



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OMNIBUS SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.

MAY-JUNE 2019

RUN 03-2019

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 3, 2019, 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 a video presentation by Bill Reynolds on trolley coaches,

The June meeting of the Omnibus Society of America will be held on June 7, 2019, in the Anderson Pavilion of Swedish Covenant Hospital. The meeting will start at 7:00 pm.

Our June meeting will be presented by Dennis McClendon. BRT systems in Brazil have gotten lots of attention, but in recent years various cities in the northwestern "shoulder" of South America have built new lines. We'll look at systems in Lima, Guayaquil, Quito, Bogotá, Cartagena, and Medellín. Along the way, we'll also see the aerial tramways now serving as public transport in La Paz and Medellín.

CTA to Modernize Red Line Tracks at Addison Station

March 7, 2019

Improvements will upgrade tracks to provide smoother ride and eliminate slow zones ahead of start of Red and Purple Modernization Phase One Project

Work begins March 8; Construction work will have impacts on service, local community

The Chicago Transit Authority today announced that it is investing nearly \$4 million in railroad track improvements on the Red Line at Addison station, as part of Mayor Emanuel's ongoing modernization of CTA rail service and the Red Line, the city's busiest rail line. The project will provide a smoother ride and eliminate a slow zone and

track conditions that could lead to future slow zones, improving service for CTA riders.

The track upgrades will ensure reliable service on the Red Line and Purple Line during future major construction work under the Red and Purple Modernization (RPM) Phase One Project, which will begin later this year and is CTA's largest project in history. The work, which is scheduled to begin March 8 and be completed by April 1, includes replacing worn track components that are important to providing reliable train service.

During the work, CTA will continue to provide Red and Purple Line service. CTA will work to minimize impacts to our customers; however, CTA recommends that customers plan ahead and allow extra travel time.

"The Red Line is a critical transportation route for our customers, providing 75 million rides a year, which is why we continue to invest in it and modernize for the future," said CTA President Dorval R. Carter, Jr. "The investments we are making will offer long-term benefits as well as improve the experience for commuters. We thank our customers in advance for their patience during this work."

Work details

- Track renewal work will be performed on the two westernmost tracks that carry southbound Red and Purple Line Express service.
- Replaces track components that are important to providing reliable train service, including concrete plinths, plates and fasteners, contact rail chairs and mounting blocks.
- Eliminates a 25 mph slow zone on the southbound Red Line track and reduces the chance of future slow zones developing in the area -- reducing the risk of greater delays at a later date, particularly during RPM construction work.
- The work is planned to be completed ahead of the Cubs' opening day April 8.

Community impacts

- The work will have community impacts that include noise, truck traffic, occasional sidewalk and parking restrictions and intermittent street and alley closures.

Service impacts and alternatives

- Red and Purple Line service will continue throughout the work period with occasional delays to service because Red and Purple Line northbound and southbound trains will have to share tracks.

- The Addison station will close the weekends of March 8-10 (late Friday night through late Sunday night) and March 29--April 1 (same) because there will be no trains stopping at Addison. The station will be served by shuttle buses that can transport passengers to the next station.
- For three weeks (March 10 thru March 30), the Addison station will offer southbound Red Line service only and will not provide northbound service at Addison during that period. People riding northbound trains to Addison, or who board northbound trains at Addison, will need to:
- Use the Sheridan or Belmont stations to board northbound trains.
- Board a southbound train at Addison, alight at Belmont and cross over to the other platform to board a northbound Red Line train.
- Note: As Sheridan station is not accessible, customers who require an accessible station will have to use Belmont or Wilson stations to enter, exit or transfer

Red and Purple Modernization (RPM) Phase One Project

The CTA is moving forward with the RPM project. Currently the agency is relocating utility lines and equipment ahead of major project construction that will begin in late 2019 and be completed in 2025.

Phase One includes reconstructing the Lawrence, Argyle, Berwyn and Bryn Mawr Red Line stations into larger, 100 percent accessible stations and track structure totaling six miles that is nearly a century old; building a rail bypass north of Belmont station that will improve service reliability on the Red, Purple and Brown lines, increasing train speeds, easing overcrowding on rail cars, and providing additional train service capacity for projected future growth; and installing a new signal system on 23 track miles between Howard and Belmont that, similar to roadway traffic signals, will improve CTA train flow and increase service reliability.

