

my Metra



CHECK OUT
METRA'S
NEW FARE
PROPOSALS

UP TRANSITION
The Impact for Riders

SAFETY FIRST
The Metra COPS App

FUN IN THE SUN
Metra's Summer Go Guide



my message

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Metra is proposing a major revision to its fare structure, one that we feel is necessary as we continue to adjust to a post-pandemic world.

This was a complicated endeavor, one that required a great deal of brainstorming and analysis. It's never easy to change decades of practice, but we know we can no longer operate the way we have always operated. You'll find important details on **Page 4**.

One of the main goals is to simplify a system that often befuddles new riders. We don't want to complicate onboard fare collection, and we need to hit our revenue targets. We think our proposal meets those goals, but we also want it to pass muster with you, our riders. I encourage you to read all about it and give us your input.

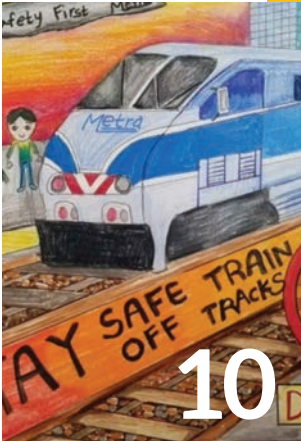
I would like to directly address one of the big changes—the end of our COVID-era promotional products. The \$6 and \$10 day passes and the \$100 “Super Saver” Monthly Pass were introduced and priced aggressively because we wanted to build ridership after it plummeted during the pandemic. The new pricing is needed to meet our revenue needs, but, particularly for Monthly Passes, the pricing remains well below pre-pandemic levels.

In another complicated endeavor, Metra and Union Pacific Railroad have been talking for several years about how to transition the operation of the three UP lines to Metra from UP. This year, that transition has begun. You can read details on **Page 6**.

There is fun in this issue, too, of course. You can find our usual list of places and events to visit via Metra on **Page 14**, and our featured restaurant can be found on **Page 18**. Our continuing series of interviews with Metra Board members is on **Page 8**. And check out **Page 20** for the return of our “Rails, Trails and Ales” excursions on the Heritage Corridor Line.

Thank you for reading and thank you for riding.

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HAVE YOU TAKEN OUR READERSHIP STUDY?

My Metra is your magazine. So, of course, we want to know what you think of it. Do you like the content? Do you find it informative? What would you like to see in future issues? We want to hear from you.

The survey will take just a few moments. And with your help, we can create a magazine that is even more informative, engaging, enlightening, and fun.

Thanks for your help!

METRA PROPOSES MAJOR CHANGE TO FARE STRUCTURE

Simplified System Is Designed to Boost Ridership

Metra has proposed the biggest change to its fare structure in its history, outlining a plan that would reduce the number of fare zones to four from 10 and change some of the fare options available. Metra is now seeking public comment about the proposal, which it hopes to launch in 2024.

Metra's goal is to create a fare structure that customers can easily understand, that will encourage ridership, that will simplify onboard fare collection, and that meets Metra's financial and technical constraints.

"As we continue to recover from the pandemic, we have an opportunity and a responsibility to change how we do business and create a better Metra for our customers," said

Metra CEO/Executive Director Jim Derwinski. "A system that is easier to use will draw new riders and further cement Metra as the best transportation alternative—the safest, most affordable and most reliable."

Metra has historically priced its One-Way, 10-Ride and Monthly tickets based on the distance traveled, using 10 fare zones. Under the new proposal, there would be only four fare zones. Downtown stations would be assigned to Zone 1 and outlying stations would be assigned to Zones 2 through 4 based on a combination of distance from downtown, service patterns and ridership characteristics on each line, which vary.

Under the proposed fare structure:

One-Way Tickets	Day Pass	Bundle of Five Day Passes	Monthly Pass
To Downtown Zone 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$3.75 from Zone 2 • \$5.50 from Zone 3 • \$6.75 from Zone 4 • \$3.75 for any trip that does not include Downtown Zone 1 as a starting point or destination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priced at 2X the cost of a One-Way Ticket • Valid for unlimited rides for a single day within selected zones • \$7 Saturday, Sunday and Holiday Passes will still be available • \$10 Weekend Pass will still be available on the Ventra app only • Current \$6 and \$10 Day Passes would be eliminated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replaces the 10-Ride Ticket • Priced at 9.5X the cost of One-Way Ticket • Available only via the Ventra app • Can be used on non-consecutive days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priced at 20X the cost of a One-Way Ticket • \$75 for Zone 2 • \$110 for Zone 3 • \$135 for Zone 4 • Replaces the current "Super Saver" Pass that was introduced during the pandemic to encourage ridership
Full details and information about how to provide feedback can be found at metra.com/2024FarePlan			

