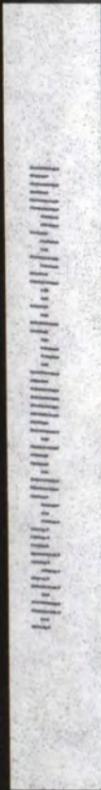


PERSPECTIVES

ON PUBLIC COMMUNICATION • OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE APCC®

October 2007
Volume 15
Number 10



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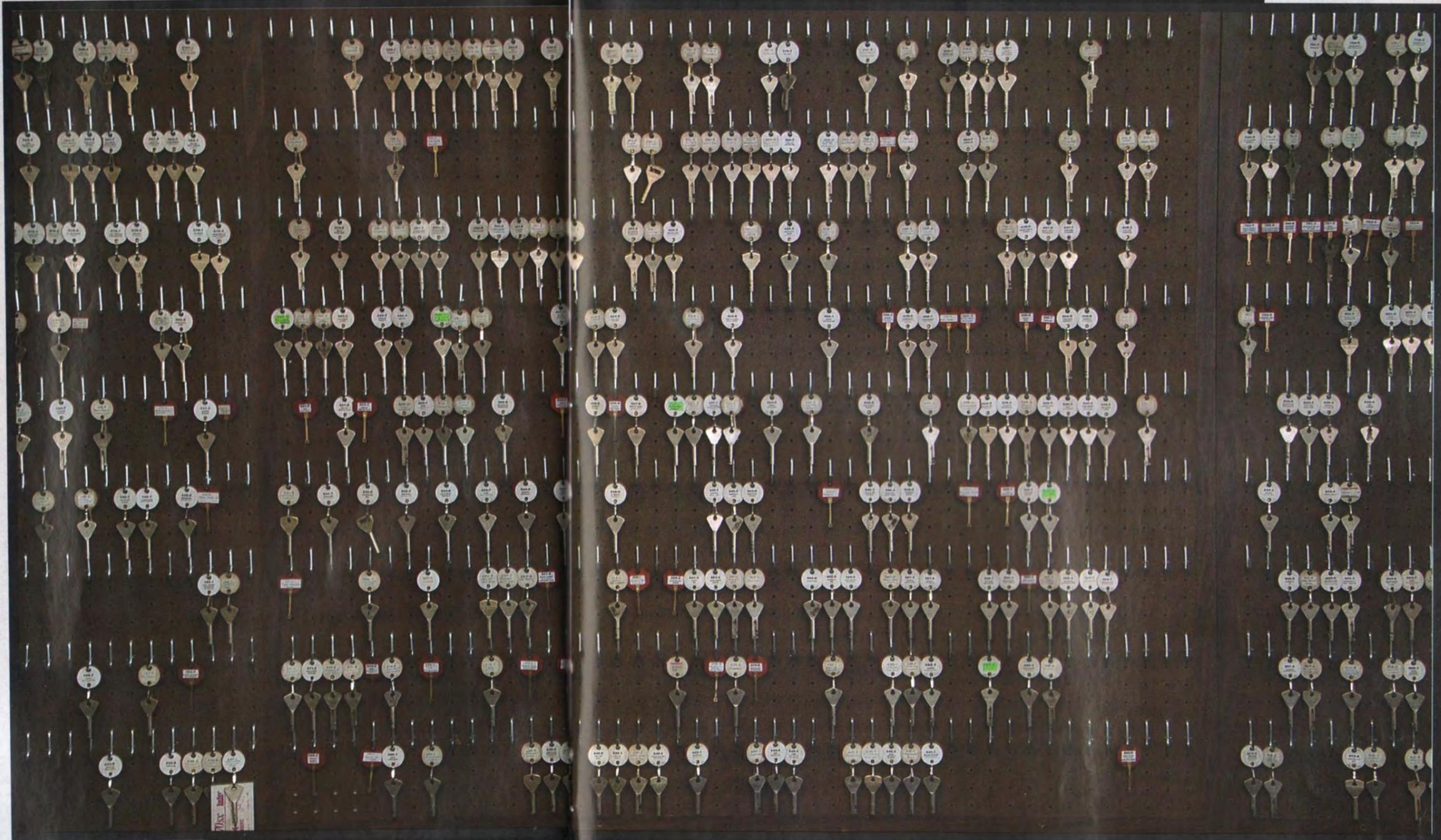
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editorial



the Bell companies to provide
refunds for their many years of
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ing. And each of you know
from your own experience that
it has been a terrific battle to
try and bring to justice the

literally hundreds of carriers responsible under the
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APCC has led and is leading the fight to ensure
you get all the DAC payments you are entitled to,
but it is an expensive and slow process, particularly
when confronting carriers that willfully and pur-
posely are thumbing their noses at their obligations.
Well, as chairman, as an APCC board member, and
as a brother operator, you can be assured of my total
commitment to seeing our fights for justice through
to the very end.

In closing, let me express publicly my deep appre-
ciation to George Niden, who did such a spectacular
job serving as APCC chairman for the last two years,
a period in the life of the payphone industry that
could not have seen more challenges. George, in
every way, was not only up to these challenges, he
provided a steadfast resolve in doing everything
possible to better our industry as a whole. It is a
big responsibility for me to follow in his footsteps.

I do want you all to know that I will be reaching
out in the coming months for your input and partici-
pation in defining and successfully implementing
APCC's regulatory program and goals for the future.
While I believe that the remainder of 2007 and into
2008 should see some positive outcomes in many of
our ongoing regulatory and litigation efforts, I am
very much looking forward to your help in making a
real success of all of our efforts at APCC to represent
each of you and the public communications industry
as a whole.

