**Message from the Inspector General**

Recent legislation designated the Office of Executive Inspector General for the Agencies of the Illinois Governor (the “OEIG”) to serve as Executive Inspector General for Metra and the other regional transit boards (RTA, CTA, and Pace). Effective July 1, 2011, our office will accept all complaints of misconduct relating to Metra and, when appropriate, will open and conduct investigations. In addition, we will conduct all pending investigations, including those initiated by Metra’s present inspector general, Hilliard Heintze, LLC.

For those unfamiliar with our office, we are an independent, nonpartisan state agency established in 2003. We have conducted hundreds of investigations in a fair and impartial manner and our efforts – as illustrated by the Executive Ethics Commissioner’s decision in Meza v. Erwin, 11 EEC-005 – have exposed unethical conduct. In the Erwin matter, the misconduct related to prohibited political activities Ms. Erwin engaged in while serving as head of the Illinois Board of Higher Education.

Our investigations have also uncovered various forms of misconduct, including benefit fraud, procurement and hiring improprieties, improper use of state resources and time abuse. In addition, our responsibilities include monitoring state employment practices, overseeing employee ethics training, and issuing revolving door employment determinations.

Our experienced and professional attorneys, investigators, and paralegals are fully committed to honest government and the highest standards of public service. We believe we are well equipped to serve Illinois citizens as Executive Inspector General for Metra and the other regional transit boards.

We invite you to visit our website at [www.inspectorgen.illinois.gov](http://www.inspectorgen.illinois.gov) and encourage you to report misconduct, fraud, or abuse, related to Metra or any other transit board click here. Complaints may be filed in a variety of ways, such as via our toll-free hotline (866-814-1113), TDD (888-261-2734), mail, in person at either of the OEIG’s two offices, or via our website.

If you have any questions or concerns about how the OEIG will function as Executive Inspector General for Metra, please contact us at 32 W. Randolph St., Ste. 1900, Chicago, IL 60601 (312) 527-5600 or at [oeig.illinois.gov](http://oeig.illinois.gov). We thank Metra for publishing this message and look forward to serving the state in this new role.

Ricardo Meza
Executive Inspector General

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**CLIFF NOTES**

**It's time to extend quiet to every Metra line**

**Sounds like a great idea!**

The rules remain the same: No cell phone calls. If you must answer your phone, you should make it brief or move to the vestibule or another car. Conversations between riders are discouraged, if you must talk to someone keep it short and use subdued voices. And if you're using headphones, make sure only you can hear them.

We hope all passengers will remember to treat their fellow passengers with courtesy and respect, no matter where they are sitting.

You can now follow me on Twitter @MetraCEO.

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**Metra helps Make-A-Wish Foundation**

A 7-year-old boy who loves trains got to experience a day of train-related activities thanks to the Make-A-Wish Foundation. Justin Bonny of Bolingbrook, pictured with his parents Kristin and Andrew in the front and Metra officials, including CEO Alex Clifford (second from left) in back, took Metra’s engine simulator for a test spin, earned an honorary engineer’s license and received a model Metra train with his name on it. He also visited Union Station, toured an Amtrak train and served as a Metra guest conductor.

**Meetings scheduled for 75th St. project**

IDOT will host two public meetings concerning the CREATE 75th St. Corridor Improvement Project, which will eliminate bottlenecks and lead to more reliable service on the SWS line. Potential solutions may route SWS trains to LaSalle St. Station instead of Union Station. The meetings will be held from 4 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on June 7 at St. Rita High School, 7740 S. Western, and on June 9 at 1st Corinthian MBC, 7500 S. Halsted. For more info, go to [www.75thcip.org](http://www.75thcip.org).

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**Metra board gets new members**

The Metra Board welcomed two new members at its May meeting. Paul C. Darley of Elmhurst was appointed by the Chairman of the DuPage County Board to replace Carole Doris as the board’s DuPage representative. Darley is currently president and CEO of W.S. Darley & Co., a fourth generation family-owned business specializing in the manufacture of equipment for the firefighting industry. He also serves on the board of the Great Lakes Chapter of the National Defense Industry Association. Don A. De Graff of South Holland was appointed by the suburban members of the Cook County Board to replace Edward W. Paesel as the south suburban Cook County representative. De Graff has served as president of the Village of South Holland since 1994. In addition, he serves as the President of MB Financial Bank, Southeast Region. More complete biographies of Darley and De Graff can be found at www.metrarail.com.