Red Line investments since 2011

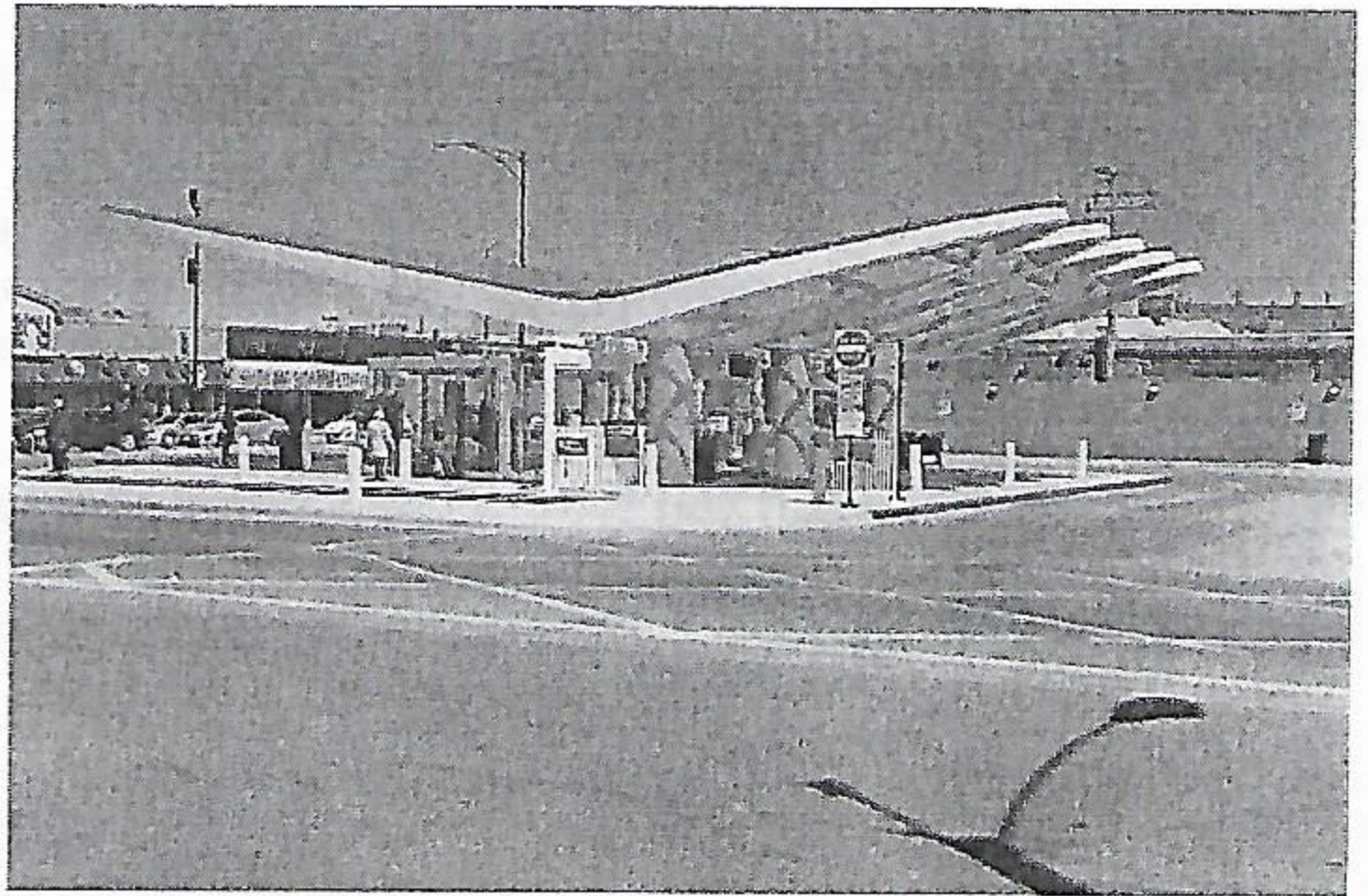
The Addison track work is preceded by a number of Red Line investments completed or under way under Mayor Emanuel, including:

- New 95th Street Terminal
- Red Line Extension (planning under way)
- Red and Purple Modernization Phase One project
- New Wilson Red/Purple Line station
- Clark/Division Red Station – new accessible entrance on LaSalle
- Red Line South Reconstruction
- Red Line North Interim Improvement Project

Mayor Emanuel, CTA Announce the Completion of the Belmont Blue Gateway Project

March 29, 2019

Station rehab latest in a series of track and station improvements completed or underway as part of Mayor Emanuel's Your New Blue O'Hare branch modernization program



Mayor Rahm Emanuel and CTA President Dorval R. Carter, Jr. today cut the ribbon on the Belmont Blue Gateway project, marking the completion of the largest project to date under Mayor Rahm Emanuel's historic, \$492 million *Your New Blue* (YNB) program to modernize and improve the O'Hare branch of the Blue Line.

"Improving Chicago's infrastructure is critical to keep our city moving and growing," said Mayor Emanuel. "As we continue to modernize our transit system to serve a world-class city for the 21st century, the CTA's Belmont Blue Gateway Project has not only created another showcase station for residents, but also helped create good-paying jobs to ensure our future is even brighter than our past."

