



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OMNIBUS SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.

MAY-JUNE 2018

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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.

• MAY/JUNE MEETINGS

The May meeting of the Omnibus Society of America will be held on May 4, 2017, in the Anderson Pavilion of Swedish Covenant Hospital, 2751 W. Winona Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. The meeting will start at 7:00 pm.

Our program for the evening will be presented by John LeBeau on trolley coaches,

The June meeting of the Omnibus Society of America will be held on June 2, 2017, in the Anderson Pavilion of Swedish Covenant Hospital. The meeting will start at 7:00 pm.

Our June meeting has not been finalized as of yet. Information to follow at May meeting

Bigger, Bolder, Better: CTA Launches Redesigned, Browser-friendly Web Site

April 3, 2018 09:55 AM

The first complete refresh in ten years gives users a fresher, more modern design

The Chicago Transit Authority today launched a major upgrade to its transitchicago.com web site. The easier-to-navigate, more mobile-friendly design offers content and features that put commuters on the fast track to information they need to get them where they want to go.

The web site features a brighter, more open layout, with useful tools that are more adaptable to all screens – whether you're using a desktop, laptop, tablet or mobile device. The changes make the site easier and more fun to browse on all devices, while continuing to showcase the links you need to navigate the system and the city faster and more efficiently.

New accessibility features help people with visual impairments use our web site with greater ease. Additional

enhancements to transitchicago.com, meant to improve the customer's experience, include:

Improved navigation and start page: This makes transitchicago.com simpler and more convenient to use.

Better search functions: It is now easier and faster to locate the information you want, plus we'll be able to refine these functions as we receive feedback from users.

Improved elevator status visibility: If you need or prefer to use a station with an elevator, this will give you the status updates you need to better plan your trip.

Trip planning: Now, it's front and center on the homepage and showcased in a way that's easier to find and quicker to use.

Travel info: This all-in-one section now contains some of the information you use most often – maps, schedules, service alerts, lost & found, and other travel help.

While we've worked to improve the functionality of the web site, some popular, frequently used elements have not changed, including:

Quick links: Finding the most-visited pages (maps, schedules, fare info) are still just one click away from just about anywhere on the site.

System status updates: Service information continues to be found on most pages, so you can quickly plan or adjust your trip.

Easy-to-find, easy-to read service information: Get route and station information in just a couple of clicks.

The new web site design will allow CTA to continually improve, upgrade and create more engaging, compelling content, and more timely, reliable information and updates to help customers more efficiently use one of the world's top transit systems.

The web site upgrade is just one of many projects under way to improve the customer experience, as Mayor Rahm Emanuel and CTA continue to modernize and improve CTA rail and bus service. Since 2011, the CTA has completed, begun or announced more than \$8 billion in modernization projects, ranging from new and completely rebuilt rail stations, new buses and railcars and technology enhancements that include 4G wireless communications in all CTA subways, a Ventra fare payment app and expansion of CTA Bus and Train Tracker.

Pace and IDOT partner offer Bus on Shoulder on Edens (I-94)

Pace launched bus-on-shoulder operations on the Edens (I-94) Expressway on April 9, 2018. Two existing routes—620 (which connects the CTA Dempster Station in Skokie and Allstate's Northbrook campus) and 626 (which connects the CTA Dempster Station in Skokie and various commercial and business centers in Northbrook, Deerfield, Riverwoods, Buffalo Grove, and Lincolnshire)—are the first to use the shoulder in this corridor.

Since Pace introduced shoulder riding on I-55 in late 2011, on-time performance for routes on the corridor has improved dramatically, from about 65% to over 90%. Ridership has increased more than 600% in the corridor, proving that reliability plays a significant role in attracting and retaining riders. While ridership may not increase at that same rate on the Edens, Pace does expect to see ridership growth and improved schedule reliability. This service improvement will greatly enhance job access for commuters coming from Chicago and North Shore communities to employment locations in the Lake Cook Road corridor.

"We've seen unprecedented ridership growth along the I-55 corridor thanks to the bus on shoulder service," said Pace Chairman Richard Kwasneski. "Since bus-on-shoulder operations began, ridership in the corridor has grown astronomically. When there's congestion on the roadway, bus-on-shoulder service is faster and more reliable than driving. Commuters see that and choose our service over their cars. We believe they will do the same in the Lake-Cook region and are excited to partner with IDOT on this project."

IDOT's construction work on the right-hand shoulder of the Edens is complete, and signage for motorists is already up. In coordination with IDOT and the Illinois State Police, Pace's bus operating rules focus on safety, and are similar to those in use on I-55. Buses use the outside shoulder lanes when general traffic slows to below 35 mph. While using the shoulders, the bus will not exceed the speed of regular traffic by more than 15 mph and the maximum speed for buses traveling on the shoulder is 35 mph. If the shoulder is unavailable due to an accident, law enforcement activity, or emergency response vehicles, Pace will merge back into the regular lanes.

"This minor modification to our infrastructure will have far-reaching benefits for commuters and the environment," said Illinois Transportation Secretary Randy Blakenhorn. "Expanding the success of this convenient, innovative program to the Edens provides travelers in the region one more option to get to where they need to go, while reducing congestion and building more reliability into their trips."

Among the many benefits of bus-on-shoulder service is the relatively small cost to implement, compared to other transit services that require new infrastructure, such as a new train line. The minimal construction work needed on both I-55 and now I-94 offers a much-improved transit service to the commuting public while minimizing the start-up cost borne by the taxpayer.

Additional routes that could utilize the I-94 service in the future are in the planning stages. In particular, as part of the recently-completed North Shore Coordination Plan, Pace has proposed a new bus-on-shoulder service (see "Route C" on the map) to connect passengers from the Jefferson Park Transit Center to downtown Skokie and Westfield Old Orchard shopping center. Additionally, Pace is investigating preliminary concepts to provide additional connections from the Jefferson Park Transit Center and potentially the CTA Kimball Brown Line Station to the Lake-Cook Road Corridor. Service expansion is based on the availability of funding and equipment and is subject to change.

