

# my Metra



**DRIVING  
SAFETY  
WITH TRAIN  
SIMULATORS**

## **WINTER EVENTS**

Your 2023 Go Guide

---

## **METRA TRACKER IS HERE**

Real-Time Train Tracking

---

## **DEI IS PART OF OUR DNA**

Building An Inclusive Agency



# my message

James M. Derwinski, CEO

## Board of Directors

Romayne C. Brown  
Chair  
Cook County

Vacant  
Vice Chair  
Lake County

Rodney S. Craig  
Secretary  
Suburban Cook County

Kenneth D. Koehler  
Treasurer  
McHenry County

Wes Becton  
Director  
DuPage County

Ric Estrada  
Director  
City of Chicago

Keri L. Holleb Hotaling  
Director  
Suburban Cook County

Joseph H. McMahon  
Director  
Kane County

Donald A. Orseno  
Director  
Will County

Stephen Palmer  
Director  
Suburban Cook County

Paul E. Ruffin  
Director  
Suburban Cook County

James M. Derwinski  
CEO/Executive Director

Far be it from us to suggest our little magazine as an antidote for Chicago's long winter, but we'd like to think we can at least provide a ray of sunshine or two, enough to hint of the spring that is slowly but inevitably on its way.

One of those rays is surely the recent launch of our new train tracking tool, *metratracker.com*, and related upgrades to our communications system. This is a major investment that is already paying significant dividends, giving you up-to-the-minute tracking data so you always know when your train is coming. You can read all the details on **Page 6**.

Another ray is the beginning of installation of our new ticket vending machines. There's much work to be done, but eventually these machines will be available at all 242 Metra stations, so you can buy tickets easily and conveniently throughout our system. It's another major investment for you. Go to **Page 6** for that story.

And a third ray is the continuation of our \$100 Super Saver Monthly Pass and other fare products this year. The variety of money-saving options helps keep Metra affordable for our *My Metra* riders. Read about those options, including the Transit Benefit program, on **Page 7**.

As we usually do, we've compiled a list of events and activities that can be reached via Metra. Why drive when Metra is fast, safe, and affordable? Don't let the weather stop you – get out of the house, on to our trains and have some fun. See the list on **Page 12**.

There's more information on these pages that riders should know about. We recently started a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion program at Metra because we recognize those values, those goals, will make us a better organization. That story is on **Page 10**. And Metra is finalizing the strategic plan that will guide our decision-making for the next five years. See that story on **Page 11**.

Finally, we are starting a feature this month to introduce you to the Metra Board Members who guide our agency. We're starting with Director Steve Palmer, appointed by southwest suburban Cook County commissioners; Wes Becton, appointed by DuPage County; and Ric Estrada, appointed by the mayor of Chicago. Read about them starting on **Page 8**.

Stay warm, stay safe, and get ready for spring.



IN THIS ISSUE

- 4 Driving Safety with Train Simulators
- 6 Metra Tracker/Vending Machine Update
- 7 Money-Saving Fares
- 8 Metra Board Profiles
- 10 Committed to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- 11 Metra's Strategic Plan
- 12 Winter/Spring Go Guide
- 14 Rider Spotlight
- 15 Employee Spotlight
- 16 Dine Near Your Line
- 17 Ogilvie Transportation Center
- 18 Your Connection to Chicago Attractions
- 19 Lost & Found/Satisfaction Survey
- 20 Crossword/Station Break
- 21 Metra by the Numbers
- 22 Ask Us Anything

## SIGN UP FOR E-DELIVERY

Did you know you can get this magazine delivered electronically every quarter? Just use the QR code to go to our website and give us your name and email address. We'll send you each e-version as soon as it's available.



## ADVERTISE WITH US TO REACH THOUSANDS OF DAILY COMMUTERS!

With riders returning in large numbers, *My Metra* magazine is a great, cost-effective way to connect with Chicago area commuters. Your ad will be seen by riders on all 11 of our rail lines and will appear online in the digital version of *My Metra*. For more information on advertising opportunities, email us at [marketing@metrarr.com](mailto:marketing@metrarr.com).



Trainee James Curtis picking up "passengers" on a virtual Metra line.

# TRAIN SIMULATORS MAKE IT REAL

## Training tool shows Metra's safety commitment

Before we put anyone behind the controls of a locomotive that weighs 13 tons or more, costs several millions of dollars and can go up to 79 mph, we put them behind the controls of a simulator.

Housed in the back of the first floor in Metra's headquarters downtown, our simulator room lets would-be

engineers learn how to operate any kind of Metra equipment over virtual versions of Metra lines. It's a major component of the engineer training program and a quintessential example of Metra's commitment to safety.

"It's a lot of responsibility, operating a locomotive," said William Greene, a senior operations trainer who

supervises the simulator room, "When you're driving a car, you have all your distractions, you have to pay attention to what's going on, but you are probably alone. The engineers may have 400 to 500 people, maybe 1,000 people sitting behind them, and if they make a mistake, it's not just them who could be affected."



Senior Operations Trainer William Greene monitors the performance of trainees.

The simulator facility consists of one main room with several smaller rooms connected to it. Each smaller room has a working replica of the operating controls of various locomotives, cab cars (the cars equipped with operating controls for when the locomotive is pushing the train) and Highliner (Metra Electric) cars. Students use the controls to operate over accurate virtual versions of the lines, with video monitors in front and on the side of them displaying the tracks, signals, switches, crossings, stations, scenery, etc., as the train passes by.

Greene sits in the main room and watches the students' performance on a bank of video monitors that show him what they are seeing

in their simulator. He can adjust the simulation, so the students are operating at night, or in a snowstorm, or in the fog. He can throw surprises at them, such as a car or rail equipment on the tracks. The students are graded and critiqued on how they adhere to the line's specific rules and how they operate the train.