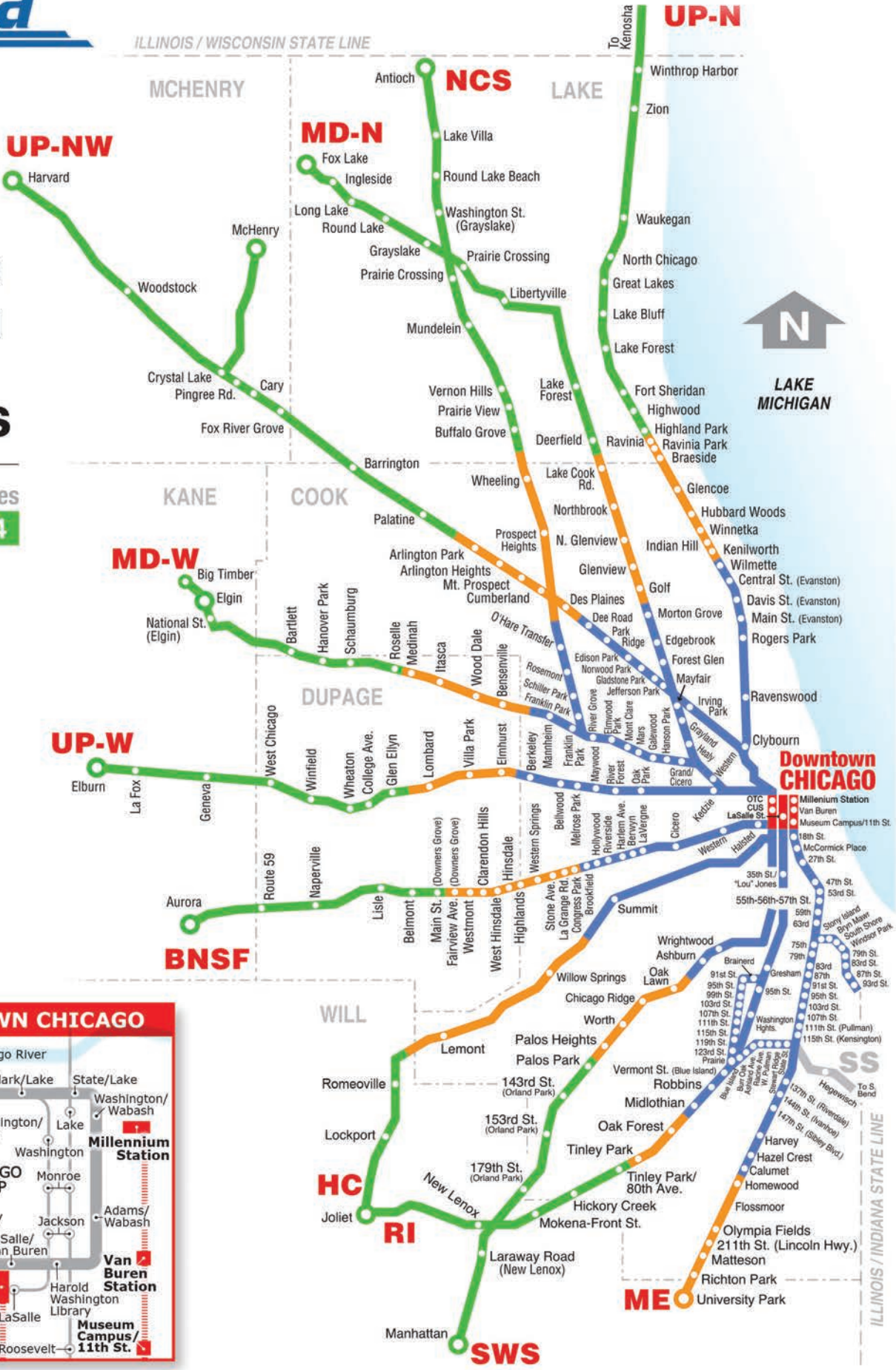


ILLINOIS / WISCONSIN STATE LINE

UP-N

2024 Proposed Metra Fare Zones

Metra Fare Zones



LAKE MICHIGAN

Downtown CHICAGO
Millennium Station
Van Buren
Museum Campus/11th St.
18th St.
McCormick Place
27th St.
35th St./
"Lou" Jones
55th-56th-57th St.
59th
63rd
75th
79th
83rd
87th
91st St.
95th St.
103rd St.
107th St.
111th St. (Pullman)
115th St. (Kensington)
115th St. (Kensington)
137th St. (Riverdale)
144th St. (Hanover)
147th St. (Sibley Blvd.)
Hegewisch
To S. Bend





UNION PACIFIC LINES TRANSITIONING TO METRA

If all goes according to plan, Metra will begin taking over operations of the three Union Pacific lines by the end of the year. What does that mean for riders? Again, if all goes according to plan, you won't notice a difference.

Many riders don't realize that the UP North, UP Northwest, and UP West lines are owned by Union Pacific Railroad, which operates the three lines with its own employees under a contract with Metra. Basically, Metra subsidizes UP's operation of passenger trains over its tracks.

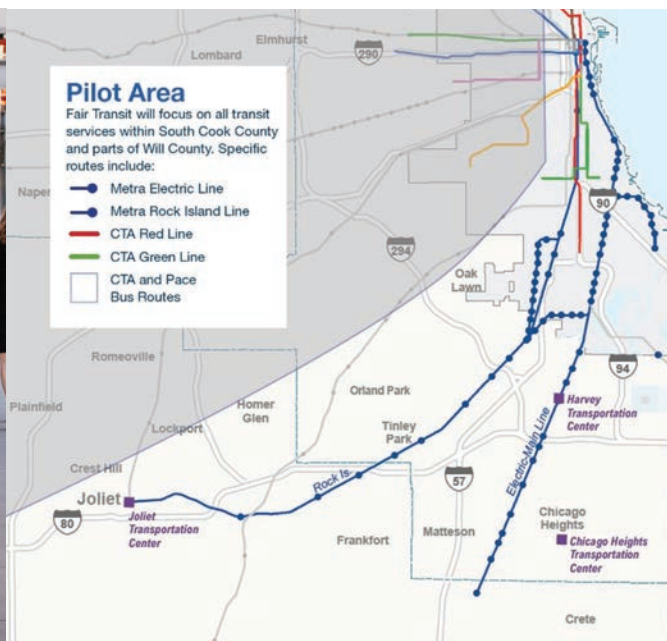
UP, however, wants to get out of the business of operating passenger trains so it can concentrate on its freight business. So, Metra and UP are negotiating an arrangement in which UP will retain ownership of the tracks, but Metra will be directly responsible for operating passenger service with Metra employees.

In many cases, that will mean the UP employees who are now operating and maintaining the trains will be hired by Metra to continue operating and maintaining the trains. Already some of the former UP managers have been hired by Metra. No impacts on schedules or service are anticipated. Metra and UP are still talking about how the tracks, stations, yards, and other infrastructure will be maintained.

The sticky question of what the new arrangement will cost Metra has yet to be addressed. Metra's goal, however, is to pay UP no more than what it is now paying UP.



FAIR TRANSIT PILOT CONTINUES TO BENEFIT SOUTH COOK



For the second year in a row, the Fair Transit South Cook pilot program produced positive results, according to an analysis completed by Cook County.

Championed by Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, the pilot was established on January 4, 2021, and offers reduced fares on Metra's Electric (ME) and Rock Island (RI) lines as well as increased service on Pace Route 352 Halsted. Residents in the Southland experience longer commute times and spend more of their household income on transportation expenses. Fair Transit helps address these inequities by making commuting more affordable and efficient.



