IAIS EHOS
SYSTEM

Overview

The Iowa Interstate Railroad (IAIS) eHOS system is a custom-built, comprehensive employee time recording system for Class 2 railroads.

eHOS is built to serve the unique needs of railroad maintenance of way, mechanical, and engineering departments. For train crews, the focused workflow and recording process is designed to follow the stringent Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) rules governing Hours of Service (HOS). The eHOS reporting features assist IAIS in all phases of FRA proof of compliance, from producing customized documents on the spot for inspectors to generating required standard reports. The specialized scheduling features of eHOS support complying with strict FRA HOS regulations and assist in following rules of the corresponding unions involved in railroad operations.

Context

Iowa Interstate Railroad is a short line railroad that operates from Omaha, Nebraska to Chicago, Illinois. As such, it's subject to Federal Railroad Administration rules governing Hours of Service for train crews on Class 2 railroads.

Up and Running's eHOS system will replace the paper recording process and automate reporting to FRA. It will also electronically manage all aspects of timekeeping, task management, and billing, thereby saving time and resources and improving efficiency and reliability.

FRA HOS rules govern shift lengths, extra shift time, consecutive shifts, mandatory rest periods, limits on regular and extra time per month, special rules for vacation time, rules classes, and other types of company business for all employees (crewmembers) involved in train movements.

This time reporting is subject to strict requirements for when and how time is reported for train movements (referred to as tie-ups) and rule violation claims by crewmembers (penalty claims). This is on top of normal employee timekeeping issues such as jury duty, bereavement leave, FMLA, sick time, etc.

IAIS, like other short lines, has regular and random visits from FRA inspectors who routinely inspect tie-ups and penalty claims. The burden of proof of compliance is on IAIS, and violations of FRA HOS rules can result in union grievances and substantial fines being levied against IAIS.

BEFORE AND AFTER

The below comparison describes how the current IAIS current system works and how Up and Running's custom eHOS system will replace and improve upon it.

Current state / When we met

IAIS records FRA HOS information using paper forms by crewmembers that are handed or faxed to the accounting department and then are manually entered into spreadsheets.

Rules compliance for a manager assigning crewmembers their daily train assignments is done by reviewing paper reports produced from these spreadsheets.

Proof of compliance for FRA inspections is done on demand by providing paper versions of tie-up reports or penalty claims for any crewmember on any date.
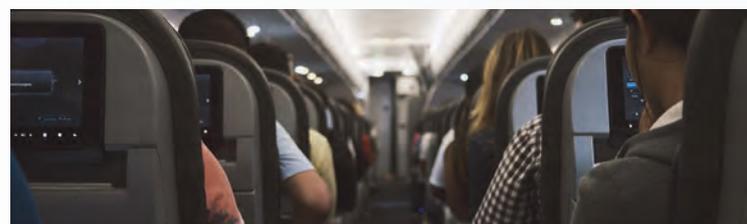
eHOS implementation / What we're building

eHOS will automate reporting to FRA. The system will allow train crews to enter tie-ups from kiosks at terminals and stations, mobile tablets, or any computer on its network. The portal will support the entire workflow, from the creation of a catalog of jobs, to daily crew job assignments, through end of shift tie-up time recording for train crews, and manager approval of tie-ups and timecards.

The system enforces compliance with FRA HOS rules by displaying crewmembers available for assignment and evaluating their hours, overtime limits, consecutive starts, and mandatory rest periods.

The reporting end of the system provides alerts and notices for crewmembers and managers alike for approaching limits and rest period requirements. Proof of compliance for FRA inspectors may be easily found using simple reports and searches. The system adheres to the strict FRA requirements for electronic record keeping, and it will eliminate the need for paper archives.

Current state / When we met

IAIS is also using paper recording of all employees (salaried and hourly) in IT, accounting, administration, and engineering departments.

Work assignments and materials used by maintenance of way and mechanical crews involved in track, locomotive, and rolling stock repair are done by filling in paper forms that are often faxed to the accounting department.

eHOS implementation / What we're building

The portal will replace this for all employees, providing the same distributed and mobile recording and reporting capabilities as for train crews enforcing union rules and other departments as required.

Materials and locations used in track repair will be recorded via the portal, facilitating improved inventory, ordering, and billing.

Current state / When we met

Company-wide payroll is currently done by manual entry into a legacy AS400 system from the time reporting spreadsheets manually assembled from paper timecards.

eHOS implementation / What we're building

The UAR eHOS system will replace this work by providing a direct export of all needed data to the legacy system, allowing payroll to be run twice per month without manual intervention.

Current state / When we met

Usage of leased tracks from other railroads is handled by train crews recording car counts and tonnage on paper and faxing the paper to the accounting department. This data is entered into spreadsheets used to produce accounts payable invoices.

eHOS implementation / What we're building

Car counts and tonnage will soon be reported by train crews as a normal part of tie-ups, providing automatic monthly reports and accounts payable invoices.

About Up and Running

We partner with clients to solve important technical problems by building, implementing, and servicing complex software solutions for customers of any size in any industry.

Started in 1995 while founder Pete Hanson was a sophomore in high school, Up and Running Software began as a technical services firm and evolved into a developer of custom software solutions. Customer happiness and open communication have been the focus since day one, plain and simple, resulting in long-term relationships with any type of client, from non-profits to startups to the Fortune 10. Thanks to this mindset, Up and Running is fortunate to have served an impressive array of clients, including giants such as General Electric (GE), Henry Schein, Sanofi, and Hearst, as well as venture-backed startups at every phase, from formation to growth.

Its over two decades of custom software development, legacy system support, and migrations drive the engines of solutions that thousands of businesses and millions of people rely on daily. That experience has resulted in hands-on depth in most software development stacks, from the command line systems in the back office to ones that gracefully handle any screen size worldwide. A commitment to QA and process improvement drives scalable results, producing long-term software assets with high ROI. Up and Running's work passes FDA & DEA audits, rolls up global treasury data, manages nuclear assets and railroads, delivers vaccines, and enables neuroscientists and researchers.

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