"I like the simulators," said Jordan Martinez, one of the students this fall. "I think they are a good teaching tool. They give you some comfort with learning the basics before you go out and touch real equipment. It's a good tool to use before going out in the field."

All five students in the fall class formerly worked as Metra conductors and then signed up for the 42-week



Joy Duren (top) and Jordan Martinez (bottom) operate trains on the simulators.



program for internal candidates to become engineers. They'll spend about four weeks of that on the simulators and about 30 weeks operating trains while being supervised by veteran engineers. (Engineers coming from another railroad have a shorter training period.)

"It's a challenge—you really have to work at it and pay attention to understand every rule and the application of those rules," said James Curtis, one of the students. "There is a lot to learn and a lot to remember."

The simulator room will soon be adding simulators for Metra's newest locomotive, an SD70MACH, and cab cars coming with its new railcar order from Alstom.

# STAY ON TRACK WITH

## **METRA TRACKER**

Metra this winter started the rollout of *metracker.com*, a new real time train-tracking website that lets you see precisely where your trains are and when they will reach your station. The new site, made possible by a wholesale replacement of Metra's current train tracking system, also makes it easier than ever to view schedules and plan a trip.

"This new train tracking system is a major upgrade and will be a dramatic improvement in our communications to *My Metra* customers," said Metra CEO/Executive Director Jim Derwinski.

"It enables us to do a better job of tracking trains and conveying timely, accurate information, and also includes a variety of interactive new features."

The *metracker.com* site, which can be reached directly through that web address or through *metra.com*, features three grey bars on the menu that provide the site's main functions:

- **Station Times**— This option allows you to check for train departure times from your station.
- **Real-Time Map**— This interactive map allows you to see the location of trains along the line or lines that you select, so you can see exactly where your train is and how soon it will reach your station.
- **Trip Planner**— This option allows you to plan a trip using Metra and other modes of travel between addresses or locations that you select.

The new system required the installation of GPS tracking devices and other equipment on more than 1,000 railcars and in 238 stations. The system is fully operational on the Metra Electric, Rock Island, Heritage Corridor, North Central Service, Milwaukee District North, and Milwaukee District West lines; equipment is still being installed on Union Pacific, SWS and BNSF trains and tracking on those lines will increase as the rollout is completed this year.



## **NEW TICKET VENDING MACHINES DEBUT**

Four new ticket vending machines should soon be installed at Union Station, the first of an eventual 650 machines that will be installed in all 242 Metra stations over the coming months.

The weather-hardened, fully ADA-accessible vending machines will accept cash or credit and will sell any Metra ticket, printing them at the time of purchase to save on costs, and will be available 24 hours a day. When installation is complete, riders will be able to buy any kind of Metra ticket at any time at every station.

"These machines will make buying tickets faster, easier and more convenient for *My Metra* riders," said Metra CEO/Executive Director Jim Derwinski. "We are excited that this improvement is starting to arrive."

The Metra Board approved a \$70 million contract with VenTek International, of Petaluma, CA, for the machines and five years of support and maintenance.

The machines could facilitate a "proof of payment" system—in which a ticket is required to board a train, with fines for those found without a valid ticket. The machines could also make it easier to achieve fare integration with CTA and Pace.



## **GET YOUR BUDGET ON TRACK** with money-saving Metra fares

With high gas prices and parking fees, Metra has always been a better value than driving. In fact, Metra offers an array of fare options to save you money traveling to work, shopping, going to school, or just going out and about. Here's a brief review of ways Metra can save you time, stress, and, of course, money:

### **Day Passes**

Our \$6 Day Pass offers unlimited travel within up to three zones all day. It's ideal for short commutes, shopping, or travel in and around your area. Our \$10 Day Pass gives you unlimited rides across all Metra lines and all zones, all day. Both passes are available only in the Ventra app.

### **10-Ride Tickets**

If you're an occasional commuter or leisure traveler, this is a great choice. It's good for 90 days from date of purchase and can be shared by people riding together.

### **Super Saver Monthly Pass**

Only \$100, our flat-rate Super Saver

Monthly Pass delivers unlimited travel across our entire system. You could save hundreds, even thousands of dollars throughout the year.

### **Regional Connect Pass**

If you're a Metra Monthly Pass holder who also takes the CTA or Pace, this pass gives you unlimited monthly rides with no time restrictions when you connect to CTA or Pace – all for only \$30.

### **Weekend Passes**

Our Saturday or Sunday Day Passes are good for unlimited rides on either of those days for just \$7. Plan to travel throughout the weekend? Our Weekend Pass, available only in the Ventra app, is just \$10 for unlimited travel on both weekend days.

### **Reduced Fares for Seniors, Students, and More**

Senior citizens, military personnel, students, and children 11 and under can receive reduced fares. With Family Fares, kids even ride FREE on weekends and select holidays. The Fair Transit South

Cook Pilot also provides lower fares on Metra Electric and Rock Island Lines.

For full details on how you and your family can save, visit [metra.com/fares](http://metra.com/fares).

## **SAVE UP TO 40% ON COMMUTING COSTS WITH PRE-TAX BENEFITS**

You could save hundreds of dollars a year commuting through payroll tax savings when you participate in a pre-tax transit plan. If your company offers this benefit, contact your Human Resources Department for the necessary authorization form.

If you're an employer, and you don't yet provide transit benefits, this is a great benefit to offer. It can reduce your employees' commuting costs and help bring them back into the workplace.

Learn more now at [metra.com/transit-benefits](http://metra.com/transit-benefits).

# MEET THE METRA BOARD

Helping to manage the nation’s fourth-busiest commuter rail system is no easy task, but that’s the role of the 11-member Metra Board of Directors. The Board is made up of members representing the six-county Chicago metropolitan area. They meet once a month to discuss and address matters related to Metra’s operations today and into the future.

