

# RFID News Roundup

Confidex intros new RFID tags for automotive industry; Reva Systems announces upgrades; IPICO inks Chinese electronic toll contract; BJ's, Barclays team up on RFID-enabled credit card; University of Maryland offers free RFID assessments.

Aug. 24, 2007—The following are news announcements made during the week of Aug. 20.

## **Confidex Intros New RFID Tags for Automotive Industry**

Finnish tag maker Confidex announced two new UHF EPC Gen 2 tags, the Confidex Corona and the Confidex Cruiser, designed to withstand chemical baths, painting, cleansing, very high temperatures and other physical stresses typically found in automotive manufacturing. The Confidex Corona tag, for example, was built to perform in industrial electrophoretic painting processes. The Confidex Cruiser is designed as a label that can be applied to the inside of a tire during manufacturing and withstand the high heat and pressure required during the curing process. The new RFID tags have been undergoing customer trials with European automotive manufacturers for several months, according to Confidex. The company, headquartered in Tampere, Finland, unveiled its first RFID product in early 2006 (see Confidex Launches Reusable Gen 2 Tag.)

## **Reva Systems Announces Upgrades**

Reva Systems, a provider of RFID hardware infrastructure solutions, is now offering a new version of its Tag Acquisition Processor (TAP) and accompanying Management Console products. A TAP server links a network of readers into the user's local area network (LAN). It also filters and aggregates tag reads before sending the tag data to enterprise software. Reva's TAP 2.0 includes plug-and-play support for more RFID readers, printers and other devices than previous versions. It also offers an improved graphical user interface and enhanced integration capabilities for IBM, Microsoft and SAP applications. The new version has been tested and validated at Metro Group's retail and distribution environments and Hewlett-Packard's manufacturing and distribution operations, according to Reva.

## **IPICO Inks Chinese Electronic Toll Contract**

Canadian tag maker IPICO says it has signed an exclusive distribution agreement with China Academy of Transportation Sciences (CNATS) to sell its Electronic Vehicle Toll and Management solution in China. IPICO's system leverages passive UHF RFID to automatically identify vehicles for electronic toll collection, electronic vehicle identification (EVI), and traffic management. Under terms of the agreement, CNATS must spend a minimum of RMB 24 million (approximately US\$3.2 million) on IPICO's tags, readers and solution components during the next three years. IPICO began negotiating the deal about two years ago, according to Gordon Westwater, president of IPICO. "There will be 80,000 kilometers of highways completed in China by 2010, and by 2020 there will be 150,000 kilometers of highway," he says. "And vehicle growth in China is growing tremendously. Electronic vehicle identification is going to be in high demand." According to IPICO, transportation authorities in South Africa, Brazil, Mexico, Saudi Arabia and other countries have announced nationwide initiatives to deploy RFID-based systems, including electronic toll collection, to monitor the movement of all vehicles on public roads.

## **BJ's, Barclays Team Up on RFID-enabled Credit Card**

Retailer BJ's Wholesale Club has partnered with financial services provider Barclays on a new credit card that features Visa's payWave contactless-payment technology. A consumer can pay for purchases with Visa payWave by waving the card, which contains an RFID inlays, within 2 inches of a secure card reader. The reader lights up and beeps to inform the user that the transaction is being processed through Visa's secure network. Currently more than 32,000 retailers in the United States accept Visa payWave, according to the company. In addition to streamlined check out at BJ's stores using the contactless payment feature, BJ's Visa Card holders can receive rewards, such as two points for every dollar spent on eligible BJ's purchases, one point for every dollar spent on all other purchases, 1,000 bonus points after their initial purchase, and a \$20 BJ's Bucks check sent with monthly statements for every 2,000 points accumulated. The new contactless card is the first one issued by Barclays in the United States.

### **University of Maryland Offers Free RFID Assessments**

The Maryland Technology Extension Service (MTES), a University of Maryland program that provides technical and business assistance to companies operating in the state, is now offering free RFID assessment services. The on-site assessments start with a review of a company's productivity or security-related issues. MTES will then consider and study RFID systems that might address those issues, and write up and present to the company a report that includes potential costs and return on investment. MTES' affiliation with the university prevents bias towards any RFID provider's hardware, according to the organization. "MTES' job is to look at each company individually and determine if RFID offers a viable solution to a company's business needs," said Paul Vinikoor, MTES manager and certified RFID technologist, in a statement announcing the assessment service. The free, on-site RFID assessments are available to a limited number of companies. To sign up for one, contact Vinikoor at 301-405-7685 or paulv@umd.edu.

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