James Kelly III
Chairman

A big responsibility

As we begin to close on the second half of 2007, and
on my first few months as your chairman of the
APCC board of directors, I would like first to thank
each and every one of you for the service you are
continuing to provide to the American public. Not-
withstanding the tough circumstances each of us
face in making sure payphones remain available for
the public's use, I think we can take a measure of
pride in the fact that we are continuing to provide
a vital service to America. And make no mistake
about the fact that payphones are as important to
the public today as they ever have been.

Each and every American is truly benefited by the
availability of the public communications services
and facilities that you are responsible for. As we have
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municate. This is true whether the emergency is
caused by storms or blackouts or, tragically, because
of the terrorist acts of truly evil men, or even the
regular but never routine need to call for emergency
help when a child is hurt on the playground. In all
of these instances, our phones are the surest way of
getting help fast when it's needed most.

But our phones also play a critical role every day
in the lives of our fellow Americans, even where no
particular emergency exists. Most recent data sug-
gest that somewhere between 7 million and 8 million
American households have neither a home phone
nor a cell phone — no phone at all. This amounts to
6 to 7 percent of all American households and unfor-
tunately, for the poorer segments of our population,
the number of households without a phone can be
twice that overall amount. For these families, our
phones are truly a lifeline.

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FCC a critical proceeding to once and for all require

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- # of ANIs
- # of customers
- Make and model of phones
- Customer category breakdown

FEE-BASED LISTINGS: Routes for sale by those wishing anonymity in the early phases will provide:

- States represented by route
- # of ANIs
- # of customers
- Make and model of phones
- Customer category breakdown
- Cash flow analysis and projection

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- City and states of interest
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- Type of buyer; cash, payout, need owner financing, etc.

PREFERRED BUYERS: A Preferred Buyer will be so designated and forwarded to all PSPs in the Free Listing as well as to the Fee-Based Confidential list where qualified. A "preferred" buyer may also stay anonymous through an agreed upon stage of the negotiations, if desired. To be considered a "preferred" buyer you'll need to provide:

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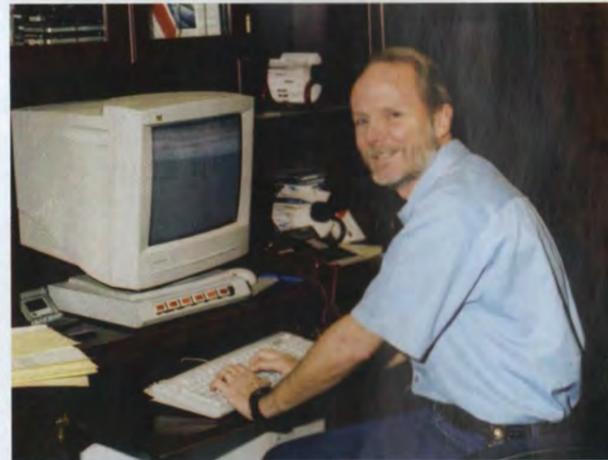


by Stacey L. Bell

The heart of the matter



Troy Lee



Ross McEathron

Those who entered the payphone industry in the late 1980s, hoping to make a quick buck, have long exited what has become a more challenging business. Those who remain have responded to changes in the business climate and technology — and consumers' love of cell phones — by adjusting their strategies and demonstrating their true entrepreneurial flair.

Perspectives recently spoke with large payphone service providers (PSPs) to find out the questions they would most like to ask their colleagues about how to operate a healthy payphone company today (we define large as a payphone provider with over 1,000 phones). In this third and final installment of a three-part series, these industry veterans share their strategies and insights into how they have addressed several of the most common issues payphone providers face. (To see the first two articles, please see the April and July issues of *Perspectives*.)

Our PSP panel for this month includes:

- **Troy Lee**, chief financial officer, Teletrust Inc., Sherman, Texas; more than 2,400 payphones; 20 years in the business
- **Ross McEathron**, vice president, Extra Effort Payphones, Houston; 6,300 payphones; 9 years in the business
- **George Niden**, vice president, IMR Telecom, Marlborough, Mass.; more than 1,400 payphones; 20 years in the business
- **Alan Rothenstreich**, director of projects, TCC Teleplex, New York City; more than 2,500 payphones; 20 years in the business

Four large PSPs answer six key questions about their businesses



George Niden



Alan Rothenstreich

The questions

1 What sources of information do you use to find new locations?

Lee: We use customer referrals and direct marketing. We analyze our business and see what sectors are producing the best results. We operate payphones throughout the United States, with phones at travel centers, convenience stores, malls and Laundromats. Our monthly totals of new locations vary from about 25 to upwards of 120.

McEathron: We use a lot of government sources that are free, here in Texas anyway. In some parts of the country you might need to pay for this data.

The first source we consult is sales tax permits. Businesses must file with the state to receive such a permit, and the state reports filings online a few weeks after a business has submitted paperwork. We check this database once a week.

We also look at the assumed names filed with

the county clerk and posted online. We download these records every day.

Third, when I have time — maybe once a week — I'll check out the building permits posted online. This is really time consuming, but you get the information on new businesses that will be opening even before an assumed name file is opened.

With all of these sources, we're looking for business names that fit our ideal customer profile. That is, we look for convenience stores, gas stations and grocery stores that we expect will have high foot traffic. We determine the best possibilities by what type of location it is and what geographic area it's located in. We then contact the listed business owner.