Over the next few issues of *My Metra* magazine, we’ll be introducing you to the members of the Board. In this issue, we invite you to meet Wes Becton, Steve Palmer and Ricardo Estrada.

FOR COMPLETE METRA BOARD INTERVIEWS VISIT: [metra.com/MeettheBoard](https://metra.com/MeettheBoard)

## MEET DIRECTOR STEVE PALMER

Last year was a significant year for Director Steve Palmer, who was appointed to the Metra Board of Directors in 2016 by southwest suburban members of the Cook County Board. After owning and operating his family restaurant, Palmer Place in his hometown of LaGrange, for 20 years, Palmer sold it last year and opened the Stadium Club at the Max restaurant in McCook. He is married with two adult children.

### Do you like being on the Board?

Love it. I love learning about the railroad business and the incredible work that goes into it. I love being a part of government and doing work for the citizens and our riders. And I love immersing myself with the various departments — observing a tie gang at work, getting a detailed outline from the DBE Department — and learning even more.

### What are you looking forward to at Metra?

The new cars are going to be amazing and game changing. I know it's two years before we see them, but I can't wait.

### Tell us something about yourself that most people wouldn't know.

I'm really an open book. People who know me know that I

don't hold back and I'm as genuine and honest as I can be. But here's something most people wouldn't know: I sang in the choir in high school.

### What does My Metra mean to you?

It's the pride that we have in the jobs that we do here, and the camaraderie, which is pretty darn incredible. And for our riders it's the fact that they can rely on getting on a safe, reliable, timely train. There's a loyalty that comes with *My Metra*, from the riders and from the staff all the way up to the board.



## MEET DIRECTOR WES BECTON

Julius W. Becton III, who goes by Wes, serves on several boards, including the Metra Board of Directors (appointed in 2021 by the DuPage County Chairman). But while being a Board member was not new to him, Metra certainly was. The Elmhurst resident, father of three and grandfather of two has enjoyed learning the ropes. He is the CEO and co-founder of George Washington Street Partners, a consulting firm that specializes in business consulting and executive leadership coaching.

### What do you like best about being on the Metra Board?

It's something completely different and I have enjoyed learning and understanding the business and environment.

### Tell us something about yourself that people don't know.

I did a TED Talk earlier this year. The topic was, "Be Curious, Don't be Judgmental" — if you ever watched the show, *Ted Lasso*, that's where I stole it from. It was an opportunity to share a message about not being judgmental, which I think has resonated with people.

**Is that a skillset that helps you be a good boardmember?**  
It helps me ask better questions. When you take a step back and you ask a question because you're curious, it usually comes across different and draws people in instead of pushing them away and making them defensive.

### What does My Metra mean to you?

It means we are there when you need us. We're a resource and an opportunity to help simplify your life.



## MEET DIRECTOR RICARDO ESTRADA

Director Ricardo Estrada, who was appointed to the Metra Board in 2021 by Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot, is currently the CEO of Metropolitan Family Services, one of Illinois's largest human services agencies. He's no stranger to big organizations, but Metra's complexity was a surprise. The resident of Chicago's Northwest Side is a father of two adult daughters.

### Do you like being on the Board?

I enjoy it, but I still feel like I am new in many ways. This is a big, complicated business within a giant industry that has so many interrelationships, agreements, permissions and so on. The logistics are very complex.

### What are you looking forward to in Metra's future?

There are going to be significant investments in everything related to capital, from bridges to rails to stations to ADA compliance. I'm looking forward to seeing that transformation. I'm looking forward to piloting new battery-powered locomotives and trainsets. And I'm looking forward to improving accessibility in neighborhoods that are far south and in other places, so everyone has better access to our wonderful downtown.

### Tell us something about yourself most people don't know.

As a young man, I was pretty adventurous. I've traveled to over 35 countries and 100 cities — mostly on pennies. One of the highlights of those experiences was running with the bulls in Pamplona. It was one of the most exhilarating and stupidest things I ever done.

### What does My Metra mean to you?

It means we should all think about it as our public resource. We are as taxpayers directly subsidizing this public resource that is meant for us, and helps the city and region thrive.





Metra workers learn from one another during a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training session.

# PUTTING DEI IN OUR DNA

As part of its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), Metra is implementing an initiative to build a sustainable and inclusive organization.

“This is a very high priority for Metra and our Board of Directors, and we are fully committed to this initiative,” said Metra CEO/Executive Director Jim Derwinski. “We understand the importance of fostering an environment where everyone feels valued and may contribute their talents. The outcomes will make us a better and more productive agency.”

Metra is following a two-year pilot program developed by the American Public Transportation Association that provides APTA members with a

