



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OMNIBUS SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.

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Welcome to another issue of The Green Pennant Special, the official publication of The Omnibus Society of America.

Through this publication we hope to keep our readers informed of events happening in the transit industry in Chicago and other cities in the United States.

Visit the Omnibus Society of America website at "www.osabus.org". At osabus.org we will be posting upcoming fan trips and meetings information, as well as membership information.

Please visit our site when you have a chance and give us your opinions and comments.

• JAN/FEB MEETINGS

The January meeting of the Omnibus Society of America will be held on January 2, 2015, in the Anderson Pavilion of Swedish Covenant Hospital, 2751 W. Winona Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. The meeting will start at 7:30 pm.

Our program for the evening will be a slide presentation by member Melvin Bernero. Mel will show slides on the South Shore and east coast commuter railroads.

The February meeting of the Omnibus Society of America will be held on February 6, 2015, 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 John LeBeau.

OSA Happenings

Melvin Bernero and Vince Allen have been elected to the OSA board at our December meeting.

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.

CTA Reaches Lease Agreements with Bin 36 and Popular London Underground Snack Shop 'Grab-A-Bite'

12/10/2014

Seven new retail leases approved for spaces at agency's headquarters and Red, Blue, Green and Purple lines

The Chicago Transit Board today approved seven new concession leases to local and international businesses, including the well-known, Chicago-based Bin 36 and the popular London Underground snack shop Grab-A-Bite, continuing the agency's ongoing efforts to provide convenient food and beverage options to transit customers.

"The investments made to CTA's existing infrastructure since 2011, under the leadership of Mayor Emanuel, have led to increased rail ridership that make CTA rail stations more attractive to restaurants and retailers," said CTA Forrest Claypool. "After years of neglect, CTA retail spaces that were once undesirable and difficult to rent, are now bringing long-term value and convenience to our customers, neighbors and the overall transit system."

Best known for its seasonal menu and wine-by-the-glass pairings, Bin 36 is a full-service restaurant, bar and retail market that will be within short walking distance of the CTA's Clinton station on the Pink and Green Lines. After 15 years in its current location, the well-known restaurant will be relocating to a space at 161 N. Jefferson, located within the CTA's main office building in the West Loop.

The lease goes into effect January 1, 2015, with Bin 36 responsible for making improvements to the roughly 5,600 sq.ft. space, as well as a 2,000 sq.ft. outdoor dining area. The restaurant is expected to continue to offer retail wine and wine accessories. At a minimum, the establishment will operate from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. five days a week.

CTA riders will soon get a taste of London via Grab-A-Bite, a popular snack shop with multiple locations across London's Underground rail system. This marks Grab-a-Bite's first presence in the U.S. and its first U.S. transit agency. Grab-a-Bite will be located at the Chicago/State Red Line and Division, Western/Milwaukee and Washington Blue Line stations, where CTA riders will be provided with a variety of ready-to-go or wholesome menu food and beverage options, including fruit smoothies, cold and toasted sandwiches, pizzas, hotdogs, muffins, coffee and more.

Also approved today were leases for two new newsstand-convenience marts at the Loyola Red Line and Harlem/Lake Green Line stations.

Six of the seven leases approved today have a base-term of 10 years plus two five-year options to extend, while one concession space lease has a base-term of seven years with two five-year options. To date, a total of 54 new concessions have been added across CTA's rail system since 2011.

Revenue generated by these leases will add nearly \$323,000 annually to CTA's non-farebox revenues and nearly \$3.4 million over the course of the base-term agreements.

Mayor Emanuel Breaks Ground on New Wilson Station Reconstruction Project

12/8/2014

\$203 Million Project Will Bring New State-Of-The-Art Facility, Red-Purple Transfer Point, While Creating Jobs And Boosting Development In Uptown



Mayor Rahm Emanuel and CTA President Forrest Claypool broke ground today on the Wilson Station Reconstruction Project, which will modernize the 91-year-old stationhouse and the station's more than 100-year-old track structure. The revitalized station will serve as an economic anchor for the historic Uptown neighborhood by stimulating local business and promoting job growth.

The \$203 million project is one of the largest station projects in CTA history and is the latest in a series of Red Line modernization projects to take place since Mayor Emanuel announced plans to update the city's busiest rail line in 2011.

"The Red Line is the backbone of our transportation network, and making major investments, like the new Wilson Station, drives economic activity that will benefit the Uptown neighborhood and Chicago for years to come," Mayor Emanuel said. "In order to build the world-class transit our city needs, we must act now. By doing so, we're building and investing in our economic future and creating thousands of new, good-paying jobs."

When the Wilson project is complete in late 2017, riders will have a modern, spacious and more accessible station that will be a new transfer point for Red and Purple Line trains. The project will also relocate and reconstruct 2,200 feet of elevated tracks, signals and supporting infrastructure, eliminating slow zones and improving service reliability for customers, as well as providing a more pleasing street environment on Wilson Avenue and Broadway Street in the heart of Uptown.

The project, expected to generate more than 550 construction jobs, is the latest of several large-scale CTA

improvements planned under Mayor Emanuel's leadership.

"Chicago has the second largest mass transit system in the country and also one of the oldest. That's why I've made it a priority to ensure that the CTA has the resources it needs to maintain and modernize its railways, particularly the heavily traveled Red Line," U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) said. "The new Wilson Station will ensure that commuters in Uptown have a safe and modern station for decades to come. I look forward to working with everyone here to make our mass transit system in Chicago is the most modern, safe and efficient in the country."

The Wilson project 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. State funding supports much of the \$1 billion *Red Ahead* investment.