CTA Unveils Interactive Artwork at Damen Blue Line

April 6, 2018

New Artwork Concludes Station Improvement Work Performed Through Mayor Emanuel's Historic Your New Blue O'Hare Branch Modernization Project

The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) today unveiled new, interactive public artwork at the Damen Blue Line station, the latest CTA station to receive unique artwork as part of Mayor Emanuel's initiative to expand public art across CTA bus and rail facilities throughout the City of Chicago.

"By incorporating creative artwork into our CTA stations, we are elevating the experience of Chicago's world-class transit system," Mayor Emanuel said. "This new installation reflects the neighborhood's vibrancy and creative spirit and is a fitting finish to this historic station modernization."

Commissioned by the award-winning artist team of Benjamin Ball and Gaston Nogues, the new one-of-a-kind artwork at Damen serves as the finishing touch to a major station renovation in 2014 as part of the historic \$492 million *Your New Blue* (YNB) O'Hare branch modernization project.

The artwork, known as *Soundtrack*, is installed on the north side of the track structure and visible from Damen Avenue, includes LED color panels that create patterns of light, activated by sound as well as vibrations caused by moving trains, cars and riders walking along the station platform. The artwork contains sensors that "read" the vibrations and translate them into the lighted patterns.

"Artwork at CTA stations is intended to be reflective of the communities they serve, and the new artwork at Damen literally captures the vibe of this lively community," CTA President Dorval R. Carter, Jr. said. "The addition of this impressive, interactive artwork to CTA's permanent collection of public art is truly exciting, and I encourage Chicagoans to come see and experience this living artwork for themselves."

Under the leadership of Mayor Emanuel, CTA's collection of public art has nearly doubled since 2011 to nearly 70 works of art across all eight rail lines. It

includes mosaics, art glass and sculptures created by nationally and internationally acclaimed artists, many of whom are local. Over the next few years, CTA's public art collection will further expand to include an additional nine new works of art.

Constructed in 1895, the Damen Station underwent a \$13.6 million stationhouse and platform rehabilitation as part of *Your New Blue* that modernized and expanded the station.

Mayor Emanuel and CTA in 2013 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 more than 27 million rides last year. Under this program, CTA will update a total of 14 Blue Line stations; make elevated and subway infrastructure upgrades; track signal improvements and traction power upgrades.

About the artists

Ball-Nogues Studio is an integrated design and fabrication practice in Los Angeles, California. Led by Benjamin Ball and Gaston Nogues, the Studio operates at the intersection of architecture, art and industrial design.

The team integrates concept and fabrication to create visual spectacles that encourage the public to more actively engage their surroundings. They have completed more than 30 commissions for permanent or temporary artworks including Los Angeles International Airport, Coachella Valley Music Festival, and have exhibited at the Venice Biennale; Museum of Modern Art; The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Museum of Contemporary, Los Angeles and Los Angeles County Museum of Art,

Ball-Nogues Studio has received numerous honors including three American Institute of Architects Design Awards, United States Artists Target Fellowships and a grant from the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts. In 2007, the Studio was the winner of the Museum of Modern Art PS1 Young Architects Program Competition.

Benjamin Ball earned a Bachelor of Architecture from Southern California Institute of Architecture and studied at the Shibaura Institute of Technology - Tokyo.

Gaston Nogues, a native of Argentina, earned a Bachelor of Architecture from Southern California Institute of Architecture, and between 1994 and 2005, he supervised product design and fabrication at Gehry Partners (the atelier of architect Frank Gehry).

Mayor Emanuel and CTA Open New South Terminal at 95th Street Station

April 15, 2018

Modern Terminal the First of Two that Will Replace 50-Year-Old Station Serving 20,000 Daily; Historic Project is Creating Hundreds of Jobs



Mayor Rahm Emanuel today joined CTA Board Chairman Terry Peterson and CTA President Dorval R. Carter, Jr. to open the first of two new bus and rail terminal facilities at 95th Street. The completion of the South Terminal is a major milestone in a \$280 million project that is building a state-of-the-art 95th/Dan Ryan station on the city's South Side and has already created more than 760 construction jobs.

"The new 95th street CTA terminal is a major investment in Chicago's South Side and represents a true collaboration from the federal, state, local and community levels," Mayor Emanuel said. "Our investments in transportation aren't just about moving people around the city, they're about moving our city forward, creating jobs, driving development, connecting residents and securing our place as a world-class city in the 21st century."

The 95th/Dan Ryan station is one of CTA's busiest stations, with 24-hour Red Line service and more than 20,000 bus and rail passengers daily. When the North Terminal is completed later this year, 95th/Dan Ryan will be a signature station on Chicago's South Side, providing CTA riders with modern design and amenities to improve the overall transit experience.

The project is the latest in more than \$8 billion of transit investments made by Mayor Emanuel and CTA since 2011, including station and track projects across the Red Line.

Customers began boarding trains and buses at the new South Terminal on Saturday evening at 10 p.m. The existing 95th/Dan Ryan station, which opened in 1969, is now closed as part of the CTA's plan to build a second bus and rail facility, the North Terminal, in place of the existing facility.

"When it is completed, the new 95th/Dan Ryan station will provide a better experience for our customers by providing safer passenger access to buses and trains, and expanding passenger facilities that will lead to a

modern, safe and pedestrian-friendly transit center," CTA President Carter said. "This project continues on time and on budget and will be fully completed in 2018."

