

FALL 2020

my Metra

10

REASONS

YOU CAN COMMUTE
WITH CONFIDENCE

WELCOME BACK

Get to know *My Metra*

TRAVEL SMARTER

New Ventra App Upgrade Is Here

PTC ON TRACK

Discover Our New Safety System



my message

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James M. Derwinski
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Welcome to the premier edition of *My Metra*, the new periodical for Metra riders.

Why call it *My Metra*? Think about all the important things you claim with the small but powerful word, *my*. My family. My neighborhood. My community. My school. My team. These are essential things that define you, support you, help you, and add joy to your life.

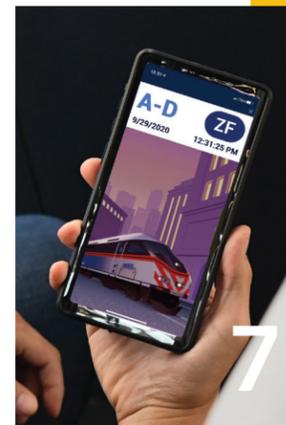
We are calling this newsletter *My Metra* because we want you to claim us, too. We aspire to be that important in your life.

The *My Metra* concept, which we are also using in a marketing plan this fall, is about making sure we're there when you need us. It's about getting you home safely and comfortably. It's about always meeting your expectations. And it's about communicating our value and relevance to you and the region.

That's even more critical in the time of COVID-19. Throughout this crisis, Metra never stopped running. We demonstrated that we are a source of continuity and connection for our riders, an irreplaceable component of their lives and a vital cog in the economic and social life of northeastern Illinois.

So now, as the region slowly regains its footing, we are using the *My Metra* concept to assure area residents that we're ready for them when they are ready for us. We've adopted comprehensive cleaning protocols to make the system safe for workers and riders. You can read about those protocols in our cover story. Our initial advertising efforts showcase all the ways you can Commute with Confidence on our safe, healthy, comfortable and reliable trains.

We hope you enjoy reading this newsletter. We hope you continue to enjoy riding our trains. And we hope that when you think about us, you think of us as *My Metra*.



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HELP US CELEBRATE GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE

Has a Metra employee gone out of their way to get you on your way? Maybe, he just greets you with a smile when you need one. Or she helped you find something you thought was lost.

Every day, Metra employees are hard at work making sure you arrive at your destination safely and on time. From the engineers who drive the trains, to the conductors who help you on board, to ticket agents and station personnel who make sure you get to where you want to go.

And every day, Metra employees go above and beyond to help our riders. So, we'd like your help in acknowledging great service. We invite you to tell us about an employee who deserves recognition. Then, in upcoming issues of *My Metra* and online, we'll tell their story. To nominate an employee, send us an email at the address below, tell us the employee's name and how they helped you. Contact us at: mymetrarecognition@metrarr.com

You deserve great service and our employees deserve recognition for delivering it! We look forward to hearing from you.



WOULD YOU LIKE TO REACH THOUSANDS OF DAILY COMMUTERS? ADVERTISE WITH US!

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 and costs, email us at marketing@metrarr.com.

10 REASONS YOU CAN COMMUTE WITH CONFIDENCE

Metra riders have always expected fast, reliable and safe service, but the definition of safe has taken on a whole new meaning in the time of COVID-19.

Since the start of the pandemic, we have reviewed everything about how we operate and looked for ways to do it better and provide our customers with the safest possible experience.

“We know the importance of providing a clean, healthy experience on our platforms and on our trains, and we know we have to promote safe and healthy practices, such as social distancing and wearing masks” said Metra CEO/Executive Director Jim Derwinski. “We want you to feel safe and confident using our service.”

Here are 10 reasons you can Commute with Confidence on Metra:

- 1 The cars have never been cleaner.** We spent the spring deep cleaning our more than 1,000 railcars and Metra Electric Highliners with high-pressure power washers, steamers and other disinfectants.
- 2 We’ve adopted a new regimen to clean, sanitize, disinfect and inspect all cars at least once a day,** with an extra emphasis on disinfecting high-touch areas as frequently as possible, including using new electrostatic disinfecting foggers. Our intention is to maintain the cleanliness we have achieved by deep cleaning.
- 3 We are cleaning Metra-maintained stations multiple times a week,** paying special attention to disinfecting high-touch surfaces, and we are using extra crews to increase the cleaning and disinfecting of downtown stations. And we have asked the municipalities or other entities that maintain the stations in their communities to do the same.
- 4 Railcars are equipped with hospital-grade MERV-13 filters** to keep the air clean. In addition, the HVAC system on railcars cleans and replaces the air on cars 15 times an hour.
- 5 Masks or face coverings are a must** for the entirety of the ride on our trains, and we are reinforcing that message with plenty of signs and announcements. Please cooperate and help us help keep everyone safe.
- 6 We are asking everyone to practice social distancing,** and we are similarly reinforcing that message with signs and announcements. Please, no more than one person per two-seater.
- 7 We’ve launched a ridership dashboard to show how many riders are on our trains** to help you make informed decisions about your trip. Find it at metrarail.com/dashboard. We’ll add cars to trains or trains to schedules to maintain that space as long as we can.
- 8 We’ll wait in stations longer.** We want everyone to stay in their seats and not crowd the aisles and vestibules before getting off at your station. So please stay seated until your stop—and we’ll give you plenty of time to get off.
- 9 We’ve installed two new touchless hand sanitizer dispensers in every car.** Our bathrooms already had dispensers.
- 10 You can use the Ventra app to buy and display tickets,** which will eliminate close interactions with crews and keep everyone safer. (And the app got an upgrade this fall—see story on Page 7.)

The safety and health of our customers and employees is our top priority. We promise you we are doing everything we can to assure a safe commute, and we promise to stay on top of the latest trends and emerging technologies to make improvements whenever and wherever we can.

WE'RE WORKING TO KEEP YOU SAFE AND BRING RIDERS BACK



Beth Birkenfeld
27 Year Metra Conductor



“The air in each car is replaced every four minutes.”

Perhaps you've seen conductor Beth Birkenfeld on TV. Or you've heard one of our radio commercials. We're spreading the word that people can commute with confidence on Metra. We're also reminding everyone that Metra really belongs to *everyone* — our service extends across 11 lines and 242 stations.

In fact, while other operations shut down due to COVID-19, Metra never has. We really have been *My Metra* for first responders, essential workers, and thousands of others who couldn't shelter in place.

Now, Metra is poised to play a key role in helping our economy open up again. We're ready for riders to return in larger numbers.

“We're sanitizing and disinfecting our trains daily,” notes Kevin McCann, Chief Mechanical Officer. “On board, riders will find physical distancing measures, hand sanitizer dispensers, and hospital grade air filters. In fact, our air comfort system circulates air so efficiently that the air in each car is replaced every four minutes.”

That's the message Metra employees are sharing throughout our region. We want everyone to think of Metra as *My Metra* — my safe, reliable way to get to work and get back home.

“We really are your best way to commute,” adds McCann. “Beyond our ongoing, strict cleaning regimen, we have a 95 percent on-time record, riding the train is 15 times safer than driving and every car we take off the road helps our community become greener.”

To learn more about *My Metra*, visit metrarail.com/confidence.

VENTRA APP GETS MAJOR UPGRADE

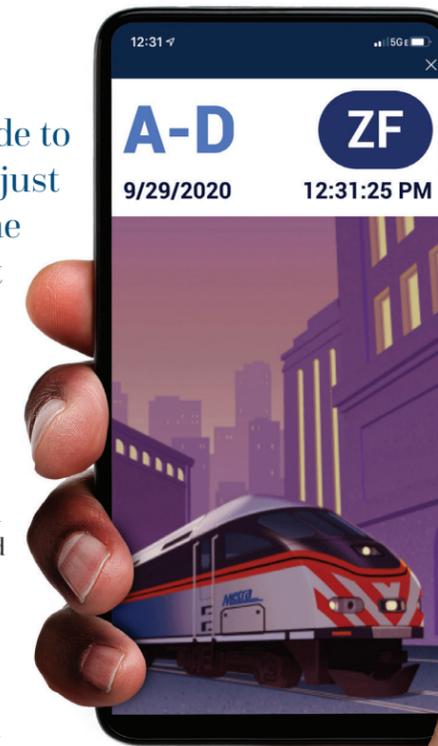
Trip planning, user-friendly design highlight changes

A major new upgrade to the Ventra app was just released, making the safe and convenient app an even better choice for buying and displaying Metra tickets.

The upgrade has a simplified user interface and dashboard for train or bus tracking and account management. For Metra customers, the other highlights include:

- You can easily summon your Metra pass from the main screen.
- If you need a new pass or ticket, you can quickly choose to reorder based on your most recent purchases.
- And if you upgrade to a new device, you can move your tickets to the new device yourself, without going through Ventra customer service.
- The new app also gives you quick access to an integrated trip planning tool to help you find your way across the Chicago area on Metra, the CTA or Pace.

