitors, tiered theatre seating and LED lighting, plus performance features including an optimized powertrain for better fuel economy. Southern Coaches additionally opted for 110-volt outlets at every seat along with Wi-Fi as part of the company's desire to offer customers their favorite amenities. All together, Southern Coaches operates a 24-coach fleet that includes 14 J4500 coaches

When Adams accepted the IMG award, he gave credit to his father, G. Milton Adams, who founded the company, as well as to his dedicated staff. "It's due to our quality drivers, excellent maintenance and great staff," said Adams, whose brother George serves as Vice President and Safety Director. "It's a joint effort to make it work. If we didn't have everybody pulling together we would never be as successful as we are."

Southern Coaches first entered the transportation industry via G. Milton Adams' regional truck line. The elder Adams had long been a transportation hobbyist, keeping an MCI coach at home for occasional use. When he sold the trucking company to start his charter company in 1989, the first coach he purchased was a re-owned MCI, which brought his fleet to two coaches. By the end of 1990, business was so good, Southern Coaches expanded its fleet to seven coaches. And in 1992, the company bought its first new coach, an MCI 102C3. Southern Coaches has since grown to be one of the region's leading operators, with a staff of about 45 people.

"MCI extends its congratulations to Southern Coaches and its staff on the prestigious IMG honor," said Patricia Ziska, MCI Vice President of New-Coach Sales. "They offer their passengers exceptional customer service and stand on a reputation of safety founded on some of the best-maintained coaches in the business and a culture of quality and precision in their operation and customer service inspired by Milton and carried on today under John's leadership. We're proud to be a part of their fleet, and we're confident that the new handling technologies aboard their new J4500s will further enhance the level of service that they offer."

## Daniel's Charter expands with four new MCI J4500s; plans second location

**DES PLAINES, IL — August 20, 2014** — Family-owned, faith-based and trend-setting, Daniel's Charters, based in Lula, Georgia, is expanding. Daniel's, which serves the greater Atlanta area, has added four 2014 MCI J4500 coaches to its fleet of 32 vehicles and plans to open a second location in Duluth, Georgia, by the end of the year.



Jimmy Cantrell, who with his late brother, Rickey, founded Daniel's Charters with one new coach in 1998, credits the company's success to faith-based business practices, highly skilled professional drivers, and a newer fleet of coaches featuring the latest entertainment options and safety advances. All of Daniel's coaches feature Satellite TV, power plugs, Wi-Fi and GPS.

Daniel's four new MCI J4500s are also equipped with Cummins engines, Allison transmissions, back-up-cameras and higher-end interior options including plush, leather-trimmed seating and wood-grain flooring. Standard features on the MCI J4500, the industry's best-seller, include three-point passenger seatbelts, Electronic Stability Control, tire monitoring and a fire detection and suppression system.

"When we started, every time a coach became 60 percent booked, we would buy another, and we've held to that practice," said Cantrell. "We run a newer fleet and like the J4500 for its curb appeal."

Named for Daniel, the biblical character driven by faith, with a nod to Cantrell's middle name, Daniel's is devoted to its customers and employees alike. "The biggest thing is our customers and drivers." Many of Daniel's drivers are retirees who formerly worked in people-oriented professions. "We're fortunate to be located near Lake Lanier, where many professionals retire," said Cantrell. "They like the opportunity to keep working. You can't teach people-skills as easily as you train someone to be a good driver. We have a former judge and three preachers."

Daniel's drivers, who dress professionally in shirt and tie, go through extensive driver training. And there are rewards, as well. In a recent 20-coach move to Daytona, Cantrell arranged a tour of the Daytona racetrack, deep-sea fishing and a night of bowling to show his appreciation to his drivers. "They are why we're successful," he said.

Two of Cantrell's children are also active in the company. His son, James, is the Director of Motorcoach Maintenance. His daughter, Shelly Echols, left a teaching career to lead Human Resources and coordinate Daniel's Educational Tours, a company division that has taken more than 5,700 students on field trips this year alone. Daniel's Discovery Tours, another



division of Daniel's, offers escorted tours throughout the U.S. and Canada; and Daniel's Charters arm holds contracts with many of the area's colleges and athletic teams.

