



## **Regional Transportation Authority**

### **For immediate release**

**DATE:** August 26, 2008

**CONTACT:** Diane Palmer, Director of Communications, RTA  
Office: 312-913-3282 Cell: 312-907-6902

### **RTA TO BEGIN IMPLEMENTING THE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES RIDE FREE PROGRAM** *Only those enrolled in the Illinois Circuit Breaker program are eligible*

Chicago – The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) will begin partnering with the Illinois Department on Aging to implement the People with Disabilities Ride Free program after Senate Bill 1920 became law today. The new legislation provides free rides on fixed-route transit (regularly scheduled CTA, Metra, and Pace buses and trains) to be made available to any Illinois resident who has been enrolled as a person with a disability in the Illinois Circuit Breaker program. **The People With Disabilities Ride Free program for the RTA goes into effect on October 24, 2008.**

“By providing these free rides on fixed-route service, we are giving additional mobility to those who need it most and helping them to improve their quality of life.” commented Steve Schlickman, RTA Executive Director.

In anticipation of the new legislation, the RTA began working with the Service Boards at the end of June to work through the logistics of the program. The program is being administered similarly to the Seniors Ride Free program launched on March 17.

#### ***Eligibility***

The People with Disabilities Ride Free program has one important qualifier: **the individual MUST be enrolled in the Illinois Circuit Breaker program as a low-income person with a disability.** Once they are enrolled, they will be eligible to apply for the People With Disabilities Ride Free program. Only Illinois residents are eligible.

#### ***For those not enrolled in the Circuit Breaker program:***

The State of Illinois Circuit Breaker program provides grants to low-income senior citizens and persons with disabilities to help them reduce the impact of taxes and prescription medications on their lives. The Circuit Breaker program is administered by the Illinois Department on Aging. Income levels for eligibility range from \$22,218 to \$36,740. To learn more about the Circuit Breaker program, individuals can visit [www.illinois.gov/transit](http://www.illinois.gov/transit) or call 1-800-624-2459 [TTY: 1-888-206-1327]. Information is also available at senior citizen centers, the Mayor’s Office on Disabilities in the City of Chicago, and Independent Living Centers.

--- MORE ---

***For those already enrolled for the Circuit Breaker program and have an RTA Reduced Fare Permit:***

All current RTA Reduced Fare Permit holders with disability and ADA paratransit permits will be contacted by the RTA and asked to complete a short application and return it to the RTA in a pre-paid envelope. The RTA will then verify eligibility and issue a magnetic stripe card called a “Circuit Permit” within 3-4 weeks with an expiration date of June 30, 2009. This permit will allow for free rides on fixed-route transit.

***For those already enrolled for the Circuit Breaker program but DO NOT have an RTA Reduced Fare Permit:***

Circuit Breaker enrollees will need to fill out an application at the RTA’s Customer Service Center at 165 N. Jefferson in Chicago or at one of the registration centers around the six-county RTA region that includes Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will counties. Applicants can find an RTA registration center by visiting [www.rtachicago.com/peoplewithdisabilitiesridefree](http://www.rtachicago.com/peoplewithdisabilitiesridefree) or by calling 312-913-5414 [TTY: 312-913-3111].

Applicants will need a government-issued picture I.D. and a photo of themselves that is 1 ½” square. Some centers may charge up to \$5 for taking your photo. The RTA’s Customer Service Center does not charge for this service.

After verifying the applicant’s eligibility with the Department on Aging, the RTA will issue a “Circuit Permit” within 3-4 weeks with an expiration date of June 30, 2009. This permit will allow for free rides on fixed-route transit.

***How the Circuit Permit will work***

On CTA and Pace buses, permit holders will insert the permit into the fare box or insert it in the turnstile for CTA trains. It will show them they may board free of charge. When riding Metra, the user will show the permit to the conductor.

***Refunds***

The CTA and Metra will be setting up refund programs for riders who still have money on their Reduced Fare Permit after the People With Disabilities Ride Free Program begins on October 24, 2008. Visit [www.rtachicago.com/peoplewithdisabilitiesridefree](http://www.rtachicago.com/peoplewithdisabilitiesridefree) or call 312-913-5414 [TTY: 312-913-3111] to find out where and when you can receive your refund.

###

*About the RTA: The RTA provides financial oversight, funding and regional planning for the three public transit operators in northeastern Illinois: The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) bus and train, Metra commuter rail and Pace suburban bus and paratransit. For more information, visit [www.rtachicago.com](http://www.rtachicago.com) and [www.MovingBeyondCongestion.org](http://www.MovingBeyondCongestion.org).*