"A 21st century transportation infrastructure system is crucial to Illinois' economic comeback and our position as a hub of the Midwest," Governor Quinn said. "This investment in Chicago's most travelled rail line is part of our comprehensive approach to improving and expanding our rail infrastructure, driving Illinois' economy forward and creating thousands of jobs across our state."

"The Wilson Station Reconstruction Project will improve the EL's speed and efficiency on the north side of Chicago, helping thousands of residents of my district who use the station to get to work, visit family, or otherwise take advantage of the city," said Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky. "I am proud of the role played by the Illinois Congressional Delegation in helping to secure federal funding for this project. I will continue to work with my colleagues at the federal, state, and local level to support Chicago public transit."

"Rebuilding the Wilson station is a critical component to rejuvenating the Red Line," said CTA President Forrest Claypool. "A revitalized Wilson station will strengthen the historic Uptown neighborhood with an attractive, modern station that provides improved transit options and connections for CTA customers and generates new retail and related economic development for the vibrant Uptown neighborhood."

"The Wilson station renovation was the first commitment I made to the people of the 46th Ward," said Ald. James Cappleman. "This new development will be a catalyst for more economic development and jobs in Uptown, a neighborhood that has a wonderfully diverse population in need of more opportunities."

The new Wilson Station will feature contemporary architecture, including steel-framed, translucent canopies and a historic restoration of the 1923 stationhouse. There will be three entrance/exits to the station, including the accessible main station entrance on the south side of Wilson Avenue, one auxiliary entry/exit on the north side of Wilson Avenue and an

auxiliary entrance on Sunnyside Avenue, which will have ADA-compliant ramps.

The station will feature two island platforms to allow convenient cross-platform transfers between Red Line and Purple Line Express service – making Wilson the only transfer station between the Howard and Belmont stations.

Additional features and amenities of the station to enhance customer convenience and comfort will include numerous security cameras throughout the station and platforms, CTA Train Tracker displays, wider stairwells, new escalators, security cameras, additional bike parking and other improvements.

The track structure relocation and reconstruction will significantly improve the pedestrian environment on Broadway and Wilson by removing many of the unsightly and 'L' structure support columns on Wilson Avenue, Broadway Street and surrounding sidewalks, creating a more pleasant, open streetscape. The project is also expected to generate new transit-oriented business development.

Additionally, the new station will feature new public artwork from internationally acclaimed artist Cecil Balmond. The design will be created with input from the community surrounding the Wilson Station and installed once construction is complete. For more information about this project, visit transitchicago.com/Wilson.

2015 CTA Balanced Budget and 2015-2019 Capital Program Approved

11/19/2014

Current fares maintained; Service improved; Modernization programs continue

The Chicago Transit Board today unanimously approved a balanced \$1.44 billion budget for 2015 that freezes fares and improves transit service levels, while continuing historic investment in projects and programs to modernize regional transit and improve the customer transit experience.

"The Chicago Transit Board applauds this fiscally responsible 2015 budget that reflects the effective management of this agency under the leadership of CTA President Forrest Claypool and his team," said Chicago Transit Board Chairman Terry Peterson. "The Board is pleased that CTA continues to operate in a financially sound manner and still make major investments in our train and bus system, and thanks Mayor Rahm Emanuel for his leadership in recognizing the importance of transit to our region's economy."

CTA's 2015 budget expands rail service to meet growing rail ridership, expected to increase by more than 2 million rides in 2015. The agency next year will also continue its aggressive modernization plans that are improving the speed, comfort and reliability of the nation's second-largest transit system. This includes the

more than \$5 billion in system-improvement projects completed, begun or announced since 2011, including rehabilitating rail stations and building new ones, modernizing rail and bus fleets, leveraging new technology to improve the commuting experience, and bringing the agency's massive infrastructure into a state of good repair to improve reliability and safety.

"This administration has worked hard to restore this agency's fiscal health and offer a budget that, for a fourth straight year, controls spending and expenses and invests in safe, affordable and reliable transit for everyone," said CTA President Forrest Claypool. "We have replaced the days of doomsday budgets and runaway costs with responsible financial management of this agency that has created jobs, modernized our transit system, increased safety and accomplished all of these things in a financially sound manner that is good for customers and taxpayers."

The 2015 operating budget is the fourth consecutive CTA budget that preserves capital investment in the transit system without diverting capital funds to balance the operating budget, a past practice that delayed critical infrastructure projects. The operating budget is also balanced despite the challenges of higher unfunded state mandates for retiree health care, pension costs and providing free and discounted rides.

Major projects that will begin or continue in 2015 include projects that benefit customers and in several cases will boost local economic development in Chicago's neighborhoods:

- The \$240 million 95th Street Terminal project, which began in fall 2014 and will expand and upgrade the 95th/Dan Ryan bus and rail station that connects Far South Side communities to job centers throughout the region
- Continuation of the environmental review processes for both the proposed Red Line Extension from 95th Street to 130th Street and Phase One of the Red and Purple Modernization Program to modernize the Red and Purple lines
- The \$203 million reconstruction of the Wilson station, which has begun and will transform Wilson into a modern, accessible transfer station for Red and Purple Lines
- The 146th CTA rail station, the Cermak/McCormick on the Green Line, which will open in 2015, providing much-needed rapid transit access to the Near South Side and McCormick Place
- Continuation of the four-year *Your New Blue* program to upgrade the O'Hare branch of the Blue Line, benefitting the 80,000 weekday passengers who use the branch
- The \$71.2 million Ravenswood Connector project to significantly upgrade track and related

rail structure between the Chicago and Armitage stations on the elevated Brown and Purple Express lines, providing more comfortable and reliable rides for customers

- Upgrade wireless communications in CTA's subway tunnels and underground facilities to 4G technology to increase the speed and reliability of underground communications
- Station project work including the new Washington-Wabash station, Quincy (Loop) and Illinois Medical District (Blue Line) station rehabilitation
- Complete the delivery of all 714 5000-series rail cars and 300 new Nova-manufactured buses as part of the CTA's ongoing fleet modernization; receive bids for the next generation of rail cars, the 7000-series, to replace the CTA's oldest cars and reduce the fleet's average to just 10 years by 2022 from more than 25 years in 2011

The Chicago Civic Federation has given its support to the proposed budget, noting the "significant fiscal turnaround for the CTA in its past three budget cycles. The agency is working under a more sustainable labor agreement, no longer relies heavily on one-time revenue sources and has balanced its budget for the past three years without increasing base fare rates."