As it does with all projects, CTA worked with its contractor on the Belmont project to promote a diverse and inclusive workforce. Thanks to those efforts, CTA exceeded project goals, attaining a 33.4 percent Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) rate by hiring 15 DBE subcontractors. This project also created over 200 jobs, with more than 89 of them being direct, on-site opportunities.

"This project, like the dozens of others completed by CTA under Mayor Emanuel, is more than just an investment in transit, it's also an investment in the surrounding community," said CTA President Dorval R. Carter, Jr. "This one investment has created new jobs and business opportunities, while also providing residents and visitors with a safer, modern, more efficient travel environment with a one-of-a-kind experience that is only available here in the Avondale community."

Upgrades made as part of this \$17 million project include the addition of a new architectural steel canopy for the terminal, designed by the Chicago architecture firm Carol Ross Barney. The canopy creates a community gateway for the station and local neighborhood, while also visually enhancing the street-level entrance to the subway station.

This modernization project represents the first major renovation to the facility since it opened nearly 50 years ago. Other project improvements include:

- Safer and modernized bus arrival and departure area—featuring new LED lighting, additional overhead heaters, repaved surface and new signage
- Permanent prepaid boarding area
- Enhanced communications systems, including new Bus and Train Tracker signs, and an upgraded public announcement (PA) system throughout
- New LED lighting and repainted surfaces throughout the rail station
- New concrete platform decking

The Belmont Transit Center is important transit hub on Chicago's Northwest side, serving nearly 1.8 million entries to the Blue Line and providing connections to the heavily traveled #77 Belmont and #82 Kimball/Homan bus routes.

Belmont is the ninth of 14 stations to be renewed under the YNB program and follows a number of other projects that are either completed or underway, including track and signal system improvements to increase service reliability for customers. YNB is the largest investment in the Blue Line since it was extended to O'Hare International Airport 30 years ago and is part of more than \$8 billion of transit investment begun under Mayor Emanuel since 2011.

CTA Statement Regarding Belmont Blue Line Accessibility Improvements

April 10, 2019

Since completing the Belmont Blue Line improvement project recently, we have received inquiries regarding CTA's commitment to accessibility. In response, we wanted to provide some more information about that important question.

CTA is absolutely committed to accessibility—and has been for many years. Currently, 100% of our buses and trains are accessible. And 71 % of our rail stations are accessible, which is among the highest rail station accessibility percentages of the older transit systems in the United States. Over the last eight years, nine stations have added accessibility, and four brand new accessible stations were constructed.

In just the last few years, CTA has added elevators to many stations, including Quincy (2018), Wilson (2018), Illinois Medical District (2018), Washington/Wabash (2017), and Addison Blue Line (2016). We've also continued to improve accessibility systemwide through signage, audio alerts, digital screens, bus shelter features, and email/text alerts about elevator status.

And while we're proud of the progress we have made, we recognize that our work will not be complete until we reach 100% accessibility. That's why last year, CTA published the Strategic Plan for All Stations Accessibility Program (ASAP), a comprehensive plan to make our entire rail system 100% vertically accessible. CTA is the first large transit agency in the U.S. to develop a plan like ASAP, which outlines project plans, station concepts and cost estimates, as well as prioritizes both short-term and long-term accessibility improvement projects—including the addition two elevators at the Belmont Blue Line station.

Specifically, the proposed station modifications at Belmont in the ASAP plan include an elevator from street level to the unpaid side of the station house mezzanine and an elevator from the paid side of the station house mezzanine to the platform. An additional exit is also proposed at the south end of the platform to provide a second point of egress. Making Belmont Blue Line vertically accessible is challenging because it is a subway facility, which in general are typically more complex due to the location of the mezzanine and/or platform areas with buildings and streets above and often require excavation and utility location. The full Belmont Blue station accessibility project is estimated to cost \$68 million.

Successful implementation of ASAP will rely heavily on future State capital programs. This will require the State to establish new revenue sources to fund transportation infrastructure improvements. CTA supports these new methods to increase funding for transportation infrastructure and will continue to advocate that accessibility projects be prioritized as part of future State capital programs. CTA is also advocating for a new federal funding program to incentivize accessibility improvements beyond the ADA requirements.

Like other station projects included in CTA's Your New Blue station improvement program, the recently completed Belmont Blue station work had a limited budget that only allowed for smaller-scale interim improvements—waterproofing, platform floor repairs, lighting and electrical work, creation of a prepaid boarding area, and construction of a protective canopy. The Belmont Blue Line station is a critical bus transfer location, providing more than 5,400 daily transfers between the CTA bus and rail networks. Improvements made as part of the recent Belmont Station construction project have provided much needed enhancements to the station's bus waiting areas, which will improve comfort as well as customer circulation and connectivity between transfers. These interim improvements will provide significant customer benefits while we pursue

funding for the ASAP program's more comprehensive Belmont Blue station project that will make it accessible.

