



Meet > HIRTA Public Transit Urbandale, IA

The Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency provides public transit services available to all citizens and visitors of Boone, Dallas, Jasper, Madison, Marion, Story and Warren Counties in central Iowa, enhancing quality of life, enabling access to employment and education, and promoting independent lifestyles for central Iowa residents. From school aged children to seniors, HIRTA's rider base includes both general public riders, and people with physical limitations.



HIRTA

Enhancing Rider Independence with Routematch Pay

HIRTA stands for Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency. Which makes sense, because not only do their transit operations serve the heart of Central Iowa, but their mission of making a positive difference by **enhancing community livability through innovative, sustainable, regional transportation options** also comes from the heart.

"I think the biggest thing for me is just being able to help residents in the community," said Amber Falls, Customer Service Supervisor at HIRTA. "There are a lot of people out there who may not have a vehicle of their own or a person in the area to help them get to areas they need to go, and to be able to accommodate basic needs, get their groceries, get to doctors' appointments...that's an area where we're able to step in and provide a service that helps get them where they need to go and get out in the community."



HIRTA

Brooke Ramsey, HIRTA's Business Development Manager, has lived in central Iowa her entire life. The communities impacted by HIRTA's transit solutions aren't just strangers at a bus stop, they're her neighbors, her family, and her friends.

"My favorite thing about working at HIRTA, is that no matter what you do, if you're a driver, if you're an accountant, if you're an administrative assistant, it doesn't matter...what you do at the end of the day helps our neighbors, my family members, and people in our community have a better quality of life," Brooke said.

HIRTA provides door to door transit services that are open to the general public, including persons with disabilities.

Fare Collection That Empowers Every Ride

Accommodating the individual needs of riders can often be a challenge for transit agencies, especially when it comes to fare collection. From manually tracking paper tickets to the hassles of riders carrying cash and not having exact change, HIRTA faced a number of fare recovery issues. For HIRTA, it's been especially difficult for the drivers and parents of school aged children, eligible to utilize paratransit services, to get to and from school.

"The large volume of school aged riders that we take in a day is probably one of the biggest driving factors [in providing a payment solution]," Amber said. "With our school aged children, we've had a reoccurring issue where



sometimes those young riders don't have the cash when the driver shows up or maybe they spent that cash on something else before their trip," Amber said.

To ease some of the pains of collecting funds from riders without correct fare, keeping track of paper tickets, as well as the hassles of riders carrying loose cash and counting exact change, **HIRTA made the decision to automate their fare collection system.** According to HIRTA, having the option to pay with a credit card or a prepaid account is something that has been a regular request from riders and drivers for a number of years.

Over the years we've continued to add **additional Routematch features** to utilize and help **streamline our services.**

I think that's a big part of public transportation in general, **giving people that level of independence.**

When looking to improve overall fare collection efficiencies, HIRTA turned to Routematch. Routematch Pay is a flexible automated fare collection system that offers a variety of payment options to streamline an agency's fare collection and management process. **It eliminates the hassles of handling cash and allows riders to manage their payments digitally.**

The ability to load funds to an online account removes the need for students to pay with cash or tickets. It's proven to be convenient for drivers, parents, students, and the agency as a whole.

"Having a prepaid option means you don't have to worry about making one more stop to pick up tickets or wondering if you have the cash to purchase tickets, or does my kid have the cash to pay for his ride. It's all something that can be managed from your living room," Brooke said. **"By having Routematch's Pay Solution, we can allow them to prepay the account, it assists the parents and us, with ensuring they have that fare available without having to deal with cash directly."**



No Rider Left Behind

By removing friction in fare collection, agencies have the ability to quickly and efficiently accommodate riders. **Integrating a fare collection technology can completely transform the rider experience.** For HIRTA, the implementation of Routematch Pay has been beneficial to a number of rider groups, including para-transit riders.

“We have one rider in one of our areas who has a mobility issue, where she is not able to move her hands very easily. She purchases HIRTA Bucks, but she has a difficult time getting into her purse to get those HIRTA Bucks to the driver,” Amber said.

Before the rider had the option to preload funds, she would purchase the HIRTA bucks, put them in a little coin purse and sit it at the very top of her bag. The drivers would have to reach into that bag to get the tickets and that was something that some of the drivers were a little bit concerned about it. The agency struggled to find a solution that worked for their frequent passenger, but with Routematch Pay, they were able to easily accommodate the rider’s needs.

“**With Routematch Pay, it’s something that’s been very helpful for her,**” Brooke said. “Because instead of having to purchase those HIRTA bucks and worry about how she’s going to get those tickets to the driver, we can just upload that balance to her account and resolve that whole situation.”

By implementing an automated payment option, the agency was able to resolve the issue. And the driver and rider were able to avoid an uncomfortable situation.

Effective and Efficient

For HIRTA, less fare to count and less pre-paid tickets to buy and handle have been the most significant outcomes and benefits to date. From a driver perspective, having a payment solution for riders without the correct fare amount has been a relief for their daily operations. It's one less thing to disrupt their day – making **daily transportation more seamless for everyone**. And for riders, it's been overall more convenient and accommodating.

Having Routematch Pay has been much easier and timelier compared to the days of manual fare collection. Internally, Brooke has seen first-hand over the eight years she's been involved with Routematch how investing in technology can transform an agency. **From efficiency and timeliness to data tracking and applying for funding, technology solutions have improved a wide range of HIRTA's operations.**

HIRTA is a living example of how integrating transit technology benefits everyone involved.

Agency Solutions:

- Full System Integration
- CRM-Style Functionality
- Reduced Cash Management Costs
- Enhanced Security
- Modernized Operations
- Flexible Back Office Management

Rider Benefits:

- No paper tickets to keep track of
- No need for riders to carry cash, count exact change
- No more waiting in line at ticket machines
- Pay a single fare or multiple fares for groups of passengers
- Pre-load funds into your account and access tickets via web or mobile device



Connected in Transit

Routematch Case Studies:

Discover agencies like yours who have found success with Routematch