

IMPROVED TRANSIT SAFETY - ONBOARD VIDEO SYSTEMS

A recent study, published in the Journal of Public Transportation, looks at how successful onboard video feedback systems have been in supporting transit safety. This technology has been used for several years in commercial vehicle fleets, and studies have shown it contributes to substantial reductions in "safety-relevant events" for young drivers and commercial truckers. Its implementation in the transit sector is still relatively new.

Authors Michael Litschi and Peter Haas, Ph.D., of the Mineta Transportation Institute at San Jose State University looked at National Transit Database (NTD) crash and injury statistics and interviewed transit operators from agencies with at least two years of published safety data after they started to use DriveCam (now Lytx), one of the two primary companies providing this technology to the industry (the other is Smart-Drive Systems, Inc.). The agencies included were: Capital Metro, LA Metro, New Jersey Transit, Pace Bus, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. Additionally, interviews were conducted with contracted operators: First Transit, MV Transportation, and Veolia; but NTD data were not analyzed due to the challenge of identifying data from the multiple transit clients these companies serve.

HOW IT WORKS

The onboard video feedback system includes a small dual-lens camera with a microphone that is mounted to the windshield, usu-

ally behind the rear-view mirror of the bus. One camera can see the view out the front windshield and the other views the interior, usually including the operator, farebox, and a portion of the passenger seating area. The cameras are always on, but only save 12-15 second video clips when activated by certain gravitational forces like sudden braking or acceleration, swerving, sharp turns, or the impact of a crash. When activated, the system saves seconds of footage from before and after the triggering event. The transit operator can also manually record an event if he or she chooses.

SAFETY IMPACTS

The study found that four out of the six agencies with usable NTD data experienced reductions in passenger injuries and collisions after implementation. Additionally, all the transit operators reported reductions in the frequency and severity of safety-related events and risky driving behaviors. Though not all agencies have seen reductions of injuries or collisions in their NTD data, drivers have adapted their driving habits to avoid risky behaviors that can lead to more serious crashes and injuries.

The authors summarized their findings saying that video feedback systems can encourage safer driving in these ways:

- As a group training tool showing peers engaging in risky driving behaviors and for demonstrating good defensive-driving techniques;



- As an incentive to drive safer due to the awareness that any risky behaviors will be captured on video;
- As an individual training tool to help transit managers identify and correct chronic risky driving behaviors that eventually will lead to crashes and injuries;
- As a means to observe clear traffic code or transit policy violations committed by operators; and
- By providing the indisputable context of an event.

COST

Based on the implementation costs reported by a few of the transit agencies, costs for the equipment and installation fees may initially range from \$1,400 to \$2,500 per vehicle, though contracts also sometimes included technical support and analysis in this price. After that

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NOTES FROM THE TOP

BY DONNA LAVIGNE



It's a New Year and we are off to a great start. We have a lot to be thankful for and a lot to talk about. First and foremost, we are all happy and sad to see Mike Watts retire... happy that he and his wife will be spending much deserved time together, sad to see him leave our group. Mike did a great job getting our bus safety and security program up to date with the training back in November and updated plan templates. We advertised the position and are happy to announce that we have selected Mike's replacement – the new Safety and Security Program Manager is Juanita Croftwell. She has a wealth of experience in managing safety programs and providing training and technical assistance. You will all be hearing from her soon. Please welcome her to our public transportation circle.

The launch of the LA-TEAM online application system was a huge success. There were a few hiccups, but all in all a much easier process... and wait until next year. For all of our returning providers, next year's application process promises to be even better. The

Program Managers are currently reviewing all applications and award letters will be going out soon. Operating contracts will be sent to all approved programs in April and May and a quick turnaround will be needed to ensure everything is executed before the end of June.

As many of you know, we are placing orders for vehicles – we'll be providing more information on their status soon. Speaking of vehicles, we will be providing 30 minute training on the Angeltrax camera/video systems during upcoming coordination meetings in your region during the months of May, June, and July.

Keycha Alexander-Green, our new RTAP program manager, has many upcoming activities. CTAA scholarship recipients will be announced in April. PASS training is scheduled for April 22nd – 24th in Baton Rouge. Keycha is working with CTAA to host drug and alcohol training and a preventive maintenance training during the summer. Stay tuned for more information on upcoming training.

The American Public Transit Association (APTA) is sponsoring a "National Stand Up For Transportation Day" on April 9. It is a campaign designed to raise awareness for a long term transportation funding bill. For more information, see our calendar or go to www.apta.com.