The new 95th/Dan Ryan station will feature:

- Wider bus lanes, sidewalks and waiting areas for bus passengers
- Elevated pedway over 95th Street that will link the North Terminal and the South Terminal
- Elevators and escalators
- Expanded rail platforms
- Bus Tracker and Train Tracker signs

"This 21st century transportation center will give residents a modern and convenient option for traveling to work and throughout Chicago," Ald. Howard Brookins, Jr. (21st Ward) said. "I appreciate the work of the CTA and the Mayor and their recognition of the importance of investing in our community, and look forward to the completion of this project this year."

"Public transportation is an important part of the daily lives of residents across Chicago and this new terminal shows the City and the CTA understand that importance and are investing in it," Ald. Carrie Austin (34th Ward) said. "I look forward to continuing to work with the Mayor and CTA to complete this project and move forward with extending the Red Line to 130th Street."

"The new 95th Street station the product of the hard work of our residents and the passion of our city's leaders," Ald. Anthony Beale (9th Ward) said. "I look forward to working with Mayor Emanuel, city officials and community members as we continue invest in our families, build our businesses and create a bright future we can all be proud of."

The South Terminal opened on time and on budget, and a new North Terminal is now under construction and scheduled to be completed by the end of 2018.

Both terminals will feature two new, unique public art displays by internationally recognized artist and Chicago native Theaster Gates. The South Terminal will feature a pair of large tapestries made from colorful strips of decommissioned fire hoses that are sewn together, and, for the north Terminal, a first-of-its-kind radio station and DJ booth that will broadcast over the 95th Street station's PA system. The art is expected to be unveiled later this year upon completion of station project work.

The station is a critical piece of the CTA's Red Line, connecting Far South Side communities to job centers throughout the region and serves as a transit gateway for South Side and suburbs. More than 1,000 CTA and Pace connecting bus trips are made at the station on a typical weekday.

Red Line South Side transit investment since 2011

The completion of the 95th/Dan Ryan South Terminal comes after the CTA completely rebuilt the Red Line South branch in 2013. That \$425 million project reconstructed the entire 10-mile track structure between

the Cermak/Chinatown and 95th/Dan Ryan stations. It also included the rehabilitation eight Red Line stations between Cermak/Chinatown and 87th Street, including adding new elevators to three stations to make the rail branch fully accessible to customers with disabilities.

Also, CTA continues to move ahead with planning work for a proposed extension of the Red Line from the 95th Street Terminal to 130th Street. Earlier this year, the CTA announced it had selected a final proposed alignment in which to locate the rail extension, which will include four new rail stations.

Your New Blue Modernization Program to Improve CTA Blue Line Service Moves Forward

April 18, 2018

CTA will begin the largest and latest project as part of Mayor Emanuel's ongoing program to upgrade the O'Hare branch of the Blue Line, one of CTA's fastest-growing rail lines

Agency plans major upgrade of rail signal system between Jefferson Park and O'Hare, replacing original 34-year-old system to improve quality of Blue Line service for customers

The CTA today said it is moving forward with its largest project to date that is part of Mayor Emanuel's *Your New Blue*, a \$492 million modernization of the busy Blue Line O'Hare branch that includes major station renovations to track improvements that will make commuting more comfortable, reliable and convenient and will reduce round-trip commutes by up to 10 minutes. The announcement follows this week's successful opening of the first of two new bus and rail terminals at 95th Street on the Red Line, as part of the CTA's \$280 million 95th Street Terminal Improvement Project.

The Chicago Transit Board today awarded a \$152.9 million contract to Kiewit-Aldridge AJV through a competitive bidding process for a \$207 million track signal improvement project on the Blue Line, the first major signal upgrade since the Blue Line was extended by eight miles from Jefferson Park to O'Hare in the early 1980s.

Similar to a street traffic signal network, a rail signal system is critical to managing the flow of trains and directing railway traffic to provide quick, safe and reliable train customers to the nearly 90,000 people who ride the O'Hare branch daily. Track signals provide critical information to rail operators that help keep trains running smoothly and safely, including alerts to slow down, stop or proceed. Train signals transmit real-time information that powers CTA's Train Tracker's real-time train arrival information for customers.

"The Blue Line O'Hare branch has been a workhorse of the CTA rail system for more than 30 years, and has continually contributed to the improvements in communities along the line," said CTA President Dorval R. Carter, Jr. "As ridership has grown, we are committed to making the investments necessary that provide better

rail service to our Blue Line customers through the number of projects that have been completed and are still to come."

The signal project is one of several projects in *Your New Blue* that will help the CTA improve service, including improving service reliability and increasing our ability to add train service during the busiest part of the rush periods.

Completed *Your New Blue* projects:

- Track improvement work between Logan Square and Damen, 2014
- Major renovations of Damen, Western and California stations, 2015
- Major renovations of stations at Addison, Irving Park, Montrose, Harlem and Cumberland, including adding an elevator at Addison to making it full accessible, 2016

Upcoming projects:

- Jefferson Park and Belmont station renovations – work begins in spring 2018
- Track signal work between Jefferson Park and O'Hare
- Renovations of Grand, Division and Chicago stations
- Substation upgrades that increases power to run trains
- Blue Line subway water mitigation project

In addition to the *Your New Blue* projects, CTA is also making additional enhancements to Blue Line service, including:

Ordering new 7000-series trains to replace trains that have been in service since the 1980s.

CTA's FastTracks program includes funding to reduce slow zones in the Blue Line O'Hare branch subway and for additional substation traction power improvements.

CTA and Mayor Emanuel in 2013 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. One of the fastest-growing segments on CTA's rail system, station entries along the O'Hare Blue Line branch have consistently topped more than 26 million annually for each of the last five years.

Schedule changes coming to Metra Electric Line

(April 9, 2018) -

Metra will be changing the schedule on the Metra Electric Line, including the cancellation of one outbound South Chicago Branch train during the evening rush, beginning April 23. The changes are being made to provide increased train spacing in preparation for the

implementation of the Positive Train Control (PTC) safety system.

