



Historical Calendar

2025





Special Delivery

An initial order of 20 four-cylinder compound Forney locomotives manufactured by Baldwin Locomotive Works depart from Belmont Yard in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania for use on the Chicago and South Side Rapid Transit Railroad (SSRT) on April 25, 1892. Described as the 20 “little engines that could” in the book The Chicago “L”, the dwarfish size of the steam locomotives is clear in comparison to the classic main-line steam locomotive hauling them, Ten Wheeler 82 from Lehigh & Wabash Dispatch.

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S <small>ABCDEF: CTA Operations Division Group Days Off</small> <small>▼ Alternate day off if you work on this day</small> <small>● Central offices closed</small>	<small>December 2024</small> <small>S M T W T F S</small> 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	<small>February 2025</small> <small>S M T W T F S</small> 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28	1 <small>New Year's Day</small>	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20 <small>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</small>	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	



CMC bus drives past Union Station

A Chicago Motor Coach (CMC) double-decker bus operates eastbound on Jackson in the early days of Union Station in the mid-1920s. The bus appears to be operating the CMC's #36 Douglas route.

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Argyle 'L' Station before it was elevated

Who could have guessed that within 100 years, the tiny station in the middle of the photo would become an elevated station on the Chicago Transit Authority's busy Red Line? In this photo (circa 1910), the original ground-level Argyle station on the Northwestern Elevated Railroad is shown along the right-of-way of the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul (CMStP) tracks. At the top of the photo, note the overhead wires for powering 'L' trains, which replaced the steam service previously provided, and the track on the far left that continued to be used for CMStP freight.

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The Original 5000-series “Doodlebugs”

Car 5001, of the original 5000-series multi-compartment cars later nicknamed “Doodlebugs,” is shown repainted in its original the color scheme when it was a prototype in the Chicago Rapid Transit Company era with a destination sign of Howard St. via Subway at Skokie Yard. Car 5001 was repainted for a final trip celebration in advance of their retirement and preservation at a museum. Photo taken June 29, 1985.

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March 2025

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May 2025

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4000-series train at grade level Oak Park

A 4000-series Lake Street B train operates at grade level between Corcoran Avenue and the Chicago and North Western Railroad right of way in Oak Park on June 22, 1962. In the waning days of grade level operations on Lake Street, the CTA completed construction to elevate just over two miles of track running through Oak Park onto the North Western Railroad on October 28, 1962, eliminating 22 grade crossings.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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4	5 <small>Cinco de Mayo</small>	6	7	8	9	10
11 <small>Mother's Day</small>	12	13	14	15	16	17 <small>Armed Forces Day</small>
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26 <small>Memorial Day</small>	27	28	29	30	31



Conservatory-Central Park during the Bank of America Chicago 13.1

Runners pass under the Chicago Transit Authority’s (CTA) Conservatory-Central Park Green Line station during the third-annual Bank of America Chicago 13.1 on June 9, 2024. The station has a unique history, as it was a brand-new station built by the CTA between 2000 and 2001 using the architectural components of the historic Queen Anne style Homan Green Line station.

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May 2025

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July 2025

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Three Trains at Tower 18 and 16 Lake Bus

Three 6000-series rail cars, donning a patriotic red, white and blue Bicentennial color scheme, converge at the Chicago Transit Authority's railroad junction at Lake and Wells known as Tower 18 on August 1, 1975. Under the Loop structure, a #16 Lake bus is parked under the tracks, staging for a photo next to the Wells entrance to the Clark/Lake subway station on the Milwaukee Avenue-Congress-Douglas Line.

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					<small>Independence day</small>	
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27	28	29	30	31		

June 2025

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August 2024

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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						



50-year anniversary of the last trolley buses

Chicago Transit Authority's (CTA) 9553 trolley bus operates on a closed bus loop at the Illinois Railway Museum on March 25, 2023 – almost exactly 50 years to the date the CTA ran its last trolley bus in Chicago. On March 24, 1973, the #53 Pulaski, #54 Cicero and #72 North became the final trolley bus routes that converted to diesel buses.

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Chicago City Railway cars during the Columbian Exposition

A Chicago City Railways Wabash/Cottage Grove cable car operates on the South Side on Chicago Day (October 9, 1893) at the World's Columbian Exposition. Chicago Day marked the 22nd anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire.

