

RFID News Roundup

Nashville sports fans use cashless payment; UPM Rafsec to build U.S. production plant; Loftware upgrades connector software; Psion Teklogix adds RFID to Workabout Pro; I.D. Systems Receives Patent for Car Rental System; TAGSYS Opens Hong Kong Office.

May 13, 2005—The following are news announcements made during the week of May 9.

Nashville Sports Fans Use Cashless Payment

Passage, a systems integrator based in Nashville, Tenn., has deployed a cashless payment system at Nashville's Greer Stadium. Spectators of the Nashville Sounds minor league baseball team, which play at the stadium, began using this payment system this week. The system was developed by Precision Dynamics Corp. (PDC) of San Fernando, Calif., and combines an age verification system with a cashless payment system. Fans over the age of 21 arriving at the stadium can pick up, upon providing valid identification, a wristband that says "Age 21 Verified." If the patron also wants to use the wristband to make payments, he or she will be given a wristband with an embedded RFID tag (fans who opt out of the payment system get a wristband without an RFID tag). Underage patrons can pick up a wristband with the payments option but without the printed age verification. At kiosks in the stadium, patrons use a credit card, a debit card or cash to load value onto their wristband's RFID tag. At concession stalls employees use handheld computers to process transactions with the wristbands. First, they read the tag to establish the dollar value it holds. Then a menu appears on the screen, and the employee selects the patron's order before reading the tag a second time to complete the transaction. According to Passage president Terry Hudson, walking concessionaires might begin carrying the pocket PCs, as well, so that patrons can use the wristband payment system without walking to a concession stand. PDC's RFID-enabled wristband contains a low frequency 13.56 MHz RFID tag. The tag has a read range of 2 to 4 inches and is ISO-15963 compliant.

UPM Rafsec to Build U.S. Production Plant

UPM Rafsec, the Finnish designer and manufacturer of RFID inlays, is building a new RFID tag production plant in Fletcher, N.C. The new facility, due to be operational in the final quarter of this year, is part of a \$24 million (19 million euro) investment program which, when fully implemented, will enable an annual capacity of 1 billion RFID tags. The new U.S. plant will specialize in the production of high-quality UHF (ultrahigh frequency) tags. It is being built in the vicinity of a pressure-sensitive label stock production facility run by label stock company Raflatac. Raflatac and UPM Rafsec are owned by the UPM Group, a collection of businesses focused on magazine papers, newsprint, fine and specialty papers, converting materials and wood products. UPM Group is based in Helsinki, Finland.

Loftware Upgrades Connector Software

Loftware, a bar code and RFID label printing-encoding solutions provider based in York, Maine, has released version 2.5 of its Loftware Connector software for bar code and RFID label printing-encoding. Loftware Connector links enterprise applications with the Loftware Print Server (LPS). The Loftware products can be used with a long list of label printers and printer-encoders, including those made by Avery, Datamax, IBM, Intermec, Paxar, Printronix and Zebra. Loftware Connector receives label requests for host applications as device-independent XML streams, applies filter and decision logic and passes the requests to the LPS across a

high-speed TCP/IP socket. LPS queues the requests for delivery to printers. Version 2.5 includes the Connector Console, a graphical user interface that allows user to manage all of the bar code and RFID label printer-encoders throughout a facility or across different locations in an enterprise. Version 2.5, which costs \$9,995 for the software per database used, also offers direct connectivity with any DB2 or Sequel-based application, in addition to applications based in Java. The LPS acts as a middleware layer, managing and filtering data being sent to different RFID label printers-encoders for labels going to different locations, all from a central database. By the end of the year, Loftware says LPS will also be able to filter data from RFID readers.

Psion Teklogix Adds RFID to Workabout Pro

Psion Teklogix, a Canadian company that makes rugged mobile computing devices, including handheld RFID readers, has made a number of enhancements to its Workabout Pro handheld computer. The device now includes a 13.56 MHz RFID reader, as well as scanners for 1-D or 2-D bar codes. Users can now use the Workabout Pro to connect to a wireless LAN through either an 802.11b link (via a CompactFlash card) or GSM/GPRS (via an expansion interface). Also, the device can run the Windows Mobile operating system as an alternative platform to Windows CE .NET. The new upgraded devices are available now, but pricing was not released.

I.D. Systems Receives Patent for Car Rental System

I.D. Systems a Hackensack, N.J.-based provider of wireless RFID-based asset tracking and management solutions, has been awarded a United States patent for an automated wireless vehicle rental and return system designed for car rental agencies. The system uses RFID transponders to automatically check out vehicles as they leave a car rental property. When the vehicle is brought back to the rental property, the system reads the RFID tag that identifies that car and its renter, and it also reads tags linked to sensors that track the car's mileage and fuel level at the time of return. The patent also includes a system that allows customers to make payments for the rentals from inside the vehicle. I.D. Systems says the patented system was designed to enhance the car rental experience for consumers and increase security, reduce operational costs and increase revenue for car rental companies. The company expects the patent to help it further penetrate the market for wireless rental-fleet management technology.

TAGSYS Opens Hong Kong Office

TAGSYS, an RFID systems developer specializing in item-level tracking and authentication, has opened a sales and technical support office in Hong Kong in order to meet the growing demand for RFID implementation in the northern Asian market. The company, which is headquartered in France and has a U.S. office in Doylestown, Pa., says the new Hong Kong office will strengthen its overall presence in the Asia-Pacific region, where it has also operated a Singapore office for the past three years. TAGSYS is providing item-level tagging for a number of libraries in Asia and says the region has growing markets for item-level RFID tagging of pharmaceutical products and fashion apparel.

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