



Raising the Bar

Palm Beach County Selects Mobile Video Surveillance System Following Exhaustive Evaluation

Palm Tran, the public transit system serving Palm Beach County, Florida, was determined to select the best possible mobile video surveillance solution to replace an aging, digital system that was prone to hard drive failure and offered minimal video storage.

A procurement team consisting of representatives from the Palm Tran's Communication, Operations, Safety and Maintenance departments invited four suppliers to participate in a six-month evaluation process and scored each system for reliability, functionality, expandability, customer support and cost.

Each supplier was asked to install two test systems to provide Palm Tran with enough

of a track record to make a decision. After six months, the March Networks 5308 Mobile Digital Video Recorder won hands down.

"Reliability was of paramount importance because there's nothing worse than going out to a bus to collect evidence of an event and not find anything there," says Palm Tran Maintenance Manager Butch Sibley.

Palm Tran was also looking for a system that would allow it to extract video from its fleet of 133 buses more efficiently. The only way to save video from its older digital video system was to pull the removable hard drive each time. That meant keeping a large supply of spares on hand and also subjecting them to wear and tear during the swap-out.

"With the March Networks™ systems, we have the flexibility to download the video to a laptop and, once we are set up for wireless, we'll be able to download selected video clips without even setting foot on a bus," notes Sibley.

Limited storage and camera capability on its legacy system were also irritating. With only a 40 GB hard drive, transit staff had to act quickly to retrieve video evidence. If an event occurred on a Friday and staff waited until Monday to pull the hard drive, there was a good chance the clip would be overwritten. The storage limitation also restricted Palm Tran to a maximum of four cameras per vehicle.

The March Networks 5308 MDVR, on the other hand, provides 120 GB of storage and up to eight cameras per bus.

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Butch Sibley
Maintenance Manager
Palm Tran

“That’s what really excited me about the March Networks system,” says Sibley. “To be able to automatically check on the health status of the full video system every time the bus returns to the garage and receive an email alerting you to any problem was a great feature that was unique and different about March Networks.”



The low-floor, sleek-looking Gillig BRT bus purchased by Palm Tran provides Palm Beach County commuters with ultra-modern styling, comfort and technology, including interior and exterior digital signage, a next stop announcement system and March Networks Mobile Digital Video Recorders.

Extra cameras

Palm Tran has taken advantage of the extra capability by installing cameras on the right and left rear sides of its buses and looking out the driver and passenger side windows in front of its vehicles.

One of the outside cameras has already proven its worth by capturing video of a hit and run accident, says Sibley. “The video shows the vehicle coming around a corner, sideswiping the bus and leaving the scene.”

Palm Tran has decided to equip all of its new buses with March Networks MDVRs and is looking at the possibility of retrofitting the rest of the fleet. Once an Automated Vehicle Locator system and wireless network are up and running, it will be able to download video wirelessly, confirm the health status of its MDVRs and upload any software updates to the buses as they pull into the service depot.

“It eliminates our dependence on operators telling us through the defect slip process that something is wrong with the system.”

Video surveillance, says Sibley, will mitigate losses due to false injury claims, deter vandalism and assist in determining fault in accident investigations.

“It also gives our patrons and operators a sense of security.”

The MDVRs were factory installed by the manufacturer, Gillig Corporation, but March Networks technicians assisted with the positioning of the cameras, conducted an on-site service check to make sure everything was functioning properly and provided training for the Palm Tran safety and security departments.

“Everyone who participated in the training was very positive about the system,” notes Sibley. “They couldn’t say enough good things about it.” 🌟

Palm Tran

Palm Tran operates a fleet of 133 buses on 35 routes in Palm Beach County, Florida.

Founded in 1973, Palm Tran is mandated to provide safe, efficient and inexpensive transportation for the 1.2 million residents of the county, which encompasses West Palm Beach, Boca Raton and 35 other communities.

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