



Standardizing Transit Surveillance

In the Heart of the Nations' Capital, One Transit Agency Sets a Precedent for Public Transportation Safety and Security

Case Study, August 2011

Washington, D.C. is one of the most safeguarded cities in the world and the region is known for having the highest level of security and safety in place to protect government officials, residents and those commuting in and out of the city.

Montgomery County – situated directly northwest of Washington, D.C. in the state of Maryland - operates the largest suburban transit system in the region. Its Division of Transit Services has just completed a major purchase of mobile video surveillance systems from Apollo Video Technology to replace 118 older systems onboard its fleet of Ride On buses. The purchase in June is the culmination of a five-year overhaul to replace outdated equipment. The first phase of Apollo Video's state-of-the-art RoadRunner DVR (digital video recorder) systems for transit vehicles were installed on 48 buses in 2007. With the phase two purchase in June, plus additional systems planned by the end of the year, nearly 180 vehicles in the Ride On bus system will be equipped with Apollo Video Technology's system. This five year replacement process is a welcomed accomplishment by the agency's transit managers, operators and law enforcement officials.

The Division of Transit Services' Ride On bus system transports 28 million passengers a year on 83 routes and serves nearly 5,000 seniors, low-income and disabled customers. It promotes a variety of commuting options including transit, car/van pooling, biking and walking; more than 2,200 area employers with 185,000 employees participate in these programs.

Prior to the installation of Apollo Video's mobile video surveillance equipment, Ride On was using equipment installed in 2005 that was no longer meeting the needs of the County's expanding bus system. Since 2007, when Apollo Video first installed the RoadRunner DVR systems on 48 vehicles, Montgomery County has been dedicated to procuring high-quality, reliable, technically advanced and affordable equipment that keeps transit safety and security a top priority for its entire fleet of Ride On transit vehicles.

"The RoadRunner system is state-of-the-art technology that has proven to be reliable and effective," stated Andy Mangene, program specialist for Ride On. "The safety and security of our passengers and drivers is Ride On's highest priority and the RoadRunner system assures us of the highest level of protection."

To help keep track of systems during the five-year installation process, the agency used a special bus coding system on completed buses which indicated that new equipment had already been installed. This system instilled an enhanced feeling of safety and confidence in the operators



With wireless LAN capabilities, police and first responders can access live video feeds remotely from on-board cameras.

and managers. They knew that the video recorded on these bus trips would always be of the highest quality and saved digitally for easy-to-use future reference.

The RoadRunner DVR, along with four interior cameras and wireless local area network (LAN) equipment, will be installed on each vehicle and will record continuously when the bus is on. The recordings are stored on the system's hard drive for review by agency officials, if needed.

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The police department and other first responders have access to live video feeds on in-vehicle laptops from as far away as 900 feet. This access helps officials determine if a bus needs to be stopped in order to prevent or assist with incidents.

The Department of Transportation also works with a police department liaison to share information and supply video of bus, bus yard and traffic incidents, which routinely aids in solving cases and serves as supporting evidence in litigation. Video footage often assists in identifying suspects.

Montgomery County is setting a standard for mobile video surveillance equipment throughout its fleet as well as those in neighboring counties. With many other Washington, D.C.-area agencies also operating Apollo Video equipment, first responders from surrounding counties can cross county or city boundaries and still benefit from the compatibility of a standardized system. Other area agencies using Apollo Video equipment include: Maryland Department of Transportation, Baltimore; Delmarva Community Services, Cambridge, MD; Alexandria Transit Company/DASH, Alexandria, VA; City of Fredericksburg, Fredericksburg, VA; and Potomac & Rappahannock Transportation Commission, Woodbridge, VA. These agencies also sought out reliable and durable equipment in order to monitor the safety of its passengers and health of its fleet.

“As always, our goals are to continue improving service and protecting our passengers – we have made a concerted effort to achieve these goals by standardizing our video surveillance with Apollo Video systems,” said Mangene.

The Division of Transit Services is prepared to go one step further after this installation phase with the deployment of Apollo Video’s ViM (Vehicle information Management) Software suite. This will provide video management and automatic monitoring of on-board video equipment for the fleet. The software mitigates the risk of failures, improves operational efficiency and lowers maintenance and operating costs. The agency will benefit over time from the software’s compatibility across all current and future generations of Apollo Video’s equipment.

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