



September 2008

A Monthly Report of The Regional Transportation Authority

## RTA Now Administering the People With Disabilities Ride Free Program

*But the program is not really free*

PEOPLE WITH  
**DISABILITIES**  
RIDE FREE

The RTA is partnering with the Illinois Department on Aging to implement the People with Disabilities Ride Free program after Senate Bill 1920 became law on August 26. 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.

This program comes at a cost to the transit system. The program will result in a combined \$5-\$10 million revenue loss for the CTA, Metra and Pace. This is in addition to the estimated \$30 million revenue loss from the Seniors Ride Free Program, and the cut of \$37 million in State reimbursement for the costs of providing free or reduced fares. The program 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.

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

For those not enrolled in the Circuit Breaker program, they will need to enroll in the program through the Illinois Department on Aging. Income levels for eligibility range from \$22,218 for a single person to \$36,740 for a family of at least three. 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. *(Continued on page 2)*

## RTA Sets Record Attendance at Public Hearings

At its August Board Meeting, RTA officials reported on a successful series of public hearings held around the six-county region. Thirteen public hearings were held August 4-14 attracting over 230 attendees with more than 65 of those individuals providing comments. The hearings were launched by the RTA to help inform transit riders and non-riders alike about the 2009 budget outlook, the implementation of reforms from the new transit legislation, the status of updating the regional strategic plan and the critically needed capital investments to maintain, enhance and expand the regional transit system.



RTA Director Jan Carlson answers questions during an RTA Public Hearing in Kane County.

The series of hearings just completed were intended to allow the public to be involved earlier in the budget process and to offer meaningful input. Comments received will be responded to by the Service Boards or the RTA. Another round of public hearings will be held in November before the regional 2009 transit budget is finalized. For more information, visit [MovingBeyondCongestion.org](http://MovingBeyondCongestion.org).

**Jim Reilly**  
RTA Chairman

**James Buchanan**  
City of Chicago

**Jan Carlson**  
Kane County

**William R. Coulson**  
Suburban Cook County

**Rev. L. Tyrone Crider, Sr.**  
Suburban Cook County

**Patrick J. Durante**  
DuPage County

**Phil Fuentes**  
City of Chicago

**Al Jourdan**  
McHenry County

**Dwight A. Magalis**  
Lake County

**Patrick V. Riley, Jr.**  
Suburban Cook County

**Michael Rosenberg**  
City of Chicago

**J.D. Ross**  
Will County

**Michael Scott**  
City of Chicago

**Judy Baar Topinka**  
Suburban Cook County

**Douglas M. Troiani**  
Suburban Cook County

**Stephen E. Schlickman**  
Executive Director

**Next RTA Board Meeting:**  
September 15, 2008 - 9:30 a.m.  
Committee Meetings begin at  
8:00 a.m.

**RTA Main Office**

Suite 1550  
175 W. Jackson Boulevard  
Chicago, Illinois 60604  
(312) 913-3200  
[www.rtachicago.com](http://www.rtachicago.com)

# Transit's Impact: By The Numbers

**1.4 billion**

Number of gallons of fuel U.S. Public Transportation saves each year

**\$5.72 billion**

The amount of fuel savings at June's average gasoline price of \$4.09/gallon that workers and families save

**5**

The percent of U.S. commuters who take public transportation to work because most lack convenient access

**33**

The percent of Americans who live near rail transit who regularly use it

**41,000-47,500**

The range of the number of jobs created with every \$1 billion invested in public transportation

**30**

The percent of greenhouse gas emissions a typical two-adult, two-car household can cut by taking public transportation instead of driving

Source: Friends of Earth - August Factsheet

*(Continued from front page)*

For those already enrolled in the Circuit Breaker program and have a RTA Reduced Fare Permit with disability or ADA paratransit permit, they will be contacted by the RTA and asked to complete a short application and return it to the RTA. The Authority 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 in the Circuit Breaker program but **do not** have an RTA Reduced Fare Permit, they 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 region. Applicants can find a registration center by visiting [www.rtachicago.com/peoplewithdisabilitiesridefree](http://www.rtachicago.com/peoplewithdisabilitiesridefree) or by calling 312-913-5414. 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.

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.

The CTA and Metra will set 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 to find out where and when you can receive your refund.

## Working Toward a Sustainable Future

**R**TA Executive Director Steve Schlickman moderated a national sustainability roundtable discussion on July 28 entitled "Going Green in Chicago." The panel included the executive directors from the CTA, Metra and Pace who described their respective agency's green transit efforts that ranged from buying hybrid buses to recycling water to wash locomotives to solar-powered bus stops. Over 130 people attended the discussion which was part of a larger sustainability conference put on by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) in Chicago.



