

WE Transport is Ready for the Future of Communications with KENWOOD NEXEDGE® Ultra-Narrow Band Trunking Systems



PROJECT OVERVIEW: With more than 1,700 vehicles operating in New York City and surrounding communities, student and driver safety and reliable communications across a broad operating area were the primary objectives for a new communications system. WE Transport selected KENWOOD NEXEDGE® NXDN™ trunking systems, operating at 6.25 kHz ultra-narrowband, for highly reliable digital communications.

WE Transport was founded in 1959, when the baby boom generation was exploding the population of elementary and secondary schools in America. While rural areas had always relied on school buses, many children were now in suburbs where distances made walking to school impractical. Urban areas were building large, multi-grade schools, which meant more students needed to travel from further away to a central location.

With these changes in U.S. schools, WE Transport was one of the first companies to offer school transportation on a contract basis. Over fifty years, the company has grown to 2,500 employees, with one of the most advanced bus fleets in the region. WE Transport has a fleet of more than 1,700 passenger transport and other vehicles serving dozens of school districts, municipalities and not-for-profit organizations in the New York Metro area and surrounding neighborhoods.

“We are a totally KENWOOD facility. I really like the quality. The KENWOOD systems have been a very good investment and we are very happy. The equipment is quite reliable.”

– Tony Mammolito, Communications Manager, WE Transport

The primary focus of their business is transporting students for public and private schools, summer camps, special needs transportation and services for wheelchair-bound individuals and charter bus rentals. WE Transport operates twelve modern dispatch and maintenance facilities. Seven are located on Long Island, two in Westchester County, one is in Connecticut and there are two in New York City.

Being able to communicate across such a broad geographic area with multiple bus yards, and in varying conditions from New York City's crowded metro corridors with high levels of radio traffic and the rolling hills of Westchester County, requires extremely robust two-way radio communications. When it came time for an upgrade from their analog low band equipment, WE Transport installed two KENWOOD NEXEDGE NXDN digital ultra-narrow band trunking systems, one in Nassau County and one in Suffolk County.

Tony Mammolito, Communications Manager with We Transport described the communications situation before the switch to NEXEDGE, "We knew an upgrade was needed. Since we are in a highly congested area for radio communications, digital was the right choice."

"Having the KENWOOD radios means I have one less thing to worry about."

– Tony Mammolito, Communications Manager, We Transport

KENWOOD NEXEDGE digital technology offered WE Transport advanced features and expanded their effective range by up to 20%. The choice of ultra-narrow band operation effectively "future-proofed" their communications system.

WE Transport uses KENWOOD NXDN technology, operating at 6.25 kHz efficiency, known as ultra-narrow band, making the radio receivers highly selective, rejecting noise and interference, and achieving a high standard signal-to-noise ratio even with a weak signal. That means voice communications is even more likely to be clearly heard, even in areas with congested radio channels, like the New York metro area. The FCC mandated a shift to narrowband operations in 2013, and it is likely that ultra-narrow band will be a future mandate, given the inevitability of channels becoming even more crowded with wireless devices. When that happens, due to their forward-thinking shift to ultra-narrowband operation, WE Transport is ready for the future and, in the meantime, already benefits from the efficiency of ultra-narrow band digital radios.

Mammolito was familiar with KENWOOD radios when he joined We Transport and had experience with digital communications with a prior transportation company. As a test, WE Transport used the NEXEDGE wide area trunked system operated by Suffolk County Communications, the authorized KENWOOD dealer that works with We Transport.

The two NXDN systems that WE Transport owns operate out of Suffolk and Nassau counties and are connected so every yard has equal access to reliable communications. Every school bus in the WE Transport



WE Transport offers special needs transportation across its service area for wheel-chair bound individuals.

fleet as well as the safety and tow trucks and other utility vehicles have KENWOOD NX-800 and NX-3820 mobile radios. WE Transport also uses KENWOOD NX-320 and NX-3320 portables.

According to Suffolk County Communications, “WE Transport’s communications systems vary as much as their needs in the communities they serve, but no matter what, KENWOOD is their number one choice. Ranging from VHF in the hills of Westchester, NY to digital narrowband in the congested airways of New York City, the one thing that is consistent is their reliance on KENWOOD to get the job done for over 30 years.”

While the transition to digital has been smooth, Mammolito admitted that “People did take a while to get used to the digital sound”, but, as he observed, “Once they saw how much further they could talk and how much clearer voices sound, they are now all pleased with the system.”

Automatic volume adjustment has been a popular feature with the drivers, automatically adjusting to loud or soft voices, even in the high noise environment of a school bus. Vehicle numbers now show up on the ultra-bright display, and each driver now knows immediately what vehicle is calling, even in low light conditions.

Overall, Mammolito said, “We are a totally KENWOOD facility. I really like the quality. The KENWOOD systems have been a very good investment and we are very happy. The equipment is quite reliable.”

“The local dealer, Suffolk County Communications, is a large part of why we’re pleased with our investment because they always come through whenever we call. Overall, this has been a win-win.”

“With over a half century of providing first in class transportation services, WE Transport has steadily built a reputation for undeniable safety. We meticulously choose who we partner with to keep that reputation intact. Suffolk County Communications is our exclusive KENWOOD provider for sales, service and product expertise for over 25 years,” Mammolito added.



Field trips and charter bus services are key segments of WE Transport’s business.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), school buses are the most highly regulated vehicles on the road. Designed to be safer than passenger vehicles, children are about 70 times more likely to get to school safely if they take the school bus.

Buses are inspected regularly and, as Mammolito points out, “The radios have to work. That’s also critically important when we go in to bid or rebid. The radio reliability is important in bids. Also, we operate buses for the New York City schools. Everything on the bus has to work, or they back charge per day.”

Like most school buses today, they are packed with technology and Mammolito says, “Having the KENWOOD radios means I have one less thing to worry about.”

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