

## *New website tracks Metro buses*

### GoBus feature allows passengers to find out if bus is on schedule in real time

Codiac Transit passengers now have another option instead of waiting out in the cold for the bus, unsure of when it might arrive on days when road conditions are less than ideal. Riders can find out exactly where their bus is simply by going online.

Codiac Transit launched its new website this week at [www.codiactranspo.ca](http://www.codiactranspo.ca), and one of the features is

GoBus, an online mapping system that displays each bus's route and where exactly a bus is at any given time.

The new feature is possible thanks to global positioning system (GPS) technology and the fact that every one of Codiac's buses have wireless Internet access.

Now, on stormy winter days such as those we've seen this week, Codiac passengers can check the status of their neighbourhood bus before walking to the nearest bus stop. If your bus is running behind or has been rerouted because of weather or other issues, you'll know and you can plan to stay indoors a little longer before heading for the bus.

"If a bus is backed up 10 minutes, or it's on time, it's important that our customers know that," says John Allain, general manager of Codiac Transit.

Allain says the GoBus feature, developed by local company Red Ball, is a "very sharp tool" that will provide a great benefit to customers as well as improving the efficiency of Codiac Transit's own scheduling.

For example, some routes in Metro Moncton have more than one bus running on them, so it's possible they can bunch up a bit on the routes. Drivers don't always know where other buses are at any given time, so they could be only five minutes behind a bus ahead of them when perhaps they should be 10 or 25 minutes behind.

Allain says until recently, Codiac dispatchers had to schedule and plan everything by communicating back and forth with drivers to ensure routes were properly covered and timed.

GoBus will allow dispatchers to see exactly where every bus is and to warn drivers if and when they are bunching up on routes so that one might wait an extra minute at a stop to adjust timing.

In the middle of discussing the new website feature, it was pointed out to Allain that one of the buses on Codiac's website appeared to be nowhere near its regular route on the map.

Bus number 14, which covers west Riverview, appeared on Codiac's website early yesterday as though it was in Point Park, on the opposite end of town.

"We know we're going to have over 1,500 people monitoring it just like you over the next 24 hours," Allain said with a chuckle.

Moments later, bus number 14 appeared back on its proper route.

Allain admitted there are a few kinks to work out, not with the GoBus system itself, but with its users -- the Codiac staff, who are in the middle of learning all about the new feature right now.

He says the system should be glitch-free and 100 per cent dependable within days.

GoBus cost \$25,000 over two years, but Allain says the cost was covered by federal infrastructure money.

Allain says Codiac's new website will also make it easier for Codiac users to communicate with Codiac to let the service know what new features it would like to see on the website.

Paul Thomson, director of corporate communications with the City of Moncton, says the redesigned website is part of the city's goal to enhance user-friendliness of all the city's websites.

Thomson says the objective is to make the websites easier to navigate and easier for staff to update so that more people will use them on a regular basis.

Allain says Codiac plans to add even more new technology to its bus system as time goes in. One technology that might be adopted would make it so passengers can just swipe a bus card when they get on the bus instead of having to get the driver to punch a card.

Allain says all new additions are made with the goal of making bus travel easier and more efficient for everyone.

Codiac Transit's new website is online at [www.codiactranspo.ca](http://www.codiactranspo.ca).