

Case Study



How ClearPathGPS Asset Tracking Saved Merrell Brothers from a \$180,000 Theft

Company Profile



Merrell Bros., Inc. is a nationwide biosolids management company helping agricultural operations, industries and municipalities to successfully manage and recycle biosolids.



Problems

Much of the company's operations involve bulk-hauling biosolids and other waste products for municipalities and agribusinesses. That means their drivers are often traveling to and from

large groves, farms, and undeveloped areas with no street address and little road signage. The company needed the ability to track its trucks and guide its drivers in real-time.

“Getting our drivers to the right spot used to mean talking them through it step-by-step over the phone: ‘Drive past 3 ditches, then turn right, and you’ll see a tree stump. Go left...’”
~ **Blake Merrell, Head of the Florida Division, Merrell Bros.**

Additionally, the Merrell Bros' fleet is comprised not only of trucks but also nearly 200 trailers, tankers, roll-off boxes, and other transportation units. Many

of these assets cost tens of thousands of dollars each, so the company needed to be able to monitor their whereabouts at all times, too.

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The Tracking Service That Failed

Prior to discovering ClearPathGPS, Merrell Bros. signed up with another GPS tracking service. That arrangement

created more problems than it solved. As Blake Merrell, who heads the company's Florida division, puts it:

“Trying to get help from our previous tracking company was like dealing with the cable provider. Our account rep was more hostile than helpful.”

The Solution

When they'd had enough of their previous tracking provider, Merrell Bros. researched the industry and found ClearPathGPS — whose solution had earned dozens of perfect 5-star customer reviews on the major software

review sites, like TrustPilot.

ClearPathGPS, Inc.

Reviews 100 • Excellent



4.8 ⓘ

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The Thwarted Theft

When Merrell Bros. closed up shop for a Thanksgiving weekend, the company left some of its trailers in staging positions at groves and farms, where they'd be loaded when business started up again on Monday. That was standard practice. And fortunately for the company, equipping these assets with ClearPathGPS trackers was now also standard practice.

At 5:00 am on a Monday: Blake got a call from one of his drivers, who told him there was no trailer at his job site.

With the driver still on the phone, Blake opened his ClearPathGPS app—and sure enough, the trailer was on the move, at least 100 miles from where it had been parked. In fact, when he checked the app, Blake found that two trailers had been taken from the site—each worth about \$90,000!

So, Blake called the sheriff in the county where the trucks were traveling at that moment. He even took screen shots of the ClearPathGPS maps showing the trailers' route and current location.

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Soon after that, the local police stopped both trailers at a red light and arrested the drivers. According to Blake Merrell, had the thieves succeeded, the results would have been highly disruptive.

“That was \$180,000 worth of assets we would’ve had to replace if those thieves had gotten away, not to mention the operational hassles we would’ve dealt with being delayed for our customers.”

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The Benefits

Merrell Bros. enjoys many additional benefits from the ClearPathGPS tracking solution. Just a few key examples Blake points out:

1. “It saves us so much time and back-and-forth communication.”

“In South Florida, the groves are huge,” Blake explains, “and getting our drivers to the right spot used to mean one of our employees had to talk a driver step by step through a grove, saying things like, ‘Drive past three ditches, then turn right, and you’ll see a tree stump. Go left...’”

“But now we’ve set up stationary, solar-powered ClearPathGPS trackers at these sites, so our drivers can just pull up the app and head straight there—without needing any guidance from us. That has saved us so many hours of our team’s time.”

2. “It’s helping us to better maintain our vehicles and even our trailers.”

“Another advantage of these trackers is that they help us keep track of which vehicles are due for maintenance,” Blake says. “I’ll get a message from ClearPathGPS saying that a truck is due for an oil change next week. Then, thanks to the Fleetio integration with ClearPathGPS, we’ll set an appointment for the service, and the system will automatically send that truck’s driver a text saying he’s scheduled for an oil change on this day next week, and here’s the address.”

“This even works for our trailers and

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other storage and transportation units. Those assets need maintenance, too, and so ClearPathGPS helps us track miles so we know when it's time to check a trailer for things like the health

of their tires, air lines, lights, that sort of thing. That's helping us get a better return on these assets."

"I can't tell you how much more quickly and cost-effectively this is letting us solve our vehicle issues!"

~ Blake Merrell, Head of the Florida Division, Merrell Bros.

3. "It even helps us more quickly repair our own vehicles."

Finally, Blake also uses the Clear-PathGPS system to direct Merrell Bros.' own mechanics to vehicles suffering some sort of trouble, so they can get those drivers back on the road quickly.

"We have our own mobile mechanics," Blake explains. "But in the past if a driver called us to say he was having trouble with his truck, I'd have figure out which mechanic was closest—and that was tricky all by itself because we're so spread out—and then guide him to the truck.

"But thanks to ClearPathGPS and the Fleetio integration, now when that driver calls me, I can see through the app where he is and which truck he's talking about. So, I just open an issue

in Fleetio, which alerts the appropriate mobile mechanic, and I step aside and let the mechanic and driver find each other and get the truck working again. I can't tell you how much more quickly and cost-effectively this is letting us solve our vehicle issues!"

"ClearPathGPS helps us track miles so we know when it's time to check a trailer for things like the health of their tires, air lines, lights, that sort of thing. That's helping us get a better return on these assets."