Since all of these sources are public information, there will be competition for the new organization's business. The first company out of the gate, so to speak, often wins.

Finally, we also rely on our techs to scout new

locations. Our guys are driving around town every day, so we tell them to look for remodeling and new construction. We offer a \$50 incentive if they get a new location to sign a contract and a smaller referral fee if they tell us of a location and one of our salespeople then signs it up.

Between all of these sources, we're probably finding eight to 10 new locations a month.

Niden: We rely on word of mouth and our current customers to attract new locations. I'd say we add probably six to 10 new locations a month this way, but I need to qualify that remark by noting that we're pulling at least that same amount of phones each month.



Rothenstreich: New York City's franchise rules for payphones affect how we can find new locations. Most of our growth and new locations come from acquisitions and word of mouth. We've joined the hotel associations to network as well.

2 What are you doing to bring business back to your payphones?

Lee: We advertise our long distance prices with more attractive, colorful signs than we have in the past. Our vendors, like our operator services provider, do a good job of providing eye-catching signs. I feel blue is synonymous with public phones, and seems to stand out. So whenever possible, blue enclosures are used.

McEathron: We've lowered our long distance prices and we've put stickers on the payphones and signs in our locations telling consumers about the great rates.

We're very aggressive with our sign program. Right now we're testing 30 to 40 convenience store and gas station locations in the Austin area with a new program. We've posted 6-inch by 12-inch signs with red lettering on a white background that advertise free calls from our payphones. We ask consumers, 'Why spend your cell phone minutes when you can make a free call from our payphone?' We're hoping a number of them will make toll-free calls, and we will then collect dial-around. We just started this program in July, so we don't yet know how successful it will be. (Editor's note: Program results were not available at press time.)

Niden: We have lowered our long distance prices and advertised that fact to callers, mostly in competitive situations where other phones have popped up and diverted our traffic. As far as trying to win back cell phone users, no, we haven't found anything for that yet. We do use the yellow handsets though, hoping to draw more attention to our payphones, and we're planning to incorporate more colorful signs on our booths to attract more attention as well.

Rothenstreich: We're promoting international calling — \$1 for three minutes to anywhere in the world. We advertise this program with 11-inch by 14-inch blue and yellow signs posted above the phones. It's been a growing base for our coin revenue.

We also have posted multicolored aluminum stickers on the vault doors to promote our calling programs: local calls are still just 25 cents, our low international rate is \$1 for three minutes anywhere in the world and it costs only 75 cents for three minutes anywhere in the United States. We have seen increased usage in collect calls since our local exchange carrier stopped using its own 800 number for collect calls.

3 What cost-cutting measures have you implemented?

Lee: We've always operated by the maxim of minimizing costs at all times. Minimizing costs is the standard; there's no need to spend a dollar to save a dime. We've advised our techs to map out their service and collection routes effectively so they can see all of the phones in a particular area when they're there and save on fuel costs. It's also important to make sure each tech has a dense route.

We're really focusing most heavily on ensuring our revenues are what they should be. We check our phone programming religiously, making sure calls are showing up as completed, and we're being compensated for all of them.

Since we have payphones spread out across the nation, we outsource service to several companies that operate on service standards similar to the ones that we expect from our own technicians. These are fixed costs, which are easier to budget, and they're worthwhile. After all, if your phones aren't maintained and in good working condition, you and your location owners are not making money.

McEathron: Our biggest cost cutter has been increasing the density of our route. In July, Houston's National Payphones bought out Extra Effort Payphones. As a result, our companies' payphone routes, which had a lot of overlap, became much more concentrated. National Payphones used to have five techs servicing its phones, and we'd had four. Now, because the route is so much more concentrated, seven techs are able to complete the same amount of work that nine could previously.

We also do more just-in-time collection of payphones. In the old days, we'd collect phones when they had \$50 to \$60 in the box. Now our phones average \$125 when we collect; we wait until they're nearly full. So instead of collecting every week, we're collecting individual phones every three to four weeks.

Line concentrators have helped us save on our phone bills at locations such as truck stops.

We're also refurbishing more of our equipment today. A full-time employee is dedicated to testing and repairing parts that come in from the field. In his spare time, he cleans and repaints phones' exteriors and makes sure all the internal parts are working fine.

Niden: We've had to lay off many employees, which has significantly reduced our payroll and benefits line items but greatly increased the workload for those of us who remain.

We have moved our offices to cut our rent payment.

We have also become more aggressive in canceling phone lines and pulling phones. Most of our payphones have been at their locations for several years, so if we see steadily declining revenue to the point where the phone is barely breaking even, we'll pull it in anticipation of that phone's traffic continuing to deteriorate. Likewise, at locations that have multiple phones, we're watching closely for declining revenue that will warrant removing one of the phones.

Finally, we've cut our commissions, and we now charge a monthly fee for phone service for new locations that we suspect won't cover their costs. We also offer this option to locations where we've determined we need to pull the phone due to nonperformance. In



the latter case, we've had limited success. Often, our location owners are looking at the phone usage records and saying they don't think the removal of the payphone will have much of an impact on their customers, so we can go ahead and remove it.

Rothenstreich: We've improved everyday operations to do more with less. For example, we've reduced our number of techs and reworked our routes to maximize efficiency. Our routes are now more dense, and we visit indoor phones and phones located in low-abuse neighborhoods less often than we used to. We've also developed better ways to track performance and remove phones quickly if they're not contributing to the bottom line.