Total ridership on the CTA is expected to grow in 2015 from this year to increase to 522.5 million in 2015, the eighth consecutive year of ridership exceeding a half-billion rides and the second-largest ridership of all public transit agencies in the country. The projected ridership represents an increase of 0.7 percent from 2014's expected total ridership.

CTA Expands Concessions Offerings at Rail Stations, Including Locally Owned

11/19/2014

Three new concessions approved for Red, Yellow lines to enhance customer experience

The CTA is adding a dash of spice and fresh, homemade Mexican cuisine to its offerings with the addition of Flaco's Tacos to its growing list of rail station concessions. The agreement with the local taqueria chain is one of three long-term agreements approved by the Chicago Transit Board today for concessions spaces along the Red and Yellow lines.

Customers and neighbors of the Granville Red Line station will soon enjoy fresh, homemade Mexican food with the opening of Chicago's fourth Flaco's Tacos location. The Chicago-based restaurant will lease the concession and outdoor patio space located at 1116-1120 W. Granville Ave., adjacent to the Granville Red Line station. The close proximity to environmentally friendly and affordable public transit services

complements the food purveyor's already "green" efforts of using bio-degradable or recyclable packaging, recycling its used vegetable oil and use of alternative fuels, such as bicycle delivery.

Also approved today was a long-term lease for the concession space at the Skokie Yellow line station, which has been vacant since 2011 when Greyhound closed its operations at that location, will soon feature a new Dunkin Donuts. A third lease was awarded to an existing Dunkin Donuts vendor that has been a long-term tenant at the Loyola Red Line.

"The CTA continues to add new, unique concession offerings for the convenience of our customers," said CTA President Forrest Claypool. "We have also made a priority to seek long-term leases to maximize revenue to support agency operations. The addition of these new vendors is mutually beneficial to customers, CTA, the tenant and the communities they serve."

The three leases have a base-term of 10 years plus two five-year options and to the total of 50 new concessions that have been added across CTA's rail system since 2011. Annual revenue generated by these lease will add nearly \$82,000 to CTA's non-farebox revenues and nearly \$936,000 over the course of the lease terms.

CTA Targets Fraudulent Use of Free, Reduced-Fare Cards

11/12/2014

Card-verification missions at rail stations, card audit aim to ensure cards are being used by authorized users; more than 1,800 improperly used cards collected

The CTA today announced that it is targeting the fraudulent use of free and reduced-fare cards, as part of a comprehensive, ongoing effort the agency has undertaken to analyze the steady rise over the past year in the number of free and reduced-fare rides taken on CTA trains and buses.

Last month the CTA began performing card-verification efforts at rail stations throughout the city and suburbs, verifying that individuals using any type of free or reduced-fare card were the cardholder listed on the face of the card. Regulations for free and reduced-fare programs—which include seniors, persons with disabilities, UPass, student fares and other categories—stipulate that those cards can only be used by the individual identified on the card, and can't be transferred.

Since October 2014, the CTA has collected more than 1,800 free and reduced-fare cards during the card-verification efforts. It estimates that the lost potential annualized revenue from the fraudulent use of those cards at \$2.8 million.

Separately, the CTA is conducting an audit of free and reduced-fare card usage to better understand card use, and ensure that individuals who qualify for free and reduced-fare rides are actually the ones benefitting. The

audit expands upon the agency's regular monitoring of special fare programs, including free- and reduced-fare rides.

The results of the recent CTA analysis found that of approximately 600,000 RTA free, reduced-fare and paratransit cards, slightly more than one percent are being used at a frequency far above the typical average for similar cards. The approximately one percent of cards CTA identified in the audit were used 10 or more times a day, at least twice in a 7-day period.

"Free and reduced-fare rides are intended for seniors, persons with disabilities and others who rightfully qualify for these important programs," said CTA President Forrest Claypool. "We take any incident of fraud seriously and are taking steps to protect innocent customers from being taken advantage of, as well as protecting all other fare-paying customers from having to subsidize improper use of these programs."

The CTA is also working closely with the RTA to continue education efforts for free and reduced-fare ride customers, including reminding them that their cards are for their use only and that they should be sure to store them in a safe place and not share them.

The CTA provides more than \$100 million annually of state-mandated free rides and federally mandated reduced-fare rides, and receives only a small percentage of reimbursement from the state; last year the total was around \$28 million. The remainder is paid for from the CTA's annual operating budget.

The CTA initiated its audit following a 20 percent spike in free rides so far this year, which translates into an annual increase of more than 8.6 million free rides.

ConnDOT: CTfastrak will serve much more than the New Britain to Hartford market

Patrick Raycraft/The Hartford Courant

By Don Stacom

MANCHESTER — The CTfastrak busway runs from Hartford to New Britain, but it's not just a "west of the river" service, state Transportation Commissioner James Redeker told an audience of Manchester-region business owners Thursday.

Manchester will part of CT Transit's new route 121, which will run about half the length of the busway and provide connections to UConn Health Center in Farmington and Manchester Community College.

