

# PERSPECTIVES

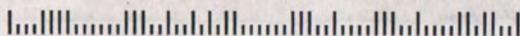
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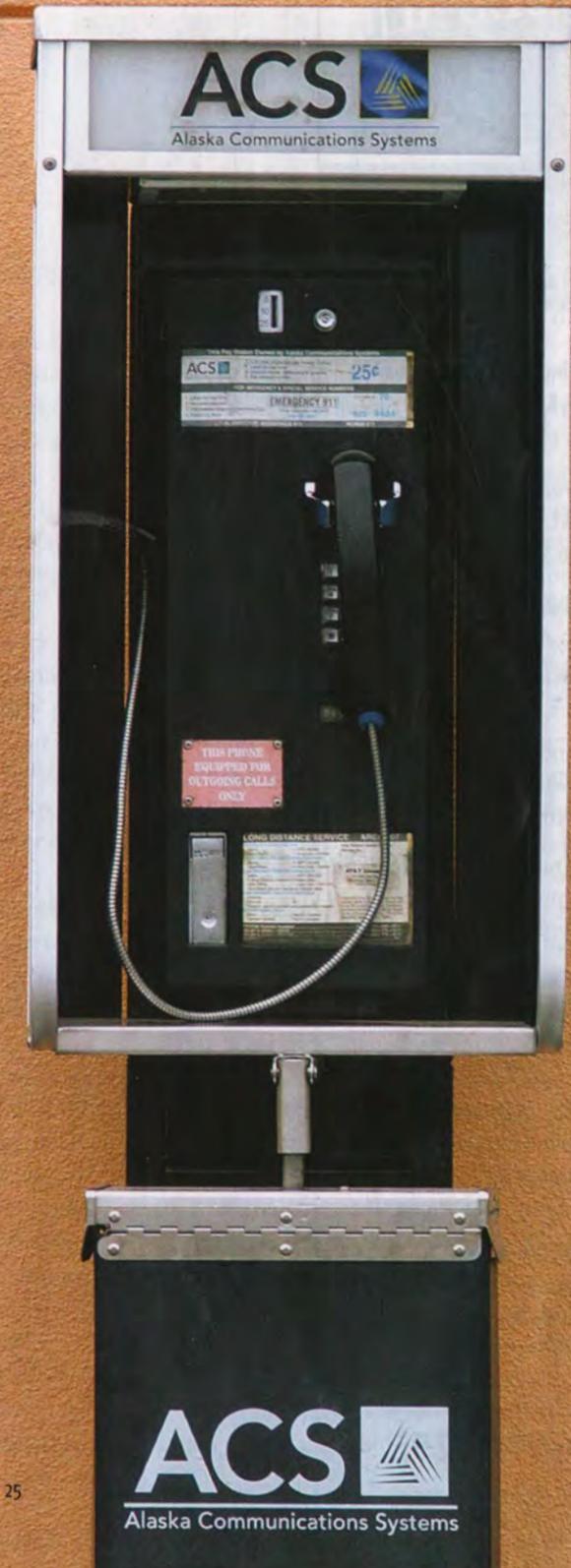
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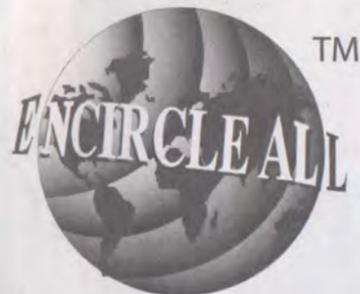
Here are 10 excellent resources you can use to find good workers.

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## editorial



spic and span. And it means something else too: less cash in hand.

Jack maintains that you need cash flow every week. "If you're only collecting phones once they reach a certain amount of money, that affects your cash flow. This in turn means you may not be able to pay bills properly, and if you're behind then you're in trouble," he says. "I've seen people go down to the last day with the LEC, and that isn't a good place to be."

**3. Think about your rates on a site-by-site basis.** Don't just decide on one rate for your whole route. For example, if there isn't much competition around, 50 cents makes sense. But if there are other phones nearby, go for 25 cents and see if your business increases. The same would apply for your 1+ and O+ rates.

**4. Look at your bills to be sure everything is correct.** Otherwise, you could be just throwing money away.

**5. Update your rate files every month.** Otherwise, you're missing calls that you could have completed.

**6. Collect the prepaid cards that are left at your phones.** This way, you can check to see if they're paying DAC. If they're not, sic APCC Services on them.

**7. Charge reasonable O+ rates.** "We have one of the lowest rates out there, and our calls have been very steady the last few years," Jack says.

**8. Keep marginal sites for a bit longer than you like.** If you're running a good business, chances are you'll outlast your competitor. He'll pull his phone and business will increase at yours.

**9. Check your FLEX ANI.** If you're not doing this, you shouldn't be complaining about your dial-around.

**10. Advertise your business.** This might not have made sense in the old days, but with many Bells doing a "quiet exit," it would behoove you to run a small ad in the yellow pages. Make it easy for location owners to find you; they often don't know how to find a PSP.

So be honest — are you paying attention to details like you should? If not, this list is a good place to start.

*Tracey Timpanaro*

Tracey Timpanaro  
Publisher

## It's all in the details

It is my job to challenge you guys on occasion. Today is one of those days.

When I talk to PSPs these days, most tell me that their traffic is down. But I spoke with one provider (whom I'll call "Jack") recently who said his traffic has been holding steady the last few years. When I asked him why, he said it's all about the details.

"There are so many little things involved in this business, and all those little details add up," he said.

That said, let's take a look at the rules he follows for running a tight route.

**1. Pay close attention to your programming.** Jack does route management work for other companies, and says he sees tons of mistakes in other PSPs' programming. They're simple enough mistakes that are easy to fix, so why aren't they being fixed? The pay-phone providers simply aren't taking the time to do the detail work that is necessary to maximize traffic and therefore revenue.

Some of the errors he's seen include: transposed numbers in reroute tables; the way sites are set up in the software; and calls that are included in the dial tone rate being funneled to 1+ carriers. All these things definitely add up.

**2. Keep your phones clean, collected and in working order.** *Perspectives* is a broken record on this topic, but with good reason. The ramifications of not doing so are huge. These days, we have a lot of repeat business. If a person doesn't want to or isn't able to use your phone, he may never come back and certainly will mention his experience to others. If your phone always works and is clean, you'll build a loyal customer base and your traffic will remain steady.

This means you should poll your phones every day. "If you're polling a few times a week instead of every day, you don't know what's going on on your route," Jack says. "We get to our service calls in a timely manner — within 24 hours."

Something else that Jack handles in a timely manner: collections. In the interest of saving money, many providers aren't collecting as often as they used to, which of course means the phones aren't as

# 'The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers'

Lawyer jokes aside, here's an update on the key legal and regulatory issues facing the independent payphone industry

Unfortunately, that often used Shakespearean quote can summarize the frustrations felt by many in the independent payphone industry. At times, it can seem like a never-ending game of legal "whack-a-mole." As soon as one issue is settled, one or more new issues immediately pop up to replace it.

