

Employee Team Converts Rail Radio System to ATMS Use

By ROB CHAPPELL

(Sept. 5, 2002) The Metro Rail radio system crossed a major threshold, Sept. 1, when an employee team completed a two-month project that switched off a problem-plagued system and shifted service to other radio channels.

The Johnson 900 MHz radio system, used for communications on the Metro Green Line, has been problematic since beginning of revenue service in 1995. Shutting down the system released vital radio frequencies for use by the ATMS "smart bus" project.

At the end of June, Wayside Systems proposed that MTA could use other existing radio channels similar to those used by the Metro Red Line and the maintenance radio frequencies that operate in the 160 MHz band. This would then release five "channels" of 900 MHz to the ATMS project.

With the project "green-lighted" by Deputy CEO John Catoe and Rail General Manager Gerald Francis, the Rail Communications group went to work.

It was teamwork

Marty Maggard, manager, Rail Communications and Signals led the team, which included Assistant Manager Dan Linstrom and Senior Engineer Anderson Bennett of Metro Construction and Engineering.

The Rail Communications staff went through a flurry of activity. Building equipment from spare parts, researching low-priced, reliable and efficient equipment that would meet the needs of a 24/7 service requirement.

These employees developed the needs and found the equipment by using any and all means necessary. Phone calls, catalogs and the Internet played a great role.

The project took shape with assistance from the ITS Systems group led by Systems Maintenance Manager Joe Giba and Systems Project Manager Larry Fordon. Engineer Bob Nevaraz of ITS Engineering provided microwave service, antenna moves and equipment tie-in at the mountain top broadcast sites.

The team tested and fine-tuned the system



Suited up and ready for the big job are, from left, Communications Technician Gary Hamilton, Scott Day of ITS and Communications Inspector Anthony Tiritilli.



Communications Inspectors Kay Koopman-Glass and Rich Lake get ready to overhaul a bank of electronic equipment.



for two weeks while waiting for equipment to arrive. With the aid of Buyer Beverly Beaver and Contract Administration Manager Victor Ramirez of Purchasing the equipment arrived "just in time."

Some of the radio conversion work had to be done at the top of a mountain top tower. Atop the tower is Scott Day and on his way up is Gary Hamilton.

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