

Media release

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First battery trains from Stadler for Chicago

Metra and Stadler have signed an agreement for 16 battery-electric trains. The initial order is for eight, two-car multiple units. In this first competitive bid for battery trainsets in the United States, Stadler continues to add to its recent success that includes the signing of the contract option for hydrogen trains for California in early 2024 and the rail vehicles with alternative drive solutions already sold in the USA. Stadler once again confirms its leading position in rail vehicles with alternative drive systems.

Stadler has been awarded the contract to supply up to 16 state-of-the-art Battery Electric Multiple Unit (BEMU) rail vehicles for Metra, which Metra intends to introduce on its Rock Island Line. Metra is initially ordering eight two-car trainsets, which can later be expanded to three-car or four-car trainsets.

Compliant with the Buy America Act, the vehicles will be built in the United States and are designed to meet all Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) standards.

Today's contract award represents a transformative step forward for Chicago's transportation landscape. We're introducing emission-free drive technology for rail transport in the city for the first time and pioneering the sale of modern multiple-unit train technology. This marks a significant shift towards sustainable and efficient urban mobility, shaping the future of transit in our city.

The trains ordered from Metra will be manufactured to be winterized and thus adapted to the severe winter conditions in Chicago. The features include efficient air conditioning technology including underfloor heating in the boarding areas as well as special insulation and well-sealed machine rooms to protect the drive technology.

Martin Ritter, CEO Stadler US, says, "Our BEMU technology helps support transit agencies like Metra in their mission to bring state-of-the art green public transit to the US. We are excited to build these trains for the greater Chicago area and are looking forward to the partnership with Metra."

"We think these trains will be an essential addition to our fleet," said Metra CEO/Executive Director Jim Derwinski. "Beyond the environmental and noise reduction benefits, they could also play a significant role in our vision to provide more frequent all-day service. We are excited to be working with Stadler and taking the lead on this technology."

Alternative drive solutions for a net-zero rail travel

Stadler's range of alternative drive solutions enable more environmentally-friendly rail travel even where there was previously no alternative to diesel. Stadler has more than 80 years of experience in the construction of battery-powered rail vehicles. Today, the modern battery-powered vehicles run both with and without overhead lines and recharge while travelling or braking.

In 2023, Stadler was awarded the contract by Californian rail operator Caltrain to develop the first battery-electric double-decker multiple-unit train for the USA. This innovative multiple-unit train enables low-emission local operation, especially on routes that are only partially electrified. Stadler also signed an important contract in October 2023: The delivery of a total of 29 hydrogen-powered trains for the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) and Caltrans. The first call-off includes four hydrogen trains, and six more hydrogen trains were ordered at the beginning of 2024.

With these ground-breaking developments in the USA and the successful sales of rail vehicles with battery or hydrogen drive in Germany, Italy, Austria and Lithuania, Stadler once again underlines its leading position worldwide in the field of alternative drive solutions for rail transport.

About Stadler

Stadler has been building trains for over 80 years. The provider of mobility solutions in rail vehicle construction, service and signalling technology has its headquarters in Bussnang, eastern Switzerland. It has a workforce of around 14,000 based in various production and engineering locations as well as more than 80 service locations. The company is conscious of its social responsibility for sustainable mobility and therefore stands for innovative, sustainable and durable quality products. The product range in the field of mainline railways and city transport includes high-speed trains, intercity trains, regional and suburban trains, metros, tramways and trams. Stadler also manufactures main-line locomotives, shunting locomotives and passenger carriages. It is the world's leading manufacturer in the rack-and-pinion rail vehicle industry.

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