Cook County's second year report found:

- *The ME and RI lines continue to recover ridership faster than the other Metra lines, although by a smaller margin than the first year of the program.*
- *An increase in number of riders coming from low-income fare zones relative to 2021.*
- *On both ME/RI and Pace Route 352 Halsted, the majority of riders are using the program to get to work, although school and recreational/social trips make up a significant number as well.*
- *Many riders would have driven if not for reduced fares on the ME and RI lines, which helped decrease pollution and congestion.*
- *Pace Route 352 Halsted ridership held steady.*

Fair Transit South Cook is scheduled to run until the end of this year. Metra and its partners are exploring ways the program can evolve following its completion.

MEET THE METRA BOARD

The job of the 11-member Metra Board of Directors is to manage our nation's fourth-busiest commuter rail system. The Board, which meets monthly, is made up of members representing the six-county Chicago metropolitan area. In this issue of *My Metra* magazine, we invite you to meet Kenneth D. Koehler, Joseph H. McMahon, and Melinda Bush.

FOR COMPLETE METRA BOARD INTERVIEWS VISIT:
metra.com/MeetTheBoard

MEET DIRECTOR KENNETH D. KOEHLER

Kenneth D. (Ken) Koehler, who also serves as the Board Treasurer, was appointed to the Metra Board of Directors in September 2015 by the McHenry County Board. He is a longtime resident of McHenry County and Crystal Lake and served on the McHenry County Board from 2000 to 2015 and as County Board Chairman from 2004 to 2012. For many years he owned and operated Flowerwood, a florist, nursery, garden center and greenhouse operation in Crystal Lake, until selling it in 2004. He and his wife of 54 years, Shirley, have two children and five grandchildren.

What are you looking forward to over the next year?

It's exciting to see that we're advancing on a long-range bridge replacement program as I'm very strong on safety with the bridges. And the fact that we have new passenger railcars on order is very exciting.

Tell us something surprising about yourself.

I was very involved in the McHenry County Conservation District and in fact I was actually president of the district for three years. I've always had a passion for open space, protecting both flora and fauna.

What hobbies or activities do you like?

Sailing, powerboating, and hunting are the three things that I probably enjoy the most.

Cubs or Sox?

I'm a lifelong Cubs fan. When I was growing up in Skokie, I was able to take the CTA down to Wrigley Field. Mr. Cub, Ernie Banks, an exciting guy, was then a player on the Cubs.

What does *My Metra* mean to you?

What it means to me is family. And again, coming out of a railroad family on my father's side, railroad people are family—the Board members, the conductors, and the engineers, all the support staff. Every employee at Metra is so dedicated to the Metra mission.



MEET DIRECTOR JOSEPH H. MCMAHON

Joseph H. McMahon was appointed to the Metra Board of Directors in May 2021 by the Chairman of the Kane County Board. Mr. McMahon, an attorney, is a co-founder of Griffin, Williams, McMahon & Walsh, LLP in Geneva and Chicago. He served as the state's attorney for Kane County and an appointed special prosecutor in matters in Cook, Kendall, McHenry, and Winnebago counties, including the prosecution of former Chicago Police Officer Jason Van Dyke. He lives with his family in suburban Kane County.

What do you like most about being a Board Member?

It gives me an opportunity to improve the experience for our riders and address the transportation challenges of our region.

Tell us something surprising about you or something most people don't know about you?

When I was growing up, I wanted to be a pilot, but I'm color-blind so that disqualified me.

What hobbies or activities do you enjoy?

I enjoy running, biking and swimming (I completed two Ironman triathlons but now I'm a recovering triathlete)

and golf. My wife and I also enjoying traveling to visit family in other states.

A friend who has never been to the Chicago area is in town — where do you take them?

We start the day with coffee at 318 Graham's in Geneva and then we take Metra from Geneva to Chicago. If it is over the holidays then a trip to the windows at Marshall Field's (now Macy's), the Christkindlmarket, State Street and Michigan Avenue, and to complete the Chicago experience, Pizzeria Due for dinner.



MEET DIRECTOR MELINDA BUSH

Melinda Bush was appointed to the Metra Board of Directors in February 2023 by the Chair of the Lake County Board. A lifelong resident of Lake County, she has served as a Grayslake village board trustee, a member of the Lake County Board and a state senator. She lives in Grayslake with her husband; they have one adult son.

What do you like most about being a Board member?

I enjoy the collaboration and the opportunity to be part of moving our transportation into the future while being responsible stewards of the public's money.

Tell us something surprising about you or something most people don't know about you?

I'm a good problem solver and I focus on empowering others to be their best.

What hobbies or activities do you enjoy?

I love gardening, travel, and being outdoors.

What do you like best about living in the Chicago area?

I love living where I can walk to my downtown, and in Lake County we have more than 30,000 acres of forest preserves! We have access to everything!

A friend who has never been to the Chicago area is in town — where do you take them?

We show them downtown Grayslake, show off our open land and take the train to the city! Gotta see the Bean, Buckingham Fountain, and the Mag Mile, grab a Chicago-style hot dog or a Lou Malnati's pizza and have a drink at Cindy's to enjoy the amazing view.

What does *My Metra* mean to you?

That it belongs to me and everyone that uses it.



REWARDING SAFETY: METRA HONORS WINNERS OF SAFETY CONTEST



Metra recently honored the winners of the 16th annual Safety Poster and Essay Contest

Each year, Metra invites students in grades K-12 throughout its six-county service area to submit poster designs and essays highlighting the importance of railroad safety. This year, Metra students created artwork and wrote essays around the theme “Stay Safe, Stay off Train Tracks.”

The contest enables students to use their creativity to take ownership of the safety message by creating posters and essays that are used by Metra in its safety campaigns.

“It’s wonderful to see students participate in this contest and learn the importance of staying safe near the railroad,” said Metra CEO/ Executive Director Jim Derwinski. “*My Metra* is all about taking personal responsibility for our riders and each other, and the winners of this contest have done a great job of demonstrating it through their artwork and essays.”

First-, second- and third-place winners were chosen from each grade level in elementary school, middle school, and high school. First-place poster and essay contest winners received a \$500 gift card, while

second- and third-place poster contest winners received \$250 and \$100 gift cards, respectively. Those receiving honorable mentions received a certificate noting their achievement.

Metra also recognizes the school with the most entries submitted in the poster contest. This year’s winner is Cicero West Elementary School in Cicero with 38 entries. In honor of this achievement, the school will receive notebook computers for use in the classroom.

Go to metra.com/contest for the complete list of winners.