Metra Electric riders will notice changes in departure and arrival times to a number of trains in the range of two to five minutes during the morning and evening rush hours. The changes are necessary to meet PTC's requirement that each signal and switch be tied into its communications system. To do this, Metra had to replace a manually operated switching system at 11th Place, just north of the Museum Campus/11th Street Station, with an automated system. More time will now be required to navigate this switching point because the signals must reset between each train. Schedules had to be adjusted to reflect the new operating conditions.

"We realize that some of our customers will be inconvenienced by these changes, but the implementation of PTC necessitates it," said Metra CEO/Executive Director Jim Derwinski. "We examined this carefully and determined that we would need to eliminate a train run to meet the requirements of PTC and maintain a reliable schedule."

The changes in train spacing necessitated by PTC will result in the permanent cancellation of South Chicago Branch outbound Train 407, the 5:15 p.m. departure from Millennium Station. To accommodate customers who formerly used Train 407, outbound Train 405 will now depart five minutes later at 5:05 p.m.

Several evening rush hour trains to University Park will also depart Millennium Station at later times. Train 707 will depart Millennium at 5:21 p.m. instead of 5:17 p.m., Train 737 will depart Millennium at 5:24 p.m. instead of 5:20 p.m. and Train 757 will depart Millennium at 5:27 p.m. instead of 5:23 p.m.

PTC is a federally mandated safety system that prevents certain types of train-to-train collisions, helps avoid derailments and other accidents caused by excessive speed and increases safety for workers. The system integrates GPS, communications units and a railroad's centralized dispatching system to track trains, convey operating instructions and monitor the crew's compliance. PTC will automatically stop a train if the system detects that a violation is about to occur. The federal government requires that all U.S. railroads have PTC in place and operational no later than Dec. 31, 2020. Additional schedule changes are anticipated as PTC is fully implemented across the Metra system.

Metra to conduct 54 safety blitzes in 2018

(April 4, 2018) -

Metra announced today that it will conduct Operation Lifesaver Safety Blitzes at 54 train stations across the six-county region in 2018 as part of its ongoing efforts to raise awareness of the importance of safe behavior around its trains and tracks.

During a safety blitz, Metra safety employees will be at one of the commuter railroad's 242 stations during the

morning commute, distributing educational materials about train and grade crossing safety, answering questions and listening to commuters' safety concerns. A short video about grade crossing safety is also available for customers to view while they wait for their train. Local police and fire officials are also invited to participate.

"Safety is always Metra's highest priority," said Metra CEO/Executive Director Jim Derwinski. "These safety blitzes allow us to reach our customers directly to ensure that they understand the need to stay vigilant about safety around the railroad."

Illinois has the second-largest rail system in the nation with more than 7,300 miles of railroad track and 11,436 public and private rail crossings. In 2017, Illinois ranked third in the nation in rail fatalities at highway rail crossings and sixth in the nation in trespassing fatalities. Last year, 45 people were killed and 49 more were injured in incidents at grade crossings or along railroad right-of-way in Illinois. Ten of these fatalities involved Metra trains. Twenty-five of these fatalities occurred at rail crossings. These numbers do not include deaths ruled as suicides or suspected suicides.

To help promote rail safety awareness and eliminate preventable injuries and deaths, Metra develops an annual schedule of safety blitzes throughout the Chicago metropolitan area.

The intent of the safety blitz program is primarily educational. However, Metra, through its Police Department, will also conduct additional enforcement blitzes at locations throughout the region where citations and warnings will be issued to pedestrians and drivers who ignore gates and warning devices.

Metra also promotes safety through its annual Safety Poster and Essay Contest for the region's schoolchildren and conducts nearly 1,000 free Operation Lifesaver presentations annually to schools, community groups, school bus drivers, professional truck drivers, emergency responders and other organizations throughout the region.

Operation Lifesaver is a national organization that works to educate and promote safe behavior near the tracks by offering free rail safety education programs. The organization's work is cosponsored by local, state and federal government agencies, highway safety organizations and America's railroads.

Metra to stop ticket sales on website

(April 2, 2018) -

Due to declining use and efforts to cut costs, Metra is ending its Ticket-by-Internet program, which allows customers to buy Monthly Passes and 10-Ride Tickets via Metra's website. The last day to purchase a Monthly Pass (the July pass) via the website will be June 20 and the last day to purchase a 10-Ride Ticket will be June 30.

Internet sales of Monthly Passes and 10-Ride Tickets started in September 2009. Customers can set up recurring orders to receive their tickets on a monthly schedule or make one-time purchases.

Online sales of monthlies peaked in 2014, when an average of 5,162 were sold per month, while sales of 10-rides peaked in 2011, when an average of 4,875 tickets were sold per month. Those numbers have been declining since then, especially after the introduction of the Ventra App for mobile tickets in late 2015. In 2017, Metra sold an average of 2,654 monthlies per month through the website (about 3 percent of the overall total) and an average of 1,201 10-rides per month through the website (less than 1 percent of the overall total).

Ending the program will allow Metra to save about \$144,000 in annual website hosting and maintenance costs, as well as interface support costs. In addition, it will allow Metra to avoid \$70,000 in required credit card security upgrades this year (and any required upgrades in future years), as well as at least \$240,000 in costs that would be associated with converting the website sales channel to Metra's new revenue accounting system.

"We understand this change will inconvenience some Metra customers," said Metra CEO/Executive Director Jim Derwinski. "However, we are trying to find efficiencies wherever we can, and we still offer several other sales channels, including the convenient Ventra App."

Metra customers who have recurring website ticket orders or who make occasional one-time website purchases can use the following alternatives:

- Use the Ventra App, available for free download from the App Store or Google Play, to buy and display mobile tickets on their smartphone;
- Buy tickets from a ticket agent or ticket vending machine – with the Ventra App selling a larger share of tickets, waiting times at ticket windows are reduced;
- Take advantage of their employer's Transit Benefits program (if offered) to use pretax dollars to buy Metra tickets and have them delivered by mail each month.