“More than half of Metra customers are already using the Ventra app to pay their fares, which shows how convenient and useful it already is,” said Metra CEO/Executive Director Jim Derwinski. “Now we've made it even more convenient and useful. We think this upgrade



will impress existing Ventra users and also create new ones.”

We tried to make the transition to the upgraded app as smooth and painless as possible. Here's how it works:

- If you have automatic app updates enabled on your device, the Ventra app already should have automatically updated on your phone. You'll know your Ventra app has been updated if the Ventra icon on your device has changed from white to blue.
- If you don't have auto updates enabled, you'll have to download the new version from the App Store or Google Play.

Once you have the new (blue icon) version on your phone, log in with your existing Ventra username and password to view your transit value and passes and retrieve your Metra mobile tickets. (If you forgot either your username or password, you can go to the Ventra website, ventrachicago.com, to retrieve either of them.) Then click “Tickets” and select “Move tickets from another device” and your existing tickets will automatically download to your phone.

For more information, go to metrarail.com/ventra.

ON SCHEDULES



Metra is exploring new ways to rebuild our schedules while ridership remains low during the coronavirus pandemic, using this time as an opportunity to improve the commuting experience once riders return.

In March, Metra implemented our alternate schedules, which were originally designed to be used in cases of extreme winter weather. Our intention was to add cars to trains or add trains to the schedules as ridership increased to allow for customers to physically distance. We've tweaked schedules a few times since March, but instead of ridership, innovation has been the driving factor.

"We look at passenger counts every morning, and with COVID, we haven't run into a wall where we couldn't just add cars," said Metra Manager of Service Design Dan Miodonski. "So when we add service, we're doing it because we want to make service more attractive to riders."

Metra in June added express service to the SouthWest Service and North Central Service for the first time on either line. On the Rock Island Line, we added two Tinley Park express trains,

including an outbound evening train that expresses to Tinley Park/SOth Avenue from LaSalle Street Station that had been popular among riders before the pandemic.

In addition to express service, Metra's scheduling team is testing new stopping patterns. On the BNSF Line, several trains used to express to or from

We've tweaked schedules, but instead of ridership, innovation has been the driving factor.

Congress Park, skipping over the more popular Brookfield Station. Brookfield has become the express point for those trains in the current alternate schedule. On other lines, the team is trying to group stations together to make sched-

ules more predictable for customers. While times might change, Metra hopes these stopping patterns will remain in place post-COVID.

Metra also looks at requests from customers themselves to refine these schedule changes. For example, several BNSF customers called for reverse commute trains to stop at Halsted Street, and that change was incorporated into the August schedule change.

All changes are guided by six service restoration principles Metra has adopted: provide consistent and frequent service throughout the day; establish easily understandable and memorable service patterns; include new express service when possible; consider transfers; explore reverse commute and new ridership markets; and promote regional equity.

"Before when we would try a schedule change, we had such overwhelming rush hour demand that if we tried something and it didn't work, we'd have stuffed trains," Miodonski said. "Now we can try new things and see if it works operationally without that concern. We have an opportunity to really start from scratch."

PTC REACHES THE FINISH LINE

It has been a long, complex, expensive trip, but Metra's journey with Positive Train Control (PTC) is finally nearing the end—and the result is an even safer system for our riders.

Sometime this fall, we expect to complete all the required steps to implement the safety system, with a couple of months to spare before the yearend deadline. The new system, mandated by Congress after a fatal California accident in 2008, represents a major safety upgrade to an already safe mode of travel.

"Installing PTC was a huge technological, logistical and financial challenge, and we are incredibly proud of the work we have done to complete it on time," said Metra CEO/Executive Director Jim Derwinski. "The reward is knowing we can now give our customers even greater confidence that our trains are as safe as they can be."

What is PTC?

PTC is a system that will automatically stop a train if the engineer fails to obey a signal or exceeds the speed limit, thereby preventing accidents. It uses GPS tracking, onboard computers and Metra's centralized train dispatching system to monitor the crew's operation of the train.

What did it cost?

The final bill for implementation on Metra comes to about \$415 million, money that for the most part had to be diverted from our already inadequate capital funding. In fact, Metra's financial struggles with PTC were a major contributing factor to fare hikes Metra implemented earlier this decade. Going forward, Metra expects PTC to cost about \$20 million annually to operate and maintain.