S	M 1 <small>Labor Day</small>	T 2	W 3	T 4	F 5	S 6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22 <small>First Day Of Autumn</small>	23 <small>Rosh Hashanah</small>	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

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October 2025

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Division/Austin Bus Terminal

The sun sets over the Division/Austin bus terminal on October 8, 1976 at the city limits of Chicago and Oak Park. Just a few months old in the photo show, the Division/Austin terminal is home to the west end of the current #70 Division bus route.

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Bus heading southbound on Michigan at Chicago

On August 9, 1961, bus 8526 destined for Soldier Field, heads southbound on Michigan Avenue just past the Water Tower at Michigan and Chicago. A particular Chicago landmark is missing from the background. Can you guess which one?

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Brown Line train over the Wells Street Bridge

A Brown Line train crosses the Wells Street Bridge on New Years Eve, December 31, 2023. A projection illuminates the Merchandise Mart on the left as part of Art on the Mart, the largest permanent digital art projection in the world. The bridge is one of two bascule bridges that feature an elevated track to take CTA rail cars over the Chicago River, the second being the Lake Street Bascule Bridge on the Green Line.

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Historical notes

January: Special Delivery



An initial order of 20 four-cylinder compound Forney locomotives manufactured by Baldwin Locomotive Works depart from Belmont Yard in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania for use on the Chicago and South Side Rapid Transit Railroad (SSRT) on April 25, 1892. Described as the 20 “little engines that could” in the book *The Chicago “L”*, the dwarfish size of the steam locomotives is clear in comparison to the classic main-line steam locomotive hauling them, Ten Wheeler 82 from Lehigh & Wabash Dispatch.

While Chicago was not the first city to operate an elevated railroad using steam-hauled trains, these 20 locomotives for the SSRT were considered an improvement over those used on Manhattan’s elevated line and were even put on display at the World’s Columbian Exposition. It was common practice at the time to operate elevated rapid transit lines with small steam locomotives; the use of electrically powered cars was still a few years away.

The SSRT incorporated on January 4, 1888, and secured a franchise from the City of Chicago on March 26 of that year to construct an elevated railroad between Van Buren Street and 39th Street (Pershing Road). The first 3.6 miles of the SSRT opened on June 6, 1892. A reporter for the Chicago Tribune noted one of the “L”’s most distinguishing features, its usefulness to all citizens of the city, by observing the variation of the passengers, from members of “the lunch pail crowd” to passengers “resembling gentlemen.”

Much of the right-of-way for the original SSRT is still used today as part of South Side Elevated branch of the Chicago Transit Authority’s Green Line.

February: CMC bus drives past Union Station



A Chicago Motor Coach (CMC) double-decker bus operates eastbound on Jackson in the early days of Union Station in the mid-1920s. The bus appears to be operating the CMC’s #36 Douglas route.

The CMC’s #36 Douglas route ran between Douglas Park and the Loop via Ogden, Roosevelt, Ashland and Jackson. The route lasted into the CTA era, renumbered #136 in 1952, and discontinued in 1973 amid a budget crisis (it bore no relation to the current #136 route.) The CMC also operated the #26 Jackson (present-day #126 Jackson) and #51 Sheridan (present-day #151 Sheridan) that

both serve Union Station for the CTA today.

Union Station opened in 1925 after ten years of construction to accommodate the ever-expanding demand for passenger rail to and from Chicago. Designed by D. H. Burnham & Company (famous for its lead architect, Daniel Burnham, who died before construction began), construction included railyards, the station, but also the streets surrounding Union Station--which are viaducts that separate trains underground from other traffic. Four railroads were involved in construction of Union Station, and it was also used by a fifth railroad strictly as a tenant that was not involved in construction. The building along the riverfront is the Beaux-Arts concourse building, made with marble, glass and iron, and the Great Hall lies behind it. The concourse building was demolished in 1969 and replaced with an office tower. Union Station is currently the fourth busiest rail station in the United States.

Other elements of the photo look the same today. The Jackson Bridge House in the lower left-hand corner was rehabbed in 2016 after being in a serious state of disrepair with a crumbling façade and deteriorating roof.