Redeker stressed that the purpose of the busway is far more than simply connecting New Britain and Hartford, and instead is intended as part of a larger mass transit network serving a large part of the state. In the years ahead, the state Department of Transportation envisions more rapid transit bus routes under the CTfastrak brand.

"I'd like to have CTfastrak East, CTfastrak West and CTfastrak North," Redeker told the Greater Manchester

Chamber of Commerce during a presentation on what the busway means to communities east of the Connecticut River.

The Capitol Region Council of Governments has been exploring additional corridors for bus rapid transit for years as a way to relieve the daily gridlock in and out of Hartford.

DOT engineers have said new bus rapid transit lines could use existing HOV lanes on interstates, avoiding massive new construction similar to the 9.4-mile busway.

The plan for bus route 121 is to begin at the UConn Health Center, follow local roads to the Cedar Street station of CTfastrak in Newington, and then run on the bus-only highway as far as the Sigourney Street station. The 121 buses would take Capitol, Main and Market streets through Hartford to reach I-84, then use I-84 eastbound's HOV lane to get to the Manchester park-and-ride lot and Manchester Community College.

Students and staff at the college are excited at the prospect of a reliable public transit link to Hartford and beyond, said Michael LaPorte, who wrote about CTfastrak last month for Manchester Community College's student newspaper, The Live Wire. There's currently a conventional bus link, but the service is infrequent, the route ends in downtown Hartford and the buses don't run in the weeks between semesters, LaPorte said.

Manchester Mayor Jay Moran said Vernon, East Hartford, South Windsor and Manchester all hope for improved mass transit connections, and he said route 121 is a good start.

Bus rapid transit systems in other states and countries range from dedicated busways to bus-only lanes on city streets. The goal typically is to offer service that's frequent, reliable and as fast or faster than driving.

One member of the audience asked about bus service to Bradley International Airport. Redeker asked how many people had ridden — or even heard of — the Bradley Flyer route that already exists; the response was low. Redeker said part of the DOT's challenge is to do a better job of promoting and marketing that service and others.

RIPTA Announces January Reopening of Kennedy Plaza Transit Hub in Downtown Providence

The Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) will welcome passengers back to the newly-renovated Kennedy Plaza transit hub on Saturday, January 17, officials announced Tuesday.

The plaza has been closed since the summer as RIPTA and the City of Providence worked to enhance the safety and aesthetics of the plaza located in front of Providence City Hall. The enhancements — which include new lighting, improved signage and trees — will make it safer and easier for passengers to make their bus connections

while also creating a pedestrian-friendly plaza in downtown Providence.

RIPTA staff will be reaching out to riders and distributing information on the new bus stop locations between now and the January reopening.

While some earlier projections had targeted late fall for the plaza reopening, the work took longer than initially expected and there were also some design modifications made during the process.

"When passengers and pedestrians see the new plaza, we think that they'll feel it was worth the wait," said Barbara Polichetti, Director of Public Affairs for RIPTA. "What once was a congested traffic area is now a plaza with trees, easy-to-read signs, and plenty of room for bus passengers and pedestrians alike," she said. "We really appreciate the patience of our riders, the public and surrounding businesses."

Initial funding for the project came from approximately \$1.7 million in bond money that the City of Providence had for its downtown circulator plan, plus an estimated \$700,000 from a federal "Bus Livability" grant obtained by RIPTA.

It has been more than a decade since major changes have been made to Kennedy Plaza, and the impetus for the current project came in part from the City and other downtown partners' vision for the greater Kennedy Plaza area.

Under Mayor Angel Taveras' leadership, the city wanted to make the plaza more appealing and also capitalize on its key location in the heart of Providence, adjacent to City Hall and Burnside Park.

"The transformation of Kennedy Plaza into a revitalized public square will benefit all those who visit, live and work in our city," said Mayor Taveras. "The City of Providence sees this new, public space as essential to creating a more vibrant city, and we look forward to welcoming back RIPTA riders in the new year."

The plaza improvements involved removing two narrow bus lanes and repaving the area as a contiguous pedestrian space, installing new lighting and new bus shelters and planting Honey Locust and Valley Forge American Elm trees.

New passenger amenities include 13 three-sided shelters which will better shield waiting riders from inclement weather. Large, lighted "lollipop" signs will make it easy for passengers to find their bus stops and they will be augmented by other signs and route maps.

There is upgraded security with the reconfiguration of the network of cameras that RIPTA maintains in the area. The Authority will also improve maintenance of the busy location and has plans to extend the hours of its customer service center there.

Other enhancements for RIPTA riders will include the installation of automated ticket vending machines and the use of technology to track buses in real time so that

passengers will be able to see the actual arrival and departure times posted on digital boards at the plaza.

Don Rhodes, volunteer president of the RIPTA Riders Alliance and a passenger for more than 25 years, said that the group was disappointed by the delayed opening, but "we understand the need to be sure that the project is completed correctly, especially in regard to passenger shelters."

Polichetti noted that with RIPTA providing more than 20 million passenger trips statewide last year, the plaza had become crowded and the new design gives riders more room and makes using the transit hub an overall better experience.

"We're very excited for our passengers," Polichetti said. "It will be easier for them to find their bus stops and they will have more room on a safe pedestrian plaza. We're also looking forward to bringing them more improvements in the state's transit infrastructure in the future, particularly now that voters have approved a \$35 million bond which will allow us to work on other locations."

Coach Tours celebrates 30th anniversary, adds new MCI® D4505

DES PLAINES, IL — December 19, 2014 — Renowned for a stellar safety record, enviable fleet of well-maintained coaches and industry-involved management team, Coach Tours, Brookfield, Connecticut, is marking its 30th anniversary. At the same time, the charter company has taken delivery of a new MCI D4505 coach, the model it has relied on for much of its history.



