

Bonny's Taxi makes leap to GPS

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Bonny's Taxis has made a technological leap to get a jump on the competition. The Burnaby-based taxicab company recently outfitted all of its 114 cabs with computer terminals that use GPS navigation and mapping, credit card readers and touch screen displays.

Cab dispatchers are equipped with GPS maps

that allow them to locate a customer's address and then locate the nearest cab to pick them up.

This is all for the customer so we can offer quick service," said Amrik Mahil, operations manager for Bonny's. We're already starting to see better service."

The \$500,000 system was implemented June 12 and Mahil admits it wasn't a smooth startup, with most of the hiccups related to implementing the new software. The company's goal is pickup customers in 10 minutes or less. And so far they've been able to accomplish that. The only time drivers have problems meeting the 10-minute goal is during the afternoon rush hour, and that's not likely a challenge they'll be able to overcome.

Even in New York with 30,000 cabs they can't pickup in 10 minutes during peak hours," said Mahil.

Bonny's becomes the second cab company in the Lower Mainland to adopt the latest PathFinder dispatch system -the first being Pacific Cabs in White Rock. The PathFinder system uses a Windows-based computer operating system and easier to use. Earlier GPS dispatch systems run on a UNIX operating system and can be a challenge to operate for most computer users, said Mahil.

Many of the local cab companies using the older system plan to switch over to PathFinder, he said.

Mahil was recently provided with a good example of how practical the new system is. Last week a cabbie called into the dispatcher and said he was at the customer's home and no one was there. Using the GPS mapping, the dispatcher located the cab and customer's address. We were able to tell the driver he had another block to go to get to the customer," he said

Without the system, the customer might not have been located. Bonny's was able to pickup the customer within 10 minutes, said Mahil.

GPS, or global positioning system, uses 24 satellites, ground stations, computers and receivers to determine the latitude and longitude of the



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Cab drivers for Bonny's Taxi, like Harjinder Sidhu, rarely have to refer to their old map books anymore, now that their cars have been outfitted with GPS terminals.

GPS receiver-equipped cabs. Mapping and navigation software allows drivers to see where they are on a map, as well as where their next customer is or the best route to get to the customer's chosen destination.

It's also a vital security tool, allowing company dispatchers to find a cab if a driver is in danger. GPS is accurate to within 30 metres.

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