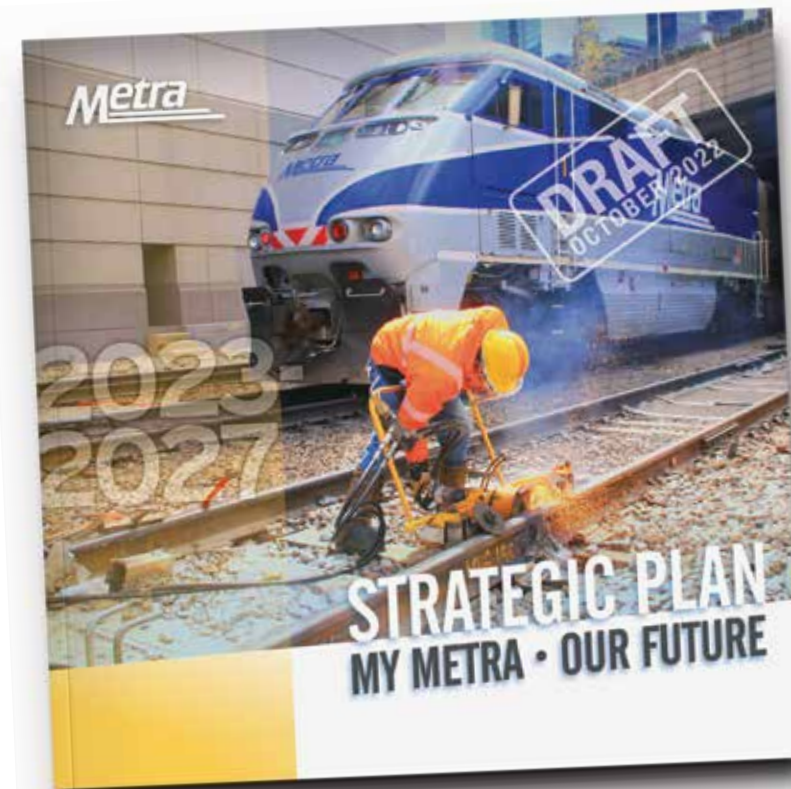
tangible roadmap for advancing racial equity within their organizations as part of a comprehensive framework for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The roadmap includes:

- Making the initiative a strategic priority and business imperative
- Performing a cultural assessment
- Analyzing demographic transactional data to inform our strategy
- Testing existing policies, programs, and practices to ensure racial equity
- Providing dedicated resources and engagement

Metra’s DEI initiative, being carried out in conjunction with consultant

R. J. Harris & Associates, will align with APTA’s roadmap. It will include executive coaching for senior Metra management team members as well as training for more than 2,000 employees; ongoing communication; holding leaders accountable for changing how we function; and tracking our progress in support of the mission. Already more than 500 employees have gone through the first phase of training.



# NEW STRATEGIC PLAN TO GUIDE METRA

After soliciting public comment in late 2022, Metra has finalized its next strategic plan, *My Metra, Our Future*. The new plan, which will guide our decision-making through 2027, focuses on identifying and addressing the operational and financial challenges of a post-COVID world.

The document is an update to Metra’s last strategic plan, *On Track to Excellence*, which covered the years 2018–2022. It includes refined mission and vision statements to make them more concise, responsive, and relevant to new realities, and calls for moving towards a “regional rail” service model that provides more frequent service throughout the day.

**Mission:** Metra provides safe, reliable, efficient, and affordable commuter rail service that enhances the economic and environmental health of Northeast Illinois.

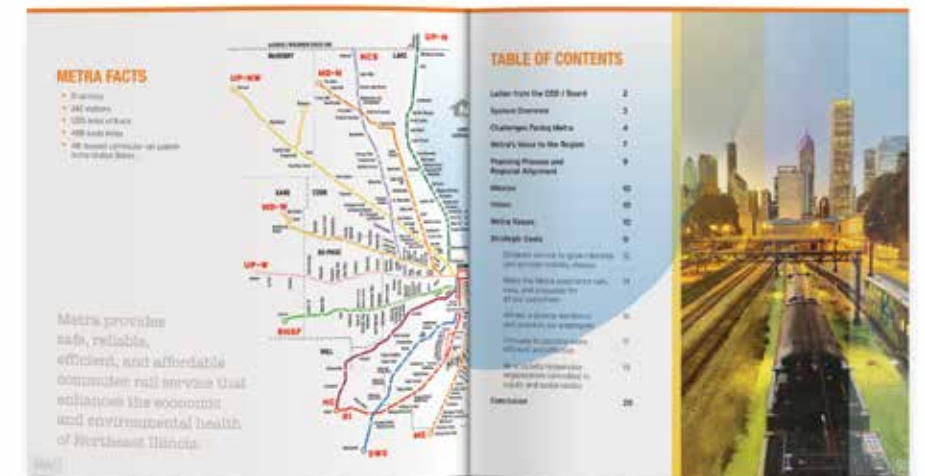
**Vision:** To proactively address evolving transportation needs, Metra will provide regional rail service that supports sustainable connected communities.

To fulfill its mission and move towards its vision, the strategic plan is built around five equally important and related goals. They reflect the evolving priorities of Metra, regional transit needs, and the voices of customers. They are:

- Enhance service to grow ridership and provide mobility choices

- Make the Metra experience safe, easy, and enjoyable for all our customers
- Attract a diverse workforce and invest in our employees
- Innovate to become more efficient and effective
- Be a socially responsible organization committed to equity and sustainability

The full document can be viewed at [metra.com/strategic-plan](https://metra.com/strategic-plan).



# Looking for a Cure for Cabin Fever?

## HEAD OUT WITH METRA'S WINTER GO GUIDE

Want to beat the winter blues? Get on board Metra! There are indoor and outdoor activities across our region. So, grab the family, bundle up, and head out. There's a lot happening, and Metra can help you experience it all.

As you travel around our region, why deal with pricey parking, high gas prices, and traffic jams? Metra offers you great ways to get around and save. Start by visiting [metratracker.com](http://metratracker.com) to plan your trip and check out train schedules. Then, save money every day, any day, and all week long riding Metra. Did you know that with our Family Fares kids ride **FREE** on weekends and select holidays? Check out the array of money-saving fares on [page 7](#).