**Metra asks riders for their vigilance**

Based on events that transpired in the Middle East last month, Metra is asking riders for their continued support and vigilance in our ongoing efforts to keep rail travel safe. Please remember, “If you see something, say something.” That means if you observe anything or anyone suspicious, please contact any Metra personnel or call Metra at 312-322-2800. For more information about emergency preparedness and Metra’s “See Something, Say Something” campaign, please go to www.metrarail.com.

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**Summer News Briefs**

**Summary of Metra announcements**

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Ricardo Meza
Executive Inspector General
Clean the windows

In the past Metra has washed their train cars at least twice a week. I have noticed the cars that go out of the south side of Union Station are filthy. The windows and sides are covered in dirt and grime. People are starting to write messages in the dirty windows. Last time I saw cars being washed was last fall. Is this part of a cost-saving measure by Metra?

Richard

We’re sorry about the conditions of those windows. We had to replace the car washer in the BNSF yard, and the new one is now being installed. It should be ready soon. We ask for your continued patience and understanding.

Clean the cars

I am riding on car 7810 on the UP Northwest line heading into Chicago. It is the car next to the engine. I have been a daily Metra passenger for more than 10 years and have never known Metra to put a car into service in this condition. There is dirt all over the seats. I mean visible granules of what looks like soil and grit. This looks like one of the old cars that was recently “rebuilt,” but someone missed cleaning this one before putting it into service. The passengers are cleaning off the seats before sitting on them. I wanted Metra to know because I believe that it generally makes an effort to keep the cars clean. There must be a gap in inspections or cleaning.

Terry

We’re sorry about what happened, but the train assignments aren’t as easy as they may appear, particularly when trains are late, because the longer trains can only use certain platforms. Train 1220 arrived on Track 12 with a 9-car set. The next train to arrive CUS after 1220 was train 1226. Train 1226 normally becomes Train 1225, departing on Track 12. We did not want to make a platform change on 1225 because people were already cued up for it, and therefore we put 1226 on Track 10 to expedite the flip and minimize confusion. 1220 did not have anywhere else to go, because a 9-car set would not fit on Track 4 or 5. Train 8 was occupied with 1223, and Track 2 was saved for 1228, an 11-car set.

You think you’re old?

Steve thinks he’s an old-timer on Metra. According to his criteria, I’d be long overdue for the silver and gold medals, and approaching platinum. I wonder if Steve had even started grade school yet when I started my daily commute on what we now know as Metra Electric. Back in the mid-1970s we called it the “IC,” and the cars we now call “old” still had that “new car” smell. Cars 1633 through 1666 were manufactured in the late 70s, I rode some of them on their maiden trips. Before they arrived, I’d occasionally get to ride some truly old cars – the green ones that were made in the 1920s. Steve’s still a youngster in my book.

Greg

We still want you....

...to download a QR-reader app to your smartphone and then scan this image with your phone’s camera. You’ll be taken to our “My Metra” page, where you can sign up to receive alerts about service issues on your line. It’s fast, easy and convenient.

Eileen

Running wild

To the large man who hit me with the speed and force of an NFL running back as he was running back to the Ogilvie Station on the evening of April 14th thanks for asking me if I was OK, saying sorry or even offering to help me up. You should count yourself among the fortunate that I wasn’t an expectant mother or elderly person, as the damage could have been greater than the bruised hip and swollen arm I received. I now submit to you that it’s time for a new campaign for the comfort of the commuters stations. Running for a train is dangerous, not only outside the stations when the gates are down, but when there are thousands of others trying to get to their trains without being tackled and injured. If you miss that train, there will be another one.

Not NFL Material

Maybe she’ll recognize herself from your letter and realize that her behavior is best left to the privacy of her bathroom.

Another clipper

I was reading “On The Bi-Level” a couple months back and I remember a story about a guy clipping his nails. Well, I think he’s back. I was on a UP/NW train and a guy was clipping his nails! He was middle-aged sitting on the upper level, right smacking into my iPad, suit, and nail clipper. I think everyone on the upper level noticed him a dirty look, but he kept going.

Christian

If only there was just one Jack the Clipper. Unfortunately, there are too many riders who never learned what is and what is not appropriate train etiquette. They keep this column in business.