Accessibility benefits everyone, and the CTA looks forward to continued discussions with the disability community and the State of Illinois on how we can work together to make ASAP a reality.

Mayor Emanuel and CTA Announce Entire Rail System Now 100 Percent Equipped with High-Definition Cameras

April 4, 2019

Red and Blue Line subway camera upgrades complete; part of \$38 million Safe & Secure Program funded by Mayor Emanuel's innovative ride-hailing fee

Mayor Emanuel and CTA President Dorval R. Carter, Jr. today announced the completion of work to install 1,000 high-definition (HD) surveillance cameras throughout the Red and Blue line subway stations, making the entire system equipped with HD cameras—a valuable tool to help deter and solve crimes.

"Through this investment, we're building on a world-class public transportation system that provides the comfortable, safe and secure experience every rider deserves," said Mayor Emanuel. "Upgrading CTA's surveillance network with state-of-the-art, high definition cameras will help ensure the safety and security of all passengers who rely on our bus and rail system to get to work, school and to destinations across our great city."

Since May 2018, crews have been switching out old analog surveillance cameras with new HD cameras across all nine Red Line subway stations and all 12 Blue Line subway stations, as well as installing additional cameras to improve surveillance coverage. In total, 660 existing cameras were upgraded, and 340 cameras were added, expanding the previous subway station camera coverage by more than 50 percent.

"Ensuring the safety of our customers and employees is our number one concern," said CTA President Carter. "The Safe & Secure program allows us to continue investing in the safety of our system and further our efforts towards providing a safer transit environment for our riders and employees."

CTA's security camera network has more than doubled in size since 2011 and now boasts more than 32,000 cameras systemwide – making it the most comprehensive networks among major U.S. transit agencies. CTA's cameras have been an invaluable tool for police as they investigate crimes committed on or near CTA properties, as well as identifying crime patterns and conducting remote surveillance missions. On average, images pulled from CTA's cameras have aided police in arresting roughly 200 persons each year.

"CTA's high-definition surveillance cameras strengthen the CPD's ability to keep buses, trains and the entire city safe," said Chicago Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson. "The Safe and Secure Program is just one more way CPD and CTA are partnering to ensure that our transportation system is safer than ever."

The new HD surveillance found throughout the Red and Blue line subway stations have been an important tool to help Chicago Police identify crime suspects and detect crime patterns. Last month, cameras recently installed at the Roosevelt Red Line station aided CPD in the arrest of three individuals now charged in connection with an altercation that led to a CTA employee being stabbed. Upgraded cameras at the Jackson Blue Line station also assisted police in the arrest of an individual now charged in connection with an altercation that led to a victim being pushed to the tracks in December.

Importantly, cameras are just one component in a multi-pronged effort towards combatting crime that also involves CTA employees, private security agencies and, most importantly, the Chicago Police Department, as well as suburban law enforcement agencies that provide security for the CTA.

As part of the multi-year Safe & Secure program, a total of 1,000 new cameras will be added and more than 3,800 older-model cameras will be upgraded throughout the rail system. Additionally, new lighting, repairs and other improvements will enhance safety at all 145 CTA rail stations. New HD cameras will also be installed at more than 100 CTA bus turnaround locations and video monitors will be added to all CTA rail stations to aid personnel in monitoring station and customer activity.

Mayor Emanuel Joins CTA, CDOT and Alderman Burnett to Launch New Program to Prioritize Bus Service on Popular Routes

April 19, 2019

New initiative delivers on recommendations made by the Mayor's New Transportation and Mobility Task Force

Mayor Rahm Emanuel was joined today by Alderman Walter Burnett, the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) and the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) to announce plans for the first of a series of projects to be completed in 2019 that will prioritize CTA bus service, enhance pedestrian safety and improve the flow of traffic along some of the City's most heavily traveled corridors.

Recognizing the vital role of bus service to Chicago's robust transportation network and its value to the local economy, Mayor Emanuel allocated \$5 million toward unsnarling bus slow zones at bottlenecks and pinch points to improve service along entire bus routes. This new initiative, the Bus Priority Zones program, complements the Mayor's commitment to extend the City's transit oriented-development policy to high

capacity bus corridors, and is one of the first projects to be implemented based on recommendations made by the Mayor's New Transportation and Mobility Task Force in March. Importantly, the commitment to prioritize bus service has been a leading initiative of the City in support of the effort to meet its climate goals under the Chicago Climate Charter and as part of Bloomberg Philanthropies' American Cities Climate Challenge.