4 What products and services have you tried to supplement your payphone business? How well have they worked for you?

Lee: We have experimented with other products and services; however, our concentration is on payphones, and our business model supports that. We'd rather have more payphones, not other products.

We leveraged our excellent customer service and equipment experience into solving our location owners' problems in this area. You are taking a risk because you have to carry around a large amount of cash, but we did really well with them. I think that even with our recent buyout, we'll continue to expand in this and other areas in the coming year.

In the past, we've looked at offering prepaid calling cards, and I'd be interested in hearing from other PSPs about their experiences with this product.

Niden: We have air machines and air/vac combos, ATMs and some advertising on payphones. All of these are nice little niches, but none of them have grown to the point where they are anywhere close to replacing the revenue lost from declining payphone use.

Rothenstreich: We're exploring new technologies



MATT HAGE

McEathron: Extra Effort Payphones — and National Payphones — also offer air/water machines and ATMs to locations. Extra Effort had planned to concentrate on expanding the number of ATMs it has in the field, because even though it's a pretty mature market, there are still opportunities out there. Some of our payphone locations were using other vendors for their ATMs, and they experienced poor service.

that go along with payphones that have proven reliable and successful. We are exploring calling card and collect call programs that seem to do well in hotel and specific indoor venues that cater to large amounts of visitors to the city. As time goes on, we continue to look at new ideas; as in all businesses, standing still is not an option. One needs to continue to strive to make a better product or to offer more services.

5 At what point do you consider a phone to be unprofitable? Do you consider your overhead in that formula or just pure cash flow?

Lee: We like to be fair on new installations. We constantly monitor the site and take into consideration any factors that could or will affect the location before considering removal. Current locations are looked at monthly to spot trends quickly.

McEathron: A lot of people consider a payphone to be profitable if it is making \$5 to \$6 above the phone bill each month. To me, that doesn't seem right. You have service and collection calls to make to that location during the month.

We divide our number of payphones by our employee salaries, benefits and overhead. So, for us, anything less than \$20 above the phone bill is

collected by one of our employees, we are much more likely to keep it in the field. Paying a subcontractor for service makes it harder to justify keeping a marginal phone. All costs considered, if a phone is making any amount of money at all, we try to leave it in.

Rothenstreich: We take into account our collection costs, franchise costs for phones that are located on city streets, and dial tone expenses. Overall costs vary by installation, but generally a profitable phone is one that is generating \$125 and up.

6 How do you think your business will look in five years? How do we make the future a positive one?

Lee: If the past five years are any indication, it's obvious our margins will be getting even slimmer. I foresee changing dynamics in the industry. I think payphones will still be there, but we'll have addi-



MATT HAGE

not a profitable phone. Those phones are put on our 'Watch List,' where they will stay for 60 to 90 days. If their revenues haven't improved at the end of that time, depending on the phone's particulars, it may be pulled. In the past, we may have given the phone longer to perform, but as profitability in this industry slows, you need to look harder and act quicker.

Niden: It really depends. If the phone is serviced and

tional options when it comes to obtaining dial tone.

The most important thing PSPs can do to create a positive future is to take an active role in visiting and getting to know their local legislators and their state senators to educate them about the role of payphones and the challenges the industry faces. Many of our elected leaders don't think about payphones. By meeting with them, you'll personalize the indus-

try. Tell them about how payphones meet the public need not only during emergencies but also for different citizens in their district. You'll get them thinking about payphones, and they then will start looking around for them more and realize that they do have opportunities to help — and need to.

Here in Texas, as of Sept. 1, PSPs no longer have to pay sales tax on the coin they collect. That's a huge victory! It took a lot of work by our state payphone association and PSPs, but we got it done.

It is up to us to be proactive in gaining political support and letting payphones' purpose be known. We need to work together to secure our future.

McEathron: I believe that in five years we'll have fewer payphones than we have today. I also believe that at some point — perhaps within the next five years — payphones themselves will become subsidized by the government — just like farmers are paid not to plant certain crops.

PSPs can help make the future positive by keeping their routes profitable. That means pulling phones that are eroding your cash flow, watching expenses closely and doing all the things smart businesspeople do. We can't afford to be complacent. Change is good — even in the payphone business.

Niden: In five years my business will have fewer payphones and hopefully a lot more air/vac machines, ATMs and something else I haven't come up with yet!

At this stage, I think it is best for PSPs to come up with other products to sell, whether they dovetail with payphones at current locations or are entirely unrelated. To rely on payphones as your sole source of income even five years out is probably naive.

Rothenstreich: I believe we'll see a larger number of semi-public payphones. As the remaining independent local exchange carriers exit the business that will create some new opportunities as well.

There will always be a need for public payphones because of the role they play in public safety. I think 70 percent of today's payphones will still exist in the same shape and form five years from now, but some new technology is bound to come out. With the deployment of N11 numbers providing access to different services, payphones will be the conduit



MATT HAGE

to services. A visitor to New York City needing help will call 311 from a payphone, or a homeless person might dial 211.

Dial-around will also be an important factor, and efforts need to be made so companies do not elect to block calls from payphones, but at the same time, payphone owners need to be compensated. A balance needs to be found, and I hope that will happen over time. The more services we provide to the public, the more we'll be needed, and therefore, payphones will remain.

To promote a positive future, we need to maintain a positive attitude. I just finished reading "The Secret," which promises that if you think positive, positive things will happen. Think of new ideas and stay positive. ■

Stacey L. Bell is a freelance writer who specializes in business and marketing issues. She is based in Tampa, Fla.