Metra to adjust UP North Line schedule

(March 26, 2018) -

Metra will implement a new schedule for evening and weekend trains on the Union Pacific North Line beginning April 9 in order to complete a multiyear bridge replacement project.

The schedule change will allow for trains to operate on a single track between the Clybourn Station and Evanston during the completion of a \$15.5 million project to replace the bridges that carry the UP North Line over Webster Avenue and the North Branch of the Chicago River (known as the Deering Bridge). These schedule

changes do not affect weekday trains during the morning and evening rush periods.

"This project is a major investment in the infrastructure of the UP North Line that riders will benefit from for many years to come," said Metra CEO/Executive Director Jim Derwinski. "Changing the schedule slightly will allow us to maintain safe, reliable service with minimal impact to our customers."

Customers should be aware that as of Monday, April 9, Train 364 will depart from Waukegan 25 minutes later, at 10:05 p.m.; and Train 368 will depart from Kenosha 10 minutes later, at 11:45 p.m. Inbound weekday trains arriving at Ogilvie Transportation Center after 8 p.m. will have five minutes added to their run times.

Outbound Train 301 will be renumbered to Train 371 on the weekdays and will depart from Ogilvie eight minutes earlier, at 12:27 a.m. Train 369 will depart from Ogilvie 10 minutes later, at 11:45 p.m., and trains departing from Ogilvie after 7:30 p.m. will have five minutes added to their run times.

On Saturdays and Sundays, inbound Train 822 will depart from Waukegan 30 minutes later, at 5:40 p.m. Outbound Train 821 will depart from Ogilvie five minutes later, at 5:15 p.m., on Saturdays only.

Physical copies will be available at Ogilvie one week before the schedule goes into effect.

Board approves contract to upgrade Rock Island rehab shops

(March 21, 2018) -

The Metra Board of Directors today approved a \$29.4 million contract for the renovation and expansion of the mechanical shops that house the agency's railcar and locomotive rehab programs. The improvements will enable Metra to significantly increase the output of its railcar rehabilitation program.

"By expanding and modernizing these facilities, we'll be able to greatly increase the number of railcars we rehab each year," said Metra CEO/Executive Director Jim Derwinski. "This will help us make significant strides in moving towards a state of good repair."

Metra's 47th/49th Street facility serves as the main mechanical yard for the Rock Island Line. The location, particularly the 49th Street Coach Shop, is also the site of Metra's main railcar rehabilitation program. The 47th/49th Street facility predates Metra. It was opened in 1947 by the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad and has not undergone significant improvement since.

The contract was awarded to Chicago-based firm F.H. Paschen, S.N. Nielsen & Associates, L.L.C. through a competitive bidding process. The contractor has committed to awarding 25 percent of the subcontracting work to Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) firms.

The project, which is expected to take nearly two years to complete, will expand the 49th Street Coach Shop, including an upgrade of the facility's loading dock,

storage and railcar wheel truck rebuild area and the addition of training facilities. The project also includes improvements to the 47th Street Diesel Shop, which maintains locomotives used on the Rock Island and is the facility where Metra's MP36 locomotive rehabilitation program is housed. Work at the 47th Street facility will include a reconfiguration of the loading dock area, adding an enclosed crane to it and rebuilding the materials storage area. The project further includes improvements to the rail yard's parking, drainage and utilities. Metra estimates that when the project is complete, it will be able to increase the number of railcars rehabbed each year in this facility by 40 percent from 35 to 60.

New safety system prompts revision of BNSF schedule

(March 19, 2018) -

Metra's busiest line, the BNSF Line between Aurora and Chicago Union Station, will be the first Metra line to have the new Positive Train Control (PTC) safety system fully operational – but the enhancement will require a significant revision of the line's schedule starting this summer.

Metra and BNSF Railway today unveiled the proposed weekday schedule revision (also available on trains and at Chicago Union Station this week) and asked for public comment. Feedback will be accepted at BNSFservice2018@metrarr.com until April 15. Metra may revise the proposal based on feedback, with a goal of implementing the new schedule in June or July.

Watch the video below for an explanation about why Positive Train Control will impact schedules, starting with the BNSF Line:

In addition to adjusting the schedule for PTC, Metra and BNSF Railway are proposing other changes to relieve overcrowding on some of the busiest trains, match the schedule to actual operating conditions and reduce scheduling at a choke point near Cicero. As a result, there will be numerous minor changes to the total running times and the station stop patterns of trains. There will be no changes to weekend trains at this time.

PTC is a federally mandated safety system that will automatically stop a train if the engineer fails to obey a signal or exceeds the speed limit. The system integrates GPS, trackside sensors and communications units, onboard computers and Metra's centralized train dispatching system. Together, these components track trains and monitor the crew's compliance with speed restrictions and signals. Although it can't prevent all accidents, PTC increases safety by preventing train-to-train collisions, unauthorized entry into work zones and derailments due to speeding or moving through misaligned track switches.

Under PTC, the crew of a train must initialize the system before each individual run. This includes entering information about the size and makeup of the train (because its weight affects its stopping distance) and

any other details about conditions along the route (such as work zones or speed restrictions) that could affect the safe operation of the train. The initialization process is expected to take about six minutes.

On the current BNSF schedule there are about 30 instances in which a train completes a run and turns around to start a new one in less than 10 minutes, typically at the ends of the line but occasionally mid-route. In those 10 minutes, the engineer must move from the cab car to the locomotive or vice versa, and the crew must clear the train, perform a brake test and conduct a job briefing. With the added task of initializing the PTC system, these "flips" are expected to take 12 to 15 minutes, so the schedule of many trains must be adjusted for increased turn times, and those changes, in turn, will affect nearly all other trains on the schedule.