An education advocate, Cantrell remarked: "I tell my family: 'You may lose your good looks or your husband, but you'll never lose your education.'" Cantrell, a life-long learner, sharpened his management skills at Milliken, working his way up from floor-sweeper to plant manager. While there, he saw how the adoption of emerging automation technologies doubled production. The lesson stuck. "It's important to keep ahead," said Cantrell. "We are one of the first to have electronic logs for our drivers and the first to have Satellite TV. When we went with plug-ins, it was 100 percent. All our coaches have them."

Daniel's received a United Motorcoach Association 2006 Vision Award, presented to companies that embody the vision to lead the industry and raise the standards for operators everywhere. Learn more at [www.danielscharters.com](http://www.danielscharters.com).

## **Long Beach Transit Awards New Flyer a Contract for 13 60' Articulated Xcelsior Transit Buses**

**Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada – July 14, 2014:** (TSX: NFI) (TSX: NFI.DB.U) New Flyer Industries Inc. ("New Flyer" or the "Company"), the leading manufacturer of heavy-duty transit buses in the United States and Canada, announced today that Long Beach Transit has awarded New Flyer a contract for 13 (26 equivalent units or "EUs") 60-foot heavy-duty Xcelsior® articulated compressed natural gas ("CNG") buses.

New Flyer has manufactured 250 buses for Long Beach Transit over the past 20 years in a variety of propulsion, bus lengths and platforms. These additional 13 articulated buses will be used to replace New Flyer 60' diesel buses manufactured in 2002, which have reached the end of their useful life. The new articulated buses will be powered by CNG, keeping with Long Beach Transit's Alternative Fuel Policy.

"We're excited for the opportunity to build our proven Xcelsior model for Long Beach Transit," said Paul Soubry, New Flyer President and Chief Executive Officer. "Not only is this the first time we will build our Xcelsior model for them, it will be the first time we have ever built them CNG buses, we are honored for this opportunity."

The 13 articulated buses will be manufactured starting with a lead bus in the fourth quarter of 2014 with all buses being delivered in the second quarter of 2015. This order is included in the Q2 2014 order activity.

## **New Flyer to Focus on Xcelsior® as Single Heavy-Duty and BRT Transit Bus Platform**

- New Flyer to rationalize to a common Xcelsior® platform for all heavy-duty and BRT transit buses
- Allows for enhanced New Flyer lifecycle service, parts and customer support programs
- Production of NABI LFW and BRT models to be phased out, with the Anniston, Alabama facility transitioning to Xcelsior in the second half of 2015
- Aggressively promoting MiDi®, New Flyer's medium-sized, low-floor bus, now in production in St Cloud, Minnesota
- Enables transition to common information technology infrastructure and provides opportunities for cost reduction and avoidance and sourcing synergies to enhance New Flyer's overall competitiveness

**Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada – June 24, 2014:** (TSX: NFI) (TSX: NFI.DB.U) New Flyer Industries Inc. ("New Flyer" or the "Company"), the leading manufacturer of heavy-duty transit buses in Canada and the United States, announced today plans to focus on a single heavy-duty transit and BRT bus platform that features its world-class Xcelsior.

Xcelsior is the latest generation of New Flyer's low-floor vehicle platform that revolutionized North American transit in the early 1990s. Xcelsior comes with a variety of propulsion options including clean diesel, natural gas, diesel-electric hybrid, electric-trolley, and now, zero emission battery-electric. Similar to New Flyer's previous bus models, Xcelsior is customized and configured to meet each customer's unique specifications. New Flyer plans to further enhance its BRT styling options for the Xcelsior platform by building on NABI's extensive BRT experience and New Flyer's customer input.

"New Flyer has made significant investments to make Xcelsior a world-class product. Our focus on a single heavy-duty bus platform enhances our ability to innovate, optimize our supply chain, improve product quality and enhance our competitiveness," said Paul Soubry, New Flyer's President and Chief Executive Officer. "We will transition production at NABI in Anniston, AL from the LFW and BRT to Xcelsior, which enables us to avoid redundant product upgrade costs and duplicate support infrastructure and demonstrates our continued investment in New Flyer's future."