EVENT / ATTRACTION	DATE(S)	LOCATION
Native Truths: Our Voices, Our Stories	Ongoing	Field Museum
Chicago Auto Show	Through Feb. 20	McCormick Place
Black History Month Tours	Through Feb. 25	DuSable Black History Museum
The Language of Beauty in African Art	Through Feb. 27	Art Institute of Chicago
Northwestern University Basketball	Through March 1	Welsh-Ryan Area
DePaul University Basketball	Through March 4	Wintrust Arena
Ice Skating Ribbon	Through March 6	Maggie Daley Park
Ice Rink	Through March 6	Millennium Park
Chicago Bulls Basketball	Through April 9	United Center
Chicago Blackhawks Hockey	Through April 13	United Center
Chicago Wolves Hockey	Through April 16	Allstate Arena
Orchid Show	Through March 26	Chicago Botanic Garden
Chlorine Sky	Feb. 14-March 11	Steppenwolf Theatre
Anna Karenina	Feb. 15-26	Joffrey Ballet
Les Misérables	Feb. 15-March 5	Cadillac Palace Theatre
Once	Feb. 16-March 26	The Writers Theatre
Cats	Feb. 21-26	Nederlander Theatre
Annie	March 7-19	Cadillac Palace Theatre
The Comedy of Errors	March 10-April 16	Chicago Shakespeare Theatre
Carmen	March 11-April 7	Lyric Opera
St. Patrick's Day Parade	March 11	Downtown Chicago
The Book of Mormon	March 28-April 16	Cadillac Palace Theatre
Shamrock Shuffle	March 26	Grant Park
Cubs Opening Day	March 30	Wrigley Field
White Sox Opening Day	April 3	Guaranteed Rate Field





Michelle Blake and Chris McCarthy

Michelle Blake and Chris McCarthy met on a Metra train in 2011 and he proposed to her on a Metra train three years later, so it's appropriate to feature them near Valentine's Day. Their love, and their love of Metra, remains strong.

**Is the romance still going?**

Chris: Yes, we'd say it's right on track!

Michelle: Did you catch what he just did there? Lol!

**When you ride Metra, do you think about how it all began?**

Michelle: Yes, every time I'm on the train and approach the area where we got engaged, I'll think of that day and text Chris if I'm riding solo.

**What do you use Metra to do?**

Chris: Visit family and explore different parts of the Chicago area.

**What do you remember about the day you met, and the day you got engaged?**

Chris: When we got engaged, I was really nervous before getting down on one knee in the train. Afterward, there was a whole Girl Scout troop in our car cheering us on.

Michelle: When we first met, I remember sitting next to Chris and

noticing he was wearing nice socks and also studying for a securities exam. I thought to myself, "I should say hi to this guy."

**Why is Metra so important to you?**

Chris: Without it we would not have built our life together.

Michelle: We both took the train so many times before meeting each other that day. We really think the stars were aligned or something was in the air to have us both go to the same car and sit in the same area.

**What would your life be like without Metra?**

Chris: I'm not sure we would've met. What if I sat four seats down or in a different car? What if Michelle missed the train?

Michelle: Before meeting Chris I was always thankful for not having to drive into the city or sit in traffic. Now, Metra has an all new meaning. Now, I'd say the train changed my life.



Ed Schafroth

**How long have you worked for Metra?**

35 years

**What's your background? Or what was your training for this role?**

Experience - starting at the bottom working my way up. My first job was at a hardware store cutting glass and threading pipe. I joined Metra as a carpenter in our Buildings and Bridges Department and have moved up through the ranks to my current role.

**What do you like most about your job?**

The daily challenges of the job and changing technology.

**What the biggest technology change you've experienced?**

SCADA, which stands for the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition system. This is what the power desk in Metra's dispatching center uses to monitor and turn the

power supplied to the overhead catenary system on and off. Another big change was going from copper wires to fiber optic cable.

**What are your biggest challenges at work?**

Working with outside consultants. Trying to keep them on the same page with the same goal, so that Metra gets what it needs from each project.

**What do you want our customers to know about your work?**

Electrical Maintenance is a behind-the-scenes department doing our best to provide safe, reliable transportation for our customers by keeping the power working, lights lit, trains running and stand-by power in the yards working.

**What does My Metra mean to you?**

My Metra means opportunity. I try to use myself as an example for our employees, to show how someone can start at the bottom and work their way up.

One of the behind-the-scenes jobs at Metra is keeping the power going on the Metra Electric Line so trains stay running. Ed Schafroth, Director of Electrical Maintenance, heads that team.





In this issue, we take you to the Edgebrook Station on the Milwaukee District North Line to Dakota 94—a family-owned restaurant serving everything from bread pudding French toast to jalapeno margaritas. Opened in 2019, Dakota 94 has become a neighborhood staple with its many delicious menu selections.

“We serve home-cooked meals because that’s the feeling you get when you come to Dakota 94. It feels just like home,” said General Manager Maria Proa.

Co-owner Kayla Lardakis came to Chicago by way of North Dakota after finishing up eight years in the U.S. Army as a combat medic. She met her husband Peter—owner of Kanela Breakfast Club—and the two have been making restaurant magic ever since. Although navigating a new restaurant through the pandemic was tough, the two worked tirelessly to ensure their business and employees survived.

“Long mornings and long nights, the restaurant became home. We even joked

we should just put cots in there and sleep at the restaurant,” said Maria Proa.

The Lardakis’ love for homestyle cooking is apparent throughout their menu. Whether you’re looking for a cozy breakfast spot, romantic dinner setting, or a fun place to grab drinks with friends, Dakota 94 has you covered. Menu highlights include biscuits and gravy, a 1/3-pound bison burger, and homemade meatloaf.

Dakota 94 brings friends and neighbors in Edgebrook together. With a bar serving up specialty cocktails, catering and private party services, and trivia on Wednesdays, there’s something for everyone. It really does capture the essence of an old-fashioned neighborhood spot.

So, if you’re in the area, be sure to stop by Dakota 94 for breakfast, dinner, and everything in-between.

Dakota 94 is at 5304 W. Devon Ave. in Chicago. For more information, visit them online at [dakota94.com](http://dakota94.com).