Similar changes will be needed on other lines with tight flips as PTC is implemented.

PTC systems have three main components: onboard computers and communications equipment; trackside antennas, servers and communications equipment; and a centralized back office dispatch system to store and communicate information to the trains and trackside locations.

Metra is responsible for creating the back office system and installing the equipment on board all Metra trains and along the five routes it controls (Metra Electric, Rock Island, SouthWest Service and the Milwaukee District West and North). The freight companies that own the other six lines – BNSF Railway (the BNSF Line), Union Pacific Railroad (the three UP lines) and CN Railroad (Heritage Corridor and North Central Service) – are responsible for the trackside equipment and back offices for those routes.

One of the key features of PTC – and one of its biggest challenges – is that PTC systems must be interoperable between railroads. This means that Metra's onboard equipment must be able to seamlessly communicate not only with Metra's trackside and back office components, but with the freight railroads' trackside and back office components, and vice versa.

BNSF Railway anticipates that PTC will be fully operational on the BNSF Line this year. UP also expects to have PTC operational on its lines starting this year. For Metra, PTC will start on the Rock Island Line this year and on the other lines in 2019 and 2020.

LaSalle Street Station concourse renovation starts March 26

(March 15, 2018) -

Metra will kick off a \$2.95 million project to renovate the LaSalle Street Station concourse on Monday, March 26. Rock Island Line customers may need to alter their walking routes to and from the station as the project progresses.

"This is a long-awaited opportunity to improve LaSalle Street Station for our customers," said Metra

CEO/Executive Director Jim Derwinski. "Other than maintenance projects, it's been more than 25 years since significant improvements were made to the concourse area."

The project will include the replacement of the surface of the 20,000-square-foot concourse area, as well as the replacement of a number of support pillars. The new surface will feature granite pavers and decorative medallions. Granite is a more durable material than the current concrete surface and will improve the overall aesthetics of the concourse area.

Work will be phased, limiting access to different sections of the concourse and platforms as the renovations progress. Contractors plan to work around the clock to minimize the impact on Rock Island Line customers. The first phase will resurface the east side of the concourse, with work then progressing to the west side and finally, to the platform entrances. Signage and barricades will be placed throughout the station to direct the flow of pedestrian traffic as each phase proceeds. Work begins March 26 and is expected to be completed in mid-July.

The renovation work will be performed by Chicago-based Blinderman Construction, which was awarded the contract through a competitive bidding process.

LaSalle Street Station serves as the downtown terminal for Metra's Rock Island Line to Joliet. The existing station, built in 1993, is used by more than 13,000 people each weekday.

Major track project to impact Milwaukee North Line

(March 12, 2018) -

A major tie replacement project between Libertyville and Fox Lake will impact midday and weekend service on the northernmost part of Metra's Milwaukee District North Line during the month of April, including a shutdown of the line north of Lake Forest for three consecutive weekends.

"We realize that this will represent a short-term inconvenience for some of our riders, but track projects like this are absolutely essential to maintaining safe and high-quality rail service," said Metra CEO/Executive Director Jim Derwinski. "Limiting rail traffic during the work period will significantly condense the project timeline and the overall customer impact."

In addition to the shutdown of service north of Lake Forest on three weekends, the project will also impact midday service on weekdays north of the Grayslake Station. Work will begin Thursday, April 5 and continue through Friday, April 27.

Metra forces will replace 17,000 ties over a 17-mile single-track span between Fox Lake and the Libertyville area in Lake County. In addition to tie replacement, the work will also include the replacement of five switches, brush clearing and the continued upgrade of the signal system on this section track in preparation for the Positive Train Control safety system. If permits can be

obtained from local municipalities, the rail crossings at St. Mary's Road and Route 120 will also be replaced during this time period.

Weekday Impacts (April 5-April 27):

Weekday (Monday through Friday) service between Fox Lake and Grayslake will be limited to morning rush hour and evening rush hour trains. Normal weekday service will be provided between Grayslake and Chicago. For riders who board between Fox Lake and Grayslake, the last inbound morning departure from Fox Lake will be Train 2124, at 7:28 a.m. Inbound trains from Fox Lake will not resume service until Train 2146's departure at 4:14 p.m. The first outbound train to Fox Lake on weekdays will be Train 2121, which departs Chicago Union station at 2:35 p.m. and arrives in Fox Lake at 4:08 p.m.

Busing to Grayslake from Fox Lake, Ingleside, Long Lake and Round Lake will be available on weekdays during midday periods. However, customers are advised that although the buses will depart the stations north of Grayslake at the normal train departure time, they will not arrive at Grayslake in time to meet their normally scheduled train. Customers will instead wait to board the next scheduled train and will arrive downtown one hour later. To reduce wait time, customers are advised to drive to the Grayslake Station for midday trips. Parking should be readily available at Grayslake. The Prairie Crossing Station is also an option for midday trips.

Weekend Service Impacts (April 7-8, April 14-15 and April 21-22):

For three consecutive weekends beginning April 7, there will be no inbound or outbound service north of Lake Forest all day Saturday until Sunday night. The first train traveling north of Lake Forest will be outbound Train 2623, the 8:35 p.m. departure from Chicago Union Station, on Sunday night. The first inbound on Sunday night will be Train 2622, which departs Fox Lake at 10:25 p.m. Customers are advised to use the Lake Forest Station for Saturday and Sunday trips.

The project will take place along a 17-mile single-track section of the line, where track equipment and workers cannot be moved out of the way of passenger trains without traveling a significant distance. Taking this track out of service during the part of the weekday and during the weekends is the most expedient and cost-efficient approach, cutting the time required for the work by at least 50 percent.

Most Milwaukee North riders will not experience any noticeable difference in service. Metra boarding counts show that more than 90 percent of the riders on this line board from Grayslake and points south of the work zone.

