

ON-BOARD VIDEO SECURITY CAPTURES HEROES IN ACTION

TECHNOLOGY DEPLOYMENT PROMOTES RIDERSHIP AND OPERATOR
PERFORMANCE FOR MILWAUKEE COUNTY TRANSIT SYSTEM



For as long as there has been transit service, there have been bus operators who've gone the extra mile to serve mass transit passengers. Think of the operators who've waited while you ran to catch the bus, who've helped elderly and disabled passengers on and off the bus and come to the aid of lost children. These everyday acts of kindness and consideration are much appreciated but have rarely been acknowledged outside of the individual operators' transit agencies and communities. That is, until the Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) instituted the MCTS Excellence program.

It all started in 2016 with the deployment of a video security system furnished by Luminator Technology Group's Apollo Video Technology. MCTS began utilizing the company's flagship RoadRunner brand high-definition (HD) surveillance system to monitor transit activity, evaluate incidents or accidents, and assist local law enforcement agencies with gathering evidence.

When the chief marketing and communications officer joined MCTS, he quickly realized that the HD video was perfect for highlighting operator good deeds. As a former reporter for Milwaukee's WISN-TV news, he knew such video evidence would produce the feel-good stories TV news directors desired.

In late 2016, the MCTS Excellence program was born and began shining a light on the extraordinary acts of kindness displayed by transit operators while simultaneously working toward MCTS's long-term goals of increased ridership, improved job satisfaction and reduced turnover.

The first MCTS Excellence video to go viral showed operator Karen Martinez-Casper stopping to rescue a little boy walking alone without shoes one chilly October morning. Martinez-Casper brought the boy on-board the



Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele and City Alderman Cavalier "Chevy" Johnson honor bus operator Karen Martinez-Casper with the MCTS Excellence Award, along with official County and City resolutions.

bus to warm up and keep him company as they waited for the police. Investigators later said that Martinez-Casper's good deed directly resulted in the boy being reunited with his family. This is just one of dozens of heartwarming stories that the program has brought to the public's attention.

Many MCTS Excellence videos have gone viral and been featured on national and international news. Operators have helped Milwaukee drivers push cars off snow-laden train tracks, rushed to the aid of car accident victims and even assisted homeless passengers with finding temporary housing.

Just days before Christmas in 2018, operator Irena Ivic spotted a baby girl wandering on a freeway overpass alone wearing only a onesie and a diaper. After pulling over, Ivic ran to help the crying child and carried her to the safety of the bus, where the baby fell asleep in Ivic's arms while she waited for authorities to arrive.

A NEW APPROACH TO "DRIVER BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT"



Thanks in part to the success of the Excellence program, the agency recently tested Luminator's mSET operator performance module.

The software, which was developed and optimized for transit applications, incorporates video footage into workflows that allow users to review, evaluate, coach and analyze video clips triggered by accelerometer or various other events. This workflow provides opportunities to highlight areas of improvement in terms of safety and customer service while providing access to comprehensive video coverage of the interior and exterior of the bus.

MCTS operators' positive reaction to using video as a training tool drove the agency to further evaluate this additional functionality within their existing mSET software suite.

Outside of internal MCTS recognition, these operators are at the core of many recent human-interest stories. In January of 2019, the footage of Ivic saving the lost baby went viral, garnering media attention and capturing the hearts and minds of the entire world. One transit operator was invited to a taping of the Ellen DeGeneres Show. Another was featured in Time Magazine’s “Person of the Year” edition as an “Everyday Hero.” MCTS estimates that the most popular videos in the Excellence program have earned as many as 800 million views, not including the additional views garnered when a news outlet such as CNN picks up the video and streams it through its own digital platforms.

More important than the view count, however, is the positive impact the MCTS Excellence program is having on the greater Milwaukee community. In MCTS’s annual passenger survey, mass transit riders were asked to rate

the friendliness of bus drivers. Year-over-year, MCTS has seen a significant increase in the friendliness ratings, which the agency believes to be directly related to the publicity of these good deeds. Within the community, bus operators have come to be known as the “friendly heroes” of Milwaukee. In recognition of their heroism, the City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, and even the Milwaukee Bucks have presented MCTS operators with official awards, honors and commendations.

The program has not only received praise from the local community and public officials but has also been recognized within the transit industry as a unique, forward-thinking initiative. In July 2019, the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) honored MCTS with its APTA Innovation Award, a prestigious national award given annually to innovators within the transit industry. In his response to the award recognition



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from APTA, MCTS Managing Director Dan Boehm said, "The MCTS Excellence video series is showcasing our incredible team, bringing positive attention to the entire industry and shining a spotlight on public transportation's vital role in our community."

For other transit agencies who want to institute their own video programs, MCTS has some advice: Always put the operators first, before marketing. It is critical to establish trust between the agency and its operators. This can lead to greater job satisfaction over time, as can the use of video as a tool for positive reinforcement and ongoing training.

None of this would be possible without the system's video security solution. "Having the high-definition video and being able to access it very easily allowed the program to quickly gain traction," said Matt Sliker, integrated marketing manager at MCTS. Thanks to the system's easy-to-use and robust back-end software, the agency can quickly identify,

download and securely transfer these extraordinary events within MCTS, to local law enforcement and to the news media. When an example is identified, the agency first secures permission from the employees featured, then leverages it further for marketing's awareness campaign. This rapid video capture is key to the health and success of the program, Sliker states.

MCTS has used video recorded by the RoadRunner system to support staff in their professional development, provide additional coaching and protect transit operators from frivolous lawsuits. This has resulted in better employee relations and morale. The MCTS Excellence program is a great example of how new technologies, a commitment to positive employee relations and savvy marketing strategies can make a real impact on a transit agency and the community.

For more information on this and other transit solutions please contact Luminator at: 425.483.7100

INTELLIGENCE, SAFETY AND EFFICIENCY IN TRANSIT

MILWAUKEE COUNTY TRANSIT SYSTEM

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

Bus Rides Provided Last Year

30,429,788

Number of Employees

1,080

Estimated Views of MCTS Excellence Videos

800+ MILLION

Quantity of On-board Video Systems Deployed

430+

Solution Deployed for

**FIXED ROUTE
PARATRANSIT**

Luminator Customer Since

1999



Data obtained from MCTS Annual Report 2018:

<https://www.ridemcts.com/getattachment/About-MCTS/2018-Annual-Report-FINAL.pdf?lang=en-US>

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