We are busy planning our 2015 conference along with our Louisiana Public Transportation Association partners. It looks like the conference will be in Baton Rouge, November 17th – 19th. More information will follow as we nail down the venue. We hope to see you all at the conference.



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ANNOUNCEMENTS & EVENTS

Stand Up for Transportation Day, sponsored by the American Public Transportation Association, is **April 9th**. Visit their website to find out more ways to get involved in this nationwide event to highlight and strongly advocate for a long-term federal transportation funding bill.



NTI COURSES

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT: www.ntionline.com

MAY 2	Understanding ADA	Fort Worth, TX
MAY 5 - 6	Transit-Oriented Development	Houston, TX
JUNE 3 - 4	Comprehensive ADA Paratransit Eligibility	Pensacola, FL
JUNE 9 - 11	Introduction to Transportation Conformity	Houston, TX
JUNE 24 - 25	Risk Assessment for Transit Capital Projects	Tampa, FL

APTA EVENTS

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT: www.apta.com

APRIL 9	Stand Up for Transportation Day	Nationwide For more information on how to get involved visit the APTA website.
MAY 1 - 5	2015 International Bus Rodeo	Fort Worth, TX
MAY 3 - 6	Bus & Paratransit Conference	Fort Worth, TX

OTHER EVENTS

APRIL 28 - 30	10th Annual FTA Drug and Alcohol Conference	Atlanta, GA Registration is now open. For more information, visit: http://transit-safety.fta.dot.gov/DrugAndAlcohol/Training/NatConf/2015/Register.aspx
MAY 30 - JUNE 5	CTAA Conference & Expo 2015	Tampa, FL Registration is now open. For more information, visit the CTAA website.

SPOTLIGHT ON...

“EMBRACING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS” - BECKY BERGERON



The Pointe Coupee Council on Aging (COA) received its charter in 1975. The COA began providing rural public transportation with just one van over 25 years ago. Today, they operate ten vans with an annual ridership of 30,500. Ms. Becky Bergeron joined the COA a little over 33 years ago, and now serves as Executive Director for both the COA and the Pointe Coupee Public Transit Agency.

Ms. Bergeron is a team builder and a real go getter! She is quick to compliment her staff, the parish, and LaDOTD. Ms. Bergeron is always taking on new challenges and constantly learning. In addition to running the COA and Pointe Coupee Public Transit, she is the treasurer of the Louisiana Aging Network Association (LANA) and the Vice President of the legislative affairs committee for the Louisiana Council on Aging Director's Association (LACODA). She stresses the importance of networking with other agencies at conferences and training events, and is an ardent supporter of community partnerships.

By embracing community partnerships, the agency has expanded services available to parish citizens. As a part of the Pointe Coupee Health Service District, communication between medical providers and the Transit Agency has led to improved transportation for clients. In some cases, the medical providers have paid for transportation services. Outreach at local expos, health fairs, and medical facilities have highlighted the services provided by the transit agency.

In September of 2011, the Pointe Coupee Public Transit Agency started providing “Out of Parish” transportation in East Baton Rouge Parish with funding assistance from the Pointe Coupee Health Service District. Additional funding from the Health Service District has increased the agency's matching funds, and allowed the agency to expand their DOTD funding request. Additionally, a Wilson Foundation Grant made it possible for the agency to further expand services. The agency has been able to examine the transportation needs for West Baton Rouge Parish, and plan for the efficient use of funds.

Becky also stresses the importance of regional and state coordination. She actively participates in the regional coordination efforts funded by LaDOTD and organized by the Capital Region Planning Commission. Partnering with LaDOTD to ensure all vans have the LaDOTD logo, the name of the local agency, and the agency's phone number has helped raise awareness of the services offered by the transit agency. Other benefits that have come out of the partnership with LaDOTD include new computers, a generator, and six fully-funded vehicles. Becky also points to the Statewide Transit Tracking and Reporting System (STARS) – which allows multiple people to access and modify transit information from any computer with an internet connection, with no recurring software cost – as a contributor to the agency's growth and success.

Always the team builder and transit promoter, Ms. Bergeron designated April as Driver's Appreciation Month. Pointe Coupee is fortunate to have seven drivers. Their transportation coordinator, Jeanette Rachal, serves as a backup driver. Thanks to inter-agency coordination with Tangipahoa Parish's Mary Dowlings — who provided training to the Pointe Coupee Parish staff — Ms. Rachal is also a certified passenger assistance trainer.