Through the transition, New Flyer expects to:

- Improve its competitiveness in the U.S. and Canadian markets by leveraging its combined bus volume, production, and purchasing for greater efficiencies,
- Streamline design, sourcing, standardization, and overhead for better product control (such as eliminating redundancy and future costs in



designing products, including refreshing bus and propulsion platforms, testing and engineering), and

- Make product enhancements and optimize aftermarket support to better serve customer needs.

"New Flyer acquired North American Bus Industries, Inc. in June 2013 to broaden our market position, to improve our technology leadership and to expand our aftermarket parts business, while providing public transit operators with long-term stability and excellence in product support. Today's announced plan is the natural evolution and optimization of product lines at New Flyer and NABI," Soubry explained.

New Flyer expects to deliver orders as previously committed and to provide support for NABI customers of the LFW and BRT products for as long as those buses are in service. A number of NABI customers have already indicated an interest in transitioning to Xcelsior. The Company believes customers will benefit from the enhancements that result from its focus on a single heavy-duty platform.

"With the transition of the Anniston facility, we will manage the potential people impact over the coming months through redeployment, retirements and job attrition, where possible," Soubry said. "We truly appreciate our employees' dedication, hard work and ongoing efforts at New Flyer and NABI and for their focused commitment to our customers each and every day."

During this transition period, management expects to invest approximately \$20 million in direct operating costs and capital expenditures to complete the transition, utilizing operating cash flow and current credit facilities. Management anticipates these direct operating and capital expenditures will be paid back through captured cost reductions and synergies within approximately two to three years. Management expects to maintain the Company's dividend policy.

Unless otherwise indicated all monetary amounts in this news release are expressed in U.S. dollars

## **York Region Transit Exercises Options For 34 New Flyer 40-Foot Xcelsior® Buses**

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada – May 21, 2014: (TSX: NFI) (TSX: NFI.DB.U) New Flyer Industries Inc. ("New Flyer" or the "Company"), the leading manufacturer of heavy-duty transit buses in Canada and the United States, announced today that York Region Transit, has exercised options to purchase an additional 34 clean diesel Xcelsior® 40-foot heavy-duty buses.

York Region Transit will purchase these buses using an umbrella contract with the procurement department of

the province of Ontario, Canada. This umbrella bus contract held by New Flyer is a 'standing offer' available to public transit agencies across the province, and as a result, New Flyer does not reflect any quantities in its backlog until specific orders are received from a customer.

Since 1989 New Flyer has delivered 225 low floor buses for York Region Transit. With a fleet of approximately 335 heavy duty transit vehicles today, York Region Transit serves an annual ridership of more than 22 million passengers. These additional clean diesel buses will replace buses already in service that have reached the end of their useful economic life.

"New Flyer is proud of the opportunity to provide buses to York Regional Transit for over the past quarter century," said Paul Soubry, New Flyer President and Chief Executive Officer. "They are a very progressive transit operator and since 1989, have progressed with New Flyer as we evolve our product offering from the high floor to low floor bus models, and now with our innovative market-leading Xcelsior."

The 34 Xcelsior® buses are anticipated to be manufactured in the second quarter of 2014 and delivered by the end of the third quarter of 2014.

## **New Streetcars debut in Toronto**

TORONTO - Flashing lights to stop motorists and bikes, exterior buttons to open doors, deployable wheelchair ramps for the first time.

The new Bombardier Flexity streetcar — debuting Aug. 31 on the 510 Spadina route — has plenty of new bells and whistles.

"They're fully accessible, so anyone using a mobility device will for the first time be able to access our streetcar fleet," Byford explains in the clip.

Riders who require wheelchair ramps at stops will be able to press a blue button with a wheelchair symbol on it, located on the outside and inside of each streetcar.

Ramps will be able to descend onto raised streetcar stops — like the one on Spadina Ave. at College St. — as well as onto the street directly into a lane with traffic stopped behind the streetcar.

So far, riders with accessibility needs have only been able to access 32 of the TTC's 69 subway and RT stations — with elevators — and its fleet of buses.

The existing streetcars require passengers to climb steps in order to board and disembark, making them impossible to use for people with mobility devices.