"We like the D-model's reliability factor; it's a nicely built coach that runs very well," said Ira Steinberg, Coach Tours president. "The same model's parts commonality enables us to reduce aftermarket parts inventory, saving about 20 percent in parts stock, and simplifies maintenance and repair for our mechanics."

Built with legendary MCI quality to deliver a unique combination of dependability and passenger comfort, the MCI D4505 is considered the industry workhorse, consistently delivering low-cost, high-quality performance. The new D4505 comes with a redesigned parcel rack; Electronic Stability Control; and tire monitoring and fire suppression systems.

Serving the greater northeastern U.S. with 20 MCI D-Series coaches, Coach Tours caters to a client list that includes prominent corporations as well as professional and college sports teams, and the U.S. Military. Such is Coach Tours' reputation that other operators count on the company when they need additional coaches. "We know we can send our coaches anywhere without failure or an incident," said Steinberg. This type of confidence comes from a top-five safety record, along with the owners' combined experience and skill in operations and fleet maintenance.

When it comes to safety, Coach Tours not only complies with industry regulations, it raises the bar. For example, two drivers are assigned to a coach if travel is required from 11:00 p.m. through 6:00 a.m. All drivers must get a solid eight hours of sleep between shifts, with consideration given to travel times from home and back.

In addition to Steinberg, Coach Tours' leadership team includes Michael Neustadt and Kelli Simmons. Together, they have weathered deregulation, 9-11 and a 2008 economic downturn. And through it all, Coach Tours has continued to prosper because of its leadership. Steinberg makes it a point to stay on top of industry trends by attending trade shows and staying in touch with passenger needs by taking the occasional turn behind the wheel. Neustadt stays active within the industry as a UMA (United Motorcoach Association) board member.

Simmons heads up the company's Group Tour division and is responsible for corporate office operations. The company's maintenance facility, capable of heavy-duty repair, has close working relationships with industry suppliers including Bergen Upholstery and the MCI Service Center in Blackwood, New Jersey. Its leadership also understands that a key to its success has been the dedication and expertise of its employees, many with decades of experience, all dedicated to providing exceptional value and care to its long-standing customers.

Said Steinberg, "Our goals have always been to keep our operating costs low, while offering our customers the highest safety record and a fair price to keep them coming back." Learn more at www.coachtour.com.

Delaware Express puts first Setra into luxury service

DES PLAINES, IL — December 18, 2014 — Earlier this fall, Delaware Express took its recently purchased Setra TopClass S 417 on a tour to Cape Cod. "Everyone was seriously raving about it," said President Gerry Frenze, who was aboard, but keeping a low profile. "A veteran cruise line director got on board and said it was the nicest coach she had seen all season. Several drivers from other companies also stepped onboard to see what the hype was about and were equally impressed."

aves aren't uncommon for the Newark-based company, which also runs a fleet of about 24 MCI coaches plus other vehicles for a total fleet of 75. But



Delaware Express' first-ever Setra is helping to set it even farther apart from competitors. Offering a level of luxury that hasn't been seen in the market before, the 2014 Setra S 417 earns its kudos with its distinctive European styling, German engineering and wealth of custom-tailored options. Frenze optioned his with a glass roof, custom seating, tables and several other upgrades — luxuries he credits with helping him win a three-year contract with a major-league sports team. Says Frenze, "The Setra S 417 is a real deal-closer."

Powered by a Mercedes-Benz BlueTec engine, the Daimler-built S 417 offers safety features including an Electronic Stability Program, front collision guard, all-wheel disc brakes, ABA braking with anti-slip control, front cornering lights, rain-sensing windshield wipers and automatic-on exterior lights. Passengers enjoy many onboard amenities, from Setra-designed seats to a top entertainment package.

Frenze started his business in the early 1980s, fresh out of the University of Delaware, where, as a student, he was working the accounts payable department. He noticed how much the university was paying for bus service, and he also noticed there was an opportunity with the deregulation of the industry. He started with airport shuttle vehicles and town cars, adding coach tours only after 9/11 paid his airport business a direct hit. Delaware Express is a member of UMA and ABA. Its website is www.delexpress.com.

Young leader positions Clark Travel for the digital age; takes delivery of six MCI® J4500 coaches

DES PLAINES, IL — November 21, 2014 — Victoria Clark, CEO of Clark Travel, has been associated with the Austin-based tour and charter company all her life. Today, Clark at 26, has found herself in charge, as the third-generation to lead the transportation business "far earlier than I planned to," but has stepped up to the challenge with a fresh look at technology, an appreciation for state-of-the-art coaches and her future populations of riders.

"My father passed away in 2008, I lost my grandfather last spring and my grandmother this year," explains Clark, who leads the company started by her grandparents Morris and Margaret Clark in 1981. Since joining the family business six years ago, Victoria Clark has computerized the company, made extensive use of social media and optimized the way Clark Travel uses its fleet of 25 motor coaches. The company supplies private

charters, airport transfers, convention transportation and shuttles and tours.



The company's newest MCI J4500 coaches are fully equipped with Wi-Fi, and outlets at every seat "that our customers really love," says Clark. She's also using social media for two specific purposes — to grow the business and to grow the next generation of leadership at the company.

"The motor coach industry isn't necessarily a natural career choice for a lot of people in their 20s, but I'd like to create a culture that establishes this as an admirable job for young people and a career with a solid future," says Clark. "Most people in this business don't have to be stuck in an office everyday and I think that has some real appeal for people in my age group."

