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LeeTran Now Employs Mobile Computing Solutions from Mentor Engineering and RouteMatch Software

Wireless technology leaders, Mentor Engineering and RouteMatch Software, partner to bring an end-to-end mobile computing solution to Passport, a LeeTran demand response service.

Serving the 805-square-mile area of Lee County, Passport performs approximately 600 trips each day. To keep pace with this growing and aging community, LeeTran decided to automate Passport's communications processes.

As Jill Brown, operations manager at LeeTran explains: "Meeting the growing demands of the community required three key things. First, we needed increased scheduling flexibility with the capability to handle same-day trips. Second, we wanted the ability to track our drivers' whereabouts and activities. Finally, we required automatic data verification to accurately record job details throughout the day. With our pre-existing radio communications system, this simply was not possible."

The chosen technology solution includes:

- **Mentor Ranger®**, a fixed-mount mobile computer installed in all 42 Passport vehicles. Ranger features a Windows CE 5.0 operating system, backlit color VGA touchscreen display, and rugged design.
- **Mentor Mobility**, a mobile software application that runs on Ranger, and is designed specifically for the demand response industry, lets drivers communicate in real time with dispatchers, supports instant job insertions and deletions, displays status messaging, and records trip information.
- Mentor's **BBX**, a wireless modem, AVL and data collection device installed in each vehicle. BBX captures the fleet's GPS coordinates, allowing dispatchers to send the closest available vehicle to a job. BBX integrates with the vehicle's odometer reader to automatically track mileage on a per trip basis.
- **RouteMatch software** used at the dispatch center to give dispatchers the ability to electronically assign trips and send real-time schedule changes to vehicles.

Even after the technology had been installed, Mentor provided LeeTran with technical services. Says Brent Ritchie, Mentor's regional sales manager, "Training, which includes customized and easy-to-understand driver's manuals, and ongoing support from the same engineers who installed the system, ensures that LeeTran is able to use the technology to its full potential."

After using the technology for six months, Jill has already noted improvements. "With the ability to see the real-time status of drivers, we can make schedule adjustments if there is a time issue developing. As well, when a call comes in, dispatchers can instantly see the vehicle that is nearest the call, and electronically contact the driver. The immediacy of this new scheduling system means that customers can book same-day trips."

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Peter Gajdjis, deputy director at LeeTran, adds: "With the on-screen maps, drivers are able to quickly find their next pick-up and drop-off location, leading to a better record of on-time service and happier customers. From an administrative standpoint, the electronic collection and verification of vehicle and daily event information is faster, more accurate, and more cost effective than it was with our manual processes."

This technology will help LeeTran realize their 10-year development plan that forecasts a doubling of demand response vehicles.

"The successful integration between the scheduling/dispatching software and the Ranger/AVL units have and will continue to streamline the Passport operations and continue to enhance LeeTrans' overall system," states Chris Campbell, sales director for RouteMatch.

About Mentor Engineering

Founded in 1988, Mentor Engineering designs and manufactures flexible mobile computing and AVL solutions that increase the efficiency and productivity of fleet operations. Mentor is distinguished by technical innovation and services including system integration, training and on-going support that optimize its clients' wireless investment.

About RouteMatch Software

RouteMatch Software provides world-class software for the transportation sector. The company's technology vision is to minimize the total cost of ownership of transportation software solutions, and yet to dramatically increase the benefits of automation and cost savings derived. RouteMatch strives to build state-of-the-art technology, while providing unparalleled customer support and maintenance.

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