

Technology In Our Lives

New Smartcard Just The Ticket For Transit Riders

(NAPSM)—Increasingly, mass transit systems are being asked to find ways to grow the number of riders they serve while cutting costs.

As a consequence, these systems often face the challenge of implementing better financial management while, at the same time, offering riders more convenience, particularly when it comes to schedules and fare collection.

Fortunately, there is new technology in the form of a smartcard that may benefit both riders and transit systems.

The Seattle Experience

Those who use mass transit in the Seattle, Washington area can ride everything from ferries to buses and rail lines. Often, they have to change from one mode of transportation to another.

These varied forms of public transportation are managed by seven main transit agencies, each with its own fare structure, schedules and business rules.

In an effort to improve both service and financial management, an international company called Vix ERG was engaged to establish a Regional Fare Coordination System (RFCS).

The project involved the design and implementation of a seamless smartcard system that some in the industry believe may be the wave of the future. The system operates across four counties, linking 12 ferry routes, approximately 17 miles of light rail and 73 miles of commuter rail. The RFCS connects 62 cities and towns spread out over 6,500 square miles.

The key to the system is a smartcard called ORCA. The card, when purchased by riders, provides access to the coordinated



New smartcard technology is benefiting both mass transit systems and riders.

elements of the transit system. Riders can move seamlessly from one part of the system to another with just a single fare card that they never have to take out of their wallet. The card also provides the system with a record of rider use and revenues.

ORCA: A Whale of a Success

Public response to the system has been so positive that ORCA became the most requested item on the Google search engine in the Seattle area. The system is ultimately expected to handle around 190 million passenger journeys per year.

Vix ERG, part of the Vix Technology group of companies, is a global leader in the design, supply and operation of automated fare collection technology for the mass transit industry. It delivers everything from magnetic stripe systems for small bus companies to large multioperator smartcard and credit card solutions that support large cities or entire countries.

To learn more, visit the website at www.vixtechnology.com.