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MAYOR EMANUEL, CHICAGO TRANSIT AUTHORITY CELEBRATE 125 YEARS OF HISTORIC 'L'
Vintage railcars to provide rides on historic Loop 'L'

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Chicago Transit Board Chairman Terry Peterson and CTA President Dorval R. Carter, Jr. today marked the 125th anniversary of Chicago's historic 'L' train system—known around the world as one of the city's most iconic symbols.

Back in 1892, the first trains began running on the city's first elevated railway, the 'L'—short for "elevated." Known as the "Alley 'L,'" the line ran from a modest terminal at 39th Street just east of State Street north to Congress Street. The first trains consisted of four wooden passenger cars pulled by a small, coal-burning, steam locomotive.

"Few inventions have had such an impact on Chicago as the historic 'L,'" Mayor Emanuel said. "Our transit system is the city's heartbeat that moves us forward. The story of the 'L' is the story of Chicago's innovation and ingenuity."

To celebrate the 125th anniversary, the CTA will offer rides on trains featuring vintage railcars from CTA's Heritage Fleet: the 4000-series, built in 1923, and the 2400-series, built in 1976-78. The rides will take place on the historic Loop 'L' tracks in downtown Chicago.

"The CTA is a critical part of daily life in Chicago, providing access to work and education opportunities for Chicagoans across our city," said Chicago Transit Board Chairman Peterson. "We look forward to continuing to serve this great city for another 125 years."

Since 2011, Mayor Emanuel has completed, begun or announced more than \$8 billion in projects and programs to modernize the CTA, including more than 40 new and renovated stations, miles of track repair and upgrades, and hundreds of new buses and rail cars.

"We are excited to celebrate with our customers today and thank them for their patronage over the last 125 years," said CTA President Carter. "As important as it is to celebrate our history, we are equally excited about our future, and the investments the Mayor is making to provide a 21st Century transit system."

The beginning of 'L' service in 1892 led the way for many of the rail lines Chicagoans are familiar with today, including the Lake Street "L" in 1893 (today's Green Line Lake street branch), the

Metropolitan West Side “L” line in 1895 (parts of today’s Blue and Pink lines), the “Union Loop” beginning in 1895 and finished in 1897 (marking today’s Loop tracks) as well as the Northwestern “L” beginning in 1900 (parts of which make up today’s Red, Brown and Purple lines).

2017 also marks another special milestone for Chicago, the CTA’s 70th anniversary. The CTA was created by the Illinois Legislature to unify multiple, private rail agencies and began operations on October 1, 1947.

Throughout 2017, the CTA has planned a series of events and activities, including tours, ridership promotions, contests and giveaways, to celebrate its anniversary. CTA’s Heritage Fleet—consisting of vintage trains and buses—will make a number of public appearances as part of the celebration. The CTA earlier this year launched a new Instagram account --@ChicagoCTA--to showcase rarely seen historical photos, which has attracted nearly 3,000 followers.

More information on the 70th anniversary celebration is available at transitchicago.com/cta70.

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Fun facts about 1892

- Ellis Island opened its doors to immigrants
- Thomas Edison patented the two-way telegraph
- The first game of basketball was played
- Benjamin Harrison was president
- The Coca-Cola Company was incorporated in Atlanta, GA
- “The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes” was published
- Dedication ceremonies for the Chicago World’s Fair were held