Clark is relying on her company's Facebook page to share news about the carrier and spread the word of job openings.

She also resolves to keep a newer fleet with trade-ins every four years that's continually operating at top utilization. "In my 15 years I've been around the business, I've seen companies come in and go out so quickly, and I think for many it comes down to utilization issues within their fleet," she explained, noting that she and her grandfather discussed bringing their then-level of 30 coaches down to 25 to get daily utilization numbers up, have newer coaches available for lengthier trips and deal with vehicle shortages through relationships with competitors. "You make money only when coaches are on the road," Clark added.

At the same time, Clark is ramping up large-scale transportation services for commercial clients, managing logistics and coach availability for events and employer use.

Clark also says operators have a role in educating younger riders to the advantages of coach travel. "We're doing more with commuting contracts with equipment that keeps riders connected to the Internet so they can work," Clark explains. "The older generation might be more of a tour and leisure-travel audience, but younger travelers are looking at commuter and entertainment

travel in a whole new way and we want to be in front of that."

In the meantime, Clark has spent a lot of time migrating the business over to new technology. "It has been a bit of a generation gap. I came up in a pen and paper business and now we've migrated to computers and our people have been great," she said. She recently swapped out the team's old flip-phones for smartphones, "which has made us more productive. Our drivers use [the smartphones] for routing and for finding cheaper diesel prices. It's made a big difference." Learn more at www.clarktravel.net.

Tiger Tours roars ahead with new high-spec MCI® J4500

DES PLAINES, IL — October 22, 2014 — Tiger Tours, Olyphant, Pennsylvania, has taken delivery of a decked-out MCI J4500, building on a business that is earning its stripes every day. The new J4500 features such upscale extras as 110-volt outlets at every seat, chrome mirrors with cameras, wood-grain trim and magazine racks.



"We're really happy with it," says Bob Johnson, who owns the company with partner Carl Straka. "It's got great curb appeal. This is the most amenity-filled coach we've purchased." The J4500 also offers a reputation for great handling and reliability. Standard features on the MCI J4500, the industry's top seller, include three-point passenger seatbelts, Electronic Stability Control, tire monitoring and a fire detection and suppression system. Combining luxury and hard-working practicality is something that Johnson knows a bit about — a car buff, he's been known to drive up in his Rolls Royce, only to hop out and wash a bus.

Tiger Tours, which is named for the owners' appreciation of the Bengal tiger, got its start in 1989, when Johnson and Straka, both of whom had driven for other companies, decided to use their experience to start a door-to-door van service for local bingo halls. Thanks in large part to the owners' attention to detail and customer service, it didn't take long for the young company to attract other clients, and in 2004 began building a motor-coach fleet.

By 2010, the company had grown enough for the owners to build a 6,400-square-foot garage and maintenance facility with four service bays. Currently, the company has six coaches, one school bus, about 15 employees and a thriving charter business serving area colleges and other clients with trips to New York City, area casinos and other attractions.

Governor Cuomo Announces Start of Production of New MTA Buses in Expanded Prevost Facility in Plattsburgh

December 23, 2014

PLATTSBURGH, NY — Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced that Prevost, a manufacturing company specializing in touring coach and bus assembly, has opened a new production line in its expanded Plattsburgh facility. This production line is Prevost's first in the United States.



The \$26 million expansion project is tied to a Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) award of \$164 million to build 300 Commuter Over the Road Buses. Once complete, the expansion project will create more than 50 new jobs at the Plattsburgh facility. Combined with a \$195 million MTA contract for 414 Nova Bus buses for the MTA's New York City Transit, the number of employees at the facility will grow to more than 250 people.

"Producing MTA buses in the North Country is a great way to boost New York's in-state manufacturing industry while increasing the upstate-downstate market," Governor Cuomo said. "This project will create and keep jobs in the State, boost economic development, and improve transportation. With the start of production, we are uniting different New York State markets to serve our growing business and transportation needs."

Prevost has invested \$26 million in its Plattsburgh facility to undergo a 10,000 square foot expansion, which will accommodate an assembly production line. The first Prevost vehicles have already been rolled off the line earlier this month.

Nova Bus, Prevost's sister company, will deliver 414 local buses to MTA New York City Transit, with the potential of providing up to 700 additional vehicles. This is the largest single order for buses ever made by MTA New York City Transit to Nova Bus since it began manufacturing transit buses for the MTA in Plattsburgh in 2009. It follows the introduction of a 90-vehicle test fleet of similar buses in 2011. The new buses are scheduled to be delivered between mid-2015 and mid-2016.

Both Prevost and Nova Bus are owned by the Volvo Group.

Empire State Development, New York's economic development agency, provided \$200,000 in grants for the new assembly line in support of the new jobs that it will create.

Gaétan Bolduc, Prevost President said, "As a global leader in the motorcoach industry, we are extremely proud that our relentless pursuit of excellence leads us in this last American market segment. This first assembly line in the United States will allow us to increase the company's competitive position."

MTA Chairman and CEO Thomas F. Prendergast said, "The MTA is by far the largest bus operator in North America, and we're glad to bring jobs and business to the North Country at the same time we're bringing new state-of-the-art buses to more than 2.5 million bus customers every day. The MTA Capital Program has been an important driver for the North Country economy, and the hard work of everyone in these plants will benefit everyone who relies on our bus service."

Empire State Development President, CEO & Commissioner Kenneth Adams said, "Today, thanks to Governor Cuomo's leadership, globally-recognized companies such as Prevost and Nova Bus have increased their workforce and overall potential for future growth. As a result of the expansion project, Prevost is better positioned to meet the needs of its major customers such as the MTA and compete in the global marketplace, and the local economy benefits."