How did you do it?

PTC had to be designed from the ground up. The software had to be customized to each railroad and its specific attributes. And because the entire industry pursued this project simultaneously, there were parts shortages, delays in acquiring radio spectrum and in delivering software updates. Metra had to hire dozens of workers to design and install PTC.

FOCUS ON SAFETY



Why was it hard in Chicago?

One of the main PTC challenges was a requirement that any train operating over another railroad's tracks must be able to communicate seamlessly with that railroad's PTC system. Nowhere is that more difficult than Chicago, with its dense railroad network. Metra's PTC system must work with the PTC systems of 12 other railroad companies.

What's next?

PTC software will continue to evolve, adding functionality and improvements to operations, reliability, security, and maintenance. We will also need to continually maintain and update the system's hardware. And our train crews, dispatchers and field personnel on both mechanical and engineering will require time to understand and adjust to a new way of doing business.

PTC by the Numbers

- \$415 million** Total installation cost
- \$20 million** Annual operating cost
- \$11 billion** Installation cost to railroad industry
- 522** Metra locomotives, cab cars and Highliners equipped with PTC components
- 347** Wayside interface units installed
- 12** Railroads that must be interoperable with Metra
- 217.5** Miles of track mapped by Metra
- 2,043** Employees trained



Anne Kozek

We love to hear from our passengers. Your stories and experiences are what make Metra what it is. In each issue, we'll highlight one of you. This quarter, we spoke to Anne Kozek, a Rock Island Line rider who boards at 99th Street/Beverly Hills, who wrote Metra to thank us for the free rides we provided for healthcare workers from March to August.

How long have you been riding Metra?

I just started again in January of this year. I had ridden back in the day, but I just got a new job and moved back to Chicago and now I'm back to riding.

What do you do for a living?

I'm a dietician in genetics at Lurie Children's Hospital. We work with those kids who need us to take specific parts of their diet and modify it—otherwise it would be toxic to the body. We treat from infancy to adulthood.

Have you been taking Metra during the entire pandemic?

For the most part, in the beginning we could work at home. But even when we worked at home, we still went in one day a week. I would drive, but then I went back to the train.

When I didn't have to deal with downtown traffic, driving was fine. But when it started to pick up again, I said "forget it." I like to sit on the train and have my 30 minutes in the beginning of the day

and 30 minutes at the end of the day to decompress and think to yourself.

How has your experience been?

I think it's great. I have no concerns. I think it's been clean; you can safely social distance. The conductors are wonderful, and I haven't had any issue with any of them. They're always polite and helpful.

What's been the best part of your train trip?

Just the fact that I don't have to think about traffic. I don't have to worry that someone is going to hit me because I'm going too slow, according to their opinion. I don't have to worry about parking. I can relax.

What would you tell others who are considering riding the train?

If they're worried, I would say don't worry about it. It's fine. It's clean. Everybody has their mask on, and you can socially distance.



Carrie Andrade

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Andrade in May moved from her job as a ticket agent at Chicago Union Station to become a lead clerk at Metra's central dispatching facility, CCF, where she's responsible for creating a healthy and clean environment that ensures trains across the Metra system can continue running.

"I try to bring positivity wherever I go in whatever capacity I can," Andrade said. "I just always wanted to be positive and could always see the good. Even in times like these, I just prefer to change my view and look away from the bad stuff and look towards the good."

That point of view is one of her many admirable qualities, said Greg Godfrey, the director of CCF. Andrade's first task when she came to CCF was to organize 30 years of files that had been bogging down the operation's efficiency. Among those were safety notes that she transcribed and compiled into a PowerPoint that train dispatchers will use in 2021 as part of a safety review.

"She's been so friendly, so accurate, very detail-oriented and has helped us review some critical safety information in way that would not have happened if she had not been here," Godfrey said.

She's also responsible for day-to-day safety at CCF. Andrade is assisting with the janitorial duties to help stem the spread of COVID-19. Before CCF, Andrade spent several years as a ticket agent at Chicago Union Station, where the mother of five daughters loved interacting with customers.

"Regardless of what position I'm at, I've always wanted to do whatever I do well," Andrade said. "I think that all jobs are important, and we've all learned through this coronavirus time that grocery store employees, janitors—those are the people we were leaning on the most."

Carrie Andrade's career has run the gamut from teacher to tower operator and several stops in between.

But one constant for this 10-year Metra employee is her glowing outlook on life.

