



Thursday, October 15, 2009

## LCTA / LCP Forum Set For November 17

Lake County Transportation Alliance (LCTA), Lake County Partners (LCP), and Lake Cook TMA are jointly sponsoring a forum on November 17 from 7:30 to 10 a.m. at the Key Lime Cove Resort in Gurnee (1700 Nations Drive). The forum will feature some excellent speakers, a full breakfast, and a great networking opportunity.

Speakers will include Jack Lavin, Chief Operating Officer for Governor Patrick Quinn's Office, as well as William Strauss, Economist at the Federal Reserve Bank in Chicago. In addition, Marty Buehler, Lake County Division of Transportation Director and Engineer, will let us know which Lake County road projects have been or will be funded by the federal stimulus (ARRA) and state capital legislation.

Strauss will present the audience with an economic review and outlook for the U. S. and Midwest. Lavin will speak about the impacts of the ARRA and the state's capital legislation on Lake County and the state.

The forum is free of charge to all members of LCP, LCTA, or Lake Cook TMA, but registration is required – *by November 11*. For non-members, there is a \$20 charge. To register, please contact Rita Lumadue at: [rlumadue@lakecountypartners.com](mailto:rlumadue@lakecountypartners.com) / (847) 247-0137, or [register online](#).

## Federal Transportation Funding In Limbo

SAFETEA-LU, the federal transportation authorization legislation that had been in effect since 2001, expired on October 1. Although an emergency one-month extension was made the day before, states that had not used their federal funding allocations (read: Illinois) lost those funds. Illinois was second only to Texas in actual dollars lost (\$80,845,690). Details can be found in the attached "Final Rescission of Contract Authority," from *Transportation Weekly*

The larger issue is, when will we have a new federal authorization plan? The Obama administration has asked for a long extension – 18 months – so that Congress can deal with other priorities first. But on Monday, October 12, Illinois' U. S. [Senator Dick Durbin](#) called for a new authorization to be approved by early next year. As the second-highest ranking Senator and a close ally of President Obama, Senator Durbin's remarks may indicate that a consensus is forming regarding the timing of the new legislation.

Speaking to the Tri-State Development Summit in Fairfield, Iowa, Durbin also said that the authorization is most likely going to require a gas tax hike. "Nobody wants to say those words. I've said them to you because unless we're honest about this, we're not going to see an (adequate) federal highway bill," Durbin said, as quoted in the *Quincy Herald Whig*

- [See the state-by-state rescission chart](#)

## Illinois Legislature in Veto Session

The General Assembly arrived Wednesday, October 14 for its annual fall veto session, expected to last three days this week and three days next week. The purpose of the veto session is consider any changes the Governor has made to bills they passed during the regular spring session, but frequently they become involved with other legislative issues. The anticipated agenda includes issues such as finding money for college student grants and stronger ethics laws. Read the [Tribune](#) article for more details.

## Illinois Transportation: Successes, Challenges in '09

Transportation for Illinois Coalition (TFIC)'s annual meeting September 30 celebrated the successful passage of Illinois' first capital legislation in ten years, but also noted the challenges ahead.

Linda Wheeler, TFIC's expert consultant, presented the facts and figures of the capital funding that was approved. The bonding that is to be used to fund the transportation means that there is no continued revenue stream; so at the end of five years, all levels of transportation funding return to 2009 levels. For that reason, TFIC stressed the importance of beginning *now* to advocate for future needs.

Wheeler's complete analysis can be seen in the attached presentation.

- [Click here to review the analysis.](#)

## Lake County Bans Video Gambling in Bars

At its October 13 meeting, the [Lake County Board](#) became the third metro county to ban video gambling in its unincorporated areas, when board members approved the ban by an 18 – 4 vote. DuPage County was the first to approve the ban, followed by Cook County.

Meanwhile, a growing list of communities are approving similar bans within their municipal boundaries. In Lake County, the list includes Beach Park, Buffalo Grove, Kildeer, Lake Forest, Libertyville, and Mettawa. [Libertyville's village board](#) just approved the ban on Wednesday, October 14. Deerfield's village board will consider the issue at its meeting on Monday, October 19.

The Video Gaming Act, signed into law in July, provides one of the key funding mechanisms for the state's \$31 billion capital plan, slated to provide about a third of the funding. The legislation legalized video gambling in licensed bars, restaurants, fraternal organizations and truck stops, although it provided local and county governments the right to opt out. The legislation also states that those entities that ban video gambling will not receive their share of the revenues for local capital projects.

## Route 120 By-Pass Gets First Nod of Approval

The Route 120 Corridor Planning Council Governance Board voted last night to approve a unified vision for the future of the Illinois Route 120 transportation corridor. Recommendations include Route 120 as a four-lane, limited access arterial highway, with a by-pass along seven miles of the state road.

The Board's approval of the plan sets the stage for the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to begin a Phase I Engineering Study. The Governance Board, including mayors and county board members from municipalities and districts in the corridor area, has worked during the past several years to build local consensus about planned future improvements. The process began when local elected officials identified Route 120 improvements as a priority at the 2005 Transportation Summit coordinated by LCDOT and LCTA.

More information is available at [www.120now.com](http://www.120now.com), and by reading the attached press release.

- [Click here to access the Route 120 news release.](#)

## CTA, Pace Increase Fares

Both CTA and Pace announced substantial fare increases and service cutbacks in their 2010 budgets released on Monday, October 12. At the CTA, train fares will increase from \$2.25 to \$3, and bus fares will increase from \$2.25 to \$2.50. Pace proposes cutting many 19 weekend and 33 weekend routes, as well as increasing paratransit fees.

CTA President Richard Rodriguez said the budgeted shortfall is due to a projected 30% decrease in sales tax revenues used to support transit.

This is not merely a local phenomenon. According to [www.Transportation4America.com](http://www.Transportation4America.com), nearly 90% of transit systems have had to raise fares or cut service in the past year. Of the 25 largest transit operators nationally, 10 agencies are raising fares more than 13% (CTA and Pace increases are 33%). An analysis of the economic value of transit and the impact of inadequate funding mechanisms is attached.

- [See "Stranded at the Station" Report.](#)

## High Speed Rail Presentation at Lake Cook TMA

TMA of Lake Cook will sponsor a presentation at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, October 27 about the high speed rail initiative in the Midwest and specifically Illinois.

Speaking will be State Representative Elaine Nekritz, chair of the Illinois House Rail Committee, as well as Rick Harnish, executive director of the Midwest High Speed Rail Association.

The high speed rail update / discussion will be held at Baxter Healthcare's Auditorium, One Baxter Parkway in Deerfield. RSVP by October 23rd to [lynn\\_stailey@baxter.com](mailto:lynn_stailey@baxter.com) or [register online](#).

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