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**MAYOR EMANUEL, CTA PRESIDENT CLAYPOOL AND FREEDMAN SEATING
ANNOUNCE LOCAL ECONOMIC BOOST AND NEW JOBS
IN CONJUNCTION WITH PURCHASE OF NEW BUSES**

*100 new positions supported as local company Freedman Seating
will manufacture light-weight seats*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel joined Chicago Transit Authority President Forrest Claypool in announcing today that Chicago's local economy will get an injection of up to \$8.25 million and up to 100 new jobs as a result of CTA's recently approved purchase of at least 300 buses up to as many as 450 buses, which will include light-weight, durable seating manufactured by Freedman Seating, a 120-year-old company based in Humboldt Park. Approximately one-third of the new jobs will require highly skilled trade positions including machinists, computer numerical control (CNC) operators, welders and engineers.

"A world-class transit system is a key component of our city's economic plan," said Mayor Emanuel. "By modernizing our bus and rail fleets, we are providing our passengers with a

more comfortable, safe and reliable transit system while making critical improvements that boost the local economy with new jobs.”

In January 2013, the Chicago Transit Board approved the awarding of a \$148 million contract to Nova Bus for the purchase of at least 300 new 40-foot buses that will replace older model buses that are nearing the end of their useful life. As part of that contract, CTA’s specifications sought lightweight seating options to reduce vehicle weight and fuel costs, and that were also durable enough to withstand heavy-duty use in all seasons.

Nova offered up two manufacturers that could meet those specs, and CTA chose Freedman because of its proven seat design that is durable, lightweight and capable of providing comfort to passengers while contributing to greater fuel efficiency for the new buses.

“With this latest bus purchase, we are pleased that the selection of Freedman addresses customer safety and comfort, service reliability, cost efficiency, reduced environmental impacts and boosting the local economy,” said President Claypool. “We look forward to continuing with our plan to replace or overhaul every single bus in our fleet within the next few years.”

Freedman Seating currently employs more than 500 employees in its Humboldt Park location. Production of the 11,100 seats needed for CTA’s 300 new buses (37 seats per bus) will begin once CTA issues a notice-to-proceed (NTP), which is expected in mid-May. Freedman will be responsible for the manufacturing of the seats and any repairs/replacements under warranty. CTA also has the option to order an additional 150 buses, which would mean an order of another 5,500 seats from Freedman for those buses.

In addition to the announcement of the new jobs that will be created, Freedman Seating is also committed to two of the Mayor’s signature economic development initiatives. The company is continuing its longstanding relationship with City Colleges by becoming a part of the College to Careers program. Additionally, the company will work with the Mayor’s office to support Skills for Chicagoland’s Future, a key initiative that seeks to ensure that Chicago’s unemployed are hired for available positions by working directly with employers. Freedman is meeting with Skills for Chicagoland’s Future and is committed to exploring the possibility of hiring the unemployed for these positions and positions that are becoming available in the future.

Freedman Seating also has a long history of working with Austin Polytechnical Academy.

“Everyone at Freedman Seating is proud and excited to have earned a place in this important program,” said Craig Freedman, President of Freedman Seating. “Our selection to provide seats is a win not only for the City but a win for FSC’s 550 dedicated associates. The City will be getting the latest in transit seat design and innovation, built right here in Chicago. For over 100 years Freedman Seating has created jobs for the community but these jobs have a special place in our history. We are all looking forward to riding CTA buses and sitting on seats designed, tested and built locally.”

The new bus purchase is part of Mayor Emanuel’s overall pledge to modernize the nation’s second largest transit system, while boosting the local economy. In the last year, CTA has committed to several major upgrades of its infrastructure and bus and rail fleets, including the \$493 million bus modernization initiative announced last June.

Under the bus modernization plan, CTA will have a clean, modern and more environmentally-friendly bus fleet with reduced increased capacity over the next few years. CTA has awarded two contracts valued at \$185 million for the mid-life overhaul of roughly 60 percent of the existing fleet -- 1,029 buses purchased between 2006 and 2007. The remaining portion of the fleet will be replaced with a combination of new standard (40-foot) and articulated (60-foot) buses.

So far, two contracts with a combined value of \$228 million have been awarded for the purchase of at least 300 standard buses from Nova and 100 clean diesel and hybrid articulated buses from New Flyer. CTA is currently in the bidding process for the purchase of up to 150 additional articulated clean diesel and hybrid buses, which will be announced in early 2013.

Buses provide 58 percent of all rides taken on the CTA each year, serving all of Chicago and 35 surrounding suburbs. In 2012, bus ridership jumped by more than 4 million from the previous year, reaching 314 million recorded bus rides.

Improvement of infrastructure, including the public transportation system and its buses and trains, is a key component of Mayor Emanuel’s Plan for Economic Growth and Jobs. The Plan was created by World Business Chicago in concert with the Mayor’s office and its ten strategies are used to guide the direction of the City’s and the sister agencies’ economic development efforts.

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