Implementation of Advanced Technologies in Rural Transit Service:

The Lone Star Card Project

David L. Marsh
General Manager, C ARTS
What Is The Lone Star Card Project?

A proposal submitted by CARTS to the FTA Office of Mobility Innovation in response to a “rolling call for projects” to demonstrate the effectiveness of ITS solutions in rural transit settings.
What Will the Project Do?

- Develop a partnership with the Lone Star Technology Department, Texas Department of Health & Human Services to expand use of card to track Medicaid trips
- Develop a partnership with TxDOT Public Transportation Division/Medical Transportation program to streamline data and billing activities related to the MTP contract
- Demonstrate the use of MDC as a gateway to improve data collection processes, simplify fare collection, enhance coordination opportunities with Human Service agencies, and improve responsiveness of service and quality of ride
CARTS: One of 38 Texas RTDs
CARTS Service Area

- 7,500 square miles
- 100+ communities
- 300,000 annual trips
- 75,000 hours service
- $3 million budget
CARTS Equipment & Facilities

• 55 paratransit buses
CARTS Equipment & Facilities

- 55 paratransit buses
- 10 fixed route buses
CARTS Equipment & Facilities

- 55 paratransit buses
- 10 fixed route buses
- 2 commuter buses
CARTS Equipment & Facilities

- 65 paratransit buses
- 15 fixed route buses
- 2 commuter buses
- 5 intermodal terminals
Development of CARTS ITS

• 1994 to 2007

• How did we do it? SLOWLY

• Why did we do it? TO IMPROVE SERVICE
1994: CARTS at a Crossroads

• 7 separate contractors, 7 phone numbers
• Varying level of service and intake quality
• Inadequate radio system
• Brokered service
• Diminishing Funding
Changing the System

1994-96:
- Automated Scheduling with PASS software

1996-98:
- Upgrade radio system
  - Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA)
- Phased out subcontracted services
- Built and equipped consolidated call center
Evolution Continues

1998 - 2001:
• Continued hardware/software upgrades to take advantage of improved products and planned for next phase of ITS.

2001 – 2005:
• MDC / AVL conversions
Project Objectives

• Automate fare collection
  – Magnetic stripe / smart card readers

• Move to paperless, personless reporting and data collection

• Integrate Texas “Lone Star” benefit card
  – Direct billing reporting for Medicaid, etc.

• Transition to seamless fare media coordination with CapMetro
The Answer?

Mobile Data Computers (MDC)
How Does MDC Work?
How Can MDC Work?

Paper/Cash system
• Paperless, no cash

Advance reservations
• On-the-fly scheduling

Person-intensive reporting
• Automated reporting and data collection
Linking the CARTS Side...
The CUSTOMER Sides!
The Lone Star Card Project

How we can all use technology to improve service...
Why the Lone Star Card?

• Partnerships with State agencies
  – Expand use of card to track Medicaid trips
    (Lone Star Technology Department, Texas Department of Health & Human Services)
  – Streamline MTP contract data & billing
    (TxDOT Public Transportation Division/Medical Transportation Program)

• Demonstrate MDC possibilities
  – Improve data collection and coordination with Human Service agencies
  – Simplify fare collection
  – Improve service and responsiveness
Improve Data Collection

Reports, Reports, Reports...
Improve Data Collection

Paperless, Personless, Accurate
Simplify Fare Collection

• Cash is risky
  – 65 buses = 65 fareboxes over 7500 sq mi

• Accounting is expensive
  – Thousands of nickels, dimes, quarters...
Improve Service

• “Where’s my ride?”
  – Automatic Vehicle Locators
  – Computerized route planning

• “Can you turn that thing down?”
  – Silent communication

• “Can I go NOW?”
  – Ability to reroute vehicles
Improve Cash Flow
The RideCARTS Card

• Easy to buy, easy to use
• Fare discounts
• Equal treatment
• Fewer cash transactions

Need A Ride?
CARTS can get you there.

Anyone Can Ride
Everyone is Welcome.

We're in your town so go ahead and give us a call.
A Friendly Reservationist is waiting to book your ride and answer your questions.

More Information at www.RideCARTS.com
Project Details

• Approaching one step at a time
• Started January 20, 2005
• First, Lone Star and RideCARTS card
• Full system-wide operation September 2007
• Total costs: $256,000
• 5-year expected payoff
It’s not about the money.

It’s about the SERVICE.
Questions?

David L. Marsh
General Manager, CARTS
(512) 481-1011
dave@RideCARTS.com
RideCARTS.com