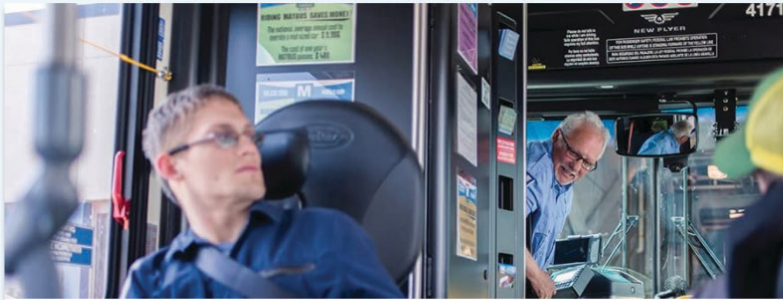


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 Do You Support the Proposed GOP Tax Plan?  
 Yes  
 No  
 vote

**MCAT Installs Technology to Assist Wheelchair Passengers on Popular Local Route**  
 Manatee County - Tuesday, Jan 31, 2017

**MANATEE COUNTY** — Manatee County Area Transit (MCAT) recently installed new state-of-the-art equipment to assist wheelchair passengers on one of the County's most popular fixed routes.

One bus on MCAT's Route 3—which offers passengers 30-minute service frequency along the Manatee Avenue corridor from I-75 to Manatee County Public Beach—now has QUANTUM wheelchair securement technology. The device enables passengers that utilize wheelchairs

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**Accessibility**  
**Q'Straint to supply Quantum, Q'POD securement systems for ABQ Ride's BRT system**  
 Posted on May 23, 2017  
 Post a comment | Comments 0 | 2

As part of its 18-BYD bus order for its Albuquerque Rapid Transit (ART) BRT buses, ABQ Ride has specified Q'Straint's Quantum rearward-facing and Q'POD forward-facing wheelchair securement systems — making it the largest one-time purchase of the Quantum in the state.

"We're very excited about this contract," said Mitch Drouillard, southern regional transit/rail

The Quantum and Q'POD systems will be installed on all 18 of ABQ Ride's ART BRT buses.

Q'STRAIN to Provide Dual Wheelchair Securement  
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**Accessibility**  
**Q'Straint's Quantum makes passenger safety push-button easy**  
 Posted on October 10, 2017  
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**Q'STRAIN**  
 THINKING BEYOND SAFETY

Wheelchair and scooter users want independent transportation, and bus drivers have a schedule to maintain. Until now those two objectives often conflicted.

However, with the introduction of QUANTUM, the industry now has the first securement system designed to keep passengers

QUANTUM Makes Passenger Safety Push Button Easy  
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**MATBUS and Q'Straint**  
*partner for mobility*





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# **MATBUS and Q'Straint**

*partner for mobility*

Fargo, ND, and Moorhead, MN, worked together to revolutionize accessibility in their communities

*By Richard Tackett*

Julie Bommelman, transit director for the City of Fargo, ND, sent her agency's maintenance director to the 2014 American Public Transportation Association (APTA) EXPO on a discovery mission: learn all you can about self-securement.

Although Fargo, through MATBUS, had worked with Q'Straint for some time, Bommelman's interest was piqued by what she had recently read about the QUANTUM – the company's then-new self-securement system for disability passengers using wheelchairs.

“Our maintenance director was the type of supervisor who was fully focused on the mechanical engineering side of new products,” she says. “I know he put Q'Straint's products through their paces, because he came back very excited with a lot of information.”

“MATBUS has always been a great Q'Straint customer, in both paratransit and transit,” adds Mike Laidlaw, senior sales manager at Q'Straint. “And they've always been very sensitive to their ridership and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provisions.”

MATBUS immediately began reviewing the products seen at APTA EXPO in anticipation of a new bus project with New Flyer Industries. When the time was right, Bommelman contacted Q'Straint.

#### **MATBUS**

MATBUS is the transit system serving Fargo and West Fargo, ND; and Moorhead and Dilworth, MN. Moorhead and Fargo maintain separate fixed-route bus fleets. Fargo's fixed-route fleet consists of 30 buses – 23 large and seven medium-sized. Moorhead has 12 buses in its fixed-route fleet – eight large and four medium. Fargo and Moorhead have a combined paratransit fleet of 15 vehicles, bringing the total number of vehicles in the combined MATBUS fleet to 57.

Bommelman and the MATBUS staff had zeroed in on two specific products from Q'Straint: QUANTUM and Q'POD.



According to Q'Straint, Q'POD is the first fully-integrated, forward-facing wheelchair securement station specifically designed and tested for transit wheelchair passenger transportation. Q'POD bolts directly into the bus, providing an all-in-one solution, and its integrated shoulder belt eliminates the need for window brackets. Q'POD's stabilizing bumper works with the front tensioner and scooter ring, allowing for three-point securement while eliminating trip hazards in the aisle.

