



February 2008

A Monthly Report of The Regional Transportation Authority

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- Carole L. Brown**
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Kane, Lake, McHenry
and Will Counties
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Members of Cook County
- Michael Rosenberg**
City of Chicago
- Judy Baar Topinka**
Suburban Board
Members of Cook County
- Douglas M. Troiani**
Suburban Board
Members of Cook County
- Stephen E. Schlickman**
Executive Director

Next RTA Board Meeting:
February 21, 2008 - 9:30 a.m.
Committee Meetings begin at
8:30 a.m.

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New Legislation Will Generate Increased Operating Funds

System-wide fare increases, service cuts avoided



Illinois lawmakers approved and Governor Rod Blagojevich has signed into law, through an amendatory veto process, House Bill 656 that provides \$530 million in new annual operating funds to northeastern Illinois' transit system. The new law also includes reforms recommended by the Illinois Auditor General to enhance coordination and efficiency and makes historic reforms to the CTA pension and retiree health care system. The RTA and Metra Boards are expanded - 13 to 16 and 7 to 11 members, respectively - to provide more representation for the region's growing population. The Governor's amendatory veto will provide free rides on fixed routes to seniors 65 and older living in the RTA's service region (see below).

The bill includes a ¼ of 1% increase in the sales tax across the RTA region and authorizes the City of Chicago to increase the real estate transfer tax to help support the CTA. The proposal also contains an additional sales tax increase of ¼ of 1% in each of the collar counties, which would be controlled by the individual county boards and could be used for public safety and

transportation projects – both road and transit.

“On behalf of millions of regional transit users, the RTA thanks the Illinois General Assembly for passing landmark transit funding and reform legislation. Governor Rod Blagojevich, Representatives Julie Hamos and Sid Mathias and Senators John Cullerton and Rickey Hendon deserve special credit for their leadership on this bill that will now avoid service cuts, fare hikes and layoffs,” said Steve Schlickman, RTA Executive Director. “Most of all, we thank the riders and transit employees for their patience during this debate, and we look forward to working together to provide quality transit service that northeastern Illinois needs and deserves.”

While the new law addresses transit's operating needs, the General Assembly is still considering a state capital funding plan that would address the system's infrastructure needs. New trains, buses, stations, track and upgrades are needed across the system.

For a summary of the mass transit reform legislation, log on to www.rtachicago.com.

Work Begins to Give Seniors Free Transit

On March 17, the RTA will begin offering free rides on fixed routes to seniors aged 65 and over who live in the RTA service region. The free rides will be available on the CTA, Metra and Pace. To take advantage of the free transit, seniors must have the senior reduced fare card. If a senior doesn't already have an RTA reduced fare card, they can apply for one at the RTA's Customer Service Center at 165 N. Jefferson or at one of the registration sites around our region.

Once they have the card, seniors riding CTA or Pace can simply use their senior reduced fare card in the bus farebox or at the train station turnstile. On Metra, seniors will be able to show their senior reduced fare card to the on-board staff to receive their free ride.

For more information, go to www.rtachicago.com/seniorsridefree or call 836-7000 from any area code or TTY: 312-836-4949.

About the Programs

The Job Access Reverse Commute Program

Job Access Reverse Commute grants are used to improve access to transportation services to employment and related activities for welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals. Grants are also available for transporting residents from urban areas to suburban employment opportunities.

New Freedom Program

New Freedom grants are used to provide new public transportation services and public transportation alternatives beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) that assist individuals with disabilities, including to and from jobs and employment support services.

How to Apply

Learn more about the Job Access Reverse Commute and New Freedom programs and download an application at jarcnf.rtachicago.com. All applications are due by 4 p.m. on March 20, 2008.

RTA Invites Applications for Transit Projects

The RTA has launched a call for projects that will help improve mobility and ensure the provision of efficient transportation services in a seven-county region. The grant program will provide \$5.6 million through the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and the New Freedom programs. Funds will be awarded to initiatives that propose ideas to improve service coordination and efficiency in the region while avoiding service redundancies, and that link workers with job opportunities. The RTA administers both grant programs as the designated recipient of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds.

The search for innovative projects follows the RTA's completion of the Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan developed in conjunction with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP). That planning initiative, adopted by the RTA Board last October, identifies and recommends regional and local strategies that encourage the most effective use of available community transportation services to enhance mobility for the region's older adults, persons with disabilities and persons with low incomes.

New project applications from Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will counties will be accepted through March 20. Any operating projects proposed will require a 50 percent local match and any capital projects will require a 20 percent local match. A recommended list of projects will be considered at the June 19, 2008 RTA Board meeting.