The high number of legal and regulatory issues facing payphone providers is due to two primary factors — 1) the highly regulatory nature of the telecommunications industry, which requires lengthy proceedings at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC); and 2) the large disparity in size and resources between independent payphone service providers (PSPs) and the major carriers that allows the latter group to wield substantial influence with policy-makers and to greatly prolong any litigation efforts to force them to meet their obligations.

However, PSPs should take heart. Our "hammers" in the legal "whack-a-mole" game may be smaller and less numerous than those of our opponents, but substantial progress is being made. In fact, today, we are on the verge of resolving many of the important legal and regulatory issues that face the independent payphone industry. Let's take a look at some of these issues.

## Dial-around compensation

Nonpaying carriers continue to be a major concern for PSPs, especially in the current environment of declining payphone call volumes. While a sizable number of carriers are meeting their dial-around compensation payment requirements, the American Public Communications Council Inc. (APCC) is successfully confronting nonpaying carriers on several fronts, including in the courts, at the FCC and through the diligent, day-to-day work of APCC Services.

**1. In the courts.** As a result of the very favorable ruling obtained by APCC earlier this year from the U.S. Supreme Court in *Global Crossing v. Metrophones* (that PSPs have the right to sue nonpaying carriers in federal court), APCC Services has been able to continue its aggressive court pursuit against AT&T,

Court Judge Ellen Segal Huvelle pointedly let the carriers know these cases already have gone on far too long and she did not intend to view favorably any further attempts at delay.

Notwithstanding Judge Huvelle's commitment to proceeding expeditiously, it should come as no surprise to PSPs that the carriers may well continue in their efforts at obstruction and delay, since these tactics are all they have left to continue maintaining the cover-up of their past misdeeds in not paying the dial-around compensation they owed to independent PSPs. Each of you can rest assured that APCC Services will continue to pursue justice for our customers.

**2. At the FCC.** APCC Services also is actively pursuing the numerous complaints it has filed at the FCC against the largest nonpaying carriers. In direct response to APCC's efforts, the FCC already has taken some actions against several carriers.

In February 2007, the FCC issued a Memorandum Opinion and Order (Damages Order) granting judgment against Network IP for unpaid dial-around compensation for the period from Oct. 1, 1999 through Nov. 22, 2001. The FCC found all of Network IP's arguments and purported defenses for its failures to pay to be without merit and directed the company to pay \$2.790 million in unpaid dial-around compensation plus \$1.766 million in interest for the benefit of APCC Services and DataNet customers.

In April 2007, Network IP filed a motion with the FCC to stay the Damages Order while the company pursues an appeal in court. APCC Services vigorously opposed the stay request. In May 2007, the FCC did in fact deny the stay motion, finding that Network IP had failed to show any likelihood of success with its appeal or that it faced any imminent irreparable harm from the Damages Order.

As Network IP subsequently failed to meet the payment deadline set by the FCC in the Damages Order, APCC Services filed a complaint to enforce the Order in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, a district court famous for not letting litigants unnecessarily delay cases (the "rocket docket"). Our complaint asked for, among other things, that: 1) Network IP be directed to make the FCC-ordered payments in full; and 2) that Network IP be restricted from making any extraordinary payments to its principals during the course of our collection proceedings.

At the initial hearing on our complaint, the judge

rejected Network IP's jurisdictional arguments, which could have delayed the case by moving it to a less favorable district court. The judge also stated that APCC's concerns with Network IP's dissipation of assets were valid and directed Network IP to provide sufficient financial information to provide assurances that assets would not be stripped from the company while its appeal of the Damages Order is pending.

In December 2006, after repeated urgings by the APCC, the FCC released a Notice of Apparent Liability (NAL) against Compass Global for a forfeiture of \$466,000 for repeated and willful violations of the FCC's Tollgate rules. The FCC noted that this would be the "first" NAL to be issued in regard to violations of its payphone compensation rules and the high amount of the forfeiture was determined with a view to providing disincentives for other carriers to continue in their violations of the rules.

The FCC also made it clear that future NALs could (would) be for higher amounts and could also include the barring of company principals from continuing in the telecommunications field. We expect that the FCC will make good on its declarations and soon will be issuing significant additional NALs against nonpaying carriers.

We also believe that the FCC soon will be issuing a final decision in our case against Radiant Communications for its nonpayment of dial-around compensation. This decision could finally bring definitive guidance from the FCC in knocking down the many excuses put forward by nonpaying carriers and should be a strong weapon in our efforts to bring additional nonpaying carriers to justice and collecting the unpaid compensation they owe to APCC Services customers.

**3. APCC Services' day-to-day activities.** APCC Services continues to obtain many new agreements from additional carriers resolving their past dial-around payment deficiencies and ensuring future

payments for the benefit of its customers. In addition, on an ongoing basis, APCC Services devotes a great amount of time and effort to analyzing call data to find all of the nonpaying and underpaying carriers. Through its analyses, APCC Services recently found previously unknown FLEX ANI problems with several interexchange carriers (IXCs), which had resulted in unpaid calls during several previous quarters.

Call data analysis by APCC Services related to intraLATA 800 calls also has resulted in competitive local exchange carriers (CLECs) and switch-based resellers (SBRs) being invoiced for previously non-compensated calls and the filing of complaints at the FCC against the responsible carriers for payphone-originated 800 intraLATA calls.

### New services test refunds

Several state associations, supported by the efforts of APCC, continue to pursue favorable resolution of petitions filed with the FCC for violations of the commission's mandated new services test (NST). The petitions were filed requesting the FCC to order refunds of line rate overcharges by the Bell companies in states where refunds have been denied or not ruled upon.



Sprint and Qwest for unpaid dial-around compensation. Although the defendants persist in their attempts to thwart the impact of the Supreme Court's ruling, through filing various frivolous and dilatory motions and other tactics, the cases are moving forward.

After almost three years of delay that caused us to go all the way to the Supreme Court, on Sept. 11, a status conference for our AT&T, Sprint and Qwest cases was held in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. At the conference, District



These proceedings have already gone on far too long. It's time now for the FCC to once and for all affirm its earlier decisions (based on the 1996

Communications Act requirements) that the Bell companies were precluded as of the spring of 1997 from continuing to charge abusive, anti-competitive and discriminatory rates to their competitors, the independent payphone providers.

Of course, as one would expect, the Bell companies have been very active in using their resources to put off a day of reckoning for their past overcharging. Their efforts have in large measure been the reason for delays, first before some state jurisdictions, and now at the FCC, in PSPs getting the refunds they deserve. However, several recent developments may now provide the impetus for the FCC to reach a positive conclusion to these long overdue proceedings.

