

# RFID News Roundup

TI buys Chipcon for \$200 million; Cognio releases RFID spectrum analysis tool; Oakton College building RFID lab, curriculum; Stratum and Meridian collaborate; BlueStar distributing Gen 2-compliant hardware.

Dec. 23, 2005—The following are news announcements made during the week of Dec. 19.

## **TI Buys Chipcon for \$200 Million**

Semiconductor maker Texas Instruments (TI) says it will acquire Chipcon for approximately \$200 million. The Oslo, Norway-based company makes short-range, low-power integrated circuits for radio frequency transceivers, as well as system-on-chip devices. The transaction is expected to be completed in January. Chipcon's products comply with the Zigbee specification for wireless monitoring and control systems. TI says the acquisition will help it expand its RF products, currently comprised of passive RFID tags and integrated circuits for RFID tags, to include RF products for consumer, home and building automation applications, as well. Through the acquisition, Chipcon will become a wholly owned subsidiary of TI and will continue to operate from its Oslo headquarters. The company's other facilities include a software design center in San Diego, California and sales offices in New Hampshire, Germany, Hong Kong and Tokyo. Chipcon employs approximately 120 people.

## **Cognio Releases RFID Spectrum Analysis Tool**

Cognio, a Germantown, Md., provider of spectrum analysis tools for wireless networks, has added an RFID version of its Spectrum Expert spectrum analysis solution. This updated version includes a frequency analyzer in a PC card form factor, with software enabling users to scan the RF activity within an area and plot out the sources of the RF energy within the area scanned. The Cognio software compares a library of waveforms with those waveforms the spectrum analyzer senses, then identifies the likely source of the energy. The system was designed to help end users and vendors of RFID products and services troubleshoot interference problems on the ISM unlicensed bands used for RFID. By interpreting a waveform, for example, the system might identify a cordless phone causing interference, as well as help the user locate the mobile phone within a facility. According to Cognio, its RFID spectrum analysis solution can also be used to determine whether problems with tag readability are due to persistent RFID interference within a facility, or if they are more likely due to faulty RFID tags. Spectrum Expert for RFID is expected to ship at the end of January with a list price of \$4,995.

## **Oakton College Building RFID Lab, Curriculum**

Oakton Community College is building an RFID laboratory at its Skokie, Ill., campus. The lab is being constructed in tandem with the development of an RFID curriculum for Oakton students. Both are scheduled to be completed in time for the fall 2006 semester. Oakton College is working with a number of RFID vendors that are contributing hardware, software and integration services to the lab. Stratum Global, an RFID middleware provider based in Littleton, Colo., will provide its TagNet RFID middleware to the project. Students will use this middleware to manage RFID interrogators (readers) and printer-encoders, commission data to RFID tags, verify tag reads and establish business rules on how to process tag data. William Frick & Co., a Libertyville, Ill., firm that provides custom printing solutions, will offer the lab various types of RFID smart labels. The firm will assist Oakton in developing curriculum materials that address how various RFID

tags function in different environments and on different materials. And Everett, Wash.-based Intermec will provide RFID hardware to the lab, including its IF5 fixed interrogators, IP3 portable readers and antennas. Students will use the hardware to establish interrogation zones, learn about different hardware configurations and discover how these can impact read rates. Oakton says it also plans to roll out an RFID certificate program for those who want to learn about RFID technology for the purpose of career advancement.

### **Stratum and Meridian Collaborate**

Stratum Global, an RFID middleware provider and systems integrator based in Littleton, Colo., has announced a partnership with Meridian IT, resellers of hardware and software to the information technology industry, located in Deerfield, Ill. Under the terms of this partnership, Meridian IT will resell Stratum Global's TagNet RFID device and tag data management software. Meridian IT will market TagNet to companies looking to track goods throughout the supply chain. The two companies are also developing an RFID demonstration center to provide clients hands-on access to hardware, tags and software, as well as video tutorials depicting Stratum Global TagNet implementations. Earlier this month, Stratum Global announced upgrades and enhancements to its TagNet line, including support for readers integrated into forklifts and a Spanish-language version of the software.

### **BlueStar Distributing Gen 2-Compliant Hardware**

BlueStar, a Florence, Ky., distributor of RFID and other automatic identification devices, as well as point-of-sale systems, says it is now selling the Datamax I-Class RFID printer-encoder. This device uses the SAMSys MP9311 reader module, capable of encoding smart labels with inlays compliant with EPC UHF Gen 1 Gen 1 protocols for Class 0, 0+ and 1, as well as the EPC UHF Gen 2 Class 1 standard. BlueStar says it is also distributing the SAMSys MP9320 RFID interrogator, which reads UHF EPC-compliant tags, including EPC Gen 1 Class 0, 0+ and 1, and EPC Gen 2 Class 1.

Copyright ©2005 RFID Journal, Inc. All Rights Reserved