"Chicago has a world-class transportation system and a key part of our success is CTA's bus service that provides almost 250 million rides each year," Mayor Emanuel said. "We can encourage even more people to ride CTA buses and make Chicago a greener City by making targeted improvements along some of our most heavily traveled routes.

Improvements made under the Bus Priority Zone program may include street resurfacing work and establishing designated bus-only lanes along certain stretches of the corridor to improve bus service during weekday rush periods or all-day, depending on the specific location. The designated lanes will be indicated with new pavement marking and signage.

Other program elements include queue jump signals to give buses a head start to get in front of regular traffic, optimizing the location of bus stops, as well as improvements that support pedestrian safety and overall traffic flow for all vehicles.

The first project to be started under the Bus Priority Zone program will be at the intersection of Chicago/Milwaukee/Ogden – one of the busiest bus boarding locations in Chicago during rush periods, on one of the highest ridership and highest frequency bus routes in the CTA system. The eight-week project will begin immediately and include street resurfacing, new signage and the reconfiguration of May Street into a cul-de-sac, which will improve the safety and flow of traffic at the intersection and also provide an extended and safer bus boarding area for riders.

"Improving the speed and reliability of bus service has been one of my top priorities, and this new funding will help us accomplish that goal on two of our busiest routes the #66 Chicago and #79 79th," said CTA President Dorval R. Carter, Jr. "With our buses providing roughly half of our system ridership, it's vital that we make these investments and find ways to keep Chicago a thriving and livable city on the move."

"By making these targeted investments, our goal is to speed up bus service, improve reliability, increase ridership and customer satisfaction and lower costs for the CTA," CDOT Commissioner Rebekah Scheinfeld said. "By doing a better job of organizing bus movements, we can also improve pedestrian safety and the overall traffic flows on Chicago Avenue, 79th Street, Western Avenue and other high-volume locations."

The #79 79th Street bus route, with 7.8 million rides in 2017, and #66 Chicago Avenue bus route, with 6.9 million rides, were selected for the initial improvements based on CTA and CDOT studies that looked at a host

of factors, including service coverage, ridership, operations, population/employment and feasibility.

In addition to the Bus Priority Zone work on 79th and Chicago Avenue, additional targeted investments have been identified for other high volume locations, such as Western Avenue and downtown intersections that serve multiple bus routes, as part of the Mayor's proposal to extend transit oriented-development for buses. Transit signal priority on Western Avenue is also planned to be completed by the end of 2019.

Chicago is one of 25 cities nationally working to accelerate its efforts to reduce carbon emissions and promote a sustainable future through the American Cities Climate Challenge. Chicago is advancing a suite of ambitious actions in transportation, including encouraging low-carbon mobility options, developing policies that support transit ridership, and defining and expanding the high-frequency public transit network. With the support provided through the Climate Challenge, the city is working to identify additional corridors for improvements under the Bus Priority Zone program, which directly supports the speed and reliability of the city's most heavily traveled corridors.

The expansion of transit-oriented development incentives have been developed in coordination with the Department of Planning and Development. They are targeted to enhance development around busy bus corridors and key bus-bus and bus-rail connections, supporting the expansion of affordable housing options and complementing other commercial development initiatives like the nearby Retail Thrive Zones on Chicago and 79th.