METRA AND DIVVY BIKES. A GREAT CONNECTION



The first bikeshare system was introduced in the Netherlands back in the 1960s. Today, bikeshare systems are popular throughout the world. When first introduced, many thought they would compete with public transit. But research has shown that they actually complement public transit: serving as a greener and healthier way of traveling that first or last mile from a train station or a bus stop.

Chicago's Divvy bikeshare system, launched in 2013, has been a great success. Today, there are some 16,500 bikes at over 800 stations and Divvy also rents ebikes and scooters.

Many people don't know it, but Divvy is, in a way, a form of public transit. It's a program of the Chicago

Department of Transportation. CDOT owns the bikes, stations, and vehicles. The system is managed by Lyft, which manages the largest bikeshare systems in the nation. In fact, Divvy bikes are available on the Lyft app; the way Metra tickets are available on the Ventra app.

Using Metra to travel downtown or other locations and then using a Divvy bike to reach your final destination is a great way to get around. You get exercise, help the environment, and can save money. And when you use Metra for leisure travel, once you arrive, a Divvy bike is a great way to explore an area.

Remember, Metra and Divvy are a great way to get around.



STUDENTS RIDE METRA FOR FREE ON AUGUST 21

To help get area schoolchildren off to a good start, Metra is offering free rides to K-12 grade students on August 21, the first day of school for Chicago Public Schools and many suburban schools.

Metra is joining with the CTA and Pace in providing free rides on this special day. K-12 students attending any public or private school, as well as an accompanying adult, can ride for free from 5:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. on August 21.

"We're proud to help area families get a great start on the new school year," said Metra CEO/Executive Director Jim Derwinski. "It's just one more way we can be *My Metra* for all our riders."

Throughout the school year, students enrolled in grade school or high school can purchase reduced fare tickets. These discounted fares are in effect at all times. To learn more visit metra.com/fares.



HOW TO CONTACT METRA POLICE

As part of its commitment to customer safety and security, Metra is installing new posters on its trains and in its stations to educate riders about how they can report emergencies, crimes, or suspicious behavior to the Metra Police Department.

“Metra trains are among the safest and most secure ways to travel, but if a concern does arise, we want our customers to know the best way to reach us so we can respond immediately and effectively,” said Metra CEO/ Executive Director Jim Derwinski. “These posters will be prominently displayed so the information will be available when and where our customers need it.”

The new posters provide customers with multiple options to report emergencies, criminal activity, or suspicious behavior, including dialing 911 or Metra Police at 312-322-2800. Customers can also text Metra Police at 312-313-9015 or visit MetraCOPS.com.

The posters also include a QR code that customers can scan to download the Metra COPS app, which is another way that customers can quickly and discreetly alert Metra Police to concerns on the train or in the stations. The free app is available for Apple users in the App Store or Android users in Google Play.

The app is intended for the reporting of safety and security issues on Metra trains and facilities, such as a crime in progress, disruptive or aggressive behavior, suspicious activity, unattended bags or packages, vandalism, pan-handling, fare evasion or other concerns. Customers are asked to not use the app for customer service issues,

service disruptions or travel information—for those matters, please use the *Contact Us form* at metra.com/contact-us.

More information about the app can be found at metra.com/metraCOPSapp.

Feel unsafe?

CALL US NOW!

- Call **911** or Metra Police at **312-322-2800** to immediately report emergencies and criminal activity.
- Text **312-313-9015** or visit **MetraCOPS.com** to report suspicious behavior on trains or around stations.

Metra





Sgt. Chauca

A LESSON IN PUBLIC SAFETY

Metra sergeants graduate from command school

As part of its continuing effort to be innovative and progressive, the Metra Police Department has been sending its sergeants to the acclaimed School of Police Staff & Command at Northwestern University's Center for Public Safety.

The school is an intensive leadership and management education program that helps prepare experienced law enforcement professionals for success in senior command positions. The 10-week curriculum zeroes in on such critical command-level content as planning and policies, media relations, organizational behavior, budgeting and resource allocation, human resources, contemporary policing, and more. Course activities allow for class members to learn from one another's experiences and to build relationships and networks that will last long after graduation.

The first Metra sergeant to be sent to the school was Sgt. Sonya Smith, who is now a captain on the Metra force. She graduated in March 2015.

Three more graduated this year: Sgt. Ricky Chauca, Sgt. Christina Morris, and Capt. Ruben Gomez.

"This certification equips Metra Police first-line supervisors, like me, with academic principles, knowledge, and skills to lead effectively during Metra Police operations and critical incidents affecting the Metra system," Sgt. Chauca said.

Metra riders may have noticed new suicide prevention signs posted at their stations. It's part of an effort to promote 988, the new, easy-to-remember number for the national suicide prevention and crisis hotline.

The signs say, "If you need to talk, we're here to listen" and list the Dial 988 phone number for the suicide and crisis lifeline. The signs also promote texting IGotU or 741741 for help.

When people call or text the lifeline, they will be connected to trained counselors who will listen, understand how their problems are affecting them, provide support, and connect them to resources if necessary. Numerous studies have shown that callers feel less suicidal, less depressed, less overwhelmed, and more hopeful after speaking with a counselor.

The previous phone number (1-800-273-8255) will always remain available to people in emotional distress or suicidal crisis.

If You Need To Talk
We're Here To Listen.

988
Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
DIAL 988
OR
TEXT **IGOTU** TO **741741**

Metra SAMHSA CRISIS TEXT LINE

SUMMER IS GOING FAST!

Let Metra get you to the season's hottest events!

The weather is still warm, the days are still long, but back-to-school time is almost upon us. Still, Chicagoland knows how to make summer last. There are music festivals, art fests, baseball, football, basketball, and soccer. There's so much to do when it's summer in the city...and throughout northeast Illinois. The chart on the accompanying page lists just some of what's happening.

Remember, Metra can take you to many of these events. Metra also offers money-saving fares for your entire family — and, during the summer, kids 11 and under ride free with a fare-paying adult seven days a week. Visit metratracker.com to plan your trip and make the most of our wonderful late summer days.



THE CHICAGO BOTANIC GARDEN IS IN BLOOM.

Opened 50 years ago, the Chicago Botanic Garden is one of the world's great living museums and conservation centers. There are some 28 gardens and four nature areas on 385 acres around nine islands. Every year, more than one million people visit. And if you want to join them, Metra can get you there.