RTA, Pace Kick off Central Harlem Avenue Corridor Study

(Published: 03-02-2018)

Corridor plan will lay foundation for Pulse Harlem Line implementation

CHICAGO – Pace, in partnership with the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), kicked off the Central Harlem Avenue Corridor Study with a steering committee meeting on January 18, 2018, at the Berwyn Public Library. Representatives from local governments, transit agencies, and other regional entities discussed the corridor's strengths and weaknesses, railroad grade-crossings, transit connections, pedestrian safety and the diversity of land uses throughout the study area.

Harlem Avenue is a planned corridor for Pulse, Pace's Arterial Rapid Transit (ART) program. Pulse is designed to provide a network of fast, frequent and reliable bus service using the latest technology and streamlined route design. The study will identify corridor attributes and challenges, which will help the Pulse Harlem Line team develop the project's scope and timeline.

"The Harlem Avenue Corridor plan will create a viable, active corridor that allows for better access to transit and improvements that will support innovative service like Pulse," says Leanne Redden, Executive Director of the RTA.

The study will explore stop locations for the future the Pulse Harlem Line, identify opportunities for redevelopment, recommend transit-supportive land uses and suggest transit accessibility improvements. Funding for the \$200,000 project will come from the RTA's Community Planning program (\$160,000) and Pace (\$40,000).

"Research and planning are crucial elements of designing quality service that effectively and efficiently meets the needs of our customers," said Pace Chairman Richard Kwasneski. "The recommendations that come from this study will guide us as we design the Pulse Harlem Line and other services in this region."

The plan is expected to take approximately a year to complete, with public engagement occurring at multiple points throughout the process. The first community meetings to solicit public feedback on the project will be held in the spring.

New York City awards New Flyer a contract for an additional 108 Xcelsior 60' transit buses

April 9, 2018 | New Flyer

St. Cloud, Minnesota, USA – April 9, 2018: (TSX: NFI) New Flyer of America Inc. ("New Flyer"), the U.S. subsidiary of New Flyer Industries Inc. ("NFI Group"), the largest transit bus and motor coach manufacturer and parts distributor in North America, today announced that the New York City Transit Authority ("NYCT") has awarded New Flyer with another order for 108 Xcelsior® clean diesel sixty-foot, heavy-duty transit buses. This order adds 216 equivalent units to New Flyers firm order backlog.

"We are proud to continue to support the expansion of New York City's transit bus fleet," said Wayne Joseph, President of New Flyer of America. "As the demand for bus transit in New York City becomes greater over the coming year, New Flyer will be there to support NYCT with reliable, innovative, and safe transportation for the citizens of New York."

NYCT and MTA Bus Company (together, "MTA") comprise the largest transit agency in North America. NYCT serves an estimated 8.5 million citizens and supports more than 60 million visitors annually.

Columbus Expands Low-Emission Fleet with up to 154 CNG buses from New Flyer

March 22, 2018 | New Flyer

St. Cloud, Minnesota, USA – March 22, 2018: (TSX: NFI) New Flyer of America Inc. ("New Flyer"), the U.S. subsidiary of New Flyer Industries Inc. ("NFI Group"), the largest transit bus and motor coach manufacturer and parts distributor in North America, today announced that the Central Ohio Transit Authority ("COTA") has awarded New Flyer a new contract for 154 Xcelsior® compressed natural gas ("CNG") forty-foot, heavy-duty transit buses (154 equivalent units) over the next five years.

The contract includes 28 firm orders with options to purchase an additional 126 compressed natural gas (CNG) forty-foot, heavy-duty transit buses, which will replace end-of-life vehicles with more efficient CNG buses over the next five years. The purchase was supported by local, state, and Federal Transit Administration funding.

The Central Ohio Transit Authority serves greater Columbus and central Ohio, covering 1.2 million residents and providing more than 18 million passenger trips annually. In 2013, COTA made the commitment to move its entire fleet to compressed natural gas within 12 years, and in 2017 introduced its newly redesigned route network featuring more frequent service, and better connections to more destinations, seven days a week. In 2018, COTA introduced CMAX, Central Ohio's first Bus Rapid Transit line, and is investing in infrastructure and technology upgrades to improve transit service and the customer experience. Details can be found at www.cota.com.

"New Flyer is proud to support the Central Ohio Transit Authority with expanding its low-emission bus fleet in pursuit of sustainable and connected transportation," said Wayne Joseph, President, New Flyer of America. "COTA has proven itself a visionary in the development of future mobility, and we are thrilled to participate in defining the cities of the future alongside the growing community of greater Columbus and central Ohio, and the talent in transportation and technology in the region."

In 2018, New Flyer committed to leading collaboration, cooperation, and the technological advancement of Smart Mobility in North America. It also became a

signatory of the Shared Mobility Principles for Livable Cities, which facilitates collaboration in developing multimodal, integrated cities through technology-driven innovation. For information on Shared Mobility Principles, visit <https://www.sharedmobilityprinciples.org/>.

DART expands low-emission transit in Dallas with up to 82 CNG buses from New Flyer

March 19, 2018 | New Flyer

St. Cloud, Minnesota, USA – March 19, 2018: (TSX: NFI) New Flyer of America Inc. ("New Flyer"), the U.S. subsidiary of New Flyer Industries Inc. ("NFI Group"), the largest transit bus and motor coach manufacturer and parts distributor in North America, today announced that Dallas Area Rapid Transit ("DART") has awarded New Flyer a contract for 82 Xcelsior® compressed natural gas ("CNG") forty-foot, heavy-duty transit buses (82 equivalent units).

The contract, which supports new services beginning in Spring 2019, includes 41 firm orders with options to purchase an additional 41 compressed natural gas (CNG) forty-foot, heavy-duty. The buses were funded by grants from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

These buses increase DART's 639 clean, low-emission CNG buses, aiding DART's mission to operate a safe, efficient and effective transportation. This order is part of a plan to reduce current fleet NOx (nitrogen oxides) emissions by 90% over conventional diesel-powered vehicles.