“Ride in Kane” Launches



Ride in Kane launches with the ceremonial ribbon cutting in Geneva. (Photo courtesy of Pace)

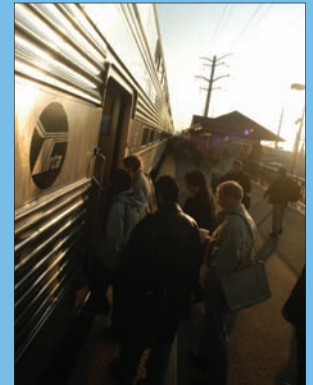
January 25th marked the launch of a new public transportation program for Kane County called “Ride in Kane.” The Kane County Paratransit Coordinating Council rolled out the new program that unites all of the county's dial-a-ride programs under one organization.

To implement the service, the Ride in Kane program received nearly \$2.4 million in federal grants through the Job Access Reverse Commute and New Freedom Programs administered by the RTA. The council also collected \$1.7 million in matching funds from 25 local governments and social-service organizations.

The new service will coordinate fragmented transit services into a combined system and optimize resources to expand service into areas currently not served or underserved. The main goal is to help increase the mobility of older adults and persons with disabilities.

The Ride in Kane program will provide curb-to-curb services to sponsored individuals 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. For more information, call 1-888-480-8549.

Project Success: Metra's Sunrise Service



Metra's successful Sunrise Service on the Union Pacific North line was established last year using a grant from the Job Access Reverse Commute program. That project added an additional early morning reverse commute Metra train from Chicago to Waukegan to meet early work start times of north suburban employers. The added train also benefits employees who reside farther north along the line who now have a viable suburb-to-suburb travel option to the same suburban business centers. An added benefit from the new service was gained because the earlier outbound train necessitated an earlier pre-dawn inbound train which serves the traditional commute market.

Regional Transportation Authority Financial Report

OCTOBER 2007 (For comparative purpose, the CTA figures in 2006 do not include expenses for paratransit service)

The October combined net results of the Service Boards of \$74.6 million were unfavorable to budget by \$0.8 million or 1.1%. Compared to last year, net results were unfavorable by \$2.0 million or 2.7%.

Year-to-date combined net results of the Service Boards of \$765.8 million were \$4.9 million or 0.6% favorable to budget. The combined Service Boards revenue was \$10.3 million or 1.4% unfavorable, while expenses were \$4.8 million or 0.6% favorable to budget. Compared to last year, each Service Board had unfavorable results in a combined amount of \$60.0 million.

Recovery Ratio

The system-generated revenue recovery ratio of 53.2% was 1.1 points unfavorable to budget and was 0.5 points unfavorable to prior year's result.

For the year, the RTA system-generated revenue recovery ratio of 51.4% was even with budget and was 2.2 points unfavorable to last year's result.

Sales Tax

Sales tax figure for October of \$64.0 million was \$4.9 million or 8.3% higher than budget and \$3.8 million or 6.3% higher than prior year. For the year, sales tax through October of \$616.6 million was \$7.1 million or 1.2% higher than budget and was \$5.3 million or 0.9% higher than prior year.

Ridership

Ridership for October of 58.1 million was 1.2 million lower than budget and was 2.8 million or 5.2% higher than last year. For the year, ridership of 521.7 million was 2.2 million or 0.4% lower than budget and was 9.3 million or 1.8% higher than prior year.