March: Argyle ‘L’ Station before it was elevated



Who could have guessed that within 100 years, the tiny station in the middle of the photo would become an elevated station on the Chicago Transit Authority’s busy Red Line? In this photo (circa 1910), the original ground-level Argyle station on the Northwestern Elevated Railroad is shown along the right-of-way of the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul (CMStP) tracks. At the top of the photo, note the overhead wires for powering ‘L’ trains, which replaced the steam service previously provided, and the track on the far left that continued to be used for CMStP freight trains even after the ‘L’ took over passenger service.

‘L’ service between Wilson and Central Street (in Evanston) began on May 16, 1908, replacing steam powered commuter trains while the CMStP continued to operate freight service. While the CMStP did have a railroad depot named “Argyle Park” close to the current location of the station, the Northwestern built a new station to better suit the needs of a rapid transit service, renaming it “Argyle” with the inauguration of ‘L’ service. The station was a small, wood frame building set between two tracks at grade level with a wooden walkway and stairs leading up to it from the street.

When the Northwestern began operations on the CMStP’s tracks, the Chicago City Council did not require the grade-level tracks to be elevated, but they did prohibit the use of a third rail for safety concerns. This necessitated the use of overhead trolley wire. Over the next decade, the Northwestern elevated the tracks from Wilson to Howard on an embankment, and

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with the elevation became a completely new station. This embankment, and station, were demolished in 2024 as part of the Chicago Transit Authority's Red and Purple Modernization Project. A third Argyle station and track structure are in the final phases of construction and are set to open in 2025.

April: The Original 5000-series "Doodlebugs"



Car 5001, of the original 5000-series multi-compartment cars later nicknamed "Doodlebugs," is shown repainted in its original the color scheme when it was a prototype in the Chicago Rapid Transit Company era with a destination sign of Howard St. via Subway at Skokie Yard. Car 5001 was repainted for a final trip celebration in advance of their retirement and preservation at a museum. Photo taken June 29, 1985.

The 5000s were intended for use by the CRT due to an all-steel mandate for subway operation and a need for more steel-bodied cars, as the 'L' still had many wooden cars from its early constituent companies. Eager for innovation, the CRT developed a car with an aluminum body and a steel-reinforced frame using all-electric PCC streetcar truck. Their worm-like articulation that widely differed in style from previous CRT railcars earned them the nickname "doodlebugs." Thirty were ordered from the St. Louis Car Company, but the order was cancelled due to financing difficulties. Four ended up being delivered, two from St. Louis and two from the Pullman Car Company. By the time the final car was delivered in 1948, the CRT had been acquired by the CTA, and the cars' design further evolved, becoming the 6000-series.

Most notably, the original 5000s featured a radical departure from what Chicago was used to. Each railcar had three articulated sections with two open gangways, seating 96 passengers. The CRT designed the 5000s for large-scale pay-on-train operation during low-ridership periods when run as a single car, with a conductors stand in the middle compartment of the car to easily collect fares by only opening the center doors. The cars spent their early years in various assignments including use in Garfield-Westchester service, with their first regular assignment in 1949, non-rush hour service on Evanston shuttle service.

May: 4000-series train at grade level Oak Park



A 4000-series Lake Street B train operates at grade level between Corcoran Avenue and the Chicago and North Western Railroad right of way in Oak Park on June 22, 1962. In the waning days of grade level operations on Lake Street, the CTA completed construction to elevate just over two miles of track running through Oak Park onto the North Western Railroad on October 28, 1962, eliminating 22 grade crossings.

Safety was the prime reason for the shift to elevated operations, removing numerous conflict points and taking out of service manual operated grade crossings. However, the project allowed train speeds to increase and provided a chance to modernize five stations. The Austin station is currently undergoing a major renovation again as part of the All-Stations Accessibility Project, with a new elevator and escalator to connect the station house to the platform above, in addition to a new ramp, stairs and platform extension.

June: Conservatory-Central Park during the Bank of America Chicago 13.1



Runners pass under the Chicago Transit Authority's (CTA) Conservatory-Central Park Green Line station during the third-annual Bank of America Chicago 13.1 on June 9, 2024. The station has a unique history, as it was a brand-new station built by the CTA between 2000 and 2001 using the architectural components of the historic Queen Anne style Homan Green Line station.