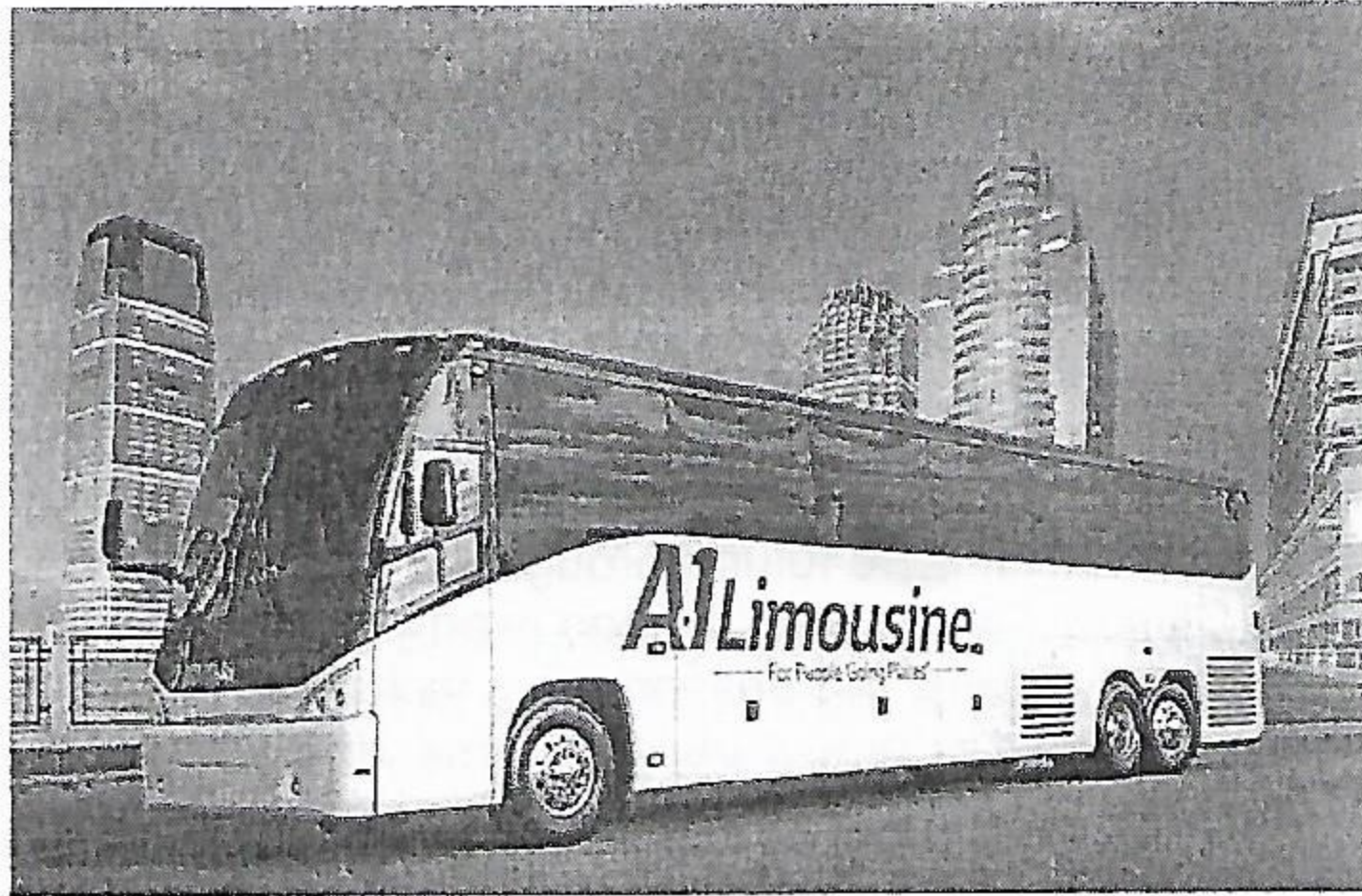
A-1 LIMOUSINE ADDS 4 NEW MCI J-SERIES COACHES INCLUDING MCI J4500 AUCTIONED TO BENEFIT ABA FOUNDATION AT ABA MARKETPLACE 2019 AND TWO MCI J3500 COACHES

DES PLAINES, ILLINOIS, APRIL 5, 2019: (TSX:NFI) Motor Coach Industries (MCI), a U.S. subsidiary of NFI Group Inc., ("NFI"), the largest transit bus and motor coach manufacturer and parts distributor in North America, notes A-1 Limousine, already among the nation's top 10 limousine companies and the No. 1 independent carrier in New Jersey, has a 55-year history with many firsts, including introducing motor coaches ahead of competitors more than two decades ago.

That decision would transform the company's business, and MCI has been a proud partner in that effort.

The Princeton-based company will round out its 20-coach fleet with two 2019 MCI J4500 and two all-new 2019 MCI J3500s, the North American leader's recent return to the luxury 35-foot coach market. One of A-1's newest J4500s was the featured MCI coach in American Bus Association (ABA) Foundation Live Auction at ABA

Marketplace Jan. 25-29 in Louisville, KY. Proceeds from the auction event benefit the ABA Foundation's scholarships and motor coach travel and tourism research.



Jeffrey Starr, president of A-1, planned to bid on the newest J4500 at ABA "before I walked in the door," noting that "I already knew the model's features and value and won." The son of founders Michael and Marilyn Star, Jeffrey Starr helped the family business expand from traditional limousines and vans into motor coaches in the 1990s as corporate clients began asking for ways to move larger groups.

That strategy would begin with MCI pre-owned coaches and a longtime working relationship built with Walter Sturdivant, a 45-year career veteran at MCI who is regional vice president of pre-owned coach sales, based at MCI Sales and Service Center in Blackwood, N.J. and Greg Lukas, regional vice president of new coach sales. Starr explains that MCI quality, person-to-person service and parts support have kept A-1 loyal.

"Every transportation company owner-operator can agree that an out-of-service vehicle is not only detrimental to the business financially, but we are also unable to meet the needs of our customers," said Starr. "I've always counted on MCI for parts and now under NFI Parts, service is even better." A-1's newest coaches, scheduled for delivery later this year, also have Starr looking forward to MCI's new 35-foot era.