"New Flyer is pleased to support Dallas Area Rapid Transit as it develops a dependable, low-emission transit fleet with the environment in mind," said Wayne Joseph, President, New Flyer of America. "As a founding member of the North Texas Clean Air Coalition, we commend DART for leading by example, improving service while reducing the carbon footprint of northern Texas, and building a more sustainable environment for the surrounding community."

DART serves over 67 million passenger trips per year in 13 cities total, a combined area of 700 square miles.

MTA Bus Overhaul Plan to Include Double-Decker Pilot.

Double decker buses, an overhaul of routes, and a new way of paying the fare — they're all part of a massive new plan by the MTA to improve and modernize slumping bus service in the city.

Taking a bus in the city hasn't changed much over the years. Many routes still follow the paths of trolley lines that disappeared decades ago.

But that's about to change with the release Monday of a sweeping plan to overhaul MTA bus service.

"We want to completely review the way we run buses. To make sure that we get people from A to B quickly, so

that buses become an attractive way to travel again," said NYC Transit President Andy Byford.

For years, as average bus speeds have slowed, an increasing number of New Yorkers have ditched riding the bus for other ways to get around - including app-based car services like Uber, making the streets even more congested.

"If we don't do anything, this city will achieve complete gridlock, it will grind to a halt. So we need to give buses a super-efficient way of getting about, a fighting chance of getting through the traffic," Byford said.



One of the proposed changes - using double-decker buses to boost capacity.

The MTA will test double-deckers on an express route linking Staten Island and Manhattan and try out an app that will allow express bus riders to check for seat availability on approaching buses.

"Not only will they know when their bus is coming, they will know if there is a seat available for them," said NYC Transit Senior Vice President Darryl Irick.

To speed service, the plan also calls for giving all bus riders, by 2020, the opportunity to pay the fare before boarding - and to board at any door, a system now used only on Select Bus Service lines.

"Paying here just makes it easier for everyone to get on instead of having everyone swipe," said one bus rider.

The plan will remap some bus routes and expand off-peak service, bus-only traffic lanes and routes that give buses priority at signals.

"These are the kinds of changes that will make buses faster and more reliable, and really get them to meet the needs of New York in 2018," said Transit Center Deputy Executive Director Tabitha Decker.

Advocates are praising the plan as ambitious unlike previous piecemeal efforts. But there's no pricetag on it yet.

"Major progress starts with leadership and strong goals and that's what we're seeing here. I think it's a reason to get pretty excited about what's to come," Decker added.

Byford's push to overhaul the bus network is a warmup to next month when he plans to release a report on reshaping all of New York City Transit, including subway, bus and para-transit service.

WASHINGTON D.C. CIRCULATOR DEPLOYS PROTERRA® BATTERY- ELECTRIC BUSES ACROSS NATION'S CAPITAL

April 20th, 2018

Fourteen new Proterra Catalyst® E2 vehicles will take riders across D.C.'s historical sites including the U.S. Capitol, National Mall and Lincoln Memorial

Burlingame, Calif. – April 20, 2018 – Today Proterra, the leading innovator in heavy-duty electric transportation, announced that the Washington, D.C. Circulator system has deployed 14 battery-electric Catalyst E2 buses, which will bring clean, quiet, zero-emission transportation to more than 4,800,000 annual riders and the Circulator's 189 drivers. This deployment is representative of a growing national movement to go electric, joining other major metropolitan cities such as Los Angeles, New York, Nashville, Seattle, Dallas and many other transit fleets in the transition to zero-emission vehicles.

"This new fleet of electric buses will support our efforts to make Washington, D.C. the healthiest, greenest, and most livable city in the nation," said Washington D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser. "The D.C. Circulator is one of the most popular transit systems in the city, and with this addition, we're doing more to ensure we remain a sustainable, multimodal city for generations to come."

Formed through a partnership between the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and DC Surface Transit (DCST), the D.C. Circulator system services six distinct routes across Washington, D.C. and

Rosslyn, VA. In line with the DDOT's comprehensive Sustainability Plan and related green infrastructure initiatives, which strive to improve the environment, social structure and economy of Washington, D.C., these 14 Proterra buses will reduce emissions and democratize electric transportation access to all riders throughout one of our nation's most historic cities.

Currently, the Circulator provides door-to-door transportation to more than 25 museums, monuments and memorials along the National Mall. Providing more than five million trips each year, the Circulator only costs \$1 to ride, ensuring that residents, commuters, and visitors alike have access to fast and affordable

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Omnibus Society of America
PO Box A3051
Chicago IL 60690



transportation. Now, with the addition of 14 new battery-electric Proterra buses, these riders can experience the appeal of zero-emission transit options over traditional diesel-dependent alternatives.

With 14 Catalyst E2 buses, the D.C. Circulator will displace more than 88,900 gallons of diesel per year and eliminate more than 243,980 pounds of CO2 emissions annually. In addition to the environmental benefits, the new highly efficient electric buses will also have a positive impact on DDOT's bottom line, since they require less energy to operate and reduced maintenance. Over their 12-year lifetime, the 14 Proterra

buses will result in fuel and maintenance cost savings of more than \$6 million. The Catalyst E2 also holds the world record for an electric vehicle travelling 1,013.76 miles on a single charge.

"As one of the most vibrant and visited cities in the nation, Washington, D.C. is the perfect place for us to show citizens from across the country and the world that our technology not only dramatically reduces emissions, but also fundamentally improves the rider experience," said Ryan Popple, CEO of Proterra. "We are proud to partner with DDOT, WMATA and DCST, which have made zero-emission transportation for D.C. possible and continue to raise the bar for its passengers and community alike."