(l-r) Pace Executive Director T.J. Ross, Metra Executive Director Phil Pagano, CTA President Ron Huberman, and RTA Executive Director Steve Schlickman

## Spreading the *drive less. live more.* message

**B**right and early on August 9, RTA and Pace staff members and family participated in the 78th Annual Bud Billiken Parade in Chicago. The crew helped promote the *drive less. live more.* campaign to an audience of a million who had lined the streets as well as those watching at home on ABC and WGN.



(standing: l-r) Marcus Feliciano, RTA's JC Vannatta, RTA's Gil Feliciano, Pace's Kris Skogsbakken (kneeling: l-r) RTA's Clint Sabin, Pace's Maggie Daly, RTA's Joseph Battle, Lili & Lauren Feliciano

# Regional Transportation Authority Financial Report

MAY 2008 (For comparative purposes, the CTA figures in 2006 do not include expenses for paratransit service)

The combined net results of the Service Boards of \$89.7 million were unfavorable to budget by \$4.3 million or 5.1%. Compared to '07, net results were unfavorable by \$10.1 million or 12.7%.

Year-to-date combined net results of \$452.3 million were \$7.6 million or 1.7% unfavorable to budget. Combined revenue was \$9.7 million favorable, while expenses were \$17.3 million unfavorable to budget. Compared to '07, each Service Board had unfavorable results in a combined amount of \$39.7 million.

## Recovery Ratio

May's system-generated recovery ratio of 53.7% was 1.6 points unfavorable to budget and was 2.9 points favorable compared to last year's. Year-to-date for the recovery ratio of 53.4% closely

matched budget and was 4.7 points favorable to last year's result.

## Sales Tax

May sales tax of \$63.2 million was \$2.5 million or 3.8% lower than budget and \$1.1 million or 1.7% lower than the prior year. Year-to-date sales tax through May of \$296.8 million was \$9.0 million or 2.9% lower than budget and was \$1.4 million or 0.5% higher than prior year.

## Ridership

May ridership of 56.2 million was 3.5 million or 6.7% higher than budget and was 1.6 million or 3.0% higher than last year. Year-to-date ridership of 261.6 million was 8.5 million or 3.4% higher than budget and was 10.1 million or 4.0% higher than prior year.

## MAY 2008 Operating Financial Report—Regional Summary (in millions)<sup>(3)</sup>

Net Results	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 %
CTA	\$54.9	\$51.4	(\$3.5)	(6.9%)	\$276.9	\$266.8	(\$10.0)	(3.8%)	\$47.9	(7.1)	(14.7%)	\$259.3	(\$17.6)	(6.8%)
Metra	\$24.7	\$23.6	(\$1.2)	(5.1%)	\$126.7	\$126.3	(\$0.3)	(0.3%)	\$22.4	(2.3)	(10.5%)	\$111.2	(15.5)	(13.9%)
Pace	<u>\$10.0</u>	<u>\$10.4</u>	<u>\$0.4</u>	<u>3.6%</u>	<u>\$48.8</u>	<u>\$51.6</u>	<u>\$2.8</u>	<u>5.4%</u>	<u>\$9.3</u>	<u>(0.7)</u>	<u>(7.3%)</u>	<u>\$42.2</u>	<u>(6.6)</u>	<u>(15.6%)</u>
<b>Total (2)</b>	<b>\$89.7</b>	<b>\$85.4</b>	<b>(\$4.3)</b>	<b>(5.1%)</b>	<b>\$452.3</b>	<b>\$444.7</b>	<b>(\$7.6)</b>	<b>(1.7%)</b>	<b>\$79.6</b>	<b>(\$10.1)</b>	<b>(12.7%)</b>	<b>\$412.6</b>	<b>(\$39.7)</b>	<b>(9.6%)</b>

Recovery Ratio (%)	Current Year vs. Budget						Current Year vs. Prior Year			
	Month			Year to Date			Month		Year to Date	
	Actual	Budget	Δ Points	Actual	Budget	Δ Points	Actual	Δ Points	Actual	Δ Points
CTA	49.4%	50.4%	(1.0)	47.3%	47.9%	(0.6)	52.2%	(2.8)	48.5%	(1.2)
Metra	56.1%	56.4%	(0.4)	53.0%	52.5%	0.5	55.1%	1.0	53.7%	(0.7)
Pace	37.0%	35.8%	1.2	36.6%	34.3%	2.3	37.6%	(0.6)	38.6%	(2.0)
<b>System (3)</b>	<b>53.7%</b>	<b>55.3%</b>	<b>(1.6)</b>	<b>53.4%</b>	<b>53.3%</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>50.8%</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>48.7%</b>	<b>4.7</b>

