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Schools In Crisis - Smarter routes save money

by Andrew Keller

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Cheboygan Schools have cut routes, increased efficiency, and saved cash

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CHEBOYGAN, MI – We have a unique twist on our series, "Schools in Crisis," a local district is using new technology to save every penny they can.

As schools across the state prepare to welcome your kids back to school in less than a week, buses are out on the roads practicing their routes.



This comes at a time when every district is looking for ways to save, and Cheboygan Schools is trying to do just that.

In Cheboygan, bus routes are making a little more sense, as in dollars and cents.

"We've streamlined where you're going to see one bus in one area, and saves us miles, and fuel, and everything," said Cheboygan Schools Transportation Director Pete Dobrowolski.

The big savings started last year, when the district cut two bus routes.

26,000 miles were eliminated and about \$20,000 was saved per bus.

And thanks to improved GPS technology, and a \$2,000 route mapping program, two more routes were cut this year.

This year, the district will run 15 routes, 5 fewer than 2008, and drive 160,000 fewer miles compared to three years ago. This will add to the already saved \$150,000 transportation savings the district has seen in the last three years.

But the new Cheboygan system isn't just saving money, it's also allowed the

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district to keep an eye on your children and the bus driver.

Cameras capture everything that happens on the bus, but for more than just hoopla and horseplay.

"The guess work with you know, how fast did that driver actually drive, or you know, what the student did or didn't do, the guess work is all out of it, it's on an SD card," said Dobrowolski. "I know when it happened, time it happened, and where it happened at."

And as the wheels on the bus go round and round, this year, it'll happen fewer times, all recorded, in hopes to save the district valuable dollars.

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