Of significant import, in July 2007, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit found in favor of PSPs in the context of the NST rate proceedings. Although the issues decided by the court were relatively narrow, the decision in *TON v. Qwest* was particularly important in its findings that the burden was on the Bell companies to ensure (and not merely to "certify") that their line charges complied with the NST. Furthermore, the court held that a violation of the

NST is a substantive violation of the Communications Act (violations of which require "repairs," i.e. refunds) and that a failure to comply procedurally with the FCC's Payphone Orders and Waiver Order may also violate the Communications Act.

Once the FCC's staff has had the chance to fully review this latest decision, which we have put before them in the official docket, we believe the agency will finally be in a position to rule on these proceedings, perhaps by year end.

### Universal Service Fund

With billions of dollars in support payouts at stake, the federal Universal Service Fund (USF) remains a highly political issue in Washington, D.C. Since many rural telecommunication providers receive substantial support from the USF, members of the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives representing rural areas of the country have made maintaining and even expanding the USF a legislative priority.

In 2006, APCC was able to get language included in the primary USF legislation to allow the FCC to consider exemption of de minimus industry segment payors into the USF fund, thereby advancing our

efforts for payphone service providers to be exempt from future USF payment obligations. Although that specific legislation was set aside due to the change in control earlier this year of Congress and the committees with jurisdiction over telecom issues, the APCC will continue to work for similar successes in any USF legislation put forward by the current Congress.

### Americans with Disabilities Act

In July of 2004, the federal Access Board released its revised accessibility guidelines (Revised Guidelines). For PSPs, the primary provision to be aware of in the Revised Guidelines is a new requirement that the side reach range for public payphones would be reduced from the current 54 inches to 48 inches. In addition, under the new guidelines, payphones would be required to provide volume controls allowing for a gain up to 20 dB as compared to the present 18 dB gain requirement.

In response to the efforts of APCC and the public communications industry, the Access Board made one significant change to its initially proposed guidelines by providing for a "grandfathering" clause that protects against any requirement to reduce the height of existing public phones or replacements or upgrades of existing phones, where the same enclosure or pedestal is not changed.

Although the Access Board is responsible for developing the accessibility guidelines, the U.S. Department of Justice is required to adopt final regulations implementing them. To begin the process of adopting any new regulations, the Department of Justice issued an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) in 2004.

In response to the ANPRM, APCC filed critical comments with the Department of Justice in May of 2005, arguing that the needs of individuals with disabilities would be better served by maintaining the existing access guidelines for payphones. APCC believes the Revised Guidelines would put an undue burden on independent PSPs and would work at cross-purposes to the ADA by causing the removal of payphones that otherwise would be available for use by the disabled and other Americans. In addition, APCC pointed out that adopting the Revised Guidelines for payphones would run counter to the Congressional mandate in Section 276 of the Communications Act of 1934 to ensure the "wide-spread deployment" of payphones.

The Department of Justice still must issue a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) to formally propose the adoption of any revised accessibility guidelines. Such an NPRM would require another

comment period before the department can begin to finalize its adoption of any revised guidelines. It is unknown at this time when the department will issue an NPRM, although the Access Board has indicated it could be several years. Until the new revised guidelines are adopted by the Department of Justice, the current accessibility guidelines remain in effect.

### Voice over Internet protocol (VoIP)

The impact of voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) on the payphone industry has yet to be fully determined. Whether it will offer PSPs a less expensive alternative to their current dial tone charges is yet to be seen. And questions remain whether use of this technology might provide carriers with an opportunity to try and avoid their dial-around compensation requirements. However, the APCC is working hard to make sure the latter does not happen.

In 2006, the APCC was successful in obtaining inclusion of language in both the primary U.S. Senate and House bills dealing with the responsibility of VoIP providers to pay dial-around compensation and maintain payphone coding digits in their transmissions. We also have aggressively pled this same requirement in various FCC proceedings that might be used by some IP-enabled carriers to attempt to justify any failures to pay.

### Conclusion

While the independent payphone industry will continue to face important legal and regulatory issues, it is important for PSPs to know that progress is being made. As indicated above, APCC will continue to "hammer" away to promote and protect the interests — and rights — of independent payphone providers.

### Additional information

Additional information on the many legal and regulatory issues facing PSPs can be found in the Legal & Regulatory section of the APCC Web site, [www.apcc.net](http://www.apcc.net). In addition, APCC members can download memos on specific legal topics, including how to prepare your annual FCC Form 499-A and Form 159 filing. APCC members also can contact me at [dcollins@apcc.net](mailto:dcollins@apcc.net) or (703) 739-1322, ext. 225 with questions on legal or regulatory issues. ■

Dan Collins is corporate counsel for the APCC.

*Editor's note:* The information contained in this article is for educational purposes only and should not be considered legal advice.

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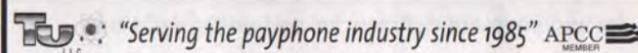
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by Donn Hotchkin

## All about AstraTel 2

Intellicall offers 15 programming tips based on the most commonly asked questions

*Editor's note:* Let's face it: no one likes to read manuals. It's much easier if you have someone around to show you how to use a machine or piece of equipment. Since that isn't always possible, the staff at Perspectives decided to create some cheat sheets, so to speak, for payphone service providers (PSPs). We've asked payphone manufacturers to address the most common questions their customers ask them, and we're going to publish the information in a series of articles. We are very grateful to Intellicall for stepping up to the plate on short notice. Look for articles from the other manufacturers in upcoming issues of the magazine.



