

A New Image for a New Era



NEW Chicago RTA 4-Window Coach and Cab Coach Bi-Levels

It was the winter of 1977, and the Midwest was facing one of the most severe Blizzards in recent history; Chicago was buried in snow, a snow which would soon bury the career of then-mayor Michael Bilandic, paving the way for Jane Byrne to take command, and signaling the end of the Chicago Political Machine.

1977 was also a significant year for the commuter transportation system in Chicago, as it was the year which introduced the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA)'s new F40PH locomotives and paint scheme to the aging and underfunded Chicago & North Western Bi-Level fleets. Powered by the taxpayers and the new short range passenger locomotives, the RTA delivered improved service and maintenance, setting the stage for future generations of government funded commuter transportation such as today's "Metra." It was ideal for trips downtown to see a Blackhawks or Bull's game at the "Madhouse on Madison" Chicago Arena, or to visit music and art festivals at newly reconitioned Navy Pier.



The RTA Bi-Level cars themselves utilized a "gallery" design, which allowed the conductors easy access to the tickets of passengers on the upper levels. This design was immensely successful, and along with the low vestibule steps that allowed for stops at stations with low platforms, was copied in later generations of commuter cars.

Chicago RTA and C&NW Bi-Level Passenger Cars

Chicago RTA EMD F40PH

- 35-6033 **NEW** Chicago RTA 4-Window Coach* \$55
- 35-6023 **NEW** Chicago RTA 4-Window Cab Coach* \$67
- 35-6042 Chicago RTA 6-Window Coach* \$52
- 35-6032 C&NW 4-Window Coach** \$52
- 35-6041 C&NW 6-Window Coach** \$52
- 35-6022 C&NW 4-Window Cab Coach** \$65

- 37-6561 RTA F40PH #135* \$130
- 37-6562 RTA F40PH #157* \$130

* Commuter Rail Board of RTA ("Metra") Licensed Products
** Union Pacific Licensed Product



A standard eight car consist would often have a cab coach somewhere in the middle, a result of the practice of "tacking on" smaller consists in order to make the trains longer during early morning or late evening rush hours since more cars were needed to handle the increased ridership. In the above consist, you can see where the added cars have some of the older C&NW paint schemes; a common sight for many years on the RTA. Note also that the train would not turn around upon arrival at a Chicago station; the design of the cab coach allowed the trains to move in and out of the city without turning.