

Illinois Water Resort Becomes RFID-Activated

Guests at the resort, which opens next year, will use RFID wristbands to do just about everything, including entering rooms, accessing lockers, buying food and arcade tokens, and even taking pictures.

By Mary Catherine O'Connor

Nov. 16, 2007—[KeyLime Cove Water Resort](#) is an indoor, year-round water-park vacation resort being built in Gurnee, Ill. When the resort opens next year, guests won't need to worry about wet wallets or lost keys putting a damper on their vacation—it plans to issue RFID-enabled wristbands that they can use to make purchases at the resort, and also as electronic keys to access guestrooms.

Such applications are becoming increasingly common at large resorts, especially those catering to families. In addition to not having to carry wallets and purses, many parents appreciate the ability to outfit children with wristbands they can use to buy snacks (see [Two Ohio Water Parks Become RFID-Enabled](#)). KeyLime Cove, however, wants to employ its wristbands for other applications as well, such as tracking action photos taken on the resort's water rides, or using the bracelets to purchase tokens in its arcade.

To that end, KeyLime Cove has selected [Precision Dynamics Corp. \(PDC\)](#), a provider of cashless-payment and identification systems, as its lead supplier and consultant in implementing these applications. PDC will provide the resort with its Smart Band RFID system, consisting of a wristband containing a passive ISO 15693-compliant, high-frequency (HF) 13.56 MHz inlay, along with a kiosk guests can use to load value onto an account associated with their wristbands. The company will also provide and maintain a back-end database of unique identifiers encoded to the inlays, along with the software used to authenticate each wristband transaction. Parents will be able to set up and load value to sub-accounts, linked to the unique IDs encoded to the wristbands issued to their children.

KeyLime Cove believes the wristband system will provide added convenience to its guests, and is working to enable every financial transaction in the resort—from paying for locker access to purchasing a soda from a vending machine or buying arcade tokens—through the wristband system. According to PDC, the adoption of RFID wristband payment systems often increases spending inside a resort.

Guests needn't worry about the security of their financial data or personal identity, says Tom Foster, regional sales manager for PDC's leisure and entertainment segment, because all such data will be secured. The RFID inlay within the wristband (issued to each guest upon checking into the hotel) will be encoded with only a unique identifier. That number will be encrypted, he assures, so that even if someone were to get close enough to a guest to use a handheld interrogator to read a wristband's inlay, the device would access only an encrypted number. According to Foster, all financial and personal data stored in the back-end databases will also be encrypted.

Additionally, PDC is working with a number of third parties to deploy the resort's various plans for the wristbands. For instance, it is partnering with [Micros Systems](#) to install RFID readers at point-of-sale stations installed throughout the resort.

In addition, PDC is working with cStar Technologies to provide readers that will be installed in the resort's vending machines. This will enable visitors to purchase refreshments and snacks by waving their wristbands in front of the interrogators, which will then read the unique ID of each wristband and transmit it back to PDC software to post each transaction.

Salto Systems, meanwhile, is providing guestroom door locks with an integrated RFID reader that will allow the wristbands to be used as electronic keys. Guests will be able to utilize the wristbands to purchase access to lockers secured by Smarte Carte locks, and Ideal Software Systems will be provide RFID readers for the arcade token machines, as well as software to post token purchases to each guest's prefunded account.

RELATED_ARTICLES To offer visitors a method of managing and purchasing vacation photos, PDC is working with Jackson Digital Imaging, a photography company specializing in amusement parks, to install an RFID-based photo-tracking system. "There will be readers at the top of certain waterslides or other attractions in the park," Foster explains. "So if a guest wants to have their photo taken during that ride, they'll just hold their wristband up to the reader as they enter the ride. Then, cameras mounted along the ride will take their picture during the ride. At then end of the day, the guests will go up to a sales booth, swipe the wristband again, and all of the photos taken of them throughout the days will appear on a screen, and they can select which ones they'd like to purchase."

Foster says Jackson Digital Imaging will manage the timing of the cameras to ensure that images captured are associated with the correct guest wristbands, and that these images are gathered into a single file and shown to the appropriate visitors at the booth.

Copyright ©2005 RFID Journal, Inc. All Rights Reserved