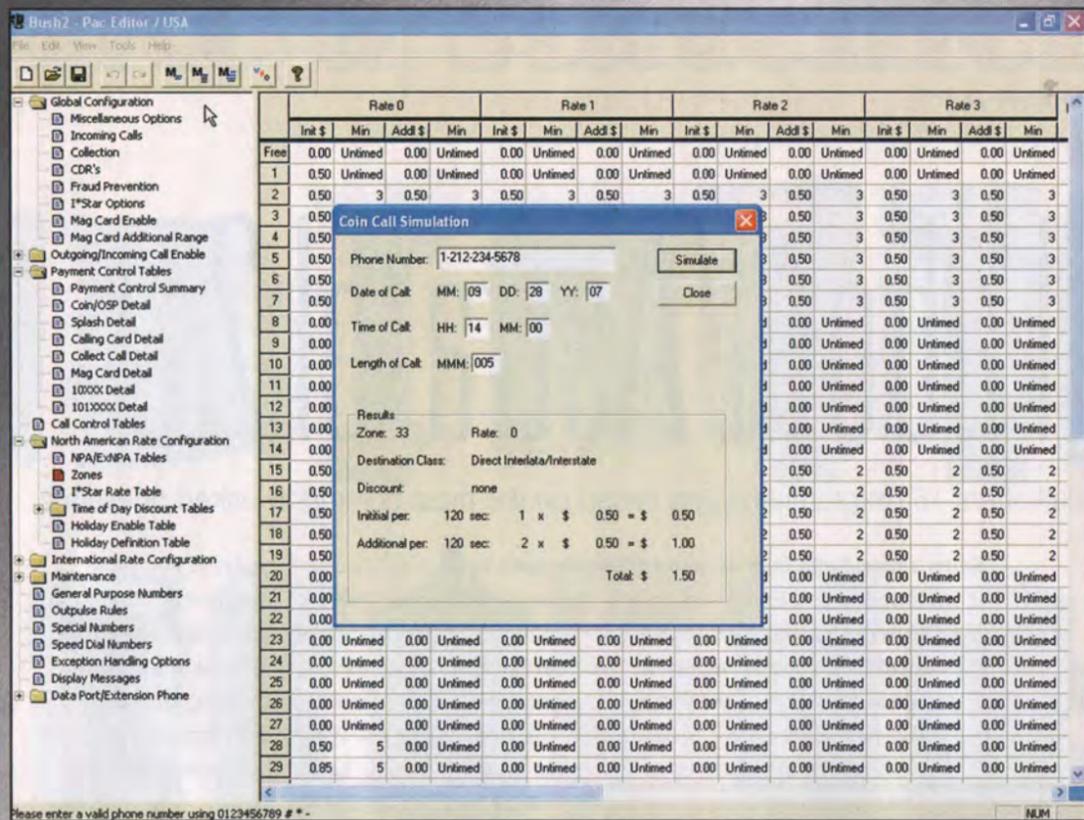


Table 1. Coin call simulation (see tip #1)

### And so we begin

Our series begins with Intellicall and the AstraTel 2. This article has 15 tips that are organized into four sections — the best tool, the most misunderstood option table, the most underused option table, and ideas for updating multiple rate files.

### Best tool

The best tool for testing a rate file is the “Coin Call Simulation” option. This allows you to enter a phone number just as it would be dialed at a phone and see the results. To use this option, just go to the tool bar at the top of the screen and click on “Tools/Coin Call Simulation” to bring up the dialog box. Enter the phone number as dialed, the time, date and length of the call, and click on “Simulate.”

The results will tell you which zone is being used, which rate band applies, the destination class, any discounts applicable, and the cost of the call. Should the call come up as “Invalid,” first check the dialing format by dialing the number differently and then make sure the number is assigned to a valid rating zone.

### Most misunderstood option table

The “Call Control Tables” contain the options to control fraud issues. These options take effect after the number(s) have been outpulsed and are intended to prevent fraud issues. (Please refer to Table 2.)

### 2 Answer detection

“Regular Answer Enable” should be enabled, as this engages the voice detection circuits that provide the most accurate form of answer detection.

“Keypad Answer Enable” can be enabled as a backup should the “Regular Answer Detect” not respond and the keypad is used. This will force the call into answer detect when a key is depressed. This is normally used on calls to answering and beeper services.

### 3 Wink action

Our recommendation is to select “Kill Keypad and Outpulse 111.” When a wink (loss of loop current) is detected, the possibility of secondary dial tone occurs and opens the line for fraud. However, with this option selected, the phone will outpulse the DTMF digits 111 and disable the keypad.

### 4 Wink ignore duration

This option determines how long to delay before responding to a “wink.” The recommendation is to set this option to 5 (5 seconds). This allows “winks” to occur during the first five seconds of the call before the “wink action” options are enforced.

### 5 Max call duration

Calls can be limited by utilizing this option. Normally used in a prison-type environment, it is also commonly used to limit operator service provider (OSP) calls. The option is in minutes.

### 6 Keypad delay

The option is set in seconds and determines how long the keypad will be disabled on completion of the phone’s outpulsing. Our recommendation is to set this to a minimum of three seconds. This will disable the keypad for three seconds, which is the normal central office (CO) timeout for time between digits.

### 7 Keypad on max

This controls how long the keypad will be active after the outpulsing occurs. Our recommendation is to set this to 120 seconds. This allows the patron to

have keypad activity for two minutes after the number is outpulsed (and then the keypad is muted). This reduces the possibilities of fraudulent calls.

### 8 Splash active

OSPs have the option of sending a splash tone back to the phone when they cannot process the call. Our recommendation is to set this option to 90 (seconds). Setting this option for longer periods could affect the battery efficiency of the phone.

### 9 Splash DTMF digits

Set this to the requirements of your OSP. The most common is the B tone.

### 10 Billing delay seconds

This option allows you to select how many seconds after the phone determines “answer” that it will collect the money. For example, the default (0 or 2) means that if the phone goes on hook in less than two seconds after answer detect is declared, the money will be returned. This is a valuable option when the local exchange carrier (LEC) does not return SIT (special information tones). This can be accomplished by setting the option to “10” (10 seconds), as the time can be set for say 10 seconds.

	Regular Answer Enable	Keypad Answer Enable	Polarity Reversal Enable	Timed Answer Enable	Timed Answer Period	Wink Action	Wink Ignore Duration	Max Call Duration	Keypad Delay	Keypad On Max	Splash Active	Splash DTMF Digits	Billing Delay Seconds
1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	0	Kill Keypad & Outpulse 111	5	F	0	F	0	0000	2
2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	Kill Keypad & Outpulse 111	5	5	3	120	0	0000	2
3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	0	Kill Keypad & Outpulse 111	5	F	0	F	0	0000	2
4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	0	Kill Keypad & Outpulse 111	5	F	0	F	0	0000	5
5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	0	Kill Keypad & Outpulse 111	5	F	3	120	0	0000	2
6	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	0	Kill Keypad & Outpulse 111	5	F	0	F	0	0000	2
7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	0	Kill Keypad & Outpulse 111	5	F	0	F	0	0000	2
8	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	0	Kill Keypad & Outpulse 111	5	F	0	F	0	0000	2
9	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	0	Kill Keypad & Outpulse 111	5	F	0	F	0	0000	2
10	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	0	Kill Keypad & Outpulse 111	5	F	0	F	0	0000	2
11	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	0	Kill Keypad & Outpulse 111	5	F	0	F	0	0000	2
12	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	0	Kill Keypad & Outpulse 111	5	F	0	F	0	0000	15

Table 2. Call control (see tips #2-10)

Special Number	Zone	Destination Class	Primary Call Control	Secondary Call Control	Primary Outpulse Rules Index	Secondary Outpulse Rules Index
1	911	Free Emergency	1	1	None	None
2	1911	Unused Emergency	1	1	None	None
3	211	Free Service	1	1	1	1
4	711	Free Direct Free Call	1	1	10	10
5	811XXXX	Free Direct Free Call	1	1	None	None
6	311	Free Emergency	1	1	None	None
7	411	28 Information	1	1	None	None
8	1411	28 Information	1	1	None	None
9	5551212	Invalid Information	1	1	None	None
10	15551212	Invalid Information	1	1	None	None
11		Unused Direct Free Call	1	1	None	None
12		Unused Direct Free Call	1	1	None	None
13		Unused Direct Free Call	1	1	None	None
14		Unused Direct Free Call	1	1	None	None
15		Unused Direct Free Call	1	1	None	None
16		Unused Direct Free Call	1	1	None	None
17		Unused Direct Free Call	1	1	None	None
18		Unused Direct Free Call	1	1	None	None
19		Unused Direct Free Call	1	1	None	None
20		Unused Direct Free Call	1	1	None	None
21		Unused Direct Free Call	1	1	None	None
22		Unused Direct Free Call	1	1	None	None
23		Unused Direct Free Call	1	1	None	None
24		Unused Direct Free Call	1	1	None	None
25	18005551212	Free Information	2	2	None	None
26	1XXX5551212	29 Information	2	2	None	None
27	1XXX375XXXX	Invalid Direct Free Call	1	1	None	None
28	950XXXX	Free User Defined Type 1	1	1	None	None
29	1800950XXXX	Free User Defined Type 1	1	1	None	None
30	1XXX950XXXX	Invalid User Defined Type 1	1	1	None	None
31		Unused Direct Free Call	1	1	None	None

