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**MAYOR ANNOUNCES MORE THAN 400 NEW CTA BUS DRIVERS HIRED FOR
RED LINE SOUTH PROJECT**

Mayor Rahm Emanuel was joined by CTA President Forrest today in welcoming 36 new bus drivers to the CTA, the latest of more than 400 jobs created as part of the upcoming Red Line South reconstruction project.

The new drivers are the latest group to join the CTA since last fall in preparation for the \$425 million investment in the Red Line on Chicago's South Side. The drivers will operate the shuttle buses and expanded supplemental bus service the CTA will offer customers during the construction project, which gets under way in May 2013. The drivers will become full-time bus drivers following the conclusion of the project.

"These 400 bus-drivers, along with the 100 traffic control aides we are hiring, will provide essential jobs for our residents and will ease transportation around the city as we make these critical improvements in our neighborhoods," said Mayor Emanuel.

Nearly all of the more than 400 new drivers—including all of today's graduates—either attended one of the CTA's three bus driver job fairs in summer 2012, or heard or saw the advertisements for the fairs, each of which were held in the footprint of the Red Line project between Roosevelt Road and 95th Street.

"These men and women are now part of the CTA as a direct result of our efforts to promote employment opportunities as part of the historic Red Line South reconstruction," Claypool said. "They will play a critical role in helping our customers get around both during this project and long after it's over."

The bus driver job fairs we so successful—attracting more than 4,000 potential candidates—that the CTA has been able to rely on that pool to fill other bus driver openings due to retirements or other normal attrition.

The bus drivers start out as part-time employees, but eventually become full-time drivers

as other drivers retire or leave CTA employment. CTA bus drivers go through a 23-day training course before being assigned to bus routes. The training focuses on bus operations and customer service, with a strong emphasis on safety.

The Red Line South project will also offer hundreds of job opportunities to tradespeople and apprentices in carpentry, electrical, ironwork, laborers, operators, plumbers and other areas. While the CTA will not hire these employees directly, the agency is working with the general contractors, Kiewit Construction Corporation (track reconstruction) and F. H. Paschen, S.N. Nielsen and Associates, LLC (station improvements), to ensure that opportunities are extended to individuals who qualify under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) as displaced, out of work or otherwise economically disadvantaged.

In addition to the job fairs, the CTA also hosted several meet-and-greet sessions between the project contractors and potential Disadvantaged Business Enterprise firms, to encourage participation in the project. The initial efforts were very successful: The track work contract award included more than 29 percent DBE firms, slightly exceeding the CTA's goal. The station work contract included 40 percent DBE firms.

More information about the Red Line South project is available at www.transitchicago.com/redsouth.

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Photo Caption 1: Mayor Emanuel Welcomes the Newest Graduating Class of CTA Bus Drivers

Photo Credit: Brooke Collins - City of Chicago