"We are very pleased that New York City Transit has renewed its confidence in our company. As we are celebrating our 5th anniversary in Plattsburgh this year, renewing our partnership with NYC Transit is a welcome opportunity to strengthen our presence in the US," said Mr. Jean-Pierre Baracat, President of Nova Bus.

Senator Betty Little said, "The facility expansion and creation of new jobs is welcomed news for our region. The New York City region will benefit, too, with the addition of high-quality buses to the MTA fleet that will serve customers well for many years ahead. This is a great private and public, upstate and downstate partnership with much of the credit going to this company and its workers who make a wonderful transportation product here in Plattsburgh."

Assemblywoman Janet Duprey said, "As I was driving in Plattsburgh the other day, I met a Prevost bus being taken on a test drive. It is a beautiful bus that will surely serve the MTA riders well. This public-private partnership is all the more special as these buses are built in Plattsburgh by North Country workers to provide comfortable, state-of-the-art bus transportation for New York City riders."

Town Supervisor Bernie Bassett said, "The successful Prevost expansion project in the Town of Plattsburgh is exciting news for the local economy. The campus is also home to Nova Bus, another leader in the industry. The

success of Nova and Prevost validates the support of the Governor's Office and the relationship with upstate leaders."

Mayor of Plattsburgh James Calnon said, "We are pleased that Prevost's expansion is nearly complete and that production on hundreds of new MTA buses are in full swing. The economic activity that is resulting from this project will benefit not only the Plattsburgh community, but the entire North Country region. I thank Governor Cuomo, Empire State Development, the MTA, Prevost/Nova Bus and all of the state and local officials for coming together to make this happen."

County Legislature Chairman Samuel R. Dyer said, "With Prevost moving into the U.S. market and opening its first production line in Clinton County, the company will not only be better able to compete, but its expansion will also strengthen the North Country's role as a leader in the transportation industry and create dozens of new jobs. We applaud the Governor for supporting this project and look forward to Upstate produced transit buses being delivered downstate in the new year."

Garry Douglas, Co-Chair of the North Country Regional Economic Development Council and President of the North Country Chamber of Commerce, said, "The completion of the new space for Prevost's U.S. motor coach assembly operation in Plattsburgh is another milestone for the North Country. It represents another success in the development of our growing transportation equipment cluster, as well as another success in attracting and hosting U.S. operations for Canadian and international companies. Our thanks to Governor Cuomo for his support all along the way, to the MTA for their confidence in the buses now being produced in New York by both Nova and Prevost, and to Volvo and Nova for their economic partnership. Onward and upward!"

Tony Collins, Co-Chair of the North Country Regional Economic Development Council and President of Clarkson University, said "Through Governor Cuomo's regional-based approach to establishing economic development priorities, we have been well positioned to support the transit equipment manufacturers in the North Country and help them take advantage of national trends towards increased public transportation. The North Country is energizing the economic renaissance of New York State's small cities and rural communities by spurring growth in transit firms like Prevost as well as biotech, energy and manufacturing industries. Coupled with the assets the North Country has in higher education and job skills training initiatives, these types of private-public investments buoy future growth."

Indian Trails Launches New Fleet of Eco-Friendly Michigan Flyer Buses

December 01, 2014

STE-CLAIRE, Quebec — Michigan Flyer is putting a brand new fleet of seven luxury motorcoaches on the road this month, representing a \$3.8 million investment

by parent company, Indian Trails, Inc. "We invested in a new fleet with high-end safety, comfort, eco-friendly features because of our commitment to our customers and our communities," said Indian Trails and Michigan Flyer CEO Gordon Mackay. "Since 2012, the number of passengers who've rewarded Michigan Flyer-AirRide with their business has doubled from 90,000 a year to more than 180,000."



The new fleet—all state-of-the-art 2015 Prevost H3-45 coaches—is equipped with technology that reduces exhaust pollutants to near zero. In addition, motorcoaches like these achieve about 206 passenger miles per gallon on average, and have the potential to remove 50-55 automobiles from the highway, further reducing air pollution and traffic congestion.

Safety features include an electronic stability system that enables drivers to avoid danger on slippery roads; an engine fire-detection and suppression system; two GPS systems; and a tire pressure monitoring system. All the coaches are equipped with three-point retractable seatbelts for passengers; ADA-compliant wheelchair lifts, and a large under-floor luggage compartment.

As for comfort, the new coaches offer deluxe, ergonomic seating with leather headrests and ample legroom; individual climate controls, reading lamps and cup holders; tinted, panoramic side windows; 110-volt AC outlets at each seat for charging mobile devices; free WiFi; on-board lavatories; and enclosed, overhead parcel racks.

"The rapid growth of Michigan Flyer-AirRide is due mainly to two factors," said Indian Trails VP Chad Cushman. "First, passengers love the service because it enables them to ride in comfort, avoid traffic, stay productive en route, save money, and help protect the environment. Second, we're now delivering what they've wanted for many years—the convenience of near-hourly roundtrips between East Lansing, Ann Arbor, and Detroit Metro Airport every day between early morning and late evening."

A big first step toward greater frequency was the formation of a public-private partnership with the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority ("TheRide") in February 2012. This increased daily roundtrips from eight to 13 on the Ann Arbor-Detroit Metro Airport segment of Michigan Flyer's route, which the company operates for as "AirRide" on behalf of TheRide. It's been

very popular, and no local property taxes go to support AirRide.

Then, last November, Michigan Flyer increased daily roundtrips from eight to 12 on the East Lansing-Ann Arbor segment of its route to and from Detroit Metro Airport. A one-year, one-time grant of \$600,000 from the Federal Highway Administration helped cover start-up costs for the new runs, which are now self-supporting.