Ms. Bergeron is blessed with the support of her family in all she does and is busily planning for a July wedding for one of her three children. She and her husband are also renovating a family home in False River. All of her precious spare time is spent with her family.

DOTD ON THE GO...



One of the DOTD PT Section's mandates is to provide information and technical assistance to transit providers in Louisiana in order to assist them in meeting their requirements for FTA funding. These activities come in many different formats and venues. DOTD PT provides numerous training courses, workshops, and training materials, as well as a website and an annual conference. To keep all of our constituents up to date on DOTD PT's activities, DOTD On The Go features just a few selected items each quarter.

SITE VISITS

Part of the outreach and assistance that LaDOTD provides to the Rural Public Transportation (Section 5311) and Elderly and Disabled (Section 5310) providers are site visits from the program managers. LaDOTD conducted a total of 11 site visits for Rural, Elderly and Disabled, JARC and New Freedom from October 2014 to March 2015. The site visits were conducted at ARC Caddo-Bossier, Holy Angels Residential Facility, New Horizons, ARC Iberville, Iberville COA, Assumption COA, Tangipahoa Parish Public Transit, Monroe Transit, St. Helena Parish Public Transit, and Volunteers of America.

OUTREACH

As most of you know, one of DOTD's primary goals is to provide some form of public transportation in all 64 parishes. It is a goal listed in the Louisiana Vision 2020 Plan. To further this goal, LaDOTD has been conducting educational visits to all of the parishes in Louisiana that do not currently have some form of public transportation service. LaDOTD conducted four outreach meetings for Rural Public Transportation, JARC, and New Freedom. The outreach meetings were held at the Ascension COA, Lafourche Parish Government, ARC of Monroe, and Arc of St. Charles.

WORKSHOPS/ CONFERENCE

No workshops/ conferences were scheduled during the last quarter. However, DOTD staff provided ST-TARS/ Site Visit training during the MPO Coordination meetings in Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Lafayette, and Shreveport.

If your agency or someone within your agency deserves recognition for a job well done, or has already received recognition or an award, please let us know. Email or send a brief description, photos, and contact information to Donna.Lavigne@la.gov or to Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development/Public Transit Section, attn: Donna Lavigne, P.O. Box 94245, Baton Rouge, LA 70804.

initial investment, annual operating costs were reported as between \$600 and \$1,300 per vehicle.

Though these costs are significant, the transit officials interviewed for the study consistently said that they believed “over time, the systems would more than pay for themselves through reduced costs and claims associated with crashes and injuries.”

In addition to saving agencies money in the long-term, these systems may be a way for agencies – including smaller rural or para-transit programs – to use modest resources more efficiently to observe potentially risky driving behavior and provide safety training. Whereas ride-along/mystery rider programs can be very costly, and focus usually only on those opera-

tors singled out by passenger complaints; onboard video feedback systems require less staff time and can provide training opportunities for all operators.

EMERGING BEST PRACTICES

Based on their research, the authors put forward the following emerging best practices for implementation of onboard video feedback systems in the transit industry.

- On-board camera systems are most effective when tied to a comprehensive coaching and training program that recognizes safe driving habits and provides timely coaching to prevent repetition of risky behaviors.
- Transit agencies should ensure there is clear management and union buy-in about how

the video systems will be used and who will have access to the footage to ensure that drivers and union officials understand the primary intent of the system is as a training tool.

- Transit agencies should carefully weigh the potential liabilities and benefits of implementing video-based driver feedback systems from a risk management perspective, although there appears to be general consensus that cameras generally have reduced transit agency liability, rather than increased it.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO VIEW THE FULL REPORT SEE:

http://www.nctr.usf.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/JPT_17.3_Litschi.pdf

FROM CAPITOL HILL...

Recently, the **Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)** announced the institutions of higher education selected to establish **Regional Surface Transportation Workforce Centers** in five geographic regions in the United States. These centers, funded under the Transportation Education Development Program, will facilitate partnerships among key stakeholders in each region to develop, test, and improve transportation education programs and curricula at all levels of the transportation workforce to address current gaps in training and skills development.

In addition to the broad goals outlined by the FHWA program, each institution has identified special emphasis areas, which will guide the regional center’s activities. The institutions selected for this program are: the University of Vermont, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the University of Memphis, Montana State University, and California State University-Long Beach.

The University of Memphis Intermodal Freight Transportation Institute will serve the southeast region, including Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Florida, and Puerto Rico. The institute’s special areas of interest are the freight industry and the growth of women in the transportation industry.

