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NEWS

CTA hopes to Target riders

May 31, 2005

CTA Blue Line riders are the target of a new ad campaign that turns a subway wall into a makeshift movie screen. The first string of backlit pictures in the tunnel near the Clark/Lake stop morph into a 15-second commercial for Target stores when L trains rumble past.

It's the CTA's first foray into tunnel commercials -- a moneymaker for tight budget times -- that have popped up in New York, Atlanta, Philadelphia and foreign cities like Hong Kong.

The first commercial here will include images of a girl blowing apart a dandelion, a woman sprinkling Target logos from a garden hose and a kayaker navigating a stream bubbling with Target bull's-eyes. "We're always looking for creative ways to advertise and reach clients," Target's Lena Michaud said.

The commercials were developed by a rocket scientist inspired by a children's toy -- the zoetrope. Astrophysicist Joshua Spodek came up with the process that brings linear still pictures to life, and puts train passengers into a life-sized flip book.

New York ad agency SubMedia sold the CTA on the program, which will change about every month. The CTA is paid monthly for use of the tunnel and gets a percentage of the ad revenue.

Upcoming Blue Line ads will feature 15-second bits for Hummer, Land Rover and fall TV shows, SubMedia CEO Peter Corrigan said. "It's a way for them to generate non-farebox revenue, it's great for advertisers to reach consumers. And regular people look at it and think, 'Wow, that's pretty cool,'" he said.

-- Mark J. Konkol, Red Streak

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