Currently celebrating its eighth anniversary, Michigan Flyer has carried nearly 700,000 passengers since its inaugural trips in November 2006. Besides connecting the Greater Lansing and Ann Arbor regions with one another—and with the world via Detroit Metro Airport—Michigan Flyer-AirRide brings some 50,000 out-of-state visitors a year to mid-Michigan, generating millions of dollars in local economic benefit.

NFTA: First LFS Natural Gas bus partnership in the United States for Nova Bus

Nova Bus has confirmed an \$11 million contract with Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) for 20 LFS Natural Gas buses, with options for up to 166 buses over the following 5 years. Buses will run in the streets of the Buffalo Niagara region starting in early 2016.

NFTA plans to use the new Nova LFS Natural Gas to replace vehicles that were purchased between 1996 and 2000 and have exceeded their useful lives. The Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority oversees public transportation in Erie and Niagara counties in New York State and contributes to quality of life improvements in the Buffalo Niagara region, such as smart mobility.

"Renewing our partnership with NFTA is a welcome opportunity to strengthen our presence in the State of New York," said Jean-Pierre Baracat, President of Nova Bus. "Nova Bus is celebrating the fifth anniversary of its Plattsburgh plant this year and we are thrilled to sign a new contract with fellow New Yorkers NFTA," he added.

The buses will be assembled in New York State and meet Buy America requirements. Nova Bus and the Volvo Group rely on a network of more than 350 component suppliers in the United States, including 47 in New York State alone.

Kimberley A. Minkel, NFTA Executive Director said, "We are very much looking forward to the arrival of our CNG buses as part of our continuing Going Green initiative. They will substantially reduce our carbon footprint and provide welcome operating efficiencies for our Metro fleet."

NFTA's new Nova LFS Natural Gas buses are built on the same proven and reliable low-floor platform as the Nova Bus vehicles NFTA has used since 2000. The structural integrity of our single platform, built from

reliable American-made stainless steel, maximizes drivers' and passengers' safety.

The brand new Nova LFS Natural Gas buses integrate the latest in natural gas technology. Combined with our Nova eCooling Smart Technology, these vehicles score high with fuel savings and define a new generation of natural gas powered buses. They emit substantially lower greenhouse gases than diesel-powered buses, thanks to simplified exhaust aftertreatment. "Nova Bus now has different types of propulsion to help business partners improve their carbon footprint and the urban environment of their communities in budget-friendly fashion," said Jean-Pierre Baracat, President of Nova Bus.

The Nova LFS Natural Gas buses come equipped with the latest Nova eCooling system. This proprietary, built-in electric engine cooling technology marks a step towards greener efficiency. It significantly reduces fuel consumption, greenhouse gas emissions and life cycle costs.

The new vehicles also feature an advanced hePEX tubing system designed to replace the traditional copper tubes of heating systems. HePEX tubes and connectors have been widely used in Volvo buses and trucks for years. They reduce vehicle weight and simplify maintenance since there is no welding or bonding involved. Buses also feature a rooftop catwalk, designed to facilitate maintenance and inspection.

A new partnership with Metrolinx strengthens Nova Bus' fast growing position in Ontario

Nova Bus is proud to announce a new partnership with Metrolinx, who coordinates transit vehicle purchasing initiatives for 13 municipalities in Ontario. The agreement includes 27 40 footer buses, with deliveries between 2015 and 2017, for a total value of \$11.4 million and 15 articulated buses for a total value of \$10 million. In addition, there is an option to reach up to 188 buses representing an order value of \$80 million.

"Nova Bus strengthens its position in Ontario with the signing of this major contract. Once again, we demonstrated our competitiveness and showed we best meet public transit needs. Our team looks forward to building a long-lasting business relationship with Metrolinx and is eager to see these new buses rolling in Ontario," said Jean-Pierre Baracat, President of Nova Bus.

The joint procurement includes 27 buses with deliveries scheduled to start in 2015. In addition there is an option to reach up to 188 40 footer buses to meet demand for future orders until 2017. Since vehicle specifications vary greatly from one city to another, the Metrolinx-Nova Bus agreement comprises various types of propulsion technologies such as clean diesel, diesel-electric hybrid and compressed natural gas.

Omnibus Society of America
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The 13 participating municipalities are Barrie, Burlington, Durham Region, Hamilton, Kingston, Milton, North Bay, Oakville, Sarnia, St. Catharines, Welland, Windsor and York Region. Nova Bus is proud to establish relationships with 9 new clients, given that Nova Bus has previously delivered buses to Durham Region, Hamilton, Windsor and York Region. More than ever, Nova Bus is well established in the province, serving a total of 31 transit authorities across Ontario.

Pace now serves Bulls and Blackhawks games and other events at the United Center

The Bulls and Blackhawks brought championships to Chicagoland, so it's only fair that Pace brings the residents of Chicagoland to Bulls and Blackhawks games and other events at the United Center.

Three new express routes comprising the Madison Stadium Express shuttle fans from free Pace Park-n-Ride lots in Schaumburg, Buffalo Grove, Bolingbrook and Burr Ridge on select weekend dates through April 11.

Route 285 provides direct service between the United Center and the Pace Northwest Transportation Center in Schaumburg. Route 286 operates to/from the Pace Park-n-Ride adjacent to the Buffalo Grove Metra Station, and Route 287 serves the United Center from Pace Park-n-Rides in Bolingbrook and Burr Ridge.

In addition to Bulls and Blackhawks games, events served include concerts and family-oriented performances. Please check the service schedule for details.

Fares are \$4.00 per rider in each direction, payable on board the bus using cash (exact fare required) or Ventra Cards and contactless debit or credit cards. Reduced and free fares are available to eligible customers.