

MERRILLVILLE, Ind. — K–12 school districts, their transportation directors and parents of students who ride school buses may benefit from a new smartphone application that tracks attendance as students board and exit a school bus.

Executives at Preshus Cargo LLC have developed the Patron Attendance and Tracking Solution (PATS) for school transportation purposes.

"All of our development is in the education sector," said Kevin McGuire, managing partner at Preshus Cargo. "We have a parent application that runs on Android and a district solution that allows school leaders to take attendance on school buses. We will have an IOS solution in the future once work on the Android version is complete."

Bus drivers or monitors use a tablet that has been pre-loaded with attendance data based on the route. The user selects a photo that informs the system if the rider is entering or exiting.

"This information is uploaded to the network so school administration officials and parents will know who is on the bus at any given time," McGuire said. "Students who ride the bus have no interaction with the current system, although we can use an RFID (radio frequency identification) reader to take attendance if schools already have that solution in place. In that case, students would scan their ID card when they get on or off the bus."

Preshus Cargo's technology is being used in the Michigan City (Ind.) Area Schools system. McGuire said school systems could recoup money using it.

"Michigan City was reimbursed \$11,000 two years ago for its paper and pencil solution," he said. "During the 2012-13 school year, the district already has been reimbursed \$14,000. School district officials anticipate when PATS is installed on all the school buses, they will see the amount increase another 20 percent. We also anticipate a reduction in insurance costs on those buses."

Although Preshus Cargo's initial market is K-12 school systems, McGuire said PATS is capable of being used in charter buses, garbage trucks, prisoner transportation and taxicabs. He explained why the company became a tenant in the Purdue Research Park of Northwest Indiana.

"The Purdue Research Park was a great fit for us as a startup company. Our biggest reason for joining was the access to individuals who have gone through the challenges we anticipate that we will encounter," he said. "We also are interested in working with the staff at the Purdue Technology Center to develop a sound foundation for the business, which will make us more successful in the future."

About Preshus Cargo LLC

Preshus Cargo is focused on patron safety and tracking. Our solutions help transportation departments in any market to track riders and resources. We are a small, growing company currently working with a handful of Indiana school districts. Implementation of our solutions will increase safety, communication and secure your precious cargo.