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



### THE THING TO TRY:

**Kayla's Grilled Cheese and Tomato Soup**  
Sourdough bread, cheddar cheese, avocado, bacon, and their delicious tomato basil soup.



## OGILVIE TRANSPORTATION CENTER

### A destination in itself

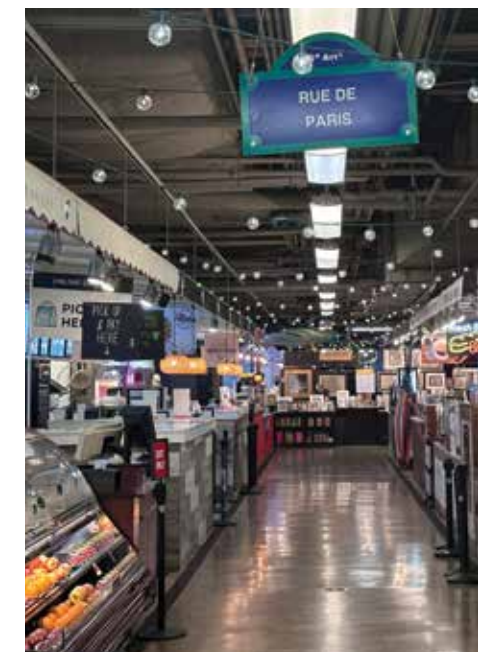
It is the terminus for all three of Metra’s Union Pacific lines and in pre-COVID days served over 100,000 riders daily. It remains one of the nation’s busiest railway stations dedicated solely to commuter traffic. While the Ogilvie Transportation Center looks modern, its origins date back to 1911.

Over 100 years ago, the Chicago & North Western Railway built its terminus on this very spot. As today, it had 16 tracks elevated above street level. For decades, trains came into and out of the terminal from across the nation. In 1984, the headhouse was replaced by the 42-story Accenture Tower (formerly Citigroup Center). Finally, in 1991, Metra purchased the train shed and over a period of four years rehabilitated the location.

The center is named after Richard B. Ogilvie, a lifelong railroad proponent, who, as governor of Illinois, created the RTA. Today, it is a welcoming destination for thousands of travelers and downtown workers. As part of Accenture Tower, there are retail stores, including an Amazon Go store, and a large, popular food court.

It’s also the gateway to Chicago’s French Market. Founded in 2009, the French Market brings a flavor of Europe to Chicago. With its 30+ vendors, travelers and area residents find an array of international culinary delights—many the product of local producers.

Brought to Chicago by the Bensidoun family, the largest Parisian market operator, the French Market was designated a Travelers’ Choice by



Tripadvisor and recommend by Restaurant Guru.

The French Market is open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday-Friday and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays.

# HEADING TO A POPULAR DESTINATION?

Get there faster and for less with Metra



While many think of Metra in terms of commuting to work, Metra is also a great choice for leisure travel throughout our area. When you ride Metra, you avoid the expense and hassles of driving. With our Metra Tracker website and money-saving fares (see pages 6-7) planning an outing is easier than ever.

Just consider a few of the many area attractions you can access via Metra.



**Guaranteed Rate Field** – Opening Day is April 3 and getting to the game is easy on Metra: just use our Rock Island Line and exit at 35th Street/“Lou” Jones Station and walk west to the ballpark.

**Soldier Field and Museum Campus** – Just exit our Museum Campus/11st Street Station via the Metra Electric Line.



**Ravinia** – Our UP North Line stops right at Ravinia Park’s front gate and your Ravinia ticket gets you a free train ride to and from the park on concert days.

**Brookfield Zoo** – Go wild and get there on our BNSF Line, just board at Union Station and ride to the Hollywood Station.

**Museum of Science and Industry** – You can board at Millennium or Van Buren Street Stations, exit at the 57th Street Station and walk two blocks east.



**Chicago Botanic Garden** – Welcome spring by hopping aboard our UP North Line and exiting the Braeside Station. There’s a nice walk path to the Garden. On Sundays, in the summer, get off at Glencoe Station and take a ride on the Garden Trolley.

**Pullman National Historical Park** – Visit this historic site via the Metra Electric Line, exiting at the 103rd Street/Rosemoor, 107th Street, 111th Street/Pullman, or 115th Street/Kensington Stations.



**The Art Institute of Chicago** – Picasso, Van Gogh, Monet, and others are waiting for you. The museum is accessible from both the Van Buren Street and Millennium Stations on the Metra Electric Line.



**United Center** – Catch NBA and NHL action (and save on expensive parking) by taking the No. 19 United Center Express Bus that connects with Millennium, Ogilvie, and Union Stations.

For more info, visit our website. Then, plan your visit via [metratracker.com](http://metratracker.com).



## Most common items found in Lost and Found



(in no particular order)

1. Umbrellas
2. Work IDs/Building access cards
3. Glasses/sunglasses
4. Hats and gloves
5. Phones
6. Bluetooth headphones/charging cases
7. Keys
8. Cellphones
9. Purses/briefcases
10. Jewelry

## Most unusual items found in Lost and Found



(in no particular order)

1. Venetian blinds
2. Guitar
3. Hearing aids
4. Dentures
5. Prosthetic leg
6. Electric skateboard
7. Funeral urn
8. Crutches
9. Walker
10. Prescription drugs

SCAN THE QR CODE AND SHARE YOUR OPINION!



## HAVE YOU TAKEN OUR ONBOARD SURVEY?

You’ve probably seen the stickers we placed on our cars inviting you to take a brief survey. If you haven’t done it—or haven’t done it lately—now’s the time. After all, we want you to think of Metra as *My Metra*.

