



Moving into the Future

The Weekly Newsletter from America's Most Efficient Suburban Transit Agency

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Pace is the suburban public transit agency for Chicagoland's six-county metropolitan region. As the 6th largest bus agency in the U.S., Pace operates fixed bus routes, vanpools and paratransit services in nearly 250 municipalities consisting of 5.2 million residents. Visit the [Route Finder](#) for bus route information.

Toll Authority, Pace jointly sponsor transit-friendly legislation

One year after the agencies negotiated a temporary exemption from tolls for Pace vehicles, Pace and the [Illinois State Toll Highway Authority](#) have cooperatively drafted legislation to make the exemption permanent. State Senator [Terry Link](#) (D-Waukegan) has introduced the [legislation](#), which has been assigned to the Transportation Committee.

"This legislation not only saves Pace hundreds of thousands of dollars per year that can now go into plugging our budget deficit," said Pace Chairman Rick Kwasneski, "but it makes a strong statement that the State is encouraging use of public transit."



The passage of SB 170 would mean an exemption from tolls for Pace vehicles, like this one, that use the tollways.

Similar legislation was introduced last year, and passed the House [112-0](#) in April 2006. The bill was never enacted into law, but soon afterwards, the two entities entered into an intergovernmental agreement that gave Pace an exemption to tolls for its buses and vans, and gave the Toll Highway Authority free advertising space on Pace's printed bus schedules.

Currently, 16 of Pace's fixed [bus routes](#) make 210 daily trips on the tollways, and 275 [vanpools](#) use the tollways twice or more per day--meaning a Pace vehicle passes through a tollbooth more than 700 times every day. These bus routes and vanpools are serving major employment centers, improving job access and strengthening the economy.

Pace is the only public agency in the State regularly using the tollway with vehicles that are in service to the public. Vehicles of other governmental entities sporadically use the tollways, but not nearly as much nor in the same way as Pace vehicles do.

"We felt it was bad public policy for Pace, a government agency, to use funding that is supposed to support public transit operations to pay the Toll Highway Authority, another government agency," said Pace Executive Director T.J. Ross. "We're glad that we now have an agreement with the Tollway and that our resources can be concentrated on serving our customers."

Pace welcomes Montreal delegation

Planners and transit professionals learn from each other

Led by the Chicago Attache Commercial of the Government of Quebec, Canada, officials from the [Quebec](#)

[Transportation Ministry](#), [Metropolitan Transportation Agency \(AMT\)](#) and [Metropolitan Planning Agency of Montreal](#) paid a visit to Pace headquarters in Arlington Heights on February 1 to discuss ideas of interest to those in both countries.

The Montreal area faces many of the same challenges as northeastern Illinois--meeting public transit needs in suburbia, reducing automobile dependency, and ensuring the system's financial health in the face of rising costs.



Pace officials in attendance were particularly intrigued by the explanation from the Quebecois about how they created a universal fare card for the Montreal area's 21 transit agencies, and a corresponding revenue-sharing agreement between the agencies. In Quebec, the agreement was implemented legislatively.

Pace's Lorraine Snorden (2nd from left) and officials from Montreal transportation agencies engage in discussion on issues of mutual interest.

The two groups also discussed the measures of success for regional transportation planning, the implementation of regional transportation plans and coordination of road management by different levels of government.

Likewise, the delegates from Montreal expressed their curiosity about the political motivations behind the state law that gave Pace the operational responsibility for ADA paratransit throughout northeastern Illinois and the innovative services, such as [vanpooling](#) and [Dial-a-Ride partnerships](#), that have made Pace an efficient and effective agency, despite its predominantly suburban customer base.

Montreal's AMT serves a population of 3.2 million in 64 municipalities and 13 regional counties with its 21 transit authorities--and provides 426 million annual trips. Pace officials plan to keep the lines of communications open with their Montreal colleagues to learn more about innovative solutions to the challenges of suburban public transit.

Pace Factoid

Pace ridership increased 8.2% in January 2007, the highest January total since 2001.

"Moving into the Future" is a weekly newsletter provided by Pace Suburban Bus to update interested parties on the services Pace provides and the progress it makes to constantly improve. Forward to others as you wish. For best results, please print in landscape format. Please submit feedback or remove yourself from the mailing list by calling 847-228-2421 or e-mail your request to govt.affairs@pacebus.com.

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