October 2007 Operating Financial Report—Regional Summary (in millions)⁽³⁾

	Current Year vs. Budget								Current Year vs. Prior Year					
	Month				Year to Date				Month			Year to Date		
	Actual	Budget	Δ Unit	Δ %	Actual	Budget	Δ Unit	Δ %	Actual	Δ Unit	Δ %	Actual	Δ Unit	Δ %
Net Results														
CTA	\$44.0	\$45.0	\$1.0	2.1%	\$467.2	\$456.6	(\$10.6)	(2.3%)	\$41.8	(2.2)	(5.3%)	\$416.2	(\$51.0)	(12.3%)
Metra	\$21.6	\$20.5	(\$1.1)	(5.5%)	\$212.3	\$223.1	\$10.9	4.9%	\$21.6	(0.0)	(0.2%)	\$204.9	(7.4)	(3.6%)
Pace	\$9.0	\$8.4	(\$0.6)	(7.4%)	\$86.3	\$90.9	\$4.6	5.1%	\$9.3	0.3	3.4%	\$84.8	(1.6)	(1.8%)
Total (1)	\$74.6	\$73.9	(\$0.8)	(1.1%)	\$765.8	\$770.6	\$4.9	0.6%	\$72.7	(\$2.0)	(2.7%)	\$705.8	(\$60.0)	(8.5%)
Recovery Ratio (%)														
CTA	55.7%	56.2%	(0.5)		52.3%	53.8%	(1.6)		56.8%	(1.1)		56.0%	(3.7)	
Metra	57.6%	59.0%	(1.4)		56.7%	55.1%	1.5		55.3%	2.3		56.0%	0.7	
Pace	36.9%	40.9%	(4.0)		38.1%	36.2%	1.9		34.9%	2.0		36.4%	1.8	
System (2)	53.2%	54.3%	(1.1)		51.4%	51.4%	(0.0)		53.7%	(0.5)		53.6%	(2.2)	
Sales Tax Revenue														
Region	\$64.0	\$59.1	\$4.9	8.3%	\$616.6	\$609.6	\$7.1	1.2%	\$60.2	\$3.8	6.3%	\$611.3	\$5.3	0.9%
Ridership														
CTA	47.0	48.3	(1.3)	(2.6%)	420.3	421.8	(1.4)	(0.3%)	44.8	2.2	4.8%	414.1	6.2	1.5%
Metra	7.6	7.5	0.1	1.0%	70.6	70.5	0.1	0.2%	7.0	0.5	7.5%	67.7	2.9	4.3%
Pace	3.5	3.5	(0.0)	(0.7%)	30.8	31.7	(0.9)	(2.8%)	3.3	0.2	4.6%	30.7	0.2	0.5%
Total	58.1	59.3	(1.2)	(2.1%)	521.7	523.9	(2.2)	(0.4%)	55.2	2.8	5.2%	512.4	9.3	1.8%

Bracketed data represents an unfavorable change. Line item calculations are based on whole numbers, some totals may not sum.

(1) Sum of service board deficits.

(2) Service Board results exclude certain revenues and expenses that are included in the system calculation.

(3) 2007 does not include region wide ADA paratransit service.

RTA Job Opportunities

Find out more at www.rtachicago.com

Customer Service Representative:

This position will handle general clerical duties in the RTA's Customer Service Center. The incumbent will answer telephones, follow-up on customer requests, process reduced fare replacement applications, assist with walk-in customers, sell fare media and many other clerical duties.

Division Manager, Program Compliance:

This position will be responsible for the implementation of initiatives to ensure the Service Boards (CTA, Metra, and Pace) are complying with statutory, administrative, and regulatory program requirements, as well as to ensure optimal programmatic and operational performance, in an effort to deliver safe, efficient and effective public transit service.

Manager, Regional Planning:

This position will serve as project manager for multi-faceted and complex studies and projects related to strategic and sub-regional planning. The incumbent will actively represent the RTA in sub-regional studies conducted by others and contribute to the RTA's on-going strategic planning activities by conducting analyses of issues and assisting in the development of options and strategies.

For more information
and to apply,
visit www.rtachicago.com.

RTA Begins Transit Benefit Outreach

The RTA along with contractor Wired Commute have begun reaching out to businesses to enroll them in the RTA/CTA Transit Benefit Fare Program. Through e-mail “blasts” and direct mail, the RTA hopes to sign up companies not taking advantage of tax-free transit for their employees, as well as a host of tax benefits to the company itself. For more information on tax-free transit, go to www.rtachicago.com/infocenter/farecheck.asp.

RTA Staffing News

Michael VanDekreke

The RTA congratulates Michael VanDekreke on being selected as the Authority’s new Accessibility Specialist. Michael will represent the RTA on a wide variety of councils and advisory boards related to the transportation needs of people with disabilities. He’ll also act as the chairperson of the RTA’s Advisory Committee for people with disabilities, as well as manage travel training staff who help instruct people with disabilities to travel safely and independently on public transportation.

Michael has been a Travel Trainer with the RTA since 2005 and began his new position in January.

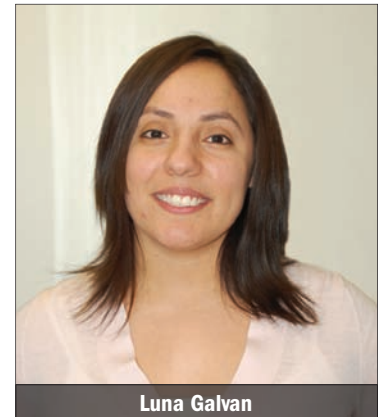


Michael VanDekreke

Luna Galvan

The RTA welcomes Luna Galvan as its new Benefits Specialist in the Human Resources department. Luna joined the Authority in January and will help consult and administer the RTA’s benefits programs and policies.

Before coming to the RTA, Luna worked in Human Resources at United Way of Metropolitan Chicago. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Human Development and Family Studies from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana.



Luna Galvan



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