The Garden is located near the Braeside Metra station on the UP North Line. You can walk to the garden via a beautiful and ADA-accessible path. You can also use the Glencoe Metra station and take a Pace bus to the Garden.



EVENT / ATTRACTION	DATE(S)	LOCATION
Lollapalooza	August 3-6	Grant Park
Taste of Chicago	August 5	Marquette Park
Cirque Returns	August 9	Millennium Park
Bruce Springsteen	August 9 & 11	Wrigley Field
Fan Expo Chicago	August 10-13	Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, Rosemont
Pink	August 12	Wrigley Field
Market Days Festival	August 12-13	Halsted Street from Belmont to Addison
My House Music Festival	August 12-13	Harrison Park, Chicago
Printer's Row Art Festival	August 12-13	Dearborn Street from Harrison to Polk
Edison Park Fest	August 12-14	Edison Park
Chicago Air & Water Show	August 18-20	North Avenue Beach
Ribfest Chicago	August 18-20	Lincoln Avenue between Irving Park Rd. and Berteau Ave.
Grant Park Music Festival	Through August 19	Millennium Park
Guns N' Roses	August 24	Wrigley Field
Taste of Greektown	August 25-27	315 S. Halsted St.
Port Clinton Art Festival	August 26-27	Highland Park
Millennium Park Summer Film Series	Tuesdays through August 29	Millennium Park
Chicago Jazz Festival	August 31-Sept. 3	Millennium Park
MJ The Musical	Through Sept. 3	Nederlander Theatre
Joliet Slammers	Through Sept. 3	Duly Health and Care Field
Schaumburg Boomers	Through Sept. 3	Wintrust Field
Chicago Sky	Through Sept. 8	Wintrust Arena
Taste of Chicago	September 8-10	Grant Park
Ravinia Festival	Through Sept. 10	Highland Park
Chicago Cubs	Through Sept. 24	Wrigley Field
Chicago White Sox	Through October 1	Guaranteed Rate Field
Chicago Fire	Through October 7	Soldier Field



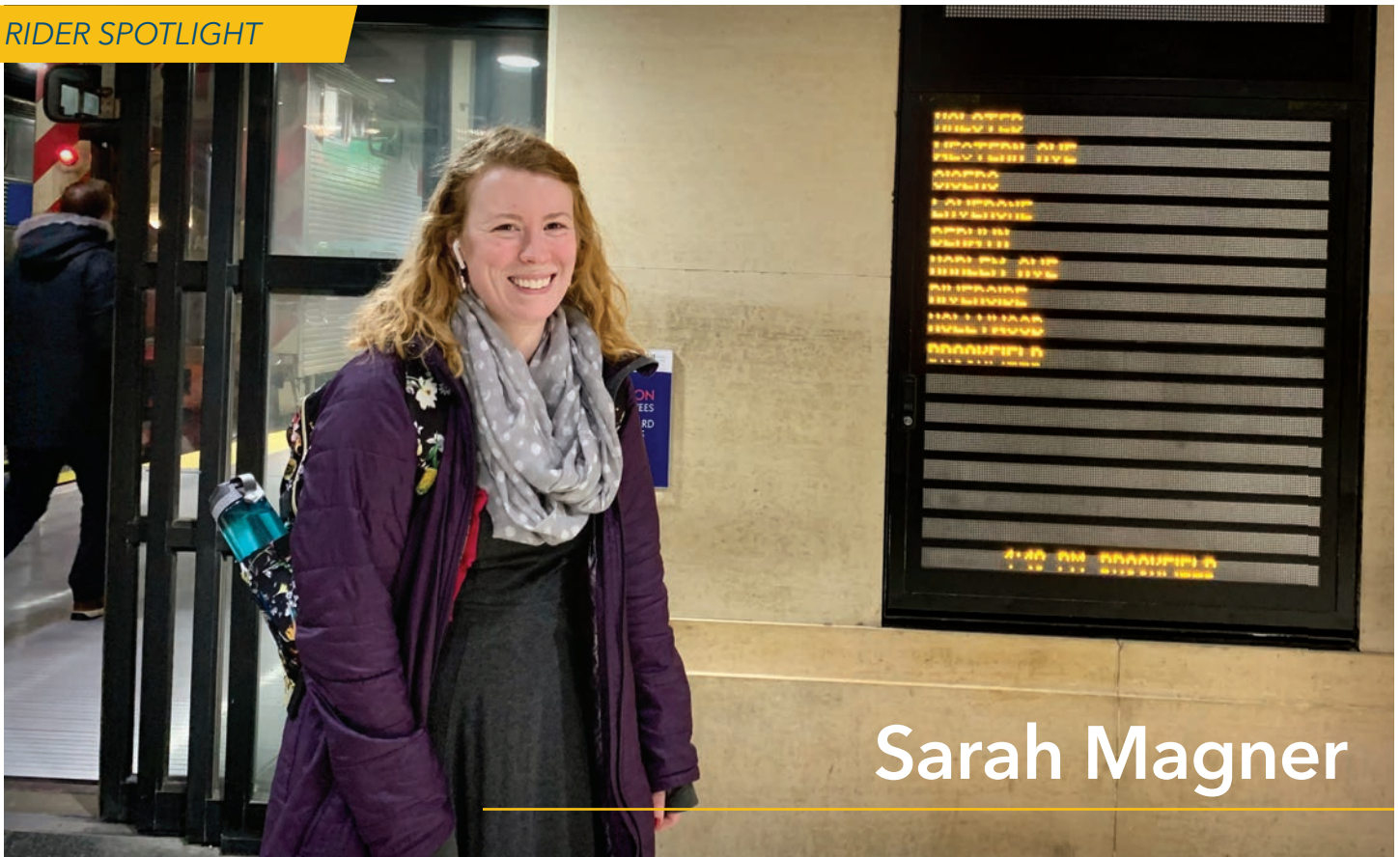
READY FOR SOME FOOTBALL? **METRA IS!!**

Football is back and if you're heading out to Soldier Field for NFL action or up to Evanston for Big 10 excitement, Metra is the safe, affordable, and reliable way to make sure you don't miss kickoff or are penalized by traffic jams, road construction, and parking hassles.