We have had over 14,000 responses to our survey, and we’ve used the information riders have shared to implement scheduling and service changes and identify areas of improvement. We have also used the survey to answer questions and comments via email. In total, we have contacted over 2,200 riders.

As we continue to gain back riders, and gain new riders, we want to hear from more of you. So, take a few moments, scan the QR code, and let us know how *My Metra* is doing.

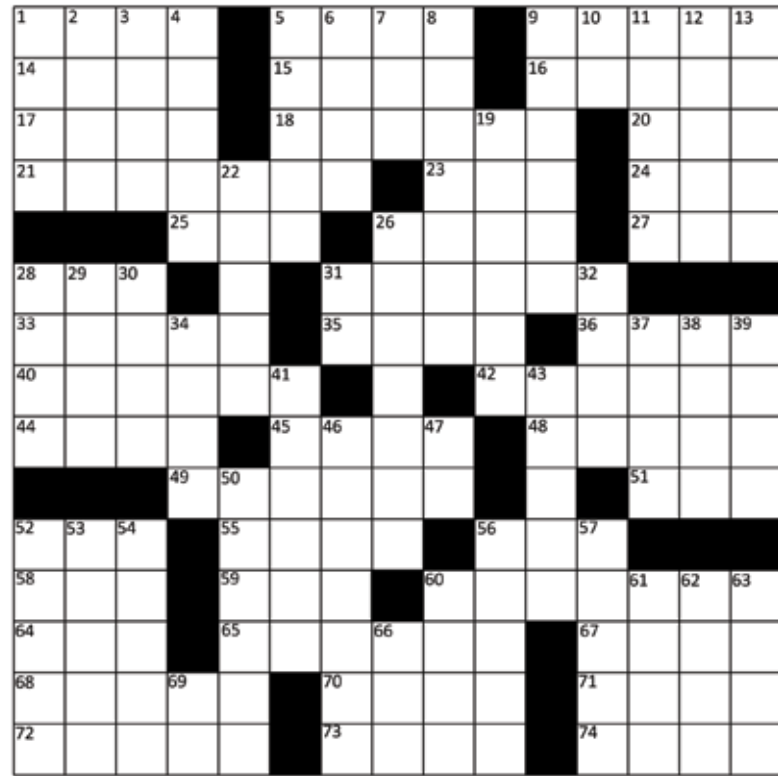
# CROSSWORD PUZZLE

## ACROSS

1. Actress in Fantastic 4
5. Too bad
9. Better than good
14. Cover for camping
15. Carry
16. Musician in Fab 4
17. Above
18. Fidel's city
20. Market index
21. 4th president
23. Eye cover
24. Metal source
25. Jazz guitarist Paul
26. Rescue
27. Combat
28. News network
31. Placido, Jose and Luciano
33. Spanish red
35. You sow them when young
36. In the middle of
40. 4th \_\_\_\_ (punt or go for it?)
42. 4th \_\_\_\_ (media)
44. Big party
45. Bewildered
48. Latin for by or in itself
49. "\_\_\_\_ bet." (No way)
51. Not happy
52. Time zone
55. FBI agents
56. Accessibility law
58. Metra's Parisian counterpart
59. Third-year students (abbr.)
60. 4th pope
64. The Greatest
65. Handy
67. Final 4 org.

## DOWN

68. Rob
66. Space group
70. Eye part
71. Premature
72. Shakespeare's do
73. Belongs to us
1. Small part
2. Hot rock
3. Reproduced
4. 4th month (conventional)
5. One of 4 musketeers
6. Lend
7. 4x4
8. Caulk
9. 4th-\_\_\_\_ maybe not as smart as a 5th-grader)
10. Sm. state
11. Enrich
12. Greek marketplace
13. Tall structure
19. 4th month (Revolutionary France)
22. 4-door
26. A year has 4 of them
28. Symbol for 4th Zodiac sign
29. One of Columbus' ships
30. \_\_\_\_ off (Catches 40 winks)
31. Opposite of from
32. Satisfy
34. One of 4 evangelists
37. 4th planet
38. "\_\_\_\_ boy!" (or girl)
39. Legal document
41. Restaurant patrons
43. One of 4 suits



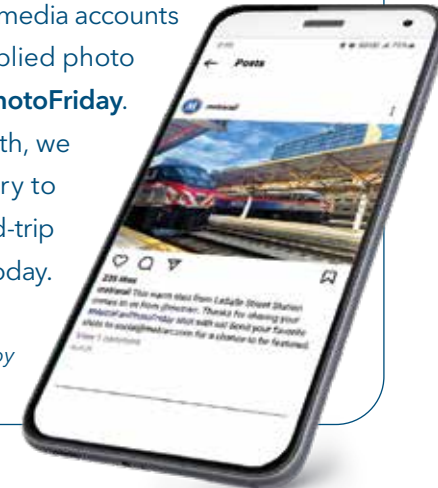
Crossword solution can be found online at [metra.com/crosswordsolution](http://metra.com/crosswordsolution).