CONNECT WITH METRA



Did you know Metra is active on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn?

You can follow us on all those social media channels to get service updates, find the latest Metra news, learn interesting facts about our system, see what we're doing behind the scenes, meet interesting Metra workers and riders, view unique photos from our system and from other riders and discover employment opportunities.

In recent weeks we've highlighted Metra's essential workers, honored retiring railroad veterans, promoted railroad safety, provided the latest about our COVID-19 response, shared videos about our upgraded cleaning efforts, described our program to honor predecessor railroads with specially painted locomotives, put the spotlight on Metra employees working in their communities, honored women who made a difference, featured new technologies to make our trains more reliable and shared throwback photos of our system.

You can follow us to get all that information and more. And on Twitter, you can follow your individual line for service updates as well as the main @metra handle for general Metra news.

And don't forget the Metra website, metrarail.com, which also is packed with information about our system and workers. And you can go to our website to sign up to receive emailed service alerts about your line, and to receive emailed news from us. It's just another way to think about Metra as *My Metra*.

How far will Metra go to serve you? With **1,155 miles of tracks** and **488 miles of routes**, Metra can get you just about anywhere you want to go in the Chicago area. We even go all the way to Manhattan (IL). And, serving all of that track are **242 stations**—one of each will be highlighted in each issue of *My Metra*.

METRA BY THE NUMBERS

HONORING OUR RAILROAD HERITAGE

Metra as we know it wouldn't exist without the railroads that first made Chicago the rail center of the country. To honor the legacy of these storied railroads, Metra created a locomotive painting program that brings a glimpse of the past to tracks across Chicagoland.

Through its heritage locomotive program, Metra is reproducing the color schemes of its predecessors on its locomotive fleet. So far, five locomotives have received special paint jobs: one in the colors of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad; one in the colors of the Chicago Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad; one in the colors of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad; one in the colors of the state of Illinois; and the most recent one, just introduced, in the colors of Chicago & North Western Railroad, the forerunner of routes operated for Metra today by Union Pacific Railroad.

Because the paint job is part of the regular rehab, the special ones don't cost any extra money. But the payoff is huge.

See more heritage painted locomotives at metrarail.com/heritage.



Metra engine painted in historic Chicago & North Western Railroad colors

Across

1. Small job
5. Athens' ancient rival
11. U.S. uncle
14. Regulation
15. Kane County town originally named Blackberry
16. Home of the Bulldogs
17. Persia
18. Australian marsupial
19. Start to hunt, kind, handle
20. Chicago gangster
22. Tombstone words
24. Automatic control system
27. Take your vitamins "___" day
28. Pain
30. A bad kind of failure
33. Wide
34. Material
35. Choose
37. South Side tech school
38. Tracks
39. Federal anti-drug group
40. Petrol
41. Mushroom family
42. Portland soccer player
44. Pointed beard
45. Tortoise challenger
46. Reference tool
49. Turn
52. One-piece swimsuit
55. Improve
58. Container
59. City in Wayne's World
62. Actress Jessica

63. The night before
64. Thanos' grandfather
65. Katy Perry hit
66. Stop color
67. Net worth
68. Work location

Down

1. Alternative to treat
2. Spirit or vibe
3. Insult response
4. Wisconsin town named for pike
5. Flushing destination
6. Arafat's org.
7. Missile initials
8. Yokel
9. Catch
10. Lake County town with Biblical name
11. Poisonous plant
12. Surprised mouth
13. A bite of the Big Apple
21. Require
23. Explosive initials
25. Empty
26. Indulges
28. Opera component
29. Temporary beds
31. Will County town named for French explorer
32. More than one alien
33. Paul Bunyan's target?
35. Smell
36. French father
38. Lisbon street

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66					67						68	

Crossword solution can be found online at metrarail.com/crosswordsolution

41. Lake County town originally known as Nippersink Point
42. Formal you
43. The Northwestern of the East
44. Hair fixer
47. Innocent
48. Ate

50. Rub out
51. Abbreviated alternative to valet parking
53. Belongs to us
54. Horse's gait
56. Lotion ingredient
57. Business school grads
60. "Hooked ___ Feeling"
61. Decompose

COMING SOON to *Metra*



Thanks to our regular federal capital funding and a significant increase in funding from Springfield, Metra has more than \$2 billion to spend over the next five years to attack a backlog of important capital work.