The Bears kick off their season on Sept. 10 against the Packers (minus Aaron Rodgers!). If you're coming from the suburbs, six Metra lines provide convenient connections to Chicago's Union and Ogilvie stations, where you can pick up the #128 Soldier Field Express bus. Plus, Metra's Electric Line Museum Campus/11th Street Station drops you off right at the stadium.

Northwestern opens its season on Sept. 9 against the University of Texas El Paso. Getting to the game is easy on the UP North Line. Exit at the Central St. station and you're just a couple of blocks from the stadium.

Be sure to take Metra all season long and never miss a moment of the action.



Sarah Magner

Sarah Magner, a Riverside resident and Chicago-based program manager, is one of the many riders who returned to the office after the pandemic. Having worked from home full-time from March 2020 to September 2021, she now relies on the BNSF Line for her daily commute.

How long have you been taking Metra?

Five and a half years.

Why do you take Metra?

When we first moved to the suburbs, we were a one-car family, and my husband needed it to commute to the southwest suburbs, so I didn't have a choice. However, even after having a second car for five years, I still prefer to take Metra over driving.

What do you like about taking Metra?

It allows me to read (or spend time on social media, let's be honest) and I get my steps in every day as I walk between the stations and my office and home. Plus, no sitting in traffic, parking, or gas costs!

What would you say to anyone who is not familiar with taking Metra?

I grew up near the L, so I was

very familiar with the concept of commuting via train but was admittedly nervous about figuring out the schedules and navigating Union Station. I promise, it is easy to figure out - the Ventra app is great - and in general it's much more reliable than traffic.

Do you take Metra on the weekends with your family?

My young kids are fascinated by the train, so I think we will make more of an effort to do trips to neighboring suburbs or the city on Metra as a family.



Christy Seibert

How long have you been working at Metra and why did you come here?

In a previous life I was in health care. I was a nurse's aide in the process of going back to nursing school. I was going through a divorce. I had small children and my father said, "You're not making enough money, you need to go work on the railroad." I said, "What am I going to do on the railroad?" and he said, "You can do anything." I've been with Metra since December 2008. I started as a clerk, in the towers on the Rock Island, and did everything I could to become a dispatcher.

Is railroading in your DNA?

I do come from a railroad family. My father is a retired railroad engineer from the Chicago Rail Link. He also worked on the old Rock Island before they foreclosed in the '80s and he worked for the Santa Fe in Texas. My grandfather had 50 years

on the railroad at the old Rock Island and then when Metra took over. He retired as an engineer in 1992.

What does a dispatcher do?

We are air traffic controllers for trains, that's the easiest way to describe it. We rely on maintainers, engineers, conductors, track workers, PTC personnel, CAD managers. I don't think many people realize how much of a team effort it really is.

What is one thing dispatchers must do successfully?

Listen. You have to listen to what others are telling you so you can do your job.

What is a good day at the office?

When everybody gets to go home safely. And again - I know it sounds sappy but: did anybody get hurt? No. Anybody get pulled out of service? No. Are we all going home safely? Yes. OK!

In today's fast-paced world, it's not uncommon for individuals to change careers multiple times throughout their lives. One such story is that of Metra's Chief Dispatcher Christy Seibert, a former nurse's aide and EKG technician who made the switch to a career in the railroad industry.



KETTLESTRINGS GROVE

105 South Marion St. in Oak Park

In this issue, we take you to the Oak Park Station on the Union Pacific West Line to visit an upscale eatery with killer drinks and delicious bites—Kettlestrings Grove. Named after Oak Park founders Joe and Betty Kettlestrings, this family-owned restaurant serves up both small bites and rotating specials curated to perfection, while the innovative cocktail menu highlights lesser-known spirit pairings that harken back to a prohibition-era speakeasy.

Kettlestrings Grove is the second project from local founders and co-owners Rob Guenther and Katie Ashton, Wil and Justine Greenwald and Pete and Fran Lisnic. Their first establishment, Kettlestrings Tavern, opened in 2020 and was an immediate hit with locals.

“With all our restaurants, the most important thing was community. We wanted to bring new dining

experiences to the people of Oak Park,” said Co-Owner Rob Guenther.

Whether you’re craving a delicious combination of carefully sourced charcuterie, or in the mood for some fried polenta bites, Kettlestrings Grove has your tastebuds covered. Chef Tanya Baker has created a bar menu that is upscale yet accessible.

“Before Kettlestrings Grove, there really wasn’t a place to get upscale small bites in the neighborhood. It’s perfect for a date night,” said Rob.

What goes well with delectable food? Hand-crafted cocktails, of course! If you’re looking to cool off in the summer heat, try the Hemingway Cooler—made with Botanist Gin, thyme, honey, lime, and topped with club soda. If classic cocktails are your thing, sip on the Smoked Old Fashioned—an elevated take on an old favorite, complete with a house-blend woodchip-smoked finish.

With a goal of bringing neighbors, families, and friends together to enjoy the simple pleasures of life, it’s safe to say the founding families of Kettlestrings Grove have succeeded. As we all know, there’s nothing better than good food, great drinks, and stellar company; and at Kettlestrings Grove, you can certainly find all three.

For more information, visit them online at kettlestringsgrove.com.

THE THING TO TRY:

FRIED POLENTA BITES

With crispy wild mushrooms, Pecorino cheese, and truffle.

If you have a favorite restaurant near a Metra station, let us know by emailing marketing@metrarr.com, and it could be featured in our next issue!

MAJOR REHAB PLANNED FOR VAN BUREN ST. STATION



Van Buren Street Station, the Metra station hidden under Chicago's front yard, is about to get a major makeover.

Metra is planning a multimillion-dollar rehabilitation of Van Buren, which was built by Illinois Central Railroad in 1897 and is one of the oldest stations in the Metra system. (Metra bought the IC in 1987.) Core elements of the renovation, now scheduled to start in 2024, will include the restoration of historic elements in the waiting area, the pedestrian tunnels, and station access. In addition, the project will add two points of ADA access as well as replace an existing elevator. Signage will be increased and modernized, in part, to improve wayfinding.



A new above-ground landscaped enclosure housing a new stair and new elevator will be constructed east of Michigan Avenue, roughly centered on the Van Buren Street pedestrian bridge at the west end of an existing rectangular patch of lawn. As a result of this improvement, for the first time, there will be accessible access to the station and Grant Park South Garage on the east side of Michigan Avenue south of Jackson Drive.

