

'Fleetwatch' Fueling System Holds Promise for Bus Maintenance

By **BILL HEARD**, Editor

(Aug. 1, 2003) It's just a little round thing attached to the right rear wheel of a Metro Bus, but it contains information that will help MTA improve bus maintenance.



Mechanic "A" Danny King of Central City Division 1 demonstrates how the fuel island reader device receives vehicle number and mileage information from a Metro Bus electronic wheel hub.

The little round thing is an electronic "hub" that keeps a precise record of the vehicle's number and mileage. It's a key component of "Fleetwatch," a computer-based fueling system that tracks the amount of fuel – CNG or diesel – pumped into a bus, the amount and types of fluids used, and the last time the bus was serviced.

"Getting accurate information is important, because it helps determine the preventive maintenance schedule for a bus," says Chief Information Officer Elizabeth Bennett.

Fleetwatch is an element of M3 – Maintenance and Material Management System – a \$20 million program intended to automate, streamline and simplify the management and maintenance of MTA's 2,400-bus fleet.

Now being installed at MTA operating divisions, Fleetwatch went live at Arthur Winston Division 5 and at Central City Division 1 in July.

Next in line to receive the new system are divisions 2, 18, 7, 10, 6, 3, 9, 8, 15 and 4. With an installation cycle that takes two to three weeks, the project should be completed in November.

Automate and streamline

To install the Fleetwatch system, a crew mounts an electronic signal receiver and control box at the yard's fuel island. The control box is connected to MTA's vehicle maintenance computer network.

The crew also must install a new wheel hub on every bus at the division, replacing all the old digital wheel hubs. Each new hub must be programmed with the correct wheel ratio and beginning mileage in order to properly register the miles the bus has traveled. The hub stays with the bus for the life of the vehicle.

How does it work? When a bus pulls up for fueling, the service attendant activates the Fleetwatch system with a proximity card he or she carries. The attendant then holds a "reader" device near the wheel hub to receive the electronic signal with the vehicle number and mileage information.

The control box records the information and activates the fuel island's diesel or CNG pumps, as required, along with the proper oil and coolant dispensers. All the service attendant has to do is connect the hoses.

"There will be fewer steps in the fueling process," says Bennett. "The Fleetwatch system does the rest."

[Back to MTA Report](#)