Pat Ziska, MCI Vice President of New Coach Sales, says: "We've been very proud to help A-1 build this business. Successful limousine operators like A-1 helped us realize that it was time to re-enter the 35-foot coach market with the creation of our new J-Series."

"MCI builds great buses," added Starr. "The 2019 J4500 and J3500 designs are fantastic. From the turning radius features on both models to the redesigned spacious interiors for maximum seating capacity, MCI coaches are intelligently engineered."

A-1 is taking its new J4500 coaches in a roomy 60-seat configuration and its two J3500 with a 44-seat layout. All four coaches will also carry optional programmable multicolor interior lighting and Advanced Driver

Assistance Systems (ADAS) that help drivers prevent incidents in highway and local traffic.

A-1 knows about 35-foot coaches – its new J3500s will replace the company's longtime "F coaches" built by MCI in Mexico more than 20 years ago.

These four new MCI vehicles will support a fast-expanding coach business, explains Starr. With nearly 130 mini-buses, vans and sedans, the company is electing to grow their coach fleet "with a goal of refreshing our motor coaches with two new coaches every few years because that side of our business is really growing," he explained.

Another source to that growth is A-1's 2018 acquisition of Princeton-based Triangle Tours and Travel, a tour and charter expert in sports, single-day and extended excursions with luxury touches like tailgate party services featuring upscale restaurant-style catering.

A-1's culture of personal service and schedule, time-keeping management has made it particularly adept at managing large group travel.

Starr recalls the time his business was responsible for transporting 700 students to an event in Philadelphia that required 175 motor coaches (sourced with nearby operators) with pinpoint drop-off and pick-up schedules of less than a half-hour. A-1 managed it all by placing 30 people on the ground at the right locations and having bus mechanics available to service coaches if required. "We have the know-how, technology and communication systems in place that helped us complete that move and many others to perfection," said Starr.

"It's also about A-1's staff," says Starr. With a staff of nearly 250 including drivers, A-1's longest employee, who ran dispatch over a 55-year career with the company, has just become a consultant on future projects. Additionally, the company's roots in sedan-based transportation have transferred its chauffeur philosophy to A-1's coach business. Starr explains that many of A-1's coach drivers were once sedan and limousine chauffeurs who understand deep, longtime customer relationships and the nuances of personalized on-time service. Each A-1 coach driver receives ongoing safe driver and first aid training throughout the year.

A longtime family legacy in ground transportation

Starr's grandfather originally founded Starr Transit in the New York area and father Michael branched out by buying his uncle's taxi business and adding school buses and car rentals in those early days. Jeffrey Starr remembers cleaning rental cars and assisting in the office at nine years old – the only child would officially join the company in 1985.

Jeffrey Star would go on to add mini-buses, coaches and a second location in Eastern Pennsylvania. Now, representing the fourth generation in the transportation business, son Aaron is A-1's Operations Manager. Today, Michael comes into the office nearly daily while Marilyn has an office at home.

In their free time, Jeffrey and Aaron are both volunteer firefighters in their townships. Every Saturday morning Jeffrey heads to the local dog shelter where he volunteers with his daughter Racheal who plans to become a veterinarian. His oldest daughter Rebecca works for a non-profit research firm near Washington, D.C. and his two stepdaughters are still in school. Sydney is studying to be a physician's assistant and Taylor is majoring in media.

Family is important. Jeffrey Starr said: "The best part of my job has been working with my parents for the past 34 years. We're a close-knit family and it's been a pleasure to run a family business together."

New buses unveiled

Nine new transit buses will soon be seen driving the streets of St. Joseph, and on Monday, city leaders gathered in the bus barn to see a sample of the new fleet.



Mayor Bill McMurray, Council Member Marty Novak, city directors and city staff members cut the ribbon on the new, 30-foot Gillig buses after a brief presentation by Director of Public Works Andy Clements.

Transit General Manager Mary Gaston said watching the buses show up one at a time has been exciting for herself and her staff, and the first new bus could be added to the fleet this week.

"It's been like Christmas here," Gaston said. "Getting these new buses after waiting for them for so long is really exciting."

She said the new buses look very similar to the old ones, but they have updated features and improvements.

"I think our customers are going to love them. They don't look a lot different than the 2012 buses, but they're clean, they're fresh, they'll be more reliable," Gaston said.

The new buses feature an improved wheelchair ramp with a better angle for when a curb isn't available, as well as an improved release device on the wheelchair securement system.

There also are enhanced lights, mirrors, more fans for cooling and an improved shoulder harness for the driver's seatbelt.

Improvements under the hood mean a more efficient and reliable vehicle, according to Public Works. These include a larger alternator, updated radiator and "fuel sense" program as well as improvements with suspension and rear end ratio.