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tech talk

by Dennis Williams

Don't be alarmed

Here are a few tricks you can try if your 99 alarm is a little too active

Dear Perspectives:

I use the Elcotel Eclipse (KX-5502) payphone, and I poll them every day with Poll Manager (PNM Plus), but suddenly on some of my phones I have been receiving a 99 alarm, file does not exist, unknown alarm error message. I try to reset the main board, change the main board, clear the alarms and clear the call counters, but the alarm does not go away. If someone is experiencing this problem and has a solution, I would like to know about it.

DAVID ROSSE

Regards,
Judes Lussier

AFX Communications
Quebec, Canada

Dear Judes:

The devious 99 alarm, also known as the "unknown alarm," is not really that unknown. I call it the Gretzky alarm or the "great one" alarm. Being from Canada and knowing about hockey, I am sure you get that one. But for our non-sports-minded readers, Wayne Gretzky was the greatest hockey player ever to play the game, and he wore the number 99 and was known as the Great One.

Anyway, enough about hockey! I have dealt

Other solutions?

If you have any other solutions to this problem, we'd love to hear about them. Please call Tracey Timpanaro at (281) 646-0051, or send an e-mail to tat66@apcc.net.



with this alarm for many years, and I have spent the last three or four trying to find a guaranteed solution, but to no avail. I have done research, and I have asked many people in the industry many questions, but it always comes to the same conclusion: This alarm is a bug in the programming. It does not matter if you are using the Canadian- or the U.S.-based firmware, it is just a bug that has no permanent solution. As you know, no matter what type of payphone you have, they all have one kind of bug or another.

Helpful hints

That said, let me give you a few things to try in this case that will hopefully ease your pain. Remember these suggestions are like a can of Raid or any other bug spray: after a few months of peace, beware. The bugs will return. But if you are proactive and check up on the items below every few weeks, maybe you can save time because you won't have to deal with a huge colony at one time.

From your letter, I see you have tried to clear the alarms and/or call counters. This can be one of the steps to try to reduce the number of times the alarm appears. Sometimes this will work for a few days or weeks, but the alarm will return. You also

mentioned you were resetting or replacing the boards. This may give you some temporary relief, but I have discovered that it is as reliable a solution as trying to carry water in a mesh bag.

You did not mention how many times you download updates to your payphones, but I have noticed that the more changes I make, the quicker this alarm will appear. It seems to be linked to the command list of the payphone itself.

Check the commands

Within the "phone details" screen of PNM Plus, there is a command list (Cmd list) button. Make sure the download commands are unchecked in the "next contact" tab. Sometimes, after I've downloaded files to the payphone, if these commands are still checked, the files will download again and again. This does cause the 99 alarm to appear. But once the boxes are unchecked, the alarm does go away for a while.

Another thing to check is register 752 in the alarms

portion of the Registers and Options file. This setting appears to affect the number of times the 99 alarm is present. This option controls the number of calls that must be exceeded in order to trigger the coin jam alarm, register 709. The default is set to "00."

Try using the default number, or if this does not work, set this register to "99" or the maximum number allowed. You can also try turning off the coin jam alarm and use your call detail records to check for problems. If the payphone is not programmed to report a coin jam alarm (register 709) or to use the coin jam alarm maximum count (register 752), the 99 alarm does not appear.

Judes, I hope these suggestions help you in your endeavors to help control the bug population within your payphones. And from one fellow Canadian to another, good luck Eh! ■

Dennis Williams has been involved in the payphone industry for 10 years and is currently operations manager for FCT Communications Inc., which is based in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

state briefs

Arizona

The Arizona Corporation Commission has launched a redesigned Web site, www.azcc.gov, which is intended to help users find information more easily. The new interface has grouped main headings on the left side with "fly out" menus for sub pages.

"Over the last several years, we have made a lot of changes to make our branch of government more open and accessible to the public," said Chairman Mike Gleason. "Updating the commission's Web design was a major, highly visible step in that process."

Buttons for the most popular portions of the Web site have special icons located along the bottom of the page. Live streaming audio, www.azinvestor.gov, E-Docket and the Starpas business entity search buttons will remain in a red frame at the bottom of the screen.

The E-Docket case management system now features a calendar interface, giving the public a new tool to track the progress of cases at the regulatory agency. The E-Docket Calendar button takes users to a screen where they can view all upcoming deadlines or select the types of items they care about most.

NARUC

Establishing an efficient phone number portability process will enhance competition in the telecommunications industry and help state regulators prevent the exhaustion of area codes, a member of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) recently told the Senate.

In testimony before the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, Tony Clark, chairman of NARUC's Committee on Telecommunications, said states have long supported number portability as a means to stimulate demand for telecommunications services, and they have supported the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC's) initial efforts to address this issue.

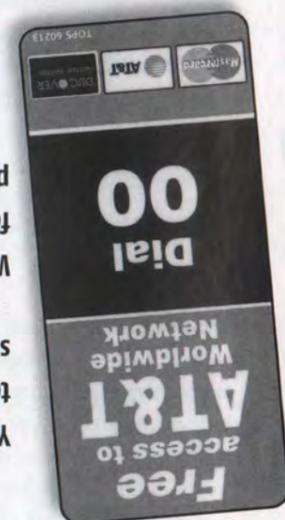
"NARUC has urged the FCC to immediately act to prohibit onerous and nonstandard porting practices as anti-competitive and anti-consumer," said Clark, a member of the North Dakota Public Service Commission. Clark cited recent allegations raised at the FCC involving local exchange carriers (LECs) who are accused of adopting practices that complicate and delay the process of switching — or "porting out" — a customer's phone number to a new provider or service. This approach acts as a barrier to true competition, Clark said.