Homan station was relocated to revitalize the East Garfield Park neighborhood and draw tourists to the park and renovated Conservatory. Today, the station brings runners of the Bank of America 13.1 steps from the start/finish line. On the day of the 2024 Chicago 13.1, 2,515 customers boarded from the Conservatory-Central Park Green Line station, an increase of 2,159 boardings than a usual Sunday (607%).

The Homan station and its Queen Anne form with a Victorian Gothic influence date to 1893 when it opened for service on the Lake Street Elevated Railroad. The two station houses are symmetrical, unusual for the Queen Anne style. One other Queen Anne station is still in service on today's CTA Green Line left over from the Lake Street Elevated, at Ashland. (Andrew Rosenthal photo)

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July: Three Trains at Tower 18 and 16 Lake Bus



Three 6000-series rail cars, donning a patriotic red, white and blue Bicentennial color scheme, converge at the Chicago Transit Authority's railroad junction at Lake and Wells known as Tower 18 on August 1, 1975. Under the Loop structure, a #16 Lake bus is parked under the tracks, staging for a photo next to the Wells entrance to the Clark/Lake subway station on the Milwaukee Avenue-Congress-Douglas Line.

In 1974, the CTA began a program to redecorate several L cars in a red, white, and blue color scheme. The bicentennial scheme was never meant to become the official paint scheme for all "L" cars, just a special recognition of the country's 200th birthday, temporary applied to selected cars. The Bicentennial paint schemes were superseded by other liveries, through a modified version of it did become of dominant scheme on the "L" for the following two decades. Red, white, and blue color schemes continue to be seen throughout today's CTA in logos and bus liveries.

Bus service on Lake Street lasted from 1954 to 1997. Most notably, buses on the #16 Lake were outfitted with buses narrower than the standard 102" width, first with older buses inherited from the predecessor companies, then starting in 1969 with specially-ordered Flexible buses that were six inches narrower than other vehicles in-service. Pictured is Flexible 3701. Due to the columns of the 'L' structure above Lake Street being in the street west of Rockwell, unusually narrow buses were needed to provide sufficient clearance for buses to safely pass one another there. The CTA maintains and operates Bus 3706 from the same series of Flexibles as part of its Heritage Fleet.

August: 50-year anniversary of the last trolley buses



Chicago Transit Authority's (CTA) 9553 trolley bus operates on a closed bus loop at the Illinois Railway Museum on March 25, 2023 – almost exactly 50 years to the date the CTA ran its last trolley bus in Chicago. On March 24, 1973, the #53 Pulaski, #54 Cicero and #72 North became the final trolley bus routes that converted to diesel buses.

At one point, the quiet 1951 Marmon-Herrington TC49 commanded the nation's largest fleet of trolley buses. The CTA's fleet grew to be 700 buses large, spanning 16 routes primarily on the northwest side – though none came within a half-mile of the Loop. Service began on the #76 Diversey on April 17, 1930.

Bus 9553 was among a massive order of 349 Marmon-Herrington TC49 buses assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, the largest quantity of trolley buses bought from any builder to-date. Interestingly, roughly half CTA's Marmons were resold to Guadalajara, Mexico, where they continued to be in service until the early 1990s.

By the late 1960s and early 1970s, however, a lot of the CTA's trolley bus infrastructure, such as the overhead system and the electrical substations (as well as the buses themselves) needed replacement or significant rehab. This put the CTA at an inflection point: make a sizable reinvestment in modernizing and continuing trolley bus service or scrap it. With CTA having invested in new diesel buses for more than a decade, it was decided to leverage that investment and standardize the bus fleet for better operating and maintenance economies. It took six years for the CTA to replace all electric buses with diesel vehicles. The last one ran on March 24, 1973.

(Andrew Rosenthal photo)

September: Chicago City Railway cars during the Columbian Exposition



A Chicago City Railway Wabash/Cottage Grove cable car operates on the South Side on Chicago Day (October 9, 1893) at the World's Columbian Exposition. Chicago Day marked the 22nd anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire.

Cable cars began serving the South Side on January 28, 1882, beginning with routes on State Street and Cottage Grove. Chicago was the first city in the United States with cable car lines outside of San Francisco. The cable cars that ran entirely on flat ground stood up to the harsh Chicago climate to be the busiest in the industry, and among the most profitable.

However, the CCRy's biggest challenge was capacity. In effort to move more people, CCRy took a different approach to pull its cars. It used bi-directional grip cars, often running trains of three trailers. Still, as seen in this photo, the CCRy's capacity was no match to the 750,000 passengers attempting to take in the spectacle that was Chicago Day at the World's Columbian Exposition.

