

RFID News Roundup

Savi upgrades RFID platform and application software; two inlay companies intro new products for tracking magnetic storage; IDS Microchip unleashes low-cost temperature-sensing chip; Alanco to outfit additional Missouri corrections facilities with RFID; Alliance Tech provides sports events conference with RFID solution; I.D. Systems, Zetes team up on RFID-enabled vehicle management.

May 1, 2008—The following are news announcements made during the past week.

Savi Upgrades RFID Platform and Application Software

Savi Technology, a wholly owned subsidiary of Lockheed Martin, has announced SmartChain 5.0, a new version of its software suite, which includes the SmartChain Site Manager for configuring and managing RFID hardware; the SmartChain Enterprise Platform for network management, as well as integration among multiple systems; and several SmartChain applications. SmartChain 5.0 leverages a services-oriented architecture (SOA), which Savi says makes it easier to integrate the SmartChain software with other enterprise systems and applications a company may have. SOA is a computer systems framework that leverages XML and other Web standards to enable multiple applications to exchange data and share services. The most recent version also incorporates a new alert framework so businesses can create more complex business rules that can trigger alerts. These automated alerts can be transmitted to end users via the Internet, a cell phone or a personal digital assistant (PDA). In addition, SmartChain 5.0 includes enhanced reporting views enabling in-depth analysis using third-party reporting software. The upgrade is available now. Savi plans to release upgrade kits to help existing SmartChain customers migrate to the SmartChain 5.0 platform, according to Savi spokesman Mark Nelson.

Two Inlay Companies Intro New Products for Tracking Magnetic Storage

KSW Microtec, an RFID component manufacturer in Dresden, Germany, and Mu-Gahat, a Sunnyvale, Calif., developer of custom RFID inlays, have each unveiled new EPC Class 1 Gen 2 RFID inlays designed specifically for tracking backup magnetic tape cartridges. KSW Microtec's new passive ultrahigh-frequency (UHF) transponder for magnetic tape cartridges complies with the EPC Class 1 Gen 2 specification and employs Ucode G2XM ICs from NXP Semiconductors. According to the company, the transponder has 512 bits of user-programmable memory and is designed to provide a 10-year lifespan once converted into a media bar-code label. Mu-Gahat's new TC10 202 inlay can be encoded with a 96-bit Electronic Product Code (EPC) and has 64 bits of user read-write memory. The inlay has been engineered to work with tape cartridges, which—because they contain metal and metallic oxides—can interfere with RF waves and detune conventional inlays, according to Mu-Gahat, whose name comes from the Native American Washoe tribal word for "bridge." The TC10 202 inlay has a read range of over 3 feet (when using a handheld interrogator) and comes with an embedded Impinj RFID chip with secure memory designed to protect single or multiple cartridges that are being moved or carried outside of a tape library by preventing cloning and counterfeiting. The Mu-Gahat inlay is intended for multiple brands and models of tape cartridges, including IBM's 3590, 3592 and 3480; Ultrium's LTO Gen4; and compatible units. Samples may be provided for testing on additional brands and models, such as Imation, StorageTek and Sun, prior to purchase.

IDS Microchip Unleashes Low-Cost Temperature-Sensing Chip

RFID semiconductor company IDS Microchip, based in Wollerau, Switzerland, has unveiled a new

passive/semi-passive temperature-sensing RFID chip that it claims is priced 10 times less than similar existing chips. According to IDS Microchip, the IDS-SL13A is designed to automatically track, monitor, time-stamp and record information about goods—from medical supplies and pharmaceuticals to bags of bananas—as they move throughout the supply chain or cold chain. The new chip, the company says, is compliant with the ISO 15693 RFID standard and can be packaged in labels smaller than a credit card and as thin and flexible as plastic wrap. It is optimized for single-cell, battery-powered smart labels with sensor functionality; an eco-friendly battery (1.5 or 3 volts) supports the integrated real-time clock and EEPROM memory to allow on-chip logging of data from the internal temperature sensor, as well as from other external sensors. The chip measures temperature with 0.5 degree Celsius (0.9 degree Fahrenheit) accuracy, which it logs against real time, and includes a serial peripheral interface (SPI) port to connect to external circuitry for display. The IDS-SL13A chip can also operate in passive mode without battery power and the real-time clock function—an approach intended for applications in which an interrogator initiates the logging and the data is stored in the reader, using an analog-to-digital converter. The chip controls whether it takes data from internal or external sensors, or both. IDS-SL13A chips are available now for sampling and are expected to be in full production in the third quarter of this year. Pricing will vary, depending on volume, but the chips are slated to cost slightly less than €1 (\$1.54) apiece in volumes of 100,000.

Alanco to Outfit Additional Missouri Corrections Facilities With RFID

The Missouri Department of Corrections (MDOC) has awarded a contract valued at up to \$750,000 to Alanco Technologies' Alanco/TSI PRISM subsidiary, a Scottsdale, Ariz., manufacturer of RFID tracking systems for the corrections industry. The contract calls for Alanco/TSI PRISM to provide its RFID systems for up to an additional five probation/parole early-release facilities (the MDOC previously purchased two TSI PRISM systems in 2006, which have been operational in similar facilities located in Farmington and St. Joseph). Two new contract installations, valued at approximately \$300,000, will commence immediately at facilities in Hannibal and Kennett, with additional sites to be scheduled in Kansas City, Fulton and Poplar Bluff. The Missouri early-release facilities, which house up to 50 inmates each, are used to re-integrate inmates from a prison environment back into society—or, in certain cases, to serve as an alternative to a state prison sentence—and inmates are allowed to leave during the day for work, then return at specified times. The TSI PRISM system will be utilized to electronically track and manage inmate movement to, from and within the facilities, according to Alanco/TSI PRISM.

Alliance Tech Provides Sports Events Conference With RFID Solution

Alliance Tech, an Austin, Texas, provider of event-tracking and management solutions, has announced that its RFID-enabled Attendance Reporter application was used to help track conference goers attending the National Association of Sports Commissions' 2008 NASC Sports Events Symposium, held recently in Omaha, Neb. NASC was founded in 1992 to provide opportunities to discuss industry issues, foster best practices, raise the level of professionalism and promote the value of amateur sports. Attendance Reporter is designed to capture, track and analyze the traffic patterns of conference attendees, enabling NASC to better understand how the crowd interacts with the conference, based on sessions they attend and their duration in each session. Using the tracking solution, NASC says it will be able to automate its process for tracking its members' continuing education. According to NASC executives, the organization previously had no way to determine which attendee participated in which sessions. With the automated solution from Alliance Tech, NASC executive director Don Schumacher said in a statement, the association can now more accurately track session attendance and grant credits.

I.D. Systems, Zetes Team Up on RFID-enabled Vehicle Management

I.D. Systems, a Hackensack, N.J., supplier of RFID systems for tracking industrial vehicles, and auto-ID technology provider Zetes Industries, based in Brussels, Belgium, have announced a partnership that will target the European market. Under the terms of the agreement, Zetes will market I.D. Systems' products and services throughout Europe. I.D. Systems' portfolio includes its RFID-based Wireless Asset Net system, designed to help control, track and manage material-handling vehicles, as well as the individuals who operate

them. I.D. Systems' products will be marketed alongside Zetes' lineup of bar-code, voice-recognition, RFID, smart-card and biometrics products. I.D. Systems expects the partnership with Zetes—which it says employs over 700 people in 12 countries—to generate significant new revenue opportunities in Europe. I.D. Systems' executives say this is one of the key elements of the company's corporate growth strategy.

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