Sales Tax Revenue	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 %
Region	\$63.2	\$65.7	(\$2.5)	(3.8%)	\$296.8	\$305.8	(\$9.0)	(2.9%)	\$64.3	(\$1.1)	(1.7%)	\$295.4	\$1.4	0.5%

Ridership	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 %
CTA	45.6	42.6	3.0	7.1%	211.2	204.7	6.5	3.2%	44.2	1.4	3.2%	203.1	8.1	4.0%
Metra	7.3	7.0	0.3	4.2%	35.4	33.8	1.6	4.8%	7.1	0.2	2.9%	33.7	1.7	4.9%
Pace	<u>3.3</u>	<u>3.1</u>	<u>0.2</u>	<u>6.8%</u>	<u>15.0</u>	<u>14.6</u>	<u>0.4</u>	<u>2.6%</u>	<u>3.2</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>1.3%</u>	<u>14.7</u>	<u>0.3</u>	<u>2.2%</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>56.2</b>	<b>52.7</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>261.6</b>	<b>253.0</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>54.6</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>3.0%</b>	<b>251.5</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>4.0%</b>

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

(1) Does not include region wide ADA paratransit service. (2) Sum of service board deficits.

(3) Service Board results exclude certain revenues and expenses that are included in the system calculation. The system calculation excludes certain Service Board revenues but includes the statutory expense credit for 2008 totaling \$200 million.



## RTA Wins National Budget Award

For the twelfth consecutive year, the RTA has won the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada. The award is a significant achievement for the RTA reflecting its commitment to meeting the highest principles of governmental budgeting. To win the award, the RTA had to satisfy nationally recognized guidelines for effective budget presentation.

## RTA Job Opportunities

Find out more at [www.rtachicago.com](http://www.rtachicago.com)

### Travel Trainer (2 vacancies):

This position provides direct instruction to people with disabilities in and around their homes throughout the six-county RTA service area. Ensures access to fixed route bus/rail transportation and enables people with disabilities to travel safely and independently on public transportation. Develops and provides various training programs and conducts pre-assessment interviews throughout the six-county region.

For more information and to apply, visit [www.rtachicago.com](http://www.rtachicago.com).

## The Push For Mass Transit Capital Funding

The RTA recently released a brochure outlining the need for a capital funding program for our region's transit system. Funding approved in January allowed the system to keep operating without service cuts and fare increases. However, funding is still needed to replace outdated or worn vehicles, equipment, tracks, and other facilities. Download your copy at [www.MovingBeyondCongestion.org](http://www.MovingBeyondCongestion.org).



## RTA Board Subcommittee Focuses on Bus Rapid Transit

At its August 21 meeting, the RTA Planning Committee listened to Director Jan Carlson's presentation on bus rapid transit – also known as BRT. Because of the region wide interest in BRT, Committee Chair Judy Baar Topinka appointed a Planning subcommittee to explore BRT projects for the RTA with members including Directors Phil Fuentes, J.D. Ross and Pat Riley with Director Carlson as chair. The subcommittee plans to update the Board in October.

## RTA Staff News

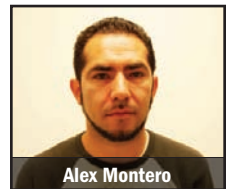
The RTA is proud to announce two service awards. John Allen, Researcher Analyst in the Research, Analysis and Policy Development division marked his 10-year service anniversary in August. Alex Montero, Senior Analyst in the Finance and Administration division, marked his 5th year of service in July.

Darrell Jackson is now in his new position as the Manager of Information Technology. Darrell previously held the position of Help Desk/LAN Technician and had been RTA's Interim Manager of Information Technology.

The RTA said farewell on August 27 to Ryan Frigo, Travel Trainer. Ryan has been with the RTA for the last two years. The RTA is grateful for his contributions and wishes him well as he relocates to Washington, D.C. to accept a new position with the Federal Transit Administration.



John Allen



Alex Montero



Darrell Jackson



## Regional Transportation Authority

175 West Jackson Boulevard, Suite 1550  
Chicago, Illinois 60604

Produced by the Communications Department  
of the Regional Transportation Authority.  
Diane Palmer, Director of Communications  
JC Vannatta, Manager, Marketing  
[communications@rtachicago.org](mailto:communications@rtachicago.org)