One of the most exciting items on our wish list is new railcars. Sometime this fall/winter we expect to finalize plans to buy up to 200 new railcars, with an option for up to 300 more. We've allowed manufacturers to propose designs other than the gallery bi-level cars we now use. It will take about three years for the first of those cars to be made and delivered.

In early 2022, we expect to receive the first of 15 newly remanufactured locomotives designated as SD70-MACH locomotives. If we like them, we can order up to 27 more. These new locomotives will increase reliability and fuel efficiency.

Construction of two new Chicago stations is in the works. Work on Peterson Ridge, on the UP North Line, should begin early next year, and some preliminary work has started at Auburn Park, on the Rock Island Line.

We also have plans to make our stations more inviting and safer. But there are still several stations that are not accessible, many of them on the Metra Electric Line, and those are our highest priority. Next year, we expect to begin work on 59th/60th Street, 147th Street and Homewood. We are also working on designing rehabilitations of the following other Metra Electric stations:

<i>79th Street 103rd Street</i>	<i>87th Street 111th Street</i>	<i>95th Street</i>
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We are also planning a major renovation of the historic Van Buren Street Station, which will likely start in 2022.

Other Metra stations that are expected to be worked on next year include:

- Grayland (MD-N) – in conjunction with replacing the nearby bridge over Milwaukee Avenue
- Blue Island Vermont (RI)
- Hubbard Woods (UP-N)
- Ravenswood (UP-N) – completing the inbound half of the station
- North Chicago (UP-N)
- Highland Park (UP-N)

We are also starting a multimillion dollar project to add warming shelters to stations that lack them, and we are planning to replace multiple elevators across our system. Finally, our new GPS tracking system will come online next year, providing much more accurate, timely tracking information.



STATION BREAK

The oldest Metra stations are the Lemont and Lockport depots on the Heritage Corridor Line. They were built by the Chicago and Alton Railroad in 1859. Both are built of Joliet-Lemont limestone, which was also used in more than 30 other still-standing buildings in downtown Lemont as well as the famous Chicago Water Tower. Both stations witnessed the passing of Lincoln's funeral train in 1865. Metra acquired the stations in 1987, when it bought the commuter assets of Illinois Central Gulf (ICG retained ownership of the tracks, however, later selling them to CN, which still owns them).

ASK US ANYTHING



Here's an opportunity for you to ask us anything about Metra. To get us started, we're running some of the questions that riders frequently ask. If you have something to ask us, email your question to mymetra@metrarr.com.

Sinister: Why do Metra trains run on the left side of the railway?

The most plausible theory is that the lines originally had a single track, with the depots on the left side (as you head downtown). When a second track was added, it was easiest to put it to the right of the first track, since the depots were taking up space on the left side. But the first track remained the inbound track, because the depots were all on that side, and you want the sheltered waiting areas for inbound riders since most people waiting at the station are heading downtown.

Chime time: What's the deal with the chimes every so often on the trains?

The chimes sound when a train is approaching a location where the maximum authorized speed drops by 20 mph or more. It's to remind the crew (who may be in any car at

any given time) so they can remind the engineer and be prepared to take action should the train fail to slow down.

Catching fakes: How do conductors know if the monthly tickets they are being shown by passengers on the train are real or a copy?

We have several features on our monthly passes designed to thwart fakes. We don't detail what they are as we don't want counterfeiters to know. Our conductors, however, know what to look for.

Why the tap dance? Love the Ventra app. But why do we have to tap the screen?

It's a security feature – if it changes color, we know the ticket is valid and not a reproduction. And be sure to download the newly updated Ventra app today.

Quieting the influence: Are passengers or conductors responsible for ensuring Quiet Cars remain quiet?

Our policy on Quiet Cars is that they are largely peer enforced. If you encounter someone being loud in the Quiet Car, we encourage you to politely point out that they are in the Quiet Car and ask them to kindly tone it down. If the passenger continues to make noise, you should inform the conductor. While our goal is to keep cars as quiet as possible, passengers should not expect the car to be completely silent.

No seat hogs: What is Metra's policy on riders 'saving seats' on trains or blocking them with their belongings?

"Seat hog-ism" springs eternal. Our policy is first come, first served. If you encounter a seat hog, we recommend politely asking if you can sit.

EXPERT CARE.

ANYWHERE YOU NEED IT.

Our doctors are ready to care for you. And with virtual visits, you can have your appointment without leaving your home.

It's never been more convenient to get the care you need to stay healthy.

Find your doctor today at
[UIHealth.Care](https://www.uihealthcare.com)