In particular, competitive providers claim that some LECs insist on old and cumbersome procedures that make switching between wireline and wireless companies and services a frustrating task, Clark said.

Noting that NARUC passed a resolution in February 2007 on this issue, Clark said the FCC and Congress should act quickly to resolve it.

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New York

New York City's Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT) has responded favorably to several suggestions from the Independent Payphone Association of New York (IPANY).

IPANY has been asking DoITT to restructure its fine system for payphone code violations. The city's existing fines are excessive and unreasonable, the association says. IPANY's suggestions include mitigated penalties, which would be ordered when an administrative law judge feels a lesser penalty is due because the violation is not the fault of the defendant or the defendant has remedied the violation after receiving the notice of violation.

IPANY's proposal also called for a second offense penalty. By using a two-tier fine schedule, payphone service providers (PSPs) attempting to do the best job possible would not be penalized as

state payphone association meetings calendar

Atlantic Payphone Association
(717) 790-9533
5:30 p.m. registration
6:15 p.m. dinner/meeting
Clyde's of Tysons Corner
December 6

Central Atlantic Payphone Association
(888) 930-9277
9 a.m. board meeting
11 a.m. general membership meeting
Sheraton Harrisburg-Hershey
Harrisburg, Pa.
December 5

Illinois Public Telecommunications Association
(847) 808-8988
Jimmy's Charhouse, Riverwoods, Ill.
November 6

Kansas Payphone Association
(913) 583-3119
6:30 p.m.
Wyndham Hotel
Overland Park
October 11

Midwest Independent Coin Payphone Association
(636) 922-5213
7 p.m.
Holiday Inn-Airport
St. Louis
December 5

Payphone Association of Ohio
(440) 951-0604
10:30 a.m.
Marriott Columbus Airport
October 4

San Diego Payphone Association
(877) 539-9604
9:30 a.m.
Cocos Restaurant
Genesee (San Diego)
November 15

All dates are subject to change; please verify with state associations prior to making travel arrangements.

severely as the few PSPs who continually ignore warnings or violations issued by the city.

DoITT agreed to most of the payphone association's recommendations during a July 12 meeting with IPANY.

Now the department is working with the city's legal department to determine whether a public hearing on the proposed fine system would be required as part of the City Administrative Procedures Act (CAPA) process.

"However, it is IPANY's belief that these changes are within DoITT's purview as internal rule-making changes, and they shouldn't require the CAPA process," said IPANY Executive Director Lester Shafran.

IPANY has been working with New York City to help it launch its new 211 dialing code.

The city has asked all payphone providers to implement a termination, or "point to," number for routing 211 dialed calls within New York. The city and Verizon have established (212) 421-1692 as the number for routing the calls.

IPANY has been keeping its members up to date on the 211 code since 2000, when the FCC assigned it for access to community information and referral services.

In 2002, the PSC assigned administrative responsibilities for the code to the 211 New York Collaborative. Since then, New York City and the 211 Collaborative agreed the city would provide 211 information to callers within New York City's five boroughs.

City PSPs were asked to implement 211 as the "point to" number by Aug. 24.

A report addressing sexual harassment on New York's subway system is calling for more payphones in stations.

The report includes nearly 1,800 responses to an online questionnaire by the Manhattan borough president's office. The majority of the participants were women who stated that sexual harassment is a widespread problem on the subway system.

The report, "Hidden in Plain Sight: Sexual Harassment and Assault in the New York City Subway System," asks the police to collect more information on this issue.

It also calls for more payphones — a February

2007 study by the Straphangers Campaign found that one out of four of the existing Verizon payphones in New York subway stations do not fully work.

Additional requests include greater police presence in the subways; brighter lights; expanded cell phone service; a study on the possibility of using cameras to prevent sexual misconduct; a public education campaign; and improved training for transit authority workers and police officers.

IPANY has been following a number of news stories about graffiti artists recently. Association members' kiosks are a frequent target for the graffiti artists' activities, and PSPs can be fined for failing to clean up their work.

In August, police arrested Russell Farriola, a Staten Island man dubbed "Public Enemy No. 1," for defacing property. Farriola originally was charged with 48 graffiti incidents, including marking up a phone booth. Since then, he has pleaded guilty to one misdemeanor. He could be sentenced to 60 days in jail and three years' probation.

IPANY is planning its 2007 holiday celebration, which will take place in mid-December. The association will announce the event's day, time and location later this fall.

San Diego

The San Diego Payphone Owners Association (SDPOA) extended the terms of several board members at its recent meeting. Elected to serve until 2009 were Ken Scott, Orion Payphones; Ray Lawson, Superior Phone Co.; and Sal Haro, Haro Stewart LLC. A subsequent meeting of that board elected new officers: Victor Rollo, Rollo Communications, as president, and Joe Pastore, Superior Phone Co., as secretary/treasurer.

SDPOA also addressed the issue of replacing Steve Fetzer as its representative to the Public Utilities Commission's Payphone Service Provider Enforcement Committee. Fetzer, while still active with the association, is unable to continue in this role due to other commitments. The association selected Rollo as Fetzer's replacement, and a letter will be forwarded to the commission to that effect.

Association members also discussed dial-around compensation and a couple of new products being offered by operator service providers. ■

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industry news

product news

NCIC Operator Services

NCIC Operator Services now offers an Inmate Telephone Service Bureau, a new revenue opportunity for payphone service providers (PSPs). The program allows participating PSPs to provide coinless payphones for inmate use with a package of services geared for jail/inmate settings.

