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YVEDDI transportation experiencing growing pains

By: Staff Report

September 20, 2013

In April 2013, YVEDDI's transportation program installed advanced scheduling software to help manage its average 1,200 trips per day. At the same time, Transportation Director Jeff Cockerham said, YVEDDI began consolidating its four-county operation into one centralized dispatch center operating out of the Yadkinville office.

"Since then," he said, "we have experienced both successes and failures while adapting to the new software and the new centralized dispatch concept."

YVEDDI's local Surry County transportation office was the last to have the software installed. As YVEDDI's biggest county, Cockerham said it accounts for 38 percent of the daily trips.

"In July, we were scheduling about 500 trips per day total between Davie, Stokes and Yadkin counties," he said. "In August, when we brought in Surry, that number immediately jumped to about 800 trips per day."

Since school recently started in all four counties, YVEDDI's daily trips have increased to around 1,200. "One of the goals of operating as a consolidated system with the scheduling software is to provide the most trips possible with the drivers and vehicles we have," Cockerham said. "The software allows us to do that by scheduling the driver to drop off a passenger and then proceed to the next pickup."

Following the initial implementation of the program in Surry, some of the problems experienced were passengers being late for appointments and subsequent extended wait times before being picked up.

"We believe we have resolved most of those issues by adjusting the parameter settings in the software," Cockerham said. "We want to let everyone know that one of the best ways they can help to reduce wait times after appointments is to keep their appointments in the middle of the day between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. to avoid the peak travel times."

Passengers who know upfront how long they will be at their appointments can also go ahead and schedule their return pickup time from the appointment, and the software will schedule a van to be back at that time. If the rider does not know how long they will be at their appointment, we schedule a return pick up 2 hours after their appointment time. Since YVEDDI operates as a shared ride service with hundreds of other riders on a daily basis, there may still be some wait time for most riders but transportation officials will continue to work to keep them at a minimum.

While we would prefer to offer individual personalized services, such as a Taxi, we must continue to strive for maximum cost efficiency as a public transit agency.

The Trapeze Software Group is the software supplier for the new system. Cockerham said it is a very robust and complex software system that he believes will provide the desirable outcome of keeping expenses low while providing more trips per day for our citizens.

To schedule a ride, residents in Davie, Stokes, Surry and Yadkin counties can call 336-679-2071 or toll free 1-855-820-0022.

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