Table 3. Special numbers (see tips 11-13)

### Most underused option table

**11** The "Special Numbers" table is a powerful tool to route particular dialing patterns to a desired destination number. There's room for 100 individual entries. Many of you know that local and state governments are now assigning several N11 dialing patterns (211, 311, 511, and 811) to be directed to a designated service (for more information, see the June 2007 issue of *Perspectives*). In some cases, when one of these numbers has been dialed, it's required that the caller is able to access a toll-free number. This is one of the processes that can be accomplished in this table.

It's important to note that the software scans this table from top to bottom looking for an exact match as each digit is dialed by the patron. When a match occurs, the phone will outpulse the specified digits. This can cause problems if the special numbers are not in the correct order.

For example, if 1234 is the entry for special num-

ber 10 and 12345678 is the entry for number 11, the phone would outpulse the 1234 parameters every time, as it would be an exact match and therefore it would never make it to the 12345678 entry. When there is no match to the dialing pattern here, the software then proceeds to process the call though the NPA/ExNPA tables.

To set up the 311 example, the 311 dialing pattern must be entered into one of the special number entries. Next select a rate zone. The call can be free or you can charge for it. Now assign a destination class. Our recommendation would be to designate this class of call as a "Service" call. This will simplify the process of sorting through the "Call Detail Records" to determine how many of these types of calls were made.

Next, assign the "Outpulse Rule," if it is to go out as dialed, set this option to "None." Should the call need to be rerouted to a toll-free number, for instance, build the outpulse rule and assign this

special number to that rule. Assign a Call Control Index to it that fits this type of call.

### 12 Tracking dial-around calls

Another use of this table can be to help track dial-around compensation calls. Enter 1800XXXXXXX, 1888XXXXXXX, 1877XXXXXXX, and 1866XXXXXXX (Xs are wild cards) as special numbers at the bottom of the table (90 and above). Set the "Destination Class" to one of the "User Defined (1 - 5)." This makes it quite easy to sort the "Call Detail Records" by destination class with a program such as Excel, and you'll get a fairly accurate account of how many calls have been made.

### 13 Testing a phone

A more creative use of this table is to use it as a tool for testing the phone's operation. Enter a special number of 1234567890. Assign this to an outpulse rule that will dial the office. Instruct your collectors/technicians to dial the number when they're at the phone.

A call that goes through tells you that the keypad is working and also gives you the location of the collector/technician. For added testing, charge 40 cents for the call. The collector/technician should then deposit a nickel, dime and a quarter for the call to go through. Now the coin acceptor, answer detection, handset, and escrow relay will be tested. So that your collector/technician doesn't have to keep a bag of change with him, assign this particular call to a Call Control Index that has the "Billing Delay Seconds" set to 60. This would allow him to have a short conversation, hang up, and get the money back.

### 14 The ease of updating multiple rate files

**14** Saving changes After making changes to a rate file, export those changes to a file that can be applied to any number of other rate files. Save the changes that were made by doing a right click on the option and select "Mark." Do this to all changes made throughout the rate file. The standard Windows functions of Shift-Left Click and Ctrl-Left Click can be used to mark multiple rows and/or columns.

After marking all the changes, select the File/Export option from the tool bar. Next, select "Export Marked" to save the changes to a file. A dialog box will pop up asking for a name for the file and where

it should be saved. The file will be saved with an .apc extension.

### 15 Applying changes

The ability to apply this change to multiple files is possible through the "Batch Import" program. Start the "Batch Import" program and select the name of the .apc file you just created. A dialog box will appear and display all the rate files if they are in the same folder. If not, you can select the proper folder where the rate files reside.

Select the files to be modified; again the standard Windows functions of Shift-Left Click and Ctrl-Left Click can be used to mark multiple rows and/or columns, and then select "Open." This will apply the changes to all files selected and a dialog box will appear that states how many files were modified and if any errors were encountered. ■

Donn Hotchkin is co-owner and vice president of Intellicall Inc. He started with the company in February of 1986 and has held various technical and management positions during that time. He can be reached at (800) 800-9091, or via [tech.support@intellicall.com](mailto:tech.support@intellicall.com).

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# psp spotlight

by Flori Meeks

## A true entrepreneur

John Palumbo has been able to shift his business plan as needed in his nearly 30 years in the business world

John Palumbo has never been afraid to try a new challenge. It's that attitude that has helped him succeed in business, whether that business has involved carpentry, detailing cars, or his current specialty: payphones.

Palumbo, the owner of P.T. Solutions in Crawfordville, Fla., has been working in the payphone industry for 15 years. Not only did he find his own way in this field, he wrote a guide to help newcomers do the same. "I've always had a soft spot for the little guy," says Palumbo, the single dad of a 3-year-old son. "People thought they were going into nice mom and pop type businesses, and they found it's highly technical."

During the 10 years P.T. Solutions has been in business, it has had as many as 16 phones — all in the Crawfordville area, which is about 20 miles south of Tallahassee. "We've had a few good sites," Palumbo says. "Ten were good for a number of years, but the area has been changing. We've been seeing a lot of growth and development. Businesses come, and they're replaced by others."

During the last year, Palumbo's route was down to two phones, and he has been bringing in income through repair work. He accepts phone equipment from throughout the United States and Puerto Rico, and he's starting to take in other devices, including stereo systems.



Flexibility has been a hallmark of John Palumbo's career.

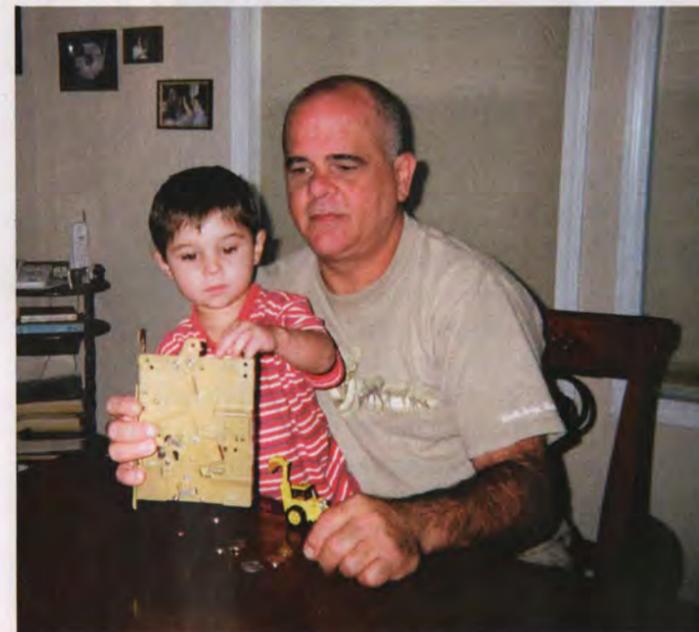
That kind of flexibility has been Palumbo's trademark from the beginning.

