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ON PUBLIC COMMUNICATION • OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE APCC®

April 2008
Volume 16
Number 3



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The Diagnostic Block

This often overlooked feature is an excellent troubleshooting tool for Elcotel phones

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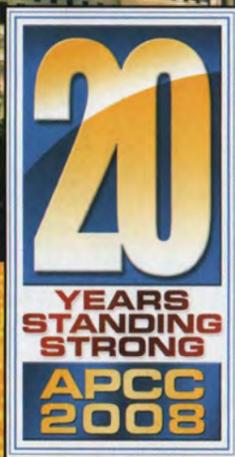
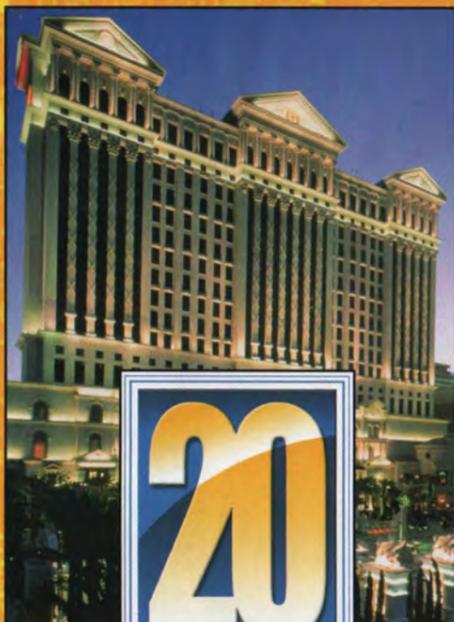
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*Official magazine of the American
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editorial

of bringing out its largest weapons against the non-payers that have continued to thumb their noses at their responsibilities and the FCC's requirements. Such actions by the commission, of course, cannot come soon enough.

If I were an executive at one of these companies, or at any of the other non-payers for that matter, thinking I could continue to hide from the FCC, these little forfeiture Orders certainly would make me think twice: "Is the FCC signaling that the heavens may soon begin to fall on our heads?"

Whether it comes in the form of significant fines, like the earlier almost half a million dollar forfeiture Order against Compass Global, or whether the agency moves directly (because of the "willfulness" and "repeated" nature of some carriers' non-compliance) to hearings to bar the companies and their principles from continuing to do business in the United States, this remains to be seen. But if I were one of those companies' owners or executives, I would be starting to get very, very nervous that our failures to comply were now catching up to us.

Let's make one thing very clear: From our perspective, not paying the DAC that's owed is stealing payphone providers' money! While PSPs may be somewhat limited to obtaining civil penalties against non-payers, government law enforcement entities can have far more power to sanction non-compliance with their rules and decisions.

The non-paying prepaid card providers might just want to look at the ongoing investigations brought against them by the Attorney General in Florida to get a flavor of what sort of actions they may be courting. And it seems pretty clear, at least to me, that if these carriers were to thumb their noses at additional sanctions or processes that might be brought by the FCC, they may just want to start considering how next they could be responding to some U.S. Attorney.

Willard R. Nichols
President

From small acorns grow great oaks

On Feb. 19, the FCC released small and perhaps little-noticed forfeiture Notices of Apparent Liability against three of the dial-around compensation non-payers. In these Notices, the FCC is imposing forfeitures of \$4,000 each against International Telecom Exchange Group, West Star Telecommunications and World One Telecommunications for their failures to respond to the complaints filed against them by APCC Services.

As all of us are too painfully aware, FCC actions to hold the switch-based resellers and prepaid card providers to their DAC payment responsibilities have been far too long in coming. And fines in the small amount of \$4,000 certainly are not in and of themselves going to get the attention of these carriers or the other non-payers. But there may be something more, much more, that these recent forfeiture Notices represent.

First, the FCC is saying that it has found these three carriers to have been in willful disregard of the FCC's rules (i.e. the requirement that they respond). Second, the FCC in discussion in its Notices has once again reminded the DAC non-payers of the commission's authority to impose very large forfeitures for substantive and direct violations of their payment obligations. And perhaps of most import, these Notices may be the way the FCC is "clearing the decks" in anticipation



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by Andy Horton

Digging into the Diagnostic Block

This powerful tool built into PNM Plus allows you to quickly and accurately troubleshoot your Elcotel phones from the comfort of your office

In this article, I'm going to discuss a diagnostic and troubleshooting tool that you can utilize to optimize the performance of your line-powered Elcotel equipment. I'm going to share proven techniques to help you ensure that your calls are being routed properly and verify that the hardware components in your payphones are working correctly — all from the comfort of your favorite office chair.

As the former training director of Elcotel, I stayed current on "real world" problems and solutions by answering technical support calls in the Customer Service Department. Customers from across the country would call in seeking help with just about every problem imaginable. When technicians called in from the field, we needed to be able to quickly troubleshoot and solve the problem, even though we could not be at the payphone location. In times like this, we reached for a powerful remote diagnostic tool found in the Elcotel product line — the Diagnostic Block.

