

RFID News Roundup

Philippines drafts rules for RFID frequency, power use; SAMSys introduces Gen 2 portal reader package; research projects \$2.3 billion market for RFID in health care, pharma; IP Smart Packaging is now ASURYS; Australian chipmaker receives government grant; German retailer Rewe testing RFID.

Dec. 2, 2005—The following are news announcements made during the week of Nov. 28.

Philippines Drafts Rules for RFID Frequency, Power Use

The National Telecommunications Commission of the Philippines (NTC) has issued draft rules surrounding the use of RFID devices. Such rules would allow RFID devices to be used within the following frequency bands: 13.553 to 13.567 MHz, 918 to 920 MHz and 2.446 to 2.454 GHz. In addition, the proposed regulations state, the "operation of RFIDs shall be on an unprotected and noninterference basis, i.e., operators cannot claim protection against interference and are not permitted to cause harmful interference to other radio services to which the bands are also allocated." Furthermore, the regs mandate, the use of RFID systems "shall not constrain the operation of other radio services to which the band is also allocated." The NTC says the maximum effective power allowed for reading RFID tags would be 0.5 watt. According to an NTC memorandum detailing the regulations, the commission created the regulations in response to inquiries regarding the technology, made by parties within and outside the Philippines. The NTC is inviting all affected and interested parties to attend a public hearing on the proposed rules, to be held at its headquarters in Quezon City on Dec. 13.

SAMSys Introduces Gen 2 Portal Reader Package

SAMSys Technologies has introduced the SAMSys RFID Portal Express System, which packages the SAMSys MP9320 v2.8 interrogator (reader) with components required to establish a portal RFID interrogator system. This system can be used to identify tagged assets, pallets and cases of goods automatically that are being received into or shipped from warehouses. The MP9320 v2.8 identifies EPC Class 1 Gen 2 tags, as well as those compliant with EPC Class 0, Class 1, ISO 18000-6A, ISO 18000-6B and Philips UCODE 1.19 protocols. Included with the reader are four SAMSys circular direction HI483-32 antennas, cables, a light stack to provide feedback regarding the success or failure of tag reads and a motion sensor that can be used to trigger the interrogator to search for tags. Also included are a portal frame made of 2-inch-thick tubular steel that is resistant to damage from material-handling equipment, and a self-standing or floor-mount base for temporary or permanent installation. The package will be available this month. Ron Pinkus, SAMSys' vice president of marketing, says pricing information is not yet being released.

Research Projects \$2.3 Billion Market for RFID in Health Care, Pharma

A new report by research and consulting company Frost & Sullivan says that in 2004, global RFID in the health-care and pharmaceutical markets earned \$370 million in revenue. The firm's research indicates the size of this market could reach \$2,318.8 million by 2011. The report segments the market by applications (medical-equipment tracking, patient tracking and drug tracking), as well as by geographic regions (North America, Asia Pacific and EMEA—Europe, the Middle East and Africa). With a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 31.3 percent, the report says, the North American sector is the strongest regional driver of the overall market. The drug-tracking applications market is expected to have the strongest CAGR, approximately

32.8 percent, during the forecast period, while the medical-equipment tracking applications market will reportedly have a CAGR of 28.9 percent during the same period. The full report is available as part of a report subscription service from Frost & Sullivan. Subscription prices vary.

IP Smart Packaging Is Now ASURYS

International Paper's Smart Packaging business, established in 1999 to develop and deploy RFID/EPC-enabled solutions for mandate compliance solutions and warehouse and transportation tracking systems, has changed its name to ASURYS. IP's marketing communications and publicity specialist, Renee Shaw, says the company's motivation behind the name change is linked to its desire to project all its core competencies, which extend beyond "just putting tags on packages." The firm also offers solutions to help users of RFID increase supply chain visibility, efficiency and security. In addition, ASURYS offers hardware packages combining RFID interrogator systems with forklifts and other material handling equipment. The word "ASURYS" is not an acronym and was derived from the word "assurance," Shaw says. Under the new name, the company will reportedly continue to offer the same services and product offerings.

Chipmaker Receives Government Grant

Integrated-circuit developer G2 Microsystems says it has received a \$1.9 million grant from the Australian government to support the firm's research and development of Wi-Fi RFID technology. G2 is developing SmarTag, an active 2.4 GHz tag that is being designed for systems using Wi-Fi (2.4 GHz) RFID hardware and location software to track people or assets. The company expects SmarTag, which can be combined with other sensors, to be commercially available later this year or early next year. The Australian government's Industry Research and Development Board, which supports commercially focused research and development (R&D) projects conducted in Australia, made the grant. While G2 has its corporate headquarters in Oakland, Calif., it says its R&D operations are Australian-based. In August, the firm announced funding from the United Parcel Service's Strategic Enterprise Fund, as well as two Australian investment capital firms (see UPS Investment Arm Funds RFID Chipmaker).

German Retailer Rewe Testing RFID

The German retailer Rewe is testing the use of RFID technology in its supply chain, according to Rafsec, the Finnish RFID manufacturer supplying RFID labels for the project. The trial, which involves applying EPC Class 1 Gen 2 smart labels to pallets of goods, is being conducted at Rewe's Norderstedt distribution center in Germany. Rafsec says up to 30 suppliers will take part in the pilot's first phase, and that it will make these Gen 2 labels available to participants at a reduced price of 23 euro cents each. Rafsec first announced its Gen 2 inlays in June (see Rafsec Set to Produce Gen 2 Inlays).

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