



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION

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The Department of Transportation has approved a grant of \$25,211,143 to the West Suburban Mass Transit District of Chicago, Secretary John A. Volpe announced today.

The two-thirds grant will assist the transit district in acquiring the commuter fleet of the Burlington Northern Railroad which operates a 38 mile suburban commuter route between Chicago and Aurora, Illinois.

"These funds, made available through the capital grant program of the Department's Urban Mass Transportation Administration, will be used to purchase 94 bi-level commuter cars and 21 locomotives which will be extensively modernized and improved," Secretary Volpe said.

In addition to refurbishing the existing fleet, the capacity of the line will be expanded by the purchase of 25 new bi-level commuter cars. The fleet will be leased to the railroad for continued operation.

Urban Mass Transportation Administrator Carlos C. Villarreal said "the Federal share, along with the matching local funds, will enable us to provide even better commuter rail service to the residents of the rapidly growing western suburban region of the Chicago metropolitan area. President Nixon has called upon us to write a mass transportation success story for the 70s and projects such as this will enable us to meet that challenge.

Administrator Villarreal pointed out "this is the second Federal capital grant in the State of Illinois to be matched by local funds available through the State's recently enacted Transportation Bond Legislation. This is indication of a local commitment to improve transportation services, and I am delighted to see it."

The population of the territory served by the Burlington Northern line has grown substantially in the last decade, and ridership has increased, even with several fare increases. "It is apparent that the commuter service provided by the Burlington Northern in the West Suburban Mass Transit District area is both vital and growing," Secretary Volpe said. "And with major commercial developments and already congested freeways along the route, mass transit services of high quality will be required in years to come.

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