### Eye for details

Palumbo got his first taste for entrepreneurship in the 1970s, after graduating from high school in Fort Lauderdale. "I was a bartender for six years," he says. "The whole time I was doing that I wanted my own business."

In 1979, while he was still tending bar, Palumbo launched his first venture, a car detailing business he named Duck's Back Enterprises. "It was lucrative, but it was so labor intensive, especially as a one-man operation."

Not that Palumbo had a prob-



Palumbo is happy to teach his 4-year-old son, Victor, the value of working with your hands.



lem with work. He also brought in income as a carpenter during that period, and he started taking college classes. Palumbo shifted his attention for a while from business to human services. After earning his degree in paramedic technology in 1981, he spent four years as a paramedic. And from there, he started focusing on helping children. He worked for a pre-school and managed several facilities for abused and neglected children. Palumbo also managed a housing facility for emotionally disturbed and handicapped teens and adults.

### New connections

Palumbo might have stayed in human services, but he and his wife at the time relocated to the Crawfordville area. Her son was starting school, and they liked the district there. "It was a nice place to move to," Palumbo says. "It has the nicest countryside and woods."

At that point, Palumbo wanted to find a job, and he found it with Communication Connection in 1992. The payphone company was only several years old when Palumbo came on board as shop manager. Palumbo managed nearly every aspect of the shop, from administrative duties to shipping and receiving. It was a hands-on introduction to the industry. "I wasn't exactly out of my element because it was a management position, but I was new to payphones," Palumbo says.

Seeing the company grow was a satisfying experience. "I really took to it," he says. "When I started

it, and I liked it, I did what I always do. I focused intensely on a goal. The knowledge I gained there allowed me to have a home-based business."

### Reaching out

Palumbo, who never forgot his early interest in entrepreneurship, established Payphone Technical Solutions in 1997. After a couple of years of business, he wrote his how-to book for others in the field: "The Payphones Service Manual for Independent Payphone Service Providers." "I advertised it as the instructions that don't come with your payphones," Palumbo says. "I wrote it for beginning guys with no technical knowledge. That was pretty successful for several years."

Not only did Palumbo's manual have advice on servicing payphones, it included information on utilizing computer technology to manage a route. "In the 1990s, computers were still a new thing in the house," he says.

After the success of his self-published manual, Palumbo started publishing pamphlets for other businesses as well. Palumbo, again, was willing to delve into multiple areas to keep the income flowing. He was printing business cards, T-shirts and other advertising pieces. "We were very diverse in the beginning," he says.

Not only that, but Palumbo started building computer systems and selling them. For a short time, he provided technical support for computers, but ultimately found it difficult to compete with larger com-



Technician Frank Trombetta has been a friend of Palumbo's since high school.



Palumbo has expanded his repair business to include home stereos, amplifiers, radios and game systems.

panies on this service. There was a period when he dropped most of his side operations and kept his focus on his route and payphone repairs.

However, when new opportunities to diversify arose, Palumbo grabbed them. "Just like so many other payphone providers diversify, we've been taking on other repairs: home stereos, amplifiers, radios, game systems. I had to redesign myself. There's a desire in me to do this kind of work. Repairing electronics is kind of like doing puzzles or riddles. That's what drives me."

In 2006, Palumbo changed the company name to P.T. Solutions to reflect his wider service base. He has been investing a lot of time in research and development as he strives to gain additional areas of expertise. "Each device has a learning curve associated with it," he says. "We're controlling

our growth and making sure we're doing the right thing with each device."

### Keeping in touch

Meanwhile, Palumbo has made a point of staying plugged into the payphone industry. He has been a member of the American Public Communications Council Inc. (APCC) since he established Payphone Technical Solutions. "Through the 90s when I had my route, it was tough. I'm in a rural area, and I had to work to keep my costs down."

For him, APCC's advocacy efforts and services for payphone service providers (PSPs) have been an important part of his company's success in the industry. "The dial-around compensation made a real difference in my revenue," he says. "I've always watched with interest what the APCC is working on. Without that kind of support, payphone guys would be floundering."

### Reasons for hope

Palumbo has empathy for fellow providers in his state who have experienced some challenges. He has seen PSPs downsizing their routes. Hurricane damage has been especially devastating for some of the companies there. "But there are a lot of success stories, too," Palumbo says. "Diversification has really been a rebirth for some. Being smaller and leaner and being in control has been a plus for them.

"They'll still be a force to be reckoned with. As long as the economy is struggling, there will probably be more need for payphones. It's kind of a recession-proof business."

And Palumbo is still sharing advice with the other guys out there. "Learn as much about payphones and computers as you possibly can," he says. "Do the work yourself, and lower your overhead."

He said he finds it fascinating to watch PSPs evolve — just like he's had to do — and find ways to stay viable. "That seems to me like real American stuff." ■

Flori Meeks is a freelance writer who is based in Houston.

**Editor's note:** Palumbo sold his last two payphones earlier this year.

## state briefs

### Indiana

Indiana Payphone Association (IPA) members received refund checks in August 2007 from AT&T-Indiana for the principal amount of end user common line (EUCL) overcharges from 1997 to 2004. According to Nikki Shoultz, counsel for the IPA, Verizon had not issued its refund checks as of press time, as it was in the process of determining the amount of principal refunds. The Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) has not yet determined whether IPA members are entitled to pre- and post-judgment interest on the principal refunds. Also pending before the IURC are decisions on the accuracy of tariffs proposed by AT&T-Indiana and Verizon for prospective payphone rates for the period Sept. 29, 2004 forward.

### New York

On Sept. 19, the Independent Payphone Association of New York (IPANY) held its annual membership meeting in East Elmhurst, N.Y. Issues discussed at the meeting included reports on recent legal and regulatory developments, 211 usage, new services test rate and refunds, recent news coverage on payphones and Verizon's dial-around payment shortfall. The meeting also included presentations by payphone manufacturers, suppliers, operator service providers (OSPs) and competitive local exchange carriers (CLECs).

It was reported during the meeting that IPANY staff continued its bi-monthly meetings with the New York City Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT) to discuss and resolve issues such as disproportionate fines, move-to-the-curb applications, building line fees, review of notices of violations, 211 implementation, reduction of building commissions to the city and presubscription to designated long distance and operator services. The IPANY board of directors had previously submitted a restructured fee schedule to DoITT that it believed was fair to both payphone service providers (PSPs) and DoITT as it penalized flagrant offenders, but considered mitigating circumstances when the violation was not the fault of the PSP or the PSP had remedied the problem.

