



Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) Elevated Car 4439

The 4000s were Chicago's first steel body elevated cars. The first series of these cars, numbered 4001-4250, were built by the Cincinnati Car Company between 1914 and 1915 and resembled designs appearing at the time in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. Car 4439, built by Cincinnati in 1924, was part of an order of 205 more advanced second-generation models.

When new, car 4439 had a salmon-colored roof and green body, with burnt orange paint through the window area. Throughout the 1940s and into the early 1950s, the car was painted orange and brown. Finally, from around 1952 until retirement, it was painted cream and green. Car 4439 has been restored in the cream and green color scheme.

After the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) took over the transit system in 1947, the 4000s were overhauled and given multiple unit door control and battery voltage for control. They also were made up into semi-permanently coupled pairs, and the trolley feed on Evanston cars was tied together so only one pole per pair was needed to power both cars. Additionally, the number of destination signs per car was reduced from four to two, not counting the destination board on the front. These changes allowed a two-person crew to staff a train of any length.

During later overhauls, the 4000s were retrofitted with a single sealed-beam headlight mounted to the roof above the end door. The cars also received battery-controlled electric four-color classification marker lights and electric tail lights, replacing the oil lanterns formerly used.

Until the early 1950s, the 4000-series cars were used almost exclusively on the North-South/State Street Subway line (today's north side Red Line, State Street Subway, and south side Green Line). Car 4439 ran on this line until at least late 1952. Starting on September 30, 1957, the Evanston Express was equipped entirely with 4000-series cars, including car 4439. The car was moved to the Lake Street line for a short time in the early 1960s, but returned to Evanston for good by November 25, 1962.

When the installation of third rail on the entire Evanston route was completed in November 1973, the need for trolley pole-equipped trains disappeared, and so the last of the 4000-series cars were removed from the Evanston route and retired from passenger service. Car 4439 last ran in passenger service on November 8, 1973, and was placed in storage until stricken from the CTA roster on April 1, 1975.

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CTA 4439 at Byrnes Park, East Troy, July 22, 2022 (Eric Zabelny photo)

Vital Statistics:

Length – 48' 6"
Width – 8' 11"
Height – 13' 3"
Weight – 76,800 lbs.
Construction – Steel
Gauge – Standard (4' 8.5")
Roof Type – AR
Ended – Double-Ended

Seats – 52 passengers
#Wheels/Conf. – 8 (B-2)
Trucks – Baldwin 78-25A/72-22A
Brakes – AMU (M23)
Compressor – D3-F
Motors – WH 567R1 (2)
Control – WH ABLFM (XMI10)
Voltage – 600 VDC

Ownership History:

Chicago Rapid Transit #4439 – 1924-1947
Chicago Transit Authority #4439 – 1947-1975
Oakland Country Parks & Recreation Commission #4439 – 1975-1985(?)
Grand Rapids Electric Railway #4439 – 1985-2014
Toledo Lake Erie & Western – 2014-2020
East Troy Electric Railroad – 2020-present

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