QUANTUM is transit's first fully-automatic rear-facing wheelchair securement station. It allows passengers with wheelchairs or scooters to maneuver into position on transit buses and trains, then independently secure themselves in a safe, stable position with the push of a button. Drivers simply operate the system from their seat, using dashboard lights as indicators facilitating the onboarding experience for the wheelchair passenger.

"These products — especially the QUANTUM — were just hitting the market at the time we conducted our research," Bommelman says. "We were very excited about it so we designed both the QUANTUM and the Q'POD into our two newest buses."

After a visit and a Skype presentation from Laidlaw, MATBUS North Dakota purchased the QUANTUM and Q'POD for its buses. Though they're publicly monickered "MATBUS," the North Dakota and Minnesota transit systems necessarily must make separate procurements. The side of MATBUS serving Dilworth and Moorhead had to work with a few state-specific regulations and were not able to procure Q'Straint's systems at the time — though they have since done so.

"We were able to partner with New Flyer, working within their layout and specifications from MATBUS," Laidlaw says. "As is normal with products like QUANTUM and Q'POD, we also made commitments to support MATBUS after the buses arrived, ensuring the long-term integrity and the service life of both products."

#### Installation and training

Once Laidlaw and the Q'Straint team knew they would be installing Q'POD and QUANTUM on new buses, rather than retrofitting older models, they began work with New Flyer to obtain the most optimal layout for their products.


"For QUANTUM, the obvious choice was to use a theater-style automatic-flip up seat," Laidlaw says. "This design easily accommodates passengers, because the seat independently flips up. A passenger using QUANTUM can board and secure themselves without having to ask for the operator's assistance."

The Q'Straint training team arrived in Fargo a full week before the newly-equipped buses began service. Over two days, department by department, Laidlaw and his team provided training videos and conducted in-person training sessions for maintenance, operations, trainers and drivers.

"Once we completed in-agency training, we conducted a media campaign with MATBUS in which we took the buses to one of the nearby universities," Laidlaw says. "MATBUS invited everyone and anyone who might be interested. The mayor gave a short speech, and TV and radio stations observed as we conducted a four-hour demonstration for the community."

"Everyone benefits from the product, not just passengers who use wheelchairs," Bommelman adds. "That was a major part of the message. If we reduce dwell and securement times, then *all* passengers can reach their destinations in a safe and comfortable manner."

The Minnesota-Moorhead side of MATBUS was integral to the community presentations, and it wasn't long after the state of Minnesota approved both the QUANTUM and Q'POD products to be used in Minnesota. This allowed the Moorhead portion of MATBUS to procure and provide these benefits to its service area of the agency.

"Once the products were certified in our state, we were very excited," says Lori Van Beek, transit manager for the City of 







Moorhead, MN. “When it came to ordering, Q’Straint was easy as ever to work with. Prices and availability fit right in with our plans, and they worked perfectly with our New Flyer buses.”

#### Feedback

MATBUS executives say both Q’POD and QUANTUM have generated superb feedback from the community and agency employees.

Passengers in both North Dakota and Minnesota have praised the QUANTUM system because of how much it has increased their independence as riders.

“It’s that sense of independence that they want, and they feel it when they secure themselves stably in QUANTUM’s mechanical arm,” Bommelman says. “Riders have really taken to the system.”

The simple effectiveness of the Q’POD system has also been a big hit with drivers and riders alike.

“I witnessed Q’POD in service at the North Dakota State University campus, with a student who uses the MATBUS service every day,” Van Beek says. “It was such a fast process for the driver to help her load onto the bus.”

Van Beek says that drivers and riders both appreciate that Q’POD minimizes the need for a driver to enter a passenger’s personal space.

“The driver doesn’t have to get so close and personal using the Q’POD as they do in other types of securement systems,” she says. “There is no need to lean over the passenger as drivers help secure the device. It’s easy to tighten and retract, both of which make the rider and driver experiences much more enjoyable.”

Matthew Peterson, Assistant Transit Director for Fargo, says that drivers also like how the Q’POD and QUANTUM reduce time spent looking for the correct straps and securements. This is especially true because of the size variance of different wheelchair and mobility devices.



“With both Q’Straint products, all securements are easily accessible no matter what kind of device is being secured,” he says. “It really is a big improvement, and makes a tremendous difference for everyone involved.”

Bommelman, Van Beek and Peterson all agree that their respective maintenance departments are thrilled with QUANTUM and Q’POD, saying that maintenance is minimal and doesn’t require any special considerations or expenses.

#### Moving forward

More than anything, representatives of MATBUS and Q’Straint agree that the cities of Fargo and Moorhead are true pioneers of accessibility in their region.

“The public transit industry, in many cases, can be a bit slow to change,” Laidlaw says. “Being a pioneer takes courage. MATBUS proved they not only lead the way in U.S. transit, but also in making the journey easier for passengers who really need it.”

“I hope many more transit agencies throughout the country opt for QUANTUM and Q’POD,” Bommelman says. “The revolution in passenger accessibility, moving through various transit systems and across our industry, will make a huge difference.” □