The current "Paris Metro" entryway sculpture (a replica, installed in 2003) east of Michigan Avenue will be reinstalled at a location determined by its owner, the City of Chicago.

STATION BREAK: OAK LAWN PATRIOT

In 2012, the Oak Lawn Village Board voted to add the name "Patriot" to the Oak Lawn Station in honor of the first responders who died after the Sept. 11 attacks. The change was spurred by the installation of the 9-11 First Responder Memorial, sponsored by the Oak Lawn Rotary Club and incorporating beams from the Twin Towers, beside the station. Oak Lawn Patriot Station now serves as a moving, daily reminder of the sacrifices that were made on that fateful day.





ADVENTURE IS **BREWING**

Metra's Rails, Trails, and Ales Is Back

For the third year in a row, Metra will be offering special Saturday "Rails, Trails and Ales" excursions on the Heritage Corridor Line this fall.

The trips give Chicago area residents opportunities to explore the bike and running paths, festivals, craft breweries, restaurants, and vibrant communities along the historic route between Chicago Union Station and Joliet. The service will be offered on Saturdays this fall starting in September; check metra.com for the exact schedules.

Metra's Heritage Corridor Line was named after the historic Illinois & Michigan Canal Heritage Corridor, which the rail line parallels. Many of the towns that are now stops on the line are closely linked to the canal's creation, with rich and

interesting histories, and bike paths that use the canal's former towpath or connect with it are accessible from many of those stops. A list of some of the sites, restaurants, breweries, and biking/hiking paths near each Heritage Corridor stop can be found at metra.com.

Metra's \$7 Saturday Day Pass, which offers unlimited rides for a single fare, makes exploring the Chicago region by rail an unbeatable bargain. Metra's Family Fares, which allow three children age 11 and under to ride free with a fare-paying adult, can be used in conjunction with the Saturday Pass.

Did you know Metra has **242 stations** throughout the six-county Chicago area? And did you know Metra has plans or is making plans to rehabilitate nearly 20 percent of them? That includes:

12
Under
Construction

9
Near
Construction

12
Designed

11
In
Development

METRA BY THE NUMBERS



FAN PHOTO

We're always excited to see photos of our trains taken by Metra riders—often featuring beautiful sunsets and the colors of the changing seasons. If you have a photo you'd like to share, send it to us at social@metrarr.com. Each week, our social media accounts post a rider-supplied photo for **#MetraFanPhotoFriday**. Then, each month, we choose one entry to win a FREE round-trip ticket. So enter today.

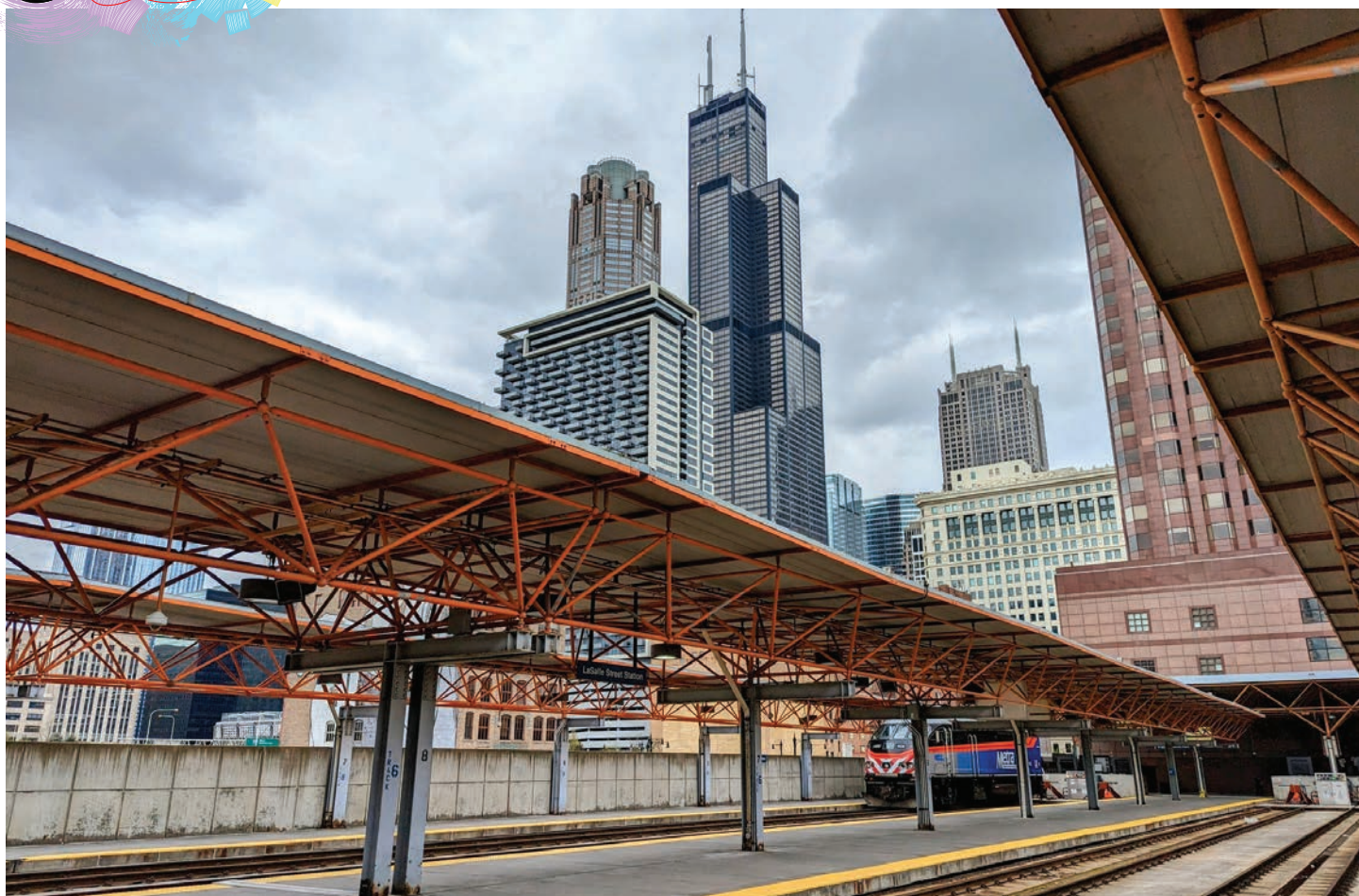
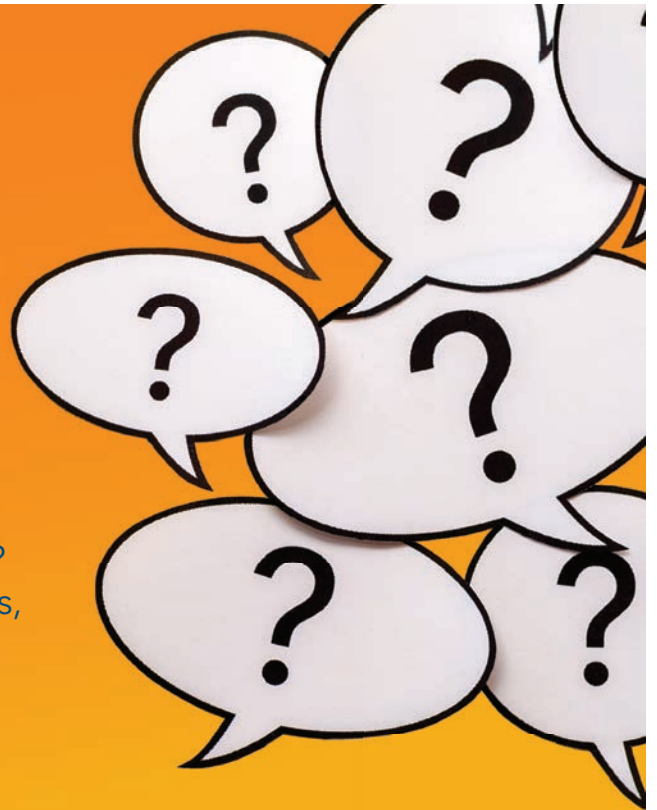


