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Project Amistad



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Headquarters: El Paso, Texas

Solutions: RouteMatch Demand Response Full Enterprise Platform

Challenges:

- Ridership Increase
- Regional Coordination
- Eliminate Manual Scheduling

Solutions:

- Demand Response Software
- Tablet Devices
- Notification Module
- Provider Web Portal

Results:

- Extend Service Area to cover increase in ridership
- Pre and Post Vehicle Inspections
- Ease of communication between third party providers
- Notification Module Saves \$8,000-10,000 in Operating Costs
- 360,000 sheets of paper saved per year

Project Amistad Partners with EPV Group and RouteMatch Software and Achieves Efficiencies with Multiple ITS Technologies

Project Amistad, a not for profit agency and the second largest transportation agency in the El Paso, Texas area, provides services to elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and persons at risk through transportation programs throughout West Texas. The Medical Transportation Program serves the six West Texas Counties of El Paso, Hudspeth, Culberson, Jeff Davis, Brewster, and Presidio.

Transporting 800-1000 trips daily in the areas of demand response and fixed route services, Project Amistad had historically relied upon a paper-based system and Microsoft Excel spreadsheets to manage its transportation services. As ridership and the need for greater regional coordination expanded, the agency sought to streamline its operations and improve efficiencies across the board.

After receiving a Texas Department of Transportation grant, the agency engaged EPV Group, a local systems engineering and professional services company, to conduct a thorough needs assessment for implementing technologies. EPV Group was able to provide useful input about how to map technologies to operations and coordinate with other transportation providers.

Due to the multiple varying requirements the agency had, Project Amistad selected RouteMatch Software's enterprise passenger transportation platform for its Demand Response needs. This included scheduling and dispatching software for optimization, tablet mobile

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data devices for automated vehicle location, driver dispatch communications and pre and post vehicle inspection, a Notification Module to place automated calls to riders, and a Provider Web portal which enables Project Amistad and its partner providers to assign and cancel trips. The single provider approach enabled Project Amistad to have one point of contact for support as well as use the technology to expand into other areas through RouteMatch’s extensible modules.

“It was really a commitment of all parties- our staff, RouteMatch and EPV Group,” said Rosario Reynoso, Director of Transportation at Project Amistad. “We really worked together and had enormous support and follow through. If there was a glitch, we knew everyone was doing their part in making it successful.”



Improved Medicaid Trip Management and Coordination with Third Party Trip Providers

How to view and share trips among multiple transit agencies can be a daunting task for today’s transportation providers. For example, Project Amistad interfaces with one of its subcontracted trip providers, Big Bend Community Action, which uses a different scheduling and dispatching software. Project Amistad also receives trips from Sun Metro, which uses yet another third party scheduling and dispatching software.

By using RouteMatch’s third party data integration tool, Project Amistad is able to share data electronically. Project Amistad now electronically assigns trips to their subcontractors through a seamlessly integrated, secure, Web-based portal using RouteMatch’s Provider Portal. Big Bend Community Action can then access electronic manifests and later perform and submit verification of trips through the same portal.

Previously, Project Amistad would generate five to ten pages of manifests; the agency would then call down to each customer to confirm a trip. Both Project Amistad as well Big Bend Community Action can now confirm trip distances, quickly communicate cancellations, make vehicle changes, and sort and verify trips by funding source, pick up time, type of vehicle and other user defined

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- Marty Loya, EPV Group



parameters all from one location. This has enabled them to extend area coverage and provide more coordinated service to riders.

Electronic Submission of Medicaid Claims for Texas Medicaid and Healthcare Partnership

Project Amistad can also more accurately verify trips and submit claims to Texas Medicaid and Healthcare Partnership (TMHP) through RouteMatch's third party data integration tool using EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) for payment. Project Amistad downloads Medicaid trips from the Texas Medical Transportation System (TMTS) website; the trips are electronically imported into RouteMatch through RouteMatch's third party data integration tool. Signatures checking and claim submissions can now occur all through a click of a button.

“Medicaid is a big issue in itself for transportation providers,” said Marty Loya, EPV Group. “Transportation providers and brokers will need to have more established procedures for culling data for State reporting and viewing all resources available.”

Notification Module Saves Staff 40 Hours per Week

RouteMatch's Notification Module has allowed Project Amistad to automatically call out to riders to confirm trips by phone prior to their appointments in English or Spanish. This has saved between 30-40

hours per week of staff time calling and verifying trips and is anticipated to reduce rider no shows. The total cost savings annually for Project Amistad will result in approximately \$8,000-\$10,000.



Greater Access to Data and Scheduling Efficiencies

Using RouteMatch's advanced scheduling and optimization engine, Project Amistad has been able to more efficiently schedule trips. Previously, it would require four hours a day for manual scheduling. With the optimization engine, the scheduling was dramatically reduced to 30 minutes a day, cutting back on time identifying trips and letting the system handle the scheduling and routing.

Having all information stored in a single data base with user-defined configuration options has meant more visibility into all data. For example, incidents and accidents that were previously known and confined to only a few users can now be quickly seen and assigned to a supervisor for faster response and resolve. This has resulted in greater

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organizational visibility and accountability.

“Project Amistad’s management team and staff are a stellar example of an agency that maximizes the full value of our technology platform,” said Tim Quinn, Executive Vice President, RouteMatch Software. “They are pioneering regional coordination, and are really gaining efficiencies and serving more riders in a time of limited resources. We are proud to be their partners.”

Tablets Bring Pre and Post Vehicle Inspection Functionality and Facilitates Better Communication and Reduces Paper

By installing 55 tablets on its vehicles, Project Amistad can now view the location of vehicles in real time through tablet mobile data devices as well as extend the capabilities for performing pre and post vehicle inspections.

Dispatchers can immediately add more trips or cancel trips to the tablets; drivers can more quickly verify trips, allowing greater vehicle capacity and enhanced ridership services.

“We were initially hesitant that our drivers and schedulers would shy away from the tablets, but once we completed our training, they got used to it,” said Rosario. “They now do not want to part without it- they know how accurate the mobile data devices are. It has saved us at least two reams of paper a day – or 360,000 sheets per year!”

Communications has further improved as dispatchers can now send messages to drivers directly on the tablets; radio chatter has also been reduced.

In addition, Project Amistad drivers will be able to electronically perform pre and post vehicle inspections from the tablets to record common requirements such as odometer readings, fluid levels, brake status and light status, and other user-defined requirements for improved vehicle and passenger safety. This will allow Project Amistad to even further eliminate paper-based inspection forms and directly capture and store information into the RouteMatch system from the tablet mobile data devices. Supervisors can be immediately alerted of faulty inspections and can assign proper next steps to drivers for resolution.

“This is a major benefit for FTA compliance. You can see the data, make immediate decisions and document each inspection for reporting and auditing purposes on vehicle conditions,” said Marty Loya, EPV Group.

“It has been excellent- going from paper to a state-of-the-art computerized system. I am very proud to be part of this transformation and seeing the positive changes,” said Rosario. “I foresee us looking for even more solutions and have worked closely with EPV Group and RouteMatch in seeking input from our users to further enhance our system. We are looking forward to even greater efficiencies to come. ”