The new streetcar, which is to be rolled out on streetcar routes over five years, will also have twice the capacity as the existing ones, with bicycle storage during off-peak periods and air conditioning for muggy summer days.



It will also feature all-door boarding. Currently, passengers can only board and pay fare at the front of the existing streetcar.

The new streetcar will operate on a proof-of-payment system.

"Regardless of where you board, when you are in the vehicle, there are fare vending machines" that dispense a receipt that doubles as a transfer, TTC spokesman Sarah Currie explained.

Other features include eight tough-to-ignore flashing red lights and a lit-up stop sign at the rear to warn motorists and cyclists to halt while passengers get on and off at a stop.

The current streetcar only has stop signs at the rear and on the doors that swing open to let passengers in and out.

## **'Rigorous' meetings for CTA pension officials — in Hawaii, Vegas**

Sun, 08/24/2014 - 11:16am

Better Government Association

Pension officials with the Chicago Transit Authority need much more than a Ventra Card for some of the taxpayer-funded travel they've been doing in recent years.

The CTA's retirement plan and health care trust spent close to \$60,000 since 2010 to travel to places such as Honolulu, New Orleans, San Diego and Las Vegas for pension-related conferences.

That's according to public documents the CTA plan turned over only after we sued the agency earlier this year for allegedly violating the Illinois Freedom of Information Act, the state law that guarantees public access to certain government records.

We had asked for expense reimbursements, among other documents, which the CTA plan refused to provide until the Better Government Association filed suit. (This litigation is in the process of being settled.)

The newly released records show the agency's expenses include more than \$20,000 on a six-night trip to Hawaii for five people in 2010, \$4,400 on a three-night trip to New Orleans for two people in 2011, \$7,500 on a four-night, four-person trip to San Diego in 2012 and about \$12,000 on a four-night trip to Las Vegas for six people in 2013.

The fund's executive director, John Kallianis, was among those who went to Las Vegas and San Diego. He defended the trips, saying the conferences were "rigorous" and "very well worth the expense."

The fund's general counsel, Jim O'Connell, was among those to visit New Orleans. He said the trips provide valuable education for staff members and trustees who are in charge of nearly \$1.9 billion in assets for the retirement plan and more than \$750 million for the health care trust.

"That's a lot of money," O'Connell said. "So you want the best people you can get and the most educated people you can get sitting at these meetings. You don't want people who have not been trained to be making public-policy decisions."

When asked whether they need to go cross-country for education, O'Connell said the conferences are "truly a place where you can get access to the best people and the best kind of practices."

"If you're trying to stay up to speed, you need to go to where they are having a conference, and there really is only two or three a year up to this level," he said. "Really they don't have something like this in Chicago every year."

It's worth noting at least a few CTA pension folks didn't bother taking a CTA bus or train to O'Hare and Midway airports, from where they flew. We obtained receipts showing they parked at the airfields — at taxpayer expense. Some folks also took cabs to the airport in Chicago, and to get around once they reached their conference destinations, records show.

The CTA pension plan, which provides retirement income to about 9,000 beneficiaries (CTA retirees or spouses), has a funding ratio of about 60 percent; 80 percent or higher is generally considered healthy.

CTA employees contribute roughly 10 percent of their salaries to the pension fund, while the transit agency — or, in other words, the taxpayer — contributes about 20 percent of any given employee's salary into the same pot. Investments play into how much the fund grows.

The fund's governance came into question several times over the last year when we reported that its now-former investment adviser was under a U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission investigation and that one of the CTA pension trustees was soliciting donations for a union charity from pension advisers.

### **Checking the pulse**

The CTA pension fund recently sent out a letter asking beneficiaries 65 years of age and older to confirm they are alive.

The aim: Make sure nobody's scamming the system and, therefore, taxpayers.

The letter, dated July 11, states the agency is "conducting a wellness verification of our retired participants to be certain that they are alive and competent."

The letter asks retirees to sign an affidavit affirming they're "alive and . . . able to handle [their] own affairs."

Willie Means Jr., the retirement fund official who authored the letter, told us his agency "is trying to get a handle on how many people were actually out there," but he insisted he doesn't think there's a big problem or widespread abuse.



