

GainSpan, Ekahau team up to create location-aware Wi-Fi sensor net; Omni-ID intros service bureau designed to simplify deployments; Chicago Trump Tower to get RFID system for parking garages; ClearCount Medical Solutions closes Series A financing round; Sirit's UHF reader included as part of DOD RFID contract.

Oct. 23, 2008—The following are news announcements made during the past week.

GainSpan, Ekahau Team Up to Create Location-aware Wi-Fi Sensor Net

Wi-Fi chipmaker [GainSpan](#) and Wi-Fi-based real-time location system (RTLS) vendor [Ekahau](#) have partnered to produce a low-power, location-aware Wi-Fi sensor-network solution. Under the partnership agreement, GainSpan has integrated the Ekahau Location Protocol (ELP) into its GainSpan Embedded Software, which runs on the GainSpan GS1010 ultralow-power SOC (System-On-a-Chip). The ELP employs the 802.11-based air-interface protocol, allowing the GS1010-based Wi-Fi sensor nodes and location tags to communicate with standard Wi-Fi access points, and to transmit data to the Ekahau Positioning Engine (EPE) software. EPE analyzes a number of factors, including tag signal strength, to determine an object's location. GainSpan Embedded Software leverages Wi-Fi and 802.11b/g networks to provide the communication backbone for their sensor networks. As part of the agreement, Ekahau will license to GainSpan customers the EPE software and Ekahau Vision application, a Web-based visual interface enabling enterprise users of Ekahau's RTLS to automatically monitor, in real time, the location of tagged assets and employees. Unveiled in March, the interface is designed to reduce users' training requirements (see [Ekahau Announces Web-Based Interface for Real-Time Asset Tracking](#)). GainSpan and Ekahau have already begun actively marketing the combined solution to OEMs and channel partners worldwide, the companies indicate.

Omni-ID Intros Service Bureau Designed to Simplify Deployments

Tag maker [Omni-ID](#) has launched a new service aimed at simplifying the deployment process of its Omni-ID RFID tags, including its Omni-ID Prox tags, which comply with the EPC Gen 2 standard and, at 35 millimeters by 10 millimeters by 4 millimeters (1.4 inches by 0.4 inch by 0.2 inch), are smaller than most metal-mount passive tags. The service presents end users and systems integrators with a range of commissioning options, and provides them with encoded RFID tags coupled with printed bar-coded labels. According to the company, this allows customers to integrate Omni-ID's RFID tags within legacy bar-code systems, and also offers a stepping-stone to RFID adoption across any industry. Omni-ID says it will grow to support additional options and services as required by the market. "We implemented the service bureau offerings in direct response to our customers' needs, and have already successfully provided the value-added service in a number of deployments," said Tom Pavela, Omni-ID's president and CEO, in a prepared statement. "We believe Omni-ID has reached a significant milestone toward simplifying the RFID integration process from a customer perspective."

Chicago Trump Tower to Get RFID System for Parking Garages

[Trump International Hotel and Tower Chicago](#), a high-rise commercial and residential complex currently under construction, will include an RFID-enabled parking system, according to [Skidata](#), an Austrian provider of access-management and ticketing solutions, and [TagMaster North America](#) a provider of

Automatic Vehicle Identification (AVI), transportation and logistics systems headquartered in Tacoma, Wash. The two companies report they have collaborated to create a parking system leveraging TagMaster's RFID system and Skidata's Parking and Revenue Control Systems (PARCS). TagMaster's 2.45 GHz semi-active tags utilize a proprietary transmission protocol to communicate with interrogators up to 10 meters (32 feet) away. PARCS is an application designed to provide management software for parking facilities, including control and administration of various entry and exit points, point-of-sale solutions for ticketing and payment, and system interfaces for integrating with customer-relationship management (CRM) software and other third-party systems. The integration between the two companies' products enables PARCS to be used to configure TagMaster readers. More than 500 tags are already in use, the companies note, with interrogators placed at Trump Tower's entrances and exits. [Automated Parking Technologies](#) (APT), located in Chicago, is heading up the parking system's installation at the Chicago Trump Tower, which is currently about 70 percent completed.

ClearCount Medical Solutions Closes Series A Financing Round

[ClearCount Medical Solutions](#), a Pittsburgh company focused on improving surgical safety, has announced the close of its \$4.1 million Series A financing round. The company says it plans to use the funds to accelerate its sales efforts and continue its product development. The round was led by [Draper Triangle Ventures](#), which provides funding for high-technology start-up companies in the Pennsylvania and Ohio regions. ClearCount Medical developed its SmartSponge system, designed to help prevent medical teams from inadvertently leaving sponges inside surgical patients. SmartSponge employs [Texas Instruments'](#) Tag-it HF-I tags, which operate at 13.56 MHz, support the ISO 15693 and 18000-3 standards, and have received clearance from the [U.S. Food and Drug Administration](#) (FDA) (see [RFID-enabled Surgical Sponges a Step Closer to OR](#)).

Sirit's UHF Reader Included as Part of DOD RFID Contract

[Sirit](#), a provider of ultra-high frequency (UHF) and high-frequency (HF) RFID products for a variety of applications, including product authentication and tracking, has announced its partnership with five of six companies awarded multiyear contracts by the [U.S. Department of Defense](#) (DOD). The contract calls for EPC Class 1 Gen 2 tags, fixed and handheld interrogators, and label printer-encoders (see [DOD Awards Passive RFID Contract to Six Vendors](#)). Sirit's EPC Gen 2 Infinity 510 reader will be supplied by systems integrators [CDO Technologies](#) and [ODIN Technologies](#), RFID logistics and supply chain solutions provider [Code Plus](#), RFID printer and label provider [Lowry Computer Products](#), and automated data collection and RFID provider [SYS-TEC](#) (the sixth company awarded the multiyear contract is systems integrator [Northrop Grumman Information Technology](#)). The six primary contractors were awarded what the Defense Department calls Passive Radio Frequency Identification (pRFID) Indefinite Delivery, Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contracts.