

GPS Technology Improving Community Service: The Dove Pointe Story



Company Name:

Dove Pointe, Inc.

Location:

Salisbury, MD

Industry:

Paratransit

Fleet Size:

57

Customer Since:

2006

For Dove Pointe, a service organization for people with developmental disabilities based in Salisbury, MD, there's never a dull moment. Their fleet of 57 vehicles, including 13 paratransit lift buses, operates all over the Eastern Shore of Maryland and parts of Delaware as well, transporting people day and night to group homes, rehab centers, activities, etc. In addition, some of their vehicles are involved in a supportive employer program taking clients to and from jobs, so they need to be on the road – and monitored – on a 24-7 basis to cover all work shifts.

Drew Schmitt, Dove Pointe's Transportation Manager, is responsible for all aspects of this mobile operation, from personnel training to vehicle maintenance to budget management. "We have 35 different locations we're running to on a daily basis," said Schmitt, referring to the 34 group homes and one central office operated by Dove Pointe. "Our vehicles do not all start out at one single location. So to keep track of it all, we were searching for a way to manage our fleet so that we weren't always guessing about where the vehicles were."

After looking at a few different GPS-based tracking solutions, Schmitt said the decision to go with Navtrak was an easy one. "Navtrak offered several additional features the other guys couldn't match, such as extensive record-keeping capabilities and the ability to manage maintenance. But most of all, it's their people that have made the

difference. They've worked with us all along the way to help us get up to speed with the system. The service has been excellent... when I call, someone is always there to get back to me with an answer. And that's all I ask for."

For an organization like Dove Pointe, accountability is a top priority. Schmitt emphasizes, "We've got to stay accountable – not just to the people we serve, but also to their families, the community, our employees and financial backers. Navtrak is a great tool – and I do see it as a tool – to help us with that. It's great to be able to call a parent and say, 'Our bus is delayed, but we know where they are, and your child will be arriving in five minutes.'"

Then there's the delicate issue of employee accountability. Schmitt's philosophy on that score is simple: it works both ways. "It's all in how you present it," he said. "We told our drivers straight-up about the Navtrak system. We said that 99% of the people won't cause any problems, but that 1% can cause a lot of problems for everyone in the agency. But the flip side of that is, what's good for Dove Pointe is good for them, and if they're doing their jobs well, the increased accountability will only benefit them in the end. Their raises depend on the organization staying within budget."

Business challenges Dove Pointe faced:

- **Staying accountable to clients, families and the state** – With clients' families, funding providers and the state all having a vested interest in their services running smoothly, Dove Pointe badly needed accurate information about their fleet's daily activities.
- **Necessity of knowing location and activity of vehicles** – Dove Pointe's goal is to improve the lives of the people they serve, so being able to find and report on where they are is critical. "I need to be able to tell who's running where, and whether or not our guys are on time, at a moment's notice," Schmitt said. "Families want to know that their loved ones are getting to the right places at the right times."
- **Managing maintenance for a large fleet** – Keeping track of regular service work and making sure 57 vehicles stay on the road was a massive, time-consuming task for Schmitt. Hours spent poring through manually generated vehicle records prompted them to search for a better way.
- **Ensuring safety and security of drivers and passengers** – The organization had no way to locate stolen property or get help to drivers quickly when necessary.
- **Time wasted gathering information about fleet** – Non-profits are always requesting new funding, and that means keeping records on everything. "We have to document everything we've done with the buses: mileage, fuel usage, etc. It would take me literally hours," Schmitt recalled.

“ I don't even have the whole system figured out yet, but it's getting better all the time... and the more information I find I can put into the system, the more information I can get out of it that I can really use. ”

-Drew Schmitt
Transportation Manager
Dove Pointe, Inc.

Driving Business Success

Benefits Navtrak has delivered:

- **Improved accountability** – With Navtrak, Dove Pointe is able to respond quickly to their clients' families when there's a question, and that helps to solidify their reputation. They're also able to prove to the state and other sources of funding that their money is not being wasted. "Navtrak helps me to prove that we've stayed within budget, which bodes well both for me and my drivers," Schmitt said.
- **Improved documentation** – Documentation is important for Dove Pointe on many levels – from getting new drivers up to speed to making the case for new funding. "We knew this system would do a lot for us," Schmitt explained. "But we didn't know that Navtrak would help us to build up our documentation in terms of transportation records. A lot of the things we want to keep track of, we discovered Navtrak was already storing in the system for us. So it saves us a lot of time on that end."
- **Employee timecard verification** – Many drivers for Dove Pointe fill out their own driver logs, and the Navtrak reports provide a way for them to verify their times and, if necessary, prove they put in a certain amount of hours. This is especially important as they begin to be paid from the moment the ignition in the vehicle is turned on.
- **Competitive advantage for funding** – Competition for state grants gets more intense every year, according to Schmitt: "They used to give out about 60 buses several years ago, but this year they only gave out 20 buses... so the more we can compete, the better we are, and the more documentation we have the better our position. Navtrak gives me an edge, because we can show them in exact numbers what we need to keep going."
- **Driver/passenger protection** – Virtually all of the Dove Pointe vehicles are engaged in transporting the people they serve, so the ability to immediately locate them if they've been in an accident or are caught in bad weather is non-negotiable. With Navtrak, Schmitt can do so with just a glance at his screen. "I put the map up first thing in the morning when I get in, and it's up all day," he said.
- **Improved routing** – Schmitt notes that Navtrak gives them an easy way to evaluate the routes their drivers are taking, and in some cases, split routes into two. "Most of the routing software that's out there is incredibly expensive, and with our budget, we couldn't get near it... but Navtrak's Playback feature has helped us to plan more efficient routes."

Since installing Navtrak, Schmitt continues to discover advantages and uses of the system on an almost daily basis. "I like the fact that Navtrak didn't just come in and say, 'We're going to shotgun this thing down, you're going to have to figure it all out on your own'... they trained us on the basics and gave us time to get comfortable with it. I don't even have the whole system figured out yet, but it's getting better all the time... and the more information I find I can put into the system, the more information I can get out of it that I can really use. It's a huge help with securing more funding, keeping employees driving safely and protecting both them and our equipment, and keeping costs down. It just makes my job a heck of a lot easier."

Navtrak:

The Proven Remedy for Mobile Workforce Headaches

All organizations with mobile workforces contend with "headaches" that limit productivity and reduce profits. If any of the following pain points is an issue for your business, be sure to read the corresponding case study (available at www.navtrak.net) to learn how Navtrak provides the cure!

- Excessive overtime costs:
The Bug Doctor story
- Insufficient knowledge of vehicle location/activity:
The Sunshine Paving story
- Inaccurate dispatching:
The Choptank Electric story
- Security and liability concerns:
The J.H. Peterson story
- Inaccurate tracking of vehicles:
The Boucher Real Estate story
- Inefficient delivery practices:
The Somerset Food Service story

For more information on how Navtrak can "heal" your mobile workforce headaches, contact your local Navtrak salesperson today, or email us at sales@navtrak.net.

GPS-Based Management Tools for Businesses with Mobile Workforces