The meeting also included a report on the newly created Street Conditions Observation Units or "SCOUT" inspection teams in New York City. The mission of the SCOUT inspectors will be to drive every city street once a month and report any conditions that negatively impact the quality of life. IPANY will be working to ensure that the SCOUT inspections do not negatively impact PSPs by leading to additional unnecessary fines.

The next IPANY board and general membership meetings will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 14. The IPANY Holiday Party will take place on Wednesday, Dec. 12.

### SPCA-TPOA

A joint meeting of the Southern Public Communication Association (SPCA) and the Tennessee Payphone Owners Association (TPOA) was held in Birmingham, Ala. on

Aug. 29 and 30. More than 100 PSPs, vendors and attorneys from across the country attended the meeting, which primarily focused on recent developments in new services test cases, FLEX ANI implementation and dial-around enforcement.

David Cotton, president of the SPCA, presented an "Inmate Communications 101" training seminar on inmate phone systems. The seminar was designed to help PSPs determine if they are interested in offering inmate phone services, how to market such services and how to choose a business partner. A DVD copy of the seminar can be obtained by calling the SPCA at (866) 305-0836. An "Inmate Communications 102" seminar is being planned for a future SPCA meeting.

Vendors also presented products at the meeting related to payphone and inmate phone systems, OSP services and alternative revenue opportunities such as video imaging, credit card clearing, advertising, air/water machines and ATMs.

It also was reported during the meeting that progress was being made in obtaining state universal service funds (USF) for payphones in Louisiana. SPCA was planning to request a hearing with the Louisiana Public Service Commission (PSC), and, if successful in getting the PSC to support USF payments to PSPs, the SPCA plans to bring the issue before the Louisiana state Legislature.

The August meeting also was the first meeting that included PSPs from Arkansas as official members of the SPCA. Two board members, Curt Selman and Troy Lee, were added to the association's board of directors to represent Arkansas members. The next joint meeting for the SPCA and TPOA will be held in Memphis, Tenn., Feb. 20-21, 2008.

In other news, the SPCA is conducting a "90-day FLEX ANI blitz" to both help members with FLEX ANI problems and to compile data for researching ways to improve dial-around collection. The association has obtained a toll-free number from Global Crossing for its members to use along with test numbers provided by the American Public Communications Council Inc. (APCC). Test sheets and instructions for testing FLEX ANI are available on the association's Web site, [www.southernpublic.org](http://www.southernpublic.org), or the materials can be sent to members via e-mail. The SPCA requests that members document FLEX ANI failures on the test sheets and then fax the test sheets to the association at (318) 256-0905. ■

## 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

**Florida Public Telecommunications Association**  
(800) 927-5050  
November 8  
Disney's Coronado Springs Resort  
Orlando

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

**Independent Payphone Association of New York**  
(718) 776-8179  
6-8 p.m.  
Crowne Plaza La Guardia  
November 14  
Holiday party  
December 12  
Location TBA

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

**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.*

# industry briefs

## product news

### Scan Coin North America Inc.

Scan Coin North America Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Scan Coin AB of Malmo, Sweden, now offers third generation self-service coin counting kiosks for supermarkets and other public locations.



CDS 820

The Cash Deposit System (CDS) 820 identifies and counts coins for a fee and issues customers receipts that they can redeem for cash. The system is designed to be easy to install and service.

The CDS 820 is a good fit for payphone service providers (PSPs) who already have relations with a wide range of site owners, along with the staff and resources they would need to service the kiosks, said Lloyd Kaiser, president of Scan Coin North America Inc.

"It serves as a good source of incremental income for them," Kaiser said. "They can simply buy the machine, install it, collect the coins and charge a fee as a source of revenue."

"It's a great opportunity to add to their existing business," said Per Lundin, executive vice president and chief operating officer. "There are many retail locations that ask for this kind of service."

Scan Coin AB was established in 1966. The company opened Scan Coin North America Inc. in Ashburn, Va. in 1979 to distribute its products in the United States and Canada. Scan Coin's products range from tabletop coin counters and sorters to quality control machines used by mints around the world.

For more information, call (800) 336-3311 or visit [www.scancoin-usa.com](http://www.scancoin-usa.com).

### ArcaTech Systems

ArcaTech Systems has developed cash recycling and cash dispensing technology for the check cashing industry.

"The company's cash recyclers and dispensers can help check cashing and convenience stores handle large volumes of cash transactions, while providing a high level of security to store employees and customers," said Aubrey Meador, vice president of

ArcaTech Systems. "We are currently expanding an in-store, check cashing program with a large national chain," Meador said. "Their employee-assisted model is providing them with improved return and increased volume as a result of their ability to help customers through the process. As the industry continues to experience such rapid growth, proven tools and technology can quickly help these outlets become successful."

The Arca2000 and Arca2600 cash dispensers automatically dispense cash to counter employees before it is passed to the customer. Transactions are faster and more accurate, ArcaTech says. For check cashing stores that offer money wires, transfers, reloadable debit cards and bill payment services, ArcaTech's Arca8000 Cash Recycler provides counterfeit detection by checking each bank note for validity before it is deposited into the safe.



Arca2000



Arca8000

LCD displays allow users to clearly see instructions on how to identify and correct the most common issues without calling a technician.

ArcaTech Systems is based in Mebane, N.C. For more information, visit [www.arcatechsystems.com](http://www.arcatechsystems.com).

### Photo Violation Technologies Corp.

Photo Violation Technologies Corp. has introduced a parking meter, the PhotoViolationMeter (PVM), designed to help customers pay more easily and avoid parking fines.

The PVM accepts payment by debit and credit cards, in addition to change. It can warn customers when they're running out of time and allow them to pay more money over the phone.

The smart parking meters have been installed for a testing period in Vancouver, British Columbia and



PhotoViolationMeter

Niagara Falls, N.Y. They received positive comments from users during a test run in San Francisco.

"On-street parking is a critical factor for cities to promote business and tourism locally so it must be easy to use and offer conveniences for the customers," said Fred Mitschele, president and CEO.

"We designed the meter so that you're not slapped with a \$30 fine simply because you ran out of change," Mitschele said. "The No-Fine feature offers you the option of automatically paying in timed increments with your credit card so you avoid the risk of a ticket, or you can take advantage of the Grace Period option. The city gives you a grace period by pre-programming a certain amount of time that you can pay for extra minutes before it turns into a parking violation. No other meter can do that."

Because it operates on a wireless network, the PVM also provides free Internet hot spots for anyone with wireless capabilities. That's a service that's valuable to the general public, along with first responders who might require a greater level of connectivity options in the face of large scale emergencies, Mitschele said.