There have been instances in other pension systems – locally and nationally – of retirees dying and relatives or others improperly continuing benefits.

Means, who's been with the CTA fund since 2006, said it's the first time this kind of letter has gone out since he's been there.

So why send it now?

No real reason, just housekeeping, said Means. Kallianis echoed that.

Either way, the letters and affidavits themselves are pretty worthless, according to Louis Kosiba, who runs the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund, a pension fund for suburban and Downstate municipal workers that's considered one of the better-run retirement systems in the state.

"We have never sent out affidavit letters to my knowledge," Kosiba said. "I don't know if that's really best practice."

Kosiba said his fund hires a company to match death records to its database on a weekly basis to ensure benefits are going to the right folks.

The CTA pension fund does the same thing – on a monthly basis, Kallianis said. The letters are intended to deal with, among other things, the possibility of someone's death not being reported, or recorded inaccurately, officials said.

The pension fund sent out roughly 6,000 letters and so far has received about 5,000 responses, Means said. The agency will keep trying to reach the remaining 1,000 people; there are no plans right now to cut off anybody's benefits, officials said.

## City Colleges Students Have New, Faster Transportation Option

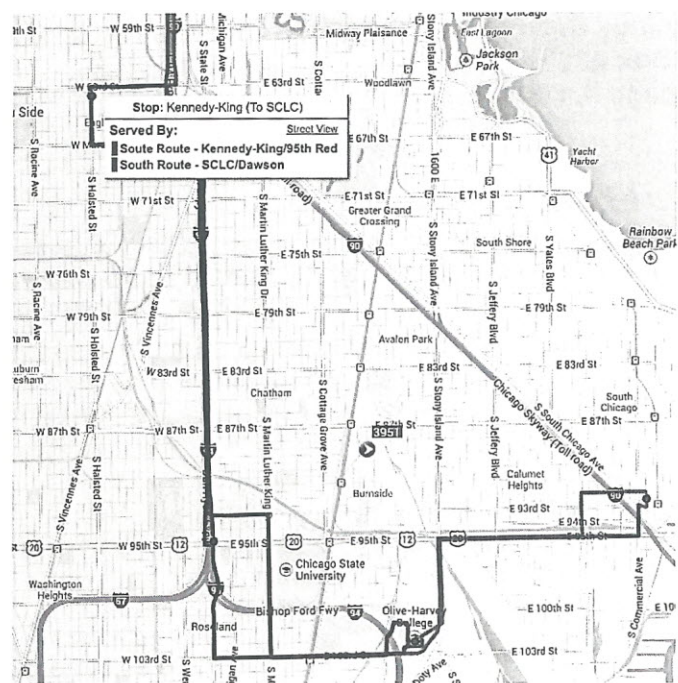
by Steven Vance

On Monday, the City Colleges of Chicago will launch four hourly shuttle bus routes to connect its many campuses to one another and to transit facilities. Students can sign up to ride the buses for free, and free onboard wifi will allow students to finish those last-minute homework assignments.

The inter-campus shuttles, according to a board of trustees ordinance will "remove a barrier to cross-registration" and "potentially reduce the use of personal vehicles." SCR Medical Transportation, which also operates paratransit vehicles for Pace, will run the shuttles through mid-2016 for up to \$3 million. Students must sign up ahead of time to use the shuttle, and then can use their contactless ID cards to board the bus.

Four routes will offer full service on weekdays and limited service on Saturdays. They will run from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. on weekdays, with breaks between 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.

The shuttles can save students time over taking Chicago Transit Authority buses and trains, especially since



getting between the colleges on CTA usually requires a transfer. We've included "transit times" in the table below that were estimated using Google Maps's transit directions.

Route	Stops	Trip time	Transit time
South	Dawson Technical Institute in Bronzeville to South Chicago Learning Center, via 95th Red	48	52-61
West	Malcolm X College to Daley College, via Western Pink and Pulaski Orange	50	77-86
North	Humboldt Park Vocational Education Center to Wright College, via Montrose Blue, California Blue, and Kimball Brown	58	49-64
North-Central	West Side Learning Center in Garfield Park to Truman College	55	58-69

The shuttles don't directly connect to Metra stations, except for the Metra Electric's 93rd-South Chicago station across from the South Chicago Learning Center.