46. Gift from heaven
47. 4th state to ratify
50. 4th \_\_\_\_ (summer holiday)
52. Rub out
53. 4th letter (Greek)
54. New \_\_\_\_ (North Shore school)
56. "\_\_\_\_ once" (suddenly)
57. Baby test (abbr.)
60. Use 4-letter word
61. Light tan
62. Hair remover
63. Soviet news group
66. Toy store initials
68. Comedian Franken

## 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](mailto: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.

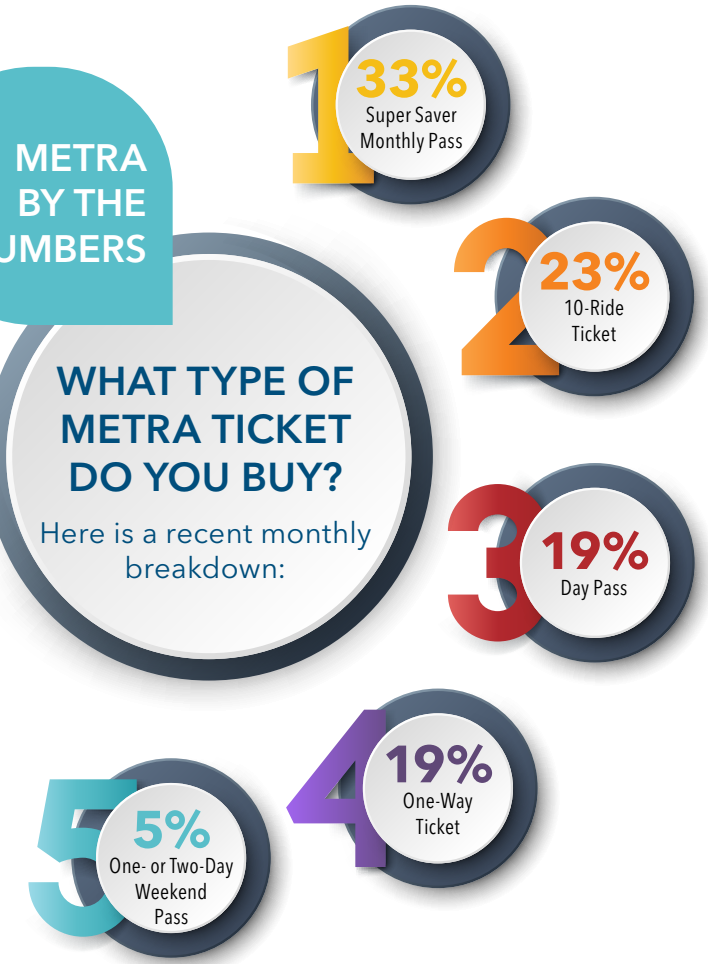
Photo taken by @metrarr



## METRA BY THE NUMBERS

### WHAT TYPE OF METRA TICKET DO YOU BUY?

Here is a recent monthly breakdown:



## STATION BREAK

### Bartlett Station

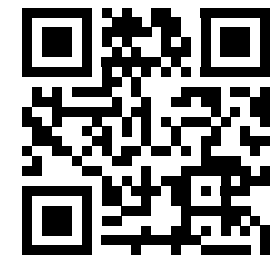
Until 2008, Bartlett Metra riders waited for their trains in the last remaining original depot left along what used to be the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad. That depot, which dates from 1873, was replaced with a new prairie-style building large enough to handle the growing ridership from the booming suburb. The smaller original depot remains, however, now serving as a museum dedicated to the legacy of the community's railroad heritage.



## SUDOKU

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

Scan the QR code to find the solution to this month's puzzle.



# ASK US ANYTHING

Here's an opportunity for you to ask us anything about Metra. If you have something to ask us, email your question to [mymetra@metrarr.com](mailto:mymetra@metrarr.com).



**How are Metra's mileposts determined? Is it a measurement of distance from a downtown terminal to the location of an outlying station's building/shelter? If not, what end-point is used?**

— Edward

Every milepost is calculated by the distance from the downtown terminal. That is also how we determine our zones for fares - each line is broken up into 5-mile segments using the downtown terminal as the starting/end point.

**I understand that Metra uses switch heaters during the winter to prevent ice from building up and clogging the switches, but in looking at one of Metra's videos on YouTube regarding winter operations, the trains roll right over the switches while the flames are turned on. How in the world can Metra do this without the risk of causing the train to catch on fire?**

— Cole

Good question! Diesel fuel is, perhaps surprisingly, much less flammable than gasoline so there is no risk from the switch heaters. It requires a far higher temperature and air pressure to ignite, as opposed to gasoline, which needs merely a spark.

**Are there plans to modify some train schedules to run shorter trains more often? I reverse commute on the UP-W and it seems really energy inefficient to pull so many train cars that are not used! In addition, having trains more often would really make my commute a lot simpler and enhance productivity.**

— Jahred

Making the trains shorter wouldn't enable us to run more trains within the same budget. Each train, no matter how short, needs a locomotive and a crew, and paying for those are the main costs. And it is not so easy to cut cars from a train

after the morning rush and then reattach them for the evening rush; we do it in some cases but in others it's more efficient to leave them attached. For your reverse commute trips, we may not need all the cars going out, but we may need them all when the train turns around and comes back in. We did expand the UP-W schedule on Dec. 5.

We recognize the need for running more trains more often and we are trying our best to do so, but there are a lot of factors that may hold us back. Do we own the tracks? (We don't own the tracks on most of our lines, including the three UP lines.) Do we dispatch the trains? (Again, on most lines, we don't, even on two lines we own.) Is there freight traffic on the line? Can we afford it? Do we have to leave windows for track maintenance? And, a more recent issue, do we have the manpower?



Learn more at [UIHealth.Care](http://UIHealth.Care)



## THE REGIONAL CONNECT PASS FOR METRA MONTHLY PASS HOLDERS

UNLIMITED MONTHLY RIDES ON CTA & PACE **ONLY \$30**

Available from Metra Ticket Agents and on the Ventra App





BANK OF AMERICA   
**Shamrock  
 Shuffle**

**2023 RACE WEEKEND**

Friday, March 24 - Sunday, March 26  
 Festival | The Mile | 8K Run | 2-Mile Walk

# SHUFFLE ON CHICAGO



**Let Metra take you to the Bank of America Shamrock Shuffle!**

Join in all the weekend activities from March 24 - March 26. Metra is a quick and convenient way to travel downtown and at \$7 our unlimited ride Sunday Pass is a win for your wallet.

To learn more, visit [metra.com](http://metra.com)