These smart parking meters also provide additional services for city governments. The PVM photographs license plates of cars that do violate parking laws. Its sensors reset each time a new

vehicle pulls into the space. Because PVMs offer more flexible payment options, they also eliminate common problems presented by on-street parking. "Many cities are trying to collect hundreds of thousands of dollars in unpaid parking fines," Mitschele said. "Because our meter makes it easier for people to pay for parking and avoid a ticket in the first place, it saves everybody time, money and an awful lot of aggravation."

"For people who do wind up receiving a ticket, the Pay Your Fine feature allows them to pay the fine right at the meter at a discounted rate."

For more information visit [www.PhotoViolation.com](http://www.PhotoViolation.com).

## people & places

### OutdoorPartner Media Corp.

OutdoorPartner Media Corp.'s wholly owned subsidiary, Prime Point Media, was named one of the 5,000 fastest growing entrepreneurial companies in America by *Inc. Magazine*.

The ranking is based on percentage revenue growth from 2003 to 2006. The Inc. 5,000 winners will be recognized at the 2007 Inc. 500 conference in Chicago.

"Being recognized by *Inc. Magazine* is a testament to the success of Prime Point," Brodtkin said. "National advertisers have endorsed Prime Point's payphone kiosk advertising by increasing campaign sizes each year since inception, which has translated to recognition as one of the fastest growing entrepreneurial companies in America."

For more information, visit [www.outdoorpartner.com](http://www.outdoorpartner.com) or [www.primepointmedia.com](http://www.primepointmedia.com).

In other news, OutdoorPartner has acquired the assets of Mira Outdoor Media Inc. of Los Angeles.

Mira operates a network of 15,000 phone kiosks on the West Coast. Most of its advertising is for local and regional clients in Las Vegas, Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco and Seattle.

Mira's founder will be joining the OutdoorPartner team to lead the company's local sales initiative nationwide.

"This acquisition will bolster OutdoorPartner's existing southern California payphone kiosk advertising business servicing national advertisers with

an established business model for serving local and regional advertisers in Southern California," said Mark Brodtkin, OutdoorPartner's CEO. "We are also extremely excited to add a seasoned executive with proven local sales success to drive the rollout of our local business nationwide."

Terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

### Automated Vending Technologies

Automated Vending Technologies (AVT), an advanced technology vending manufacturer, has signed an agreement with Green Eye Media to install AVT's 7 inch LCD PC and digital signage software into 2,000 payphones from San Diego to San Francisco as part of a pilot program.

"Each payphone will be capable of sequencing up to 10 or more digital advertisements, generating income that we believe will be substantial," said Tommy Buzbee, AVT's national sales director. "We believe this is a remarkable achievement and an enormous step forward for our company."

This move has the potential to breathe new life into the payphone industry, said long time payphone industry specialist Sal Haro of Green Eye Media. "The payphone industry has been struggling for several years because of the introduction of the cell phone," Haro said. "Attempts to use payphones as pay per use Web portals is a challenge, but adding AVT's technology brings the potential of a digital signage media network, bringing an optimistic outlook to the entire payphone industry, combined with the significant infusion of advertising revenue."

Advertising media will be transmitted over a Virtual Private Network (VPN) structure. Local and national companies will be able to place their ads or brands over a network of existing payphones in key locations.

For more information, visit [www.avtinonline.com](http://www.avtinonline.com). ■

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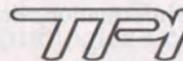
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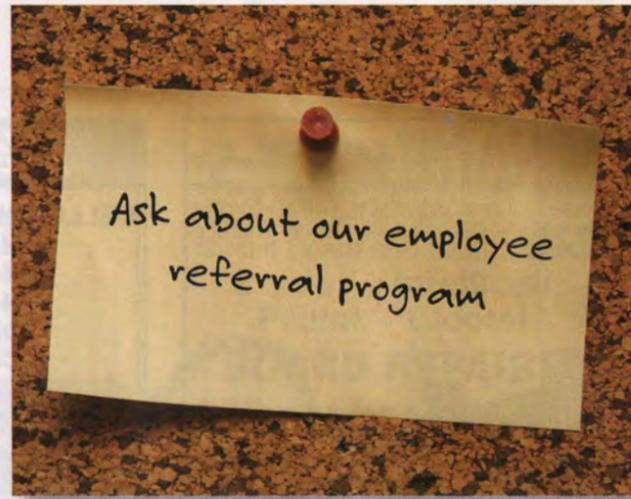
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## last word

by Stacey L. Bell



### Finding good help

Here are 10 great resources for finding great workers

"There's nothing more expensive than a bad hire," reports Vicki Abernathy, associate vice president of human resources and employee development for AlphaStaff Inc. in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and a speaker at APCC 2007. "Toxic" complainers can lower the morale of the whole company and scare off customers. Unproductive employees and disloyal workers also can dramatically harm your business.

Sadly, the costs don't stop there. "It can cost 30 percent of the annual pay for a position to replace the employee by the time you find and train a replacement. So pick good people to begin with," Abernathy says.

The first step to finding good people is casting a wide net. Abernathy suggests 10 sources for finding qualified candidates:

**1. Ask your employees.** "One of the best ways to find future employees is through current ones," Abernathy reports. Let employees know when you're looking to hire someone so they can recommend their friends, who will likely have a similar work ethic. Reward employees who find good workers with cash bonuses or some other perk.

**2. Network.** Contact your local Chamber of Commerce and tell everyone you know what positions you're trying to fill. And that means everyone — trusted vendors and industry colleagues, family, friends, neighbors and acquaintances. They may well know someone who would be a perfect fit.

**3. Go back to school.** "You can get and mold employees when they're most willing to learn," Abernathy says. She suggests targeting two-year colleges, local universities, vocational-technical schools and university alumni associations. Even talented high school students could give your business a boost at a bargain price.

**4. Support the armed services.** The military will

pay to relocate many of its personnel wherever they'd like to live. Surf online for posting boards dedicated to the armed forces, and review Monster.com's section that is specifically geared toward retired or separating soldiers. You'll need to pay for a job listing, but who better to hire than someone who has displayed great discipline and patriotism?

**5. Talk with outplacement companies.** Firms that work with companies that are laying off workers will know who is available. Similarly, if you hear a competitor is selling his route, approach his techs about jobs with your company.

**6. Contact your state's unemployment office.** Check your state government's Web site for links to workforce readiness or unemployment programs.

**7. Get with a government program.** Not only could you find great help, but you also could score a tax credit for hiring from this pool of workers, such as people who are transitioning from welfare into the paid work force.

**8. Surf niche job Web sites.** Information technology specialists, accountants and bookkeepers — many different disciplines have professional associations with Web sites dedicated to connecting talented workers with good job opportunities.

**9. Visit major Web sites.** Review resumes on Monster.com, HotJobs.com and CareerBuilder.com. "It takes some work to sort through all of the candidates, but the results can be worth it," Abernathy says.

**10. Develop a jobs domain.** If you're a large company with numerous jobs available throughout the year, it may be worthwhile to build your own employment Web site. YourCompanyName.jobs will attract people Googling the word "jobs." ■

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



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