CARTS ITS STRATEGY: SLOW BUT STEADY GROWTH

LESSONS FOR RURAL TRANSIT

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Presented by:
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LET’S DISCUSS:

• CARTS ITS Goals
• A History of Technology Enhancements
• Lessons to Learn for Rural Transit
TECHNOLOGY GOALS

• Overall goals:
  – Provide more trips for more people through staff and trip productivity improvements
  – Enhance the customer's experience – making it easy to ride
  – Improve safety
  – Enhance reporting capabilities
  – Improve and simplify CARTS fare collection
CARTS: A HISTORY OF EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY

Part One:

- **1992** - The first step in the process was the implementation of DRT (paratransit)

  **Software:**
  - Consolidating various dispatch functions in 9 counties
  - Creating a new uniformity of service
  - Keeping an eye to the future
EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY

Part 2 - Developed and implemented consolidated dispatch center

• In 1993 CARTS initiated the consolidation of a number of outlying dispatch stations:
  – Maximize use of software
  – Achieve uniformity of scheduling
  – Reduce duplication and improve productivity
Part 3 - Voice Communications

- In 1997 CARTS secured space on a state of the art radio network for the entire service area
  - Tracked it from the start
  - Full digital capabilities
  - Monitored 24 hours a day
EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY

Part 4 – Digital Communications

• In 2002-3, CARTS initiated the use of Mobile Data Computers (MDC) and Automatic Vehicle Locators (AVL) in its fleet.
  – Started with pilot project
  – One time data entry electronically
  – Dispatch enhancements
  – AVL can assist in emergencies
EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY

Part 5 – Using Card Readers

• In 2005 CARTS initiated a procurement for card readers.
  – Swipe card technology
  – Use to identify clients and report to agencies
  – Debit/credit and possible payment by human service agencies
  – RideCARTS card
EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY

Part 6 – Website

• As part of a recent technology grant, CARTS developed an enhanced web site
  – Detailed information
  – Purchase cards
IMPLEMENTATION: NOT ALWAYS A PRETTY PICTURE

• As often than not in rural (and some urban areas), the technology is flat out not being used at all or not as intended.
• Many that have implemented still use their old approach, not adapting to the technology - negating any potential gains.
• Sophisticated installations have a poor record of success, despite major financial backing. Yet at this time, that record is improving!
• Many systems have a difficult time maintaining the technology.
LESSONS TO LEARN

• Walk, Don’t Run – Implement one technology at a time, master it, then take the next step. Take your time.

• A Solution In Search Of A Problem – Have a vision and goals. What do you want to accomplish with this technology.

• Purchase For The Future, Not The Present – Think 5 – 10 years into the future and ensure that your software will work with any new technologies that may be available.
MORE LESSONS TO LEARN

• Demonstrations Do Not Really Count – Demos are nice, but you must see the technology working in the real world before you purchase.

• Seek Out The Best Communications Option – In CARTS case a local power authority was bringing a state of the art system on line.

• It’s Still the Staff – Success depends on staff willingness and ITS capabilities. The best technology requires willing and able staff to maximize performance.
UNDERSTAND ONE THING RELATED TO TRANSIT TECHNOLOGY

It is still all about the staff!
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