



President's Report – February 9, 2011
Richard L. Rodriguez

Thank you Chairman Peterson, members of the board.

On February 1, we faced one of the worst winter storms in the history of Chicago. The combination of wind and rapid accumulation of snow presented a number of serious challenges, some of which we have never before encountered.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the CTA employees who worked around the clock to keep service operating throughout last week's historic storm.

The preparation in advance of the storm was vital to keeping our trains and buses running.

On Tuesday, as the storm began to descend on the area, we provided earlier rush hour service for riders who left work early to get home before the worst of the storm arrived.

To keep the tracks clear on all rail lines, we dispatched sleet trains that prevented snow buildup and icing on the third rail.

For routes that don't operate on a 24-hour schedule, we had non-service cars running all night. The snow blades attached to the front of these cars helped to clear snow away from the running rail.

CTA staff was on duty at rail yards to clear the switches of snow and ice buildup. They were also removing snow at our substations for emergency access. Rail switch heaters throughout the rail system were activated to help reduce ice buildup.

We also had teams out at rail terminals to clear snow and at stations to keep the platforms clear. Many of the teams included administrative employees who volunteered. This effort was vital to keeping our trains on schedule and to protecting the safety of our customers.

We had to suspend service on a segment of the Pink Line from Pulaski to 54th Street and on the Yellow Line. In response, snow fighting locomotives were dispatched and bus shuttles were implemented to supplement service for our customers. In doing so, we were able to restore service on both lines for our customers in time for the Thursday morning rush.

There were delays, including several instances where high winds blew debris onto the tracks causing operators to stop briefly in order to move it. But for the most part, trains kept moving as did buses albeit contending with the storm on the roadways was no easy task. Our operators did a magnificent job.

Unfortunately, some of our buses were stranded behind other traffic on Lake Shore Drive during the storm, including a few of the buses that were serving as warming centers. Clearly these were very trying circumstances for our riders and our operators. Fortunately there were no resulting injuries. I don't want to diminish the anxiety and frustration people experienced in these cases, but I am grateful that all involved ended up safe considering the ferocity of the storm.

Ridership was very light on Wednesday as most people who could stay home did just that. For those that had to travel, CTA was most certainly one of the most reliable options.

On Thursday morning, with both the Yellow and Pink Line service operating normally, we saw ridership begin to approach normal levels.

CTA crews continued to work round the clock to deter the effects of the snow and the rapidly dropping temperature.

The process to clear bus stops and rail station entrances began once the storm cleared, and is still ongoing. Hundreds of volunteers from CTA have assisted with this effort. Over the weekend, I joined volunteers from CTA and City departments at Soldier Field, where we were assigned shovels, salt and safety vests and then dispatched to areas in need of attention.

The CTA team continues to utilize inside resources and is working with the Chicago Department of Transportation, as well as the City's Department of Streets and Sanitation to ensure that all high-ridership bus stops and shelters are clear of snow and safe for our passengers.

I would like to recognize the numerous business and building owners who helped commuters by clearing the stops by their premises. For all those with neighboring stops that are still covered in snow, we urge you to please help your community by clearing the snow.

It is during times like this that you are afforded the opportunity to see what an organization is made of, and clearly the CTA is an organization with heart. Despite an exhausting and challenging week, our employees knew that people were relying on the CTA and they were able to prove that they could indeed rely on us.

I want to thank our customers for their patience throughout last week and their understanding when they had a slow or crowded commute.

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Despite our agency-wide response to the blizzard, employees still maintained the momentum of our corporate operations. With that, I am proud to present the various items on today's agenda. I want to welcome our new tenants, the National Able Network, who will be leasing part of the 11th floor of this building.

Revenue from the lease agreement will help CTA's operating budget, which is reliant on public funding and system-generated revenue to support service and operations.

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Also on today's agenda is an amendment to the CTA's 2011-2015 Capital Improvement Program. The amendment reflects the receipt of grant money that includes \$37.4 million from the Federal Transit Administration State of Good Repair Funds and \$11.1 million in Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality funds

The State of Good Repair funding provides for a bus facilities rehabilitation program to upgrade garages built between 1908 and 1993.

It is imperative that CTA make investments in its infrastructure and capital funding is needed to ensure we are properly maintaining and improving these assets.

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That concludes my report. Thank you.