

# Enhancing the Public Transit Experience

## DVRS HELP ROCHESTER GENESEE COMMUTERS ENJOY THE RIDE

The Rochester Genesee Regional Transportation Authority (RGRTA) has begun equipping its fleet of close to 400 buses with March Networks Mobile Digital Video Recording (MDVRs) systems to create a safer and stress-free environment for passengers and drivers.

Video recording on buses serves as a deterrent to inappropriate behavior and puts drivers and customers at ease," says RGRTA CEO Mark Aesch. "It helps to relax people as they ride the bus and allows drivers to concentrate on navigating our vehicles."

Equally important, says Aesch, is the impact of video surveillance on limiting the authority's exposure to liability claims.

With DVRs recording video from cameras both inside and outside its buses, RGRTA is able to produce evidence to defend itself against claims related to traffic accidents and slip and falls.

In an accident, "you can have 12 people on a bus, but 200 people reporting a sore neck," says Aesch.

RGRTA provides transportation services to seven counties, including the city of Rochester, New York, and moves 50,000 customers per day.

The authority began deploying digital video recording systems from another vendor four years ago. Since the initial installation, RGRTA has contracted the services of March Networks.

Procurement and operations staff looked at a number of systems before selecting a March Networks™ 5000 Series MDVR trial unit for a hands-on evaluation.

"Having had several years of experience with our first system and having had an

opportunity to see what the March Networks system can do, we made a conscious decision to switch," says Aesch.

### Storage

One of the key issues for the RGRTA was video storage.

"With our previous system, if we had an accident on a Friday and it wasn't reported to us until Monday, evidence of the event would be lost. The March Networks system offers us greater storage capacity, so that's a significant added benefit."

Buses with DVRs from the RGRTA's original supplier are being retrofitted, while new buses joining the fleet are being equipped with March Networks systems right at the factory.

"The March Networks system is a lot easier to manage than our previous system," notes Aesch.

Prior to the acquisition of the March Networks systems, the typical configuration on RGRTA buses consisted of four cameras recording inside the bus and two positioned to record outside – one at the passenger entry point capturing video along the curb side of the bus and the other positioned to record a view of the road ahead.





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CEO, RGRTA



“With the March Networks system, we are adding a seventh camera to record the driver side of the vehicle because we saw we were having a number of hit and run events that were not being captured by our previous systems.”

According to Aesch, “70 per cent of accidents involving RGRTA buses are caused by other vehicles hitting us,” so having video evidence to defend itself is crucial.

“Having the flexibility to add an exterior camera to record the driver side of the vehicle helps us to demonstrate responsibility for accidents on that side of the bus and investigate hit and run incidents.”

### Wireless

Video from the buses is automatically downloaded as they enter a wireless hot spot set up at the authority’s service building. The transfer of video occurs as the fare box is emptied and the buses are cleaned and refueled, so there is no impact on fleet scheduling and vehicle availability.

Wireless hot spots are also used to download health status information and allow for uploading configuration changes and software upgrades. The systems can also be programmed to periodically capture and transmit short clips from all of the cameras on a bus to confirm that they are in focus and pointed in the right direction, a task that would otherwise require operator intervention.

Aesch also likes March Networks’ GPS integration capability.

“The video is integrated with our GPS system, so we’re able to associate the video we’re watching with the physical location of the bus at any particular point in time,” he says. “From a liability perspective, that’s something that’s extremely important to us.”

The March Networks 5000 Series MDVRs are designed to withstand the harsh operating conditions and temperature extremes of mobile applications. They feature a modular, docking station architecture, built-in battery backup, an embedded Linux operating system and efficient H.263 or MPEG-4 video compression.



RGRTA Director of Operations Bruce Philpott, left, and CEO Mark Aesch oversee transportation service that moves 15 million riders per year in Rochester and surrounding counties



Integration of video surveillance and GPS allows RGRTA Supervisor/Controller Timothy Quinlan to review archived video alongside city map pinpointing location of bus

“We’re extremely pleased with the performance and reliability of the March Networks system in the time that we’ve had it on the streets of Rochester,” says Aesch. “We have already seen a payback in terms of liability and deterrence and being able to put customers and drivers at ease.

“There’s a customer service component to this and we are an organization that is focused on customer service. If it helps to encourage people to ride the bus and make it safer for our drivers and customers, it’s well worth the investment.” ✨

## Rochester Genesee Regional Transportation Authority

The Rochester Genesee Regional Transportation Authority ([www.rgrta.org](http://www.rgrta.org)) provides bus transportation services in Rochester, New York, and a seven county service area with a population of 1.2 million. The Authority has a fleet of close to 400 buses, 800 employees and moves 15 million riders per year.