

STOPtalk



MTD Rings in a New Service Year

The 2012-2013 service year began Sunday, August 19. For MTD staff, summer is the busiest time of year as months of preparation go into updating schedules, maps, internal data, and all rider communications.

Conversations begin in the spring to discuss the depth of potential service improvements. Many things are taken into account as data is collected all year round along with customer feedback. A [public hearing](#) is held at the end of May or early June to share proposed improvements with the public. These meetings provide a great opportunity for community members to speak directly with MTD staff and Board of Trustee Members.

Then...we're off! Updates and edits to the Maps & Schedules book take several weeks as dates, timetables, route maps, and graphic images are tweaked. The master list of bus stop signs is analyzed to determine which stops need attention. There are over 100 shelter boards installed around the District. Each and every shelter board undergoes a design transformation to alert MTD passengers to the new service year and the potential for change. This year, the background images for the shelter boards are a collection of photographs taken from the "Behind the Scenes at MTD" [exhibit](#).

"Masters" are generated for every bus serving a route at every possible time. Operators use these initially to pick their work schedule, but will continue referencing the document each time they operate their route. Masters are then compiled into Supervisor Schedules for extended blocks of time as a comprehensive list for supervisors and radio dispatchers to reference. Internal software programs that enable operator scheduling, bus assignments, and data tracking also require a thorough update.

MTD's online [Trip Planner](#), [Bus Stop Lookup](#), and Maps & Schedules [section](#) also demand several weeks of line-by-line development. MTD also updates (and exports) data through Google Transit and our [API](#) (Application Programming Interface).

These are the big projects that demand months of creation, labor, and proofreading. There are many smaller initiatives that also contribute to the summer of bus love. **Destination signs underwent a makeover, too.**



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Annual Pass Sales
Go Up, Up, Up!



In 2009, MTD reduced the cost of the annual pass from \$235 to \$60. Annual passes are good for 12 months of unlimited riding.

91%

In the first year of the cost reduction, annual pass sales grew from 1,735 to 3,314. A 91 percent increase!

17%

The sale of annual passes continues to grow. The average growth for 2011 and 2012 is 17 percent.

Thank you for riding!

theINSIDELANE

Visit the CUMTD Blog here.

Illinois Public Transportation Association's Annual Conference Comes to Champaign

The Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District is proud to host the Illinois Public Transportation Association's (IPTA) annual conference this year! The IPTA Conference will be September 5 – 7 at iHotel.

There are 94 IPTA members, which include other public transportation agencies as well as the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), bus manufacturers, and vendors who specialize in transit products.

Over 175 attendees will visit Champaign-Urbana and tour Illinois Terminal, MTD's Administration & Operations building, as well as our Maintenance Facility. The President of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), Mike Meliphany, will be one of them! Staff from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) will also be in attendance.

There will be three sessions, each with two concurrent topics. The presentations will cover disaster and crisis preparation and response, facilities expansion, employee selection, and low cost messaging.

The IPTA Conference will not impact MTD service in any way. Attendees, however, may experience envy as they ride our system, visit campus, and enjoy Champaign-Urbana.

[Learn More](#)



August Ends with Outdoor Fun

Two events mark the end of summer and the beginning of a new academic year.

The first was the [Sweetcom Festival](#) put on by the [Urbana Business Association](#). This annual event celebrated its 37th year of music, activities, and corn! MTD brought a 30-foot hybrid bus and staffed our Marketing Mobile Friday, August 24 through Saturday, August 25.

This event provides a terrific opportunity for MTD to hand out the new service year's Maps & Schedules Book. Many booth visitors want to know, "Has a lot changed from last year?" For most riders, the service path and timetables for the route they ride were not affected. To be certain, we always reply, "Which routes do you ride?" Not sure if your route was affected? Read [this](#) blog post.

The Sweetcom Festival closes the streets of Main, Broadway, Elm, and Race, which causes many MTD buses to be rerouted. Lincoln Square is a major hub for MTD routes, so staff frequently answers questions about where to board from the Festival.

The second event was Quad Day at the University of Illinois on Sunday, August 26. If you've never witnessed the Quad during this annual welcome event, it is a sight to behold. Thousands of new and returning students pour onto the Quad the Sunday before classes start to meet registered student organizations, get information on campus and area resources, and, of course, visit MTD's booth!

This year, our Maintenance Crew built an App Garage. Although it may have appeared to be just a tent with siding, this structure attracted attention to the over 15 apps available for download thanks to our developer community. Our [App Garage](#) gets 20-30 page views each day on average. On Quad Day, the App Garage had over 700 views. MTD's Application Programming Interface (API) is also answering more requests than ever. May 2012 saw over three million requests!

Interested in developing an MTD app?



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