



Moving into the Future

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

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www.pacebus.com

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

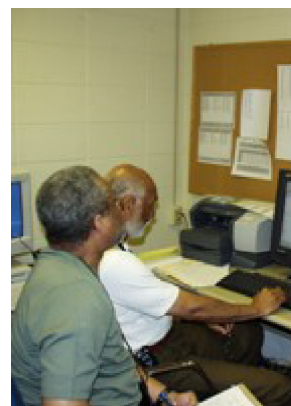
Technology investment brings improvements to paratransit

[Pace's ADA passengers](#) in Chicago and the suburbs will soon see more improvements to their paratransit service, thanks to a contract recently signed by Pace and Trapeze, the paratransit scheduling software company.

The new software greatly improves the scheduling process for the thousands of ADA trips in [Chicago](#) every day. It also eases the process of scheduling transfers between Chicago and suburban paratransit services.

Riders will soon see benefits such as more efficient, direct trips to their destinations, as well as better on-time performance. Pace's contractual dispatchers and drivers are to see easier and better scheduling of trips.

A major complaint from customers about the ADA service Pace recently took over in Chicago relates to the excessive amounts of time customers have to spend on the phone to schedule their rides for the next day. Horror stories abounded at Pace's public forums, such as spending hours on the phone, calling two or three different carriers to find an available telephone operator.



Pace staffers utilize the new software to streamline work and streamline the scheduling process.

Beginning ____, ADA customers with internet access can log onto Pace's Web site and schedule a trip on-line. Then, through additional technology called Interactive Voice Response, customers receive an automatically generated phone call, confirming the time and date of the trip.

This investment in technology brings much-needed relief to ADA customers, reducing time wasted on the phone, and increasing efficiencies to Pace's operation, which reduces costs and administrative headaches.

Automatic alert keeps passengers informed during blizzards

While rain, snow, sleet or hail might slow down traffic in northeastern Illinois this winter, Pace's e-mail alerts always arrive at a destination in-boxes in plenty of time to provide customers with information on major service disruptions.

Just like all other vehicles on the roadways on the morning of Friday, December 1, Pace buses were delayed by traffic during the season's first snowstorm. During such significant service interruptions, it is important for passengers to know the status of service during inclement weather and other situations, and on Friday, Pace's E-Mail Subscription Service was up to the task.

"The E-Mail Subscription Service was launched June 1st of this year," says Bowman, Section Manager of Marketing and Communications. "Typical



Modern technology enables bus operators, dispatchers and riders to keep in constant communications regarding the status of the bus.

up for information that relates to, or is of interest to, them, and the service generates an email when Pace's Web site reflects a change--maybe in a schedule, or a public hearing notice."

Not only was an e-mail alert sent to subscribers regarding Friday's weather information was posted at pacebus.com in addition a press release was sent to various outlets. The only other time an emergency alert was sent out was on October 1st regarding a major storm.

Not only do subscribers find out about emergencies but routes, schedule information, newsletters, news releases, project documents, job opportunities, calendar, new route schedules, meeting agendas, reports as well as policies. Concerning Pace's use of this technology, Pace Executive Director T. J. Ross said, "We're putting the information our riders want right before their eyes wherever it's available. Riders can subscribe to specific information based on their interests. Relevant e-mail notifications are then sent automatically when the information is posted at our website," Ross said.

Pace is also currently partnering with a consultant on a project which will allow a customer to call a number on their cell phone for real-time arrival and departures for their exact stop.

[TriMet](http://www.trimet.org), the transit agency for Portland, OR, launched a similar service in 2003 and has since generated more than 33,000 calls and increased website usage by as much as 45 percent.

Pace strongly believes in doing outreach to its riders, whether through a public forum or an e-mail alert. Modern technology allows the agency in not only maintaining on time performance for the fleet of vehicles on the street but allows for passengers to know the location of their bus so they can get to the bus stop conveniently and be safely taken to their destination.

Pace Factoid:

By the end of 2006 Pace predicts that over 1000 subscribers will take full advantage of the E-Mail Alert.

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