NCIC's services include Web-based call detail reporting, Web-based call recording retrieval for jail administrators, Web-based live call monitoring, notification of calls for inmates on a "special watch" list, prepaid collect calling for medium and long-term facilities, a configurable PIN option with block capabilities, international collect calling, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) capabilities to reduce line costs, real time call and phone blocking, access to live operators and flexible rates.

"It's a perfect fit for payphone providers," said NCIC President Bill Pope. "They have contacts at the city, county and state level. They basically have all of the tools to manage and service a route of phones, pay commissions and be a complete inmate service provider with no increase in overhead. The main difference is they would not have to collect coins."

The inmate industry represents a steady, year-round source of revenue for PSPs, Pope said. Payphones in many parts of the country are seasonal or impacted by changes in the weather. The inmate business is fairly consistent and not as seasonal.

NCIC also has a group dedicated to researching notifications of government bid requests for payphone service. "We take these leads and give them to our customers," Pope said. "It's an easy sell for a payphone provider located near the facility seeking service."

"A lot of PSPs have diversified into other areas, including ATMs and air and water machines," he said. "Getting into the inmate business will help them diversify more without leaving telecommunications."

For more information, call (888) 686-3699, or visit www.ncic.com.

Excel Tire Gauge

Excel Tire Gauge, which manufactures air vending equipment for gas stations and convenience stores, is offering distributorship opportunities to payphone service providers.

The company's electronic air towers feature Pneutronic Electronic Tire Gauges that allow customers to inflate — or deflate — their tires to the exact pressure specified. After a tire is properly calibrated, the equipment stops and beeps.

The equipment is designed to be easy to use and durable. It features LCD backlit displays, constant face panel illumination, large coin boxes, lock boxes, remote activation and wireless data acquisition.



Excel Tire Gauge

A New York-based PSP recently added Excel Tire Gauge's equipment to its product line and more are expected to do the same, said company President Jay Nelson. "It was an easy transition because they already had payphones in gas stations and c-stores," Nelson said. "It's the same collection system. It's a natural progression."

Currently, the company has exclusive distribution in six areas. "We are looking for distribution and distributors throughout the U.S.," Nelson said.

Excel Tire Gauge, based in Warwick, R.I., was established in Brazil in 1991 and started operating in the United States in 1999. For more information, call (401) 732-8420, or visit www.exceltiregauge.com.

people & places

Hays Financial Consulting

In response to numerous requests, Atlanta-based Hays Financial Consulting LLC is adding space on its Web site where it will link companies who

want to sell payphone sites and routes with people who want to buy them. The posting will list sites/routes on the market along with a list of potential buyers.

"Following the publication of several articles in *Perspectives* and after I spoke at APCC 2007 in Miami Beach, many payphone providers approached me about the topic," said Pam Dennison, director of operations for the company's Louisville, Ky. branch. "We thought the listing would be a great service for the industry."

There will be a free listing page for companies that are willing to make their route and contact information public. Those who wish to remain anonymous can pay a fee, and Hays will place a generic posting on the Web site. In addition, the company will offer various levels of service available on a fee basis, such as due diligence, book preparation and negotiation of sales agreements. The company will be handling transactions from one phone up to thousands of phones.

Hays Consulting offers outsource management and consulting services to PSPs along with its traditional service to other industries. For more information, contact Pam Dennison at (866) 864-HAYS (4297), or visit www.haysconsulting.net/outsource-managment.html.

US Interconnection Service

US Interconnection Service Inc. (USIS) has signed an agreement with Ewait AS of Norway, the manufacturer of the Ewait Internet Platform (IP). The agreement gives US Interconnection Service exclusive rights to operate Ewait's platform in the United States.

Ewait's IP terminals are state of the art machines,



EUCL money available

Dickstein Shapiro LLP is asking for assistance in locating the companies listed below. The firm has money for these clients from the EUCL litigation. If you have current contact information for the individuals or companies listed, please call Terence Hastick at (202) 420-3430, or send an e-mail to hastickt@dicksteinshapiro.com.

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Boston Telecom
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Monjid Hamdan

Cajun Callers Inc.
Austin, Texas
Jim Smith

CBX Inc.
Houston, Texas
Craig W. Evans

Dial-Tone Communications
Staten Island, N.Y.
Carmen Cunsolo

Edward Goddard (Edward Goddard d/b/a Valley Payphones)
McAllen, Texas
Edward T. Goddard

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Marco Valverde

Southern Payphones Services Inc.
Kenner, La.
Douglas Burr

Sun City Vending Inc.
N. Miami, Fla.
Darrell Agrella

Teddy Bear Telco
Roseville, Calif.
Mike Connor

TeleComm Concepts
Michigan
Marianne White

The Diamond Group
Sterling, Va.
Kevin Moran

Thompson Business Development/Thompson Telephone
Poala, Kan.
David Thompson

Vend-One Communications
Commerce City, Colo.
Geronimo Rodriguez

Virginia Communications
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Richard Thomas

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said George Sowards, chief operating officer of Kentucky-based US Interconnection Service. In addition to providing Internet connectivity, they allow wireless connectivity for the newest generation of cell phones.

Ewait already has deployed IP terminals in Europe. Now Ewait and USIS plan to deploy 10,000 units in the United States. Under the plan, scheduled to begin in the fall, Ewait will retain ownership of the terminals, and PSPs will install and service the equipment. Service and compensation agreements are being developed now.