An article from The Scientific American, printed January 27, 1894, states: "The people who were fortunate enough to get in or on the Wabash and Cottage Grove Avenues cable cars made a slow and painful trip to the Fair grounds. Business was never more thoroughly suspended throughout the city than on that day. The weather was perfect, and when the gates of

Historical notes

the Exposition grounds were opened at six in the morning, the people stood in lines waiting to enter, and the procession of visitors never ceased until late at night. Every kind of conveyance was put into requisition and the combined effort was inadequate to cope with the enormous crowds.”

The Wabash/Cottage Grove line was electrified on October 21, 1906.

October: Division/Austin Bus Terminal



The sun sets over the Division/Austin bus terminal on October 8, 1976 at the city limits of Chicago and Oak Park. Just a few months old in the photo show, the Division/Austin terminal is home to the west end of the current #70 Division bus route.

Previously, the #70 terminated in an on-street loop via Mason-Thomas-Austin-Division. The off-street bus terminal was built new in 1976 (and sports a very 70s look, with bubble-top canopies that are still used at the terminal today); it opened Feb 16, 1976. In the January 1977 edition of CTA's Transit News, it states: "A brighter, better-looking corner of Division and Austin is a public service by-product of CTA's recently-completed new bus turnaround. Another is relief of traffic congestion on the street. But, principal advantage, of course, is to CTA riders who have well-lighted, weather-protected areas in which to make transfers and wait for their transportation."

Transit service on Division started in 1886, when the North Chicago City Railway operated horse car service east of the Chicago River between Milwaukee Ave and Mozart. The route was extended east to Wells in 1887. Transit on Division was converted to streetcar and operated by the North Chicago Street Railroad/Chicago Railways in 1895, which extended the route west from Grand to Cicero Ave in 1914, then Austin in 1915.

For several years, riders in the Humboldt Park area navigated a one-mile gap of streetcar service between California and Grand, resulting in two separate streetcar route segments: the west segment of Austin to Grand, and the east segment of California to Wells. A bus route bridging the two streetcar segments between California and Grand, the #70A, was introduced in 1941 until the west streetcar segment was converted to buses five years later and combined with the #70A extension bus route. On February 2, 1951, all service on Division was converted to buses, with the #70A extension routing combined with the east segment to create one main route. Since then, the #70 Division bus has been a vital crosstown bus route for the Chicago Transit Authority, connecting the Gold Coast to the City limits along with transfers to both the Red and Blue Lines.

November: Bus heading southbound on Michigan at Chicago



On August 9, 1961, bus 8526 destined for Soldier Field, heads southbound on Michigan Avenue just past the Water Tower at Michigan and Chicago. A particular Chicago landmark is missing from the background. Can you guess which one?

The intersection of Michigan/Chicago is home to the Chicago Water Tower, the second-oldest water tower in the United States that survived the Chicago Fire of 1871. The project that conceived the John Hancock Tower at 875 N Michigan wouldn't start until 1964. Planning for the Water Tower Place shopping mall started in the late 1960s, opening in 1975. Interestingly, however, the Water Tower isn't the only long-time tenant of the extremely busy intersection. The southeast corner still is home to a Walgreens.

December: Brown Line train over the Wells Street Bridge



A Brown Line train crosses the Wells Street Bridge on New Years Eve, December 31, 2023. A projection illuminates the Merchandise Mart on the left as part of Art on the Mart, the largest permanent digital art projection in the world. The bridge is one of two bascule bridges that feature an elevated track to take CTA rail cars over the Chicago River, the second being the Lake Street Bascule Bridge on the Green Line.

The Brown Line is the third busiest line on the CTA, with L service over the Wells Street Bridge dating back to 1900. Train service over the Wells Street Bridge began just after the turn of the century. The Northwestern Elevated Railroad operated regular revenue service between the Loop and Wilson. From 2012 to 2013, the Chicago Department of Transportation performed a year-long reconstruction of the Wells Street Bridge. The bridge's historical elements were preserved with all the structural, mechanical, and electrical elements of the bridge replaced. CDOT announced a similar project for the for the Lake Street Bridge on the Green Line.

(Andrew Rosenthal photo)