

The Pennsylvania park, operated by the Split Rock Resort and Golf Club, is using a Bartronics RFID-enabled system that guests can utilize to make purchases, open lockers and more.

By Beth Bacheldor

Apr. 20, 2009—Guests visiting the H20oohh! indoor water park at the [Split Rock Resort & Golf Club](#), located in the western region of Pennsylvania's Pocono Mountains, need not carry wallets, purses, credit cards or cash. Instead, they can use wristbands to enter the park, pay for food and store items in on-site lockers. The four-season resort is employing an RFID-enabled solution from [Bartronics America](#), a wholly owned subsidiary of [Bartronics](#).

The Proximities RFID system, originally developed by [Proximities Inc.](#) and acquired by Bartronics in February 2008, leverages the GO waterproof wristband, which has an embedded 13.56 MHz RFID chip compliant with the ISO 15693 standard. Split Rock first began using the system at its water park in October 2008, and now hands out between 9,000 and 10,000 RFID-enabled wristbands each month.

When guests pay for admission at the water park's front entrance, staff members attach a wristband to each visitor's wrist. The wristband's chip is encoded with a unique ID number associated with that guest's name and age, as well as either a credit card or a prepaid amount of cash that the individual can use to pay for food and beverages within the park. The chip can also be encoded with access-control data that will enable the guests to unlock and lock their lockers. This information will identify whether a guest has purchased a one-day or multiple-day ticket, along with the dates during which that ticket is valid. When a visitor purchases admission, an employee asks to take that individual's photo, which is then linked with the wristband's ID number.

The wristband includes a patented electronic mechanism that will disable the RFID chip if the band is cut and removed from its wearer's wrist. This, says Eduardo Unanue, Bartronics America's sales manager, is a security feature preventing anyone from transferring purchasing power and privileges associated with a particular wristband, such as services requiring guests to be of a certain age. "The tag's antenna goes all around the wrist," Unanue explains, "so if the wristband is cut, the tag is disabled."

Also included in the solution is GO SmarTTender, a Web-based application, hosted by Bartronics, that stores the tag numbers and associated guest information, in addition to processing tag reads and purchases. Customers, such as Split Rock, can log securely into the Web-based application via the GO System Management Console software that provides the user with a single, comprehensive view of all operations. With the GO System Management Console, users can also make real-time adjustments to venue operations, manage guest accounts and adjust venue pricing.

The Split Rock resort has two handheld computers that employees can utilize to scan wristbands as guests enter the water park, according to Sathish Gajaraju, Bartronics America's CTO. Not all guests' wristbands are scanned upon entrance to the park because employees also visually check if the visitors

are wearing wristbands, but the staff can also periodically check wristbands throughout the day to verify their validity. The handheld computers can display basic guest information, the type of pass (one-day or multi-day), whether a particular guest is at least 21 years, and a photo of that individual (if he or she had one taken).

If a guest has rented a locker, he or she can go to the locker area and place the wristband next to an RFID-enabled panel marked "place wristband here," and the corresponding locker will then pop open. At Split Rock's water park, Gajaraju says, there are approximately 30 to 40 lockers per panel.

At the water park's concession stands, Unanue says, Bartronics America integrated RFID interrogators with point-of-sale (POS) computers and Aloha, the park's POS system, provided by [Radiant Systems](#). "That's one of the biggest advantages we have," he states. "We can integrate into any point-of-sale or property management system."

Next week, according to Gajaraju, Bartronics America plans to introduce an upgraded version of its Proximities RFID system that will include a number of new features. In addition to scanning wristbands to check a guest's wristband, companies will be able to use the handheld computers as mobile POS systems so guests can make purchases and check the amount of cash they may have left in their accounts. Split Rock plans to begin using this new feature in early May, Gajaraju says.

Another new feature of the updated system will enable a company to better track its inventory. As hot dogs are sold at concession stands, for instance, the system will track those purchases and lower inventory counts (inventory levels must currently be input into the system manually). As inventory levels drop, GO SmartTender will automatically generate replenishment notices that companies can view upon logging into their GO System Management Console.

According to Unanue, the RFID-enabled system is ultimately intended to improve customer service. "One of the areas where our solution really adds value is that it eliminates lines that guests have to wait in," he says. "If you eliminate [paying with] cash or credit cards whenever someone wants to buy a drink or something to eat, the lines will move more smoothly." The system also boosts sales, he adds, because cashless systems often spur impulse purchases.

"Our main goal is to enhance the guest experience," Unanue states. "If we can do that, the guest will return, they'll tell all their friends, and they'll spend more."

Bartronics America will demonstrate its new Proximities RFID suite, version 3.6, in Booth 802 at [RFID Journal LIVE! 2009](#). The conference and exhibition is being held on Apr. 27-29 in Orlando, Fla.

Split Rock is not the first resort to issue RFID-enabled wristbands to its guests. For example, [Fort Rapids Indoor Waterpark](#), located in Columbus, Ohio, and [Great Wolf Lodge](#), in Mason, Ohio, have been using RFID systems to let guests pay for services and unlock hotel rooms (see [Two Ohio Water Parks Become RFID-Enabled](#)).

H20oohh! Water Park Offers Guests Cashless Convenience

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