Like CTA buses and trains, the CCC transit system has a mobile-friendly real-time shuttle tracker website.

## As New School Year Begins, CTA Reminds Students, Parents How to Get Reduced 75-Cent Bus and Train Fares on School Days

8/26/2014

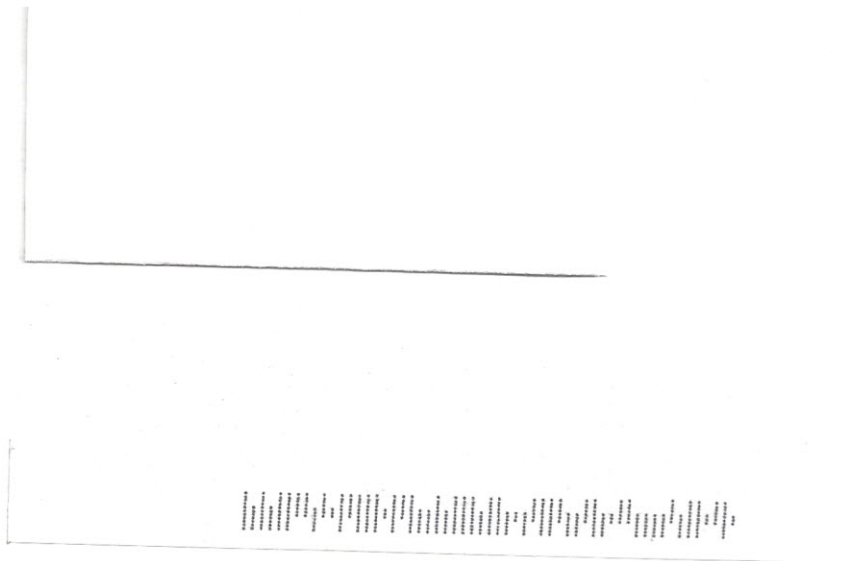
The Chicago Transit Authority today reminds students and their parents that they are eligible to receive student reduced fares of just 75 cents to ride CTA trains and



Omnibus Society of America  
PO Box A3051  
Chicago IL 60690

5 SUBURBAN IL 604

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buses on school days. To get the student rate, parents and students need to take just a few easy steps.

The 75-cent student fare is available for full-time students ages 7–20 for trips to and from regular day classes (at a public, parochial or private elementary or high school). The special fares are available Monday thru Friday, 5:30 a.m. until 8:30 p.m., on days school is in session with the use of their student Ventra card. When school is not in session, children ages 7-11 receive the reduced rate of \$1.10 on rail and \$1.00 on the buses, and younger children ride free.

The fare was lowered by 10 cents last year by Mayor Rahm Emanuel and CTA President Forrest Claypool to make transit even more affordable for Chicago families. In addition to the 75-cent fares for rides, students pay just 15 cents for up to two transfers within a two-hour window during school hours.

Last Friday, Mayor Emanuel and the CTA announced the transit agency will once again provide students with free CTA bus and train rides on the first day of school, which is Tuesday, September 2. The goal of the "First Day, Free Rides" program, which Mayor Emanuel and the CTA begin in the fall of 2011, is to promote attendance on the first day of school – which sets the tone for the rest of the school year.

As in previous school years, the 75-cent Student Reduced Fare is available with a Ventra card that must be obtained from the school where the child is registered or directly from Ventra via a special online student form available at <http://www.transitchicago.com/students/>. In order to obtain student fare cards, students should not obtain Ventra cards from vending machines or from retailers who sell Ventra:

The CTA has been working closely with Chicago Public Schools and other schools in order to ensure a seamless transition for the beginning of the new school term. These efforts include a significant outreach effort on the program that includes information for administrators on how schools and students can easily obtain new cards or renew their student discount from the previous school year.

Additionally, CTA will be distributing informational flyers at rail stations to remind parents and students about the how to obtain the student reduced fare.

The CTA recognizes it plays an important role in education, and is committed to providing affordable, reliable and safe transportation to every student rider.

On an average weekday, CTA provides more than 115,000 rides to students and roughly 25.6 million reduced student rides throughout the academic year.