Photo taken by @EricAllixRogers

ASK US ANYTHING

Do you have something you'd like to ask us? It could be about our service, trains, stations, any question you have. Just submit your question to mymetra@metrarr.com



What font does Metra use on its station signs?

— *K*

The blue and white signs that were designed before 2010 used the Helvetica font. Around 2010, we started using Helvetica Bold Condensed on platform signs. This allowed us to fit slightly longer station names, and the team that redesigned our sign specifications in 2010 found it to be more legible – especially for customers aboard trains. In the past couple of years, we started transitioning to Roboto Bold Condensed on our redesigned platform signs, to match the train-tracking template on digital station displays. Roboto is digitally optimized and is more legible on screens.

I was just wondering, how come the UP-W line doesn't extend to DeKalb? I think it would provide a great connection to and from NIU, and it would allow both residents of DeKalb and students to access Chicago and the suburbs easier.

— *Ben*

In recent years Metra has concentrated its limited funding on maintaining our existing system, not on extensions, and especially not on extensions outside the six-county RTA region (which funds public transportation within those counties). You may have seen some recent news stories that planners with the city of DeKalb are exploring an extension of the line; they know that they will have to figure out how to cover the capital and operating costs associated with the extension. Their efforts are in the early stages.

What exactly do the signs labeled "1/2" indicate? Are they half-mile markers? If so, does a web map of Metra's mile and half-mile markers exist online?

— *Edward*

Yes, those are half-mile markers. And we don't have any map of them, sorry.

WORD SEARCH

AIRANDWATERSHOW
 BASEBALL
 BIKECAR
 BOTANICGARDEN
 CROSTOWNCLASSIC
 CUBS
 FAMILYFARES
 FIREWORKS
 GUARANTEEDRATEPARK
 JAZZFEST
 LAKEFRONT
 LASALLEST
 LINCOLNPARKZOO
 LOLLAPALOOZA
 MARKETDAYS
 MILLENNIUMPARK
 MYMETRA
 NAVYPIER
 NORTHAVEBEACH
 OGILVIE
 PITCHFORKFESTIVAL
 RAVINIA
 RIOTFEST
 SOLDIERFIELD
 SUPERSAVERPASS
 UNIONSTATION
 WHITESOX
 WRIGLEYFIELD

Summertime in Chicago

L	K	B	O	T	A	N	I	C	G	A	R	D	E	N	O	G	I	L	V	I	E	F
W	S	F	K	B	O	O	Z	K	R	A	P	N	L	O	C	N	I	L	N	J	G	A
S	K	L	T	G	U	A	R	A	N	T	E	E	D	R	A	T	E	P	A	R	K	M
Y	R	L	A	K	E	F	R	O	N	T	O	C	F	N	A	V	Y	P	I	E	R	I
A	O	M	O	Z	V	C	I	S	S	A	L	C	N	W	O	T	S	S	O	R	C	L
D	W	R	I	G	L	E	Y	F	I	E	L	D	W	H	I	T	E	S	O	X	M	Y
T	E	R	N	O	R	T	H	A	V	E	B	E	A	C	H	V	W	I	H	S	Y	F
E	R	A	O	V	A	S	S	A	P	R	E	V	A	S	R	E	P	U	S	G	M	A
K	I	I	F	M	P	D	L	E	I	F	R	E	I	D	L	O	S	S	O	U	E	R
R	F	N	G	P	I	T	C	H	F	O	R	K	F	E	S	T	I	V	A	L	T	E
A	M	I	K	M	I	L	L	E	N	N	I	U	M	P	A	R	K	J	U	R	R	S
M	O	V	P	L	F	C	W	O	H	S	R	E	T	A	W	D	N	A	R	I	A	D
P	B	A	S	E	B	A	L	L	F	L	O	L	L	A	P	A	L	O	O	Z	A	S
K	X	R	T	S	N	O	I	T	A	T	S	N	O	I	N	U	L	H	P	P	H	B
R	A	Y	T	S	E	L	L	A	S	A	L	W	J	A	Z	Z	F	E	S	T	A	U
B	I	K	E	C	A	R	T	R	W	T	S	E	F	T	O	I	R	Q	B	T	N	C

Find the words on the left in this puzzle.
 Words are hidden \uparrow \downarrow \rightarrow \leftarrow and \swarrow .

SUDOKU

6	8		3	7	2		1	
	9			1	4			
		5		6				7
2						3		
3		9				4		
	4					9		
			2		6	8	5	
			7		5			
		6	1				2	

Scan the QR code
 to find the solutions to
 this month's puzzles.



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