"This terminal has great applications for airports, amusement parks, shopping centers, c-stores, sports bars, truck stops and just about anywhere where someone checks on Internet activity or would need to retrieve a paper copy of a document received in a digital format," Sowards said.

This agreement will also allow USIS to continue its plans for developing a voice over the Internet protocol (VoIP) dial tone product for the payphone industry.

"USIS is extremely pleased with the Ewait relationship," Sowards said.

For more information about Ewait AS, visit www.ewait.no/2004_fall_final.

For more information about US Interconnection Service, call (866) 511-8748, or visit www.usis-corp.com Slug: add.ib.

Prime Point Media

Prime Point Media, based in Atlanta, has named Rob Figa vice president of sales. Figa, who will be based in New York, will manage the company's national and local sales forces.

"We are thrilled to have Rob at our company," said Karen Robinson, president of Prime Point Media. "His talent and experience will be an invaluable asset as we continue to grow our business."



Rob Figa

A 20-year veteran of the outdoor advertising industry, Figa has held positions at Gannett Outdoor (now CBS Outdoor), Eller Media (now Clear Channel Outdoor) and Wilkins Media Co., where he spent nine years as a member of the executive management team.

"I am looking forward to joining Prime Point,

and I am excited about tackling new challenges and working with a world class group of media professionals," Figa said.

ILD Telecommunications

ILD Telecommunications Inc. has announced the acquisition of the international operator services division of Andiamo Telecom LLC, a facilities-based domestic and international carrier.

ILD, which has been growing in its international operations, noted that this acquisition would place the company in a stronger position to compete overseas and address the needs of the international carrier, hotel and payphone communities.

Andiamo's international partnerships will complement ILD's operator services business, said Dennis Stoutenburgh, ILD's president and COO. "We are confident that this integration, coupled with ILD's financial strength, broad customer base and commitment to the operator services industry, will position us to enhance our core business," Stoutenburgh said.

For more information, visit ildtelecom.com.

CRTC

The National Anti-Poverty Organization (NAPO), the Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC) and the Union des consommateurs jointly petitioned the Canadian cabinet recently to overturn the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission's (CRTC's) decision to double local payphone rates from 25 cents to 50 cents a call for Bell Aliant, Bell Canada, MTS Allstream and Sasktel.

The petition calls for the cabinet to rescind the payphone rate hike and to refer the matter back to the CRTC with directions. The petitioners are urging the CRTC to consider the effect the payphone rate increase could have on users, particularly on low income customers.

The National Anti-Poverty Organization (NAPO) is a national nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that represents the interests of low income people in Canada. PIAC is a nonprofit organization that provides legal and research services on behalf of consumer interests. Union des consommateurs, another nonprofit organization, strives to promote and defend consumer rights with particular emphasis on the interests of low income households.

A copy of the petition is online at www.piac.ca. ■

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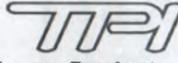
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last word

by Stacey L. Bell



Going to the dogs

A new franchise opportunity is all about man's best friend

During the recent dog days of summer, you may have noticed a phenomenon that is spurring a new business: thirsty pets.

In July of 1998, South Beach (Miami) model Carlotta Lennox was skating by a park when she saw some unhappy canines.

"Dogs were out for a walk with their owners, and the dogs were dying of thirst," she says. "The water fountains didn't work or were too tall, and the sidewalks were dirty since there were no poop bags available. I thought, 'Poor dogs. They need water, a toy, even a treat.' I thought that there should be a vending machine there to sell these items so everyone would be happy."

Enter Hey Buddy LLC. Lennox unveiled her first pet-friendly vending machine in the downtown Dallas Bark Park in November of 2005. It sells dog leads and leashes, treats, tennis balls, Frisbees, bottled water, fold-up plastic water bowls, baggies and other goods for \$1 to \$6. The machine generated enough revenue to cover its costs within its first year of operation.

The Hey Buddy doggie vending machine is housed within an upscale "doghouse," complete with a shingled roof and plastic flower arrangements to attract Rover's attention. They are designed to be an aesthetically appealing addition to dog parks, apartment buildings, hotels, beaches, rest stops, campgrounds — anywhere that the U.S.'s nearly 75 million dogs might hang out.

"We've seen a lot of interest from pet stores that would like to have one outside their store when they're closed," Lennox says, adding that the machines also can accept customized coupons to drive repeat business.

A new pet project

Lennox says her company is gathering research on what products sell best at which price points and in which locations. She expects to bring on franchisees in early 2008, and this is where payphone service providers (PSPs) could fit in the picture.

A number of payphone providers have branched out into vending over the years; some with good success, others not so much. This opportunity could be a good fit, although the machines are a little high for the standard PSP budget. Standard models cost about \$5,000 and accept coins and bills. A credit card/debit card option may be added for \$700.

A smaller, less expensive vending machine, which will be housed within a dog bone-shaped structure, should be available by late 2008. Lennox expects this smaller design to be popular at retail outlets such as Starbucks. (And yes, she does pay a commission to location owners.)

Franchisees may purchase machine supplies through Hey Buddy. "Our prices are very competitive with those in pet stores since we don't have the overhead, shelf space and employee costs to cover," Lennox says.

"I think this machine is an asset to people who forget things or don't have time to get to the store or just want to spend more quality time with their pet," Lennox concludes. To learn more about serving the pets in your community, contact Hey Buddy at (877) 26-BUDDY, or send an e-mail to carlotta.lennox@heybuddyvending.com. ■

Stacey L. Bell is a freelance writer who specializes in business and marketing issues. She is based in Tampa, Fla.

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