The buses came with a local cost of \$420,989 each for a total of about \$3.8 million, but they are expected to cut down on maintenance and repair costs, which is up to about \$7.20 per mile for the older buses.

Gaston said the buses are being fitted with equipment and will be on the road soon.

"We have started moving some of the equipment from the old buses onto the new buses, things like the fare boxes and the cameras, that kind of peripheral equipment," Gaston said.

All nine of the buses are expected to be driving the streets by the end of March.

BUILT WITH MCI PRIDE: PEMBINA, ND MANUFACTURING TEAM COMPLETES PRODUCTION OF THE FIRST MCI D45 CRT LE COMMUTER COACH

Unit #81000, one of four going to Bow Valley's Roam Transit, marks a milestone as the first new model manufactured at Pembina in nearly 30 years

All-electric **MCI D45 CRT LE** targeted for 2020

DES PLAINES, ILLINOIS, MARCH 26, 2019: (TSX:NFI) Motor Coach Industries (MCI), a U.S. subsidiary of NFI Group Inc., ("NFI"), the largest transit bus and motor coach manufacturer and parts distributor in North America, delivered the first of its all new MCI D45 CRT LE. The D45 CRT LE is MCI's next-generation Commuter Coach, opening new opportunities in transit.

The game-changing coach offers modern styling and superior rider comfort with something very different — revolutionary passenger accessibility via a second door with a low-entry automatic ramp system. The Low-Entry Vestibule design provides comfortable seating for up to five passengers, including two with mobility devices plus an attendant.

Following rigorous in-service testing by public and private transportation organizations across the nation, the first full production unit, #81000, has rolled off the production line for delivery.

"We're very proud of our team in Pembina and excited to begin delivering this amazing coach," said Ian Smart, MCI President. "We're designing for a transit future where all passengers will have an easier, faster and more comfortable commute, and our North Dakota plant is making that a reality for operators everywhere."

Omnibus Society of America
PO Box A3051
Chicago IL 60690

CARDL STREAM IL 601

27 APR 2019 PM 7 L



Revolutionary MCI D45 CRT LE design

Everything about this MCI design project was new. "Our research and customer feedback demonstrated a need for more efficient, well-designed options for mobility challenged passengers," said Brent Maitland, MCI Vice President of Marketing and Product Planning. "The D45 CRT LE entry simplifies the boarding process, matching low-floor transit dwell times, and as importantly improves the overall passenger experience."

A conventional motor coach wheelchair lift takes an estimated 8 to 10 minutes to deploy; involving a multi-step process. Operating a wheelchair lift requires significant driver training. The lift elevates the passenger in the air to a slide-door entry and requires several driver maneuvers and interior seat adjustments. Boarding the D45 CRT LE is radically easier.

Over four years, MCI's design team worked with Designworks on dozens of concepts. And then it called in the end-users. Representatives from accessibility groups including the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL), The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) and Manitobans with Disabilities (SMD) provided input into the final design.

"The important design element isn't just about boarding efficiency, it's caring about the users," said Maitland. "We learned that all passengers, specifically the mobility challenged, desire a stress-free boarding experience. The vestibule allows passengers using mobility devices to board in the same manner as all other passengers and provides access to amenities for an enjoyable riding experience." In fact, passengers surveyed while riding the D45 CRT LE during test phase service gave it a 93 percent approval rating.



When the D45 CRT LE was unveiled to the industry, National Bus Trader Magazine's industry critic wrote: "One must spend some time inside this module (Vestibule) to grasp not only its extraordinary ingenuity, but a conceptual use of space, mechanics, movement and convertibility I had never before seen in any public transportation vehicle in my entire career. The D45 CRT LE represents new thinking, the solution to a capacity issue that had previously stumped the industry (and) a breakthrough in the ability to capture a huge and growing, untapped market, and a vehicle capable of breaking through travel inequality for a deserving portion of our population whose travel by motorcoach had thus far been marginalized by a profound lack of innovation, if not an almost total absence of interest."

More firsts

Alberta's Bow Valley Regional Transit was the first operator to order the MCI D45 CRT LE. Delivery is scheduled to be completed by April 5, and the agency's four new coaches will serve the longest, most scenic route for Bow Valley's Roam Transit — a 45-minute commute connecting Banff and Lake Louise.

Later this year, SouthWest Transit, Eden Prairie, Minnesota, will take delivery of two new MCI D45 CRT LE Commuter Coaches, citing that the coaches will allow for better vehicle scheduling and cost-savings by providing the right vehicle for both the load demand and accessibility needs.

At United Motorcoach Association's annual EXPO, Fort Lauderdale, January 6-10, MCI also showcased a custom order for a Silicon Valley employer that features bike racks, flat-screen monitors and onboard workspace areas, also planned for 2019 delivery.