User-friendly Maintenance & Materiel Management System, coordinated by Chief Information Officer Elizabeth Bennett, foreground, will enable users such as, clockwise from left, Tom Lingenfield in Rail Maintenance, Sergio Rubalcava in Bus Maintenance, Jon Lyle in Materiel Management and Melvin Navarro in Facilities Maintenance to automate, streamline and simplify much of the work required to manage equipment maintenance.
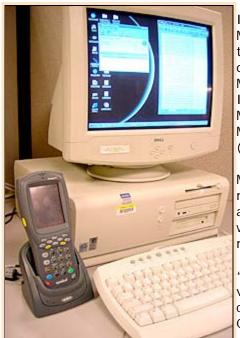


PHOTO BY GAYLE ANDERSON

## M3 Project Will 'Bring Our Maintenance System into 21st Century'

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(March 11, 2003) It's still months away, but by this time next year MTA will roll out a new computer-based program that "will bring our whole maintenance system into the 21st century," says MTA Chief Information Officer Elizabeth Bennett.



It's called M3 for Maintenance & Materiel Management System and it will replace systems that date back at least two decades to SCRTD days – the Vehicle Maintenance System (VMS), Material Management System (MMS), Rail Incident Management System (RIMS), Facilities Management Information System (FMIS) and Maintenance Manpower Accounting System (MMAS).

M3 will be faster, smarter, more powerful and more reliable than VMS and MMS. It will automate, streamline and simplify much of the work required to manage equipment maintenance of all kinds.

"M3 will give us the opportunity to track our vehicle maintenance and determine when components need to be replaced," says Deputy CEO John Catoe. "Also, by keeping better track

Handheld electronic device will record barcode information from equipment and repair parts, store information keyed into it by the user and then download the information into an M3 computer via a docking station.

of our inventories and managing them better, we will reduce operating costs."

"It will help bus operations by providing more historical information," says Servio Rubalcava, assistant maintenance manager, Arthur Winston Division 5. "The new automated fuel system will provide accurate mileage collection that will make preventive maintenance scheduling more efficient."

During a "campaign," when MTA must replace certain parts on many of its vehicles, M3 can determine how which buses require replacements, where they're located and decide how many parts and associated equipment are required for the campaign.

### Support for internal customers

"It will allow us to more efficiently analyze, track and manage inventory to more effectively support our internal customers," says Jon Lyle, materiel supervisor in Inventory Management.

Mechanics, division maintenance managers, warehouse storekeepers, procurement specialists, financial managers and sector general managers — all these and more will use M3.

"M3 will meet the needs of bus operations and the needs of rail operations," says Tom Lingenfield, rail equipment maintenance manager for the Metro Gold Line. He was one of more than 30 staff members who served on the committee that reviewed M3 vendor proposals.

"One of the nice things about the system," he says, "is that an executive can call up an almost instant report on any aspect of operations. It could be miles between failures, hours worked to remove graffiti or how much fuel is being used in the sectors."

The MTA Board approved the $19 million project in January, awarding a three-year contract to Spear Technologies of Oakland, effective Feb. 1. Work on the first phase of the project already has begun and employee training is expected to begin in November.

Perhaps the element of M3 that will be most visible to employees is a handheld electronic device. The device will record barcode information from equipment and repair parts, can store information keyed into it by the user and then download the information into an M3 computer via a docking station.

### 400 handheld devices

MTA plans to buy some 400 of the devices for use by maintenance, storeroom and procurement employees, says Bennett, "We'll do away with a lot of paperwork by converting to an electronic system."

"Once M3 is implemented, a technician will have access to information needed to get a job completed," says Facilities Maintenance Supervisor Melvin Navarro. "Work orders, equipment history, manuals, technical data and drawings will be available immediately through M3."

The fuel systems at the operating divisions and Regional Repair Center will be tied in to the M3 program. It will note the vehicle number, mileage, the amount of fuel pumped into a bus and when it was last fueled.

Together with other information available through M3, managers can determine a vehicle's condition, repair status and can decide what maintenance should be performed and when.

The program currently is in use by New York's MTA, by DART in Dallas, by AMTRAK, San Francisco's Muni Railway, the Hudson-Bergen light-rail line and many others in the United States and abroad.

"M3 will make a difference to MTA," says Bennett. "It will make a difference by giving the divisions the ability to manage better. It will make their work easier by giving them access to information they don't have today. It will bring us a new, state-of-the-art technology that will take us into the future."

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