Through the Diagnostic Block feature, you can remotely view the operating conditions of the phone and diagnose the sources of problems. You can get an "inside view" into the operation of the payphone. You can see in detail the exact actions taken by the caller and the precise responses made by the payphone. You can use the Diagnostic Block to remotely diagnose:

- potential problems with the coin mechanism, coin counter, and relay;
- incorrect call routing to your chosen 1+ carrier, 011+ carrier and operator service provider (OSP);
- the functioning of the operational files that form the programming;
- fraudulent attempts to receive refunds for lost coins; and
- other attempts to fraudulently place calls from your phone.



Let's roll up our sleeves and get into the "how to" section of this article. We'll start by uploading the Diagnostic Block from a payphone.

Uploading the Diagnostic Block

To upload the file from a payphone to PNM Plus, the "Upload Diagnostic Block" command should be executed during a remote modem telemetry session. This can be accomplished during a scheduled poll or during a one-time polling session.

Once uploaded, the Diagnostic Block is stored in PNM Plus. Its file name consists of the phone's ANI appended with the letter "D" (for "diagnostic"). For example, a file named 94130882.55D would be assigned to a payphone with the ANI 941-308-8255. This file is stored in the directory where the PNM Plus database is located. This default location is C:/PNMPLUS/DBCONFIG/. See Figure 1 below.

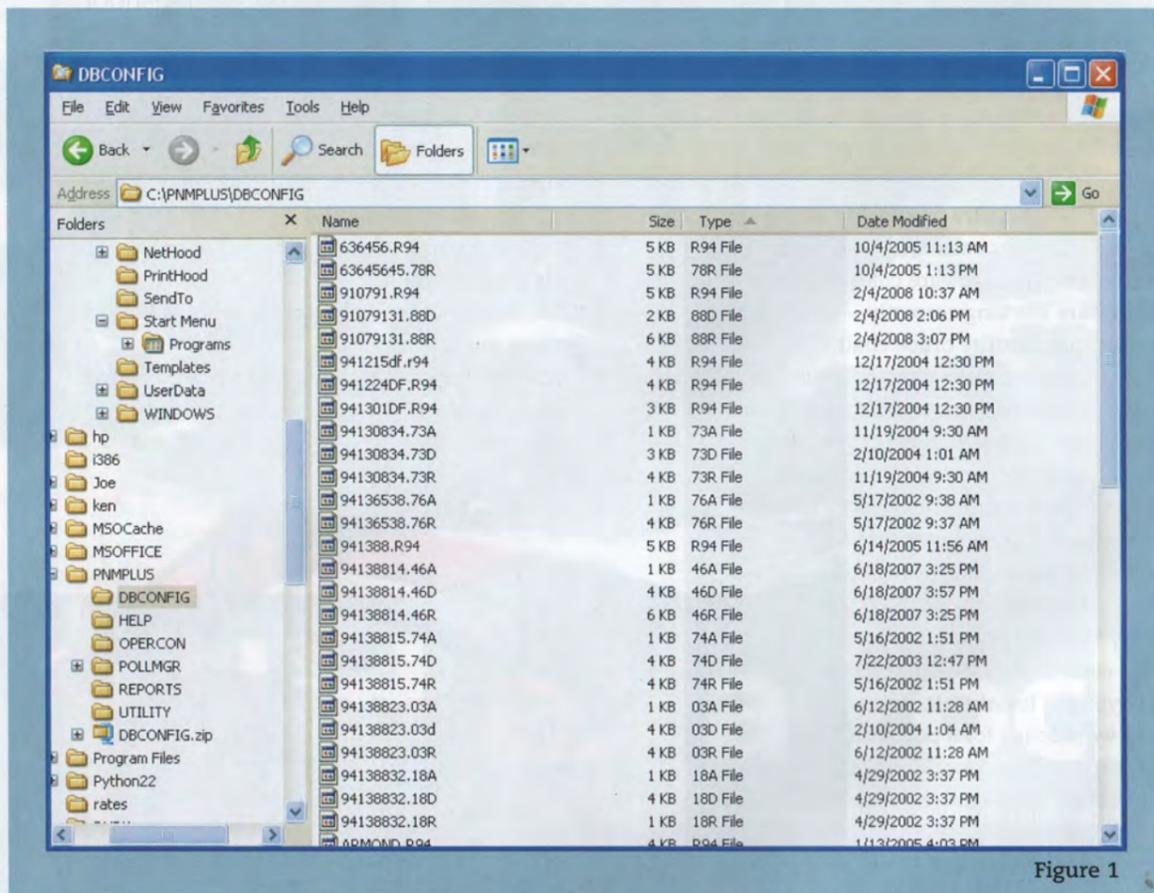


Figure 1

A quick note: As a result of the naming convention used by PNM Plus, there can be only one Diagnostic Block file created for each payphone ANI. Each time you upload the file, the old file is overwritten. Therefore, if you need a copy of the current diagnostic file for a payphone, you must rename and/or save the existing file in an alternate directory before executing an "Upload Diagnostic Block" command on that payphone.

Viewing the Diagnostic Block

Now it's time to unleash the power of the Diagnostic Block. We'll assume that you have already uploaded it to PNM Plus.

From the Operator Console Screen:

Step 1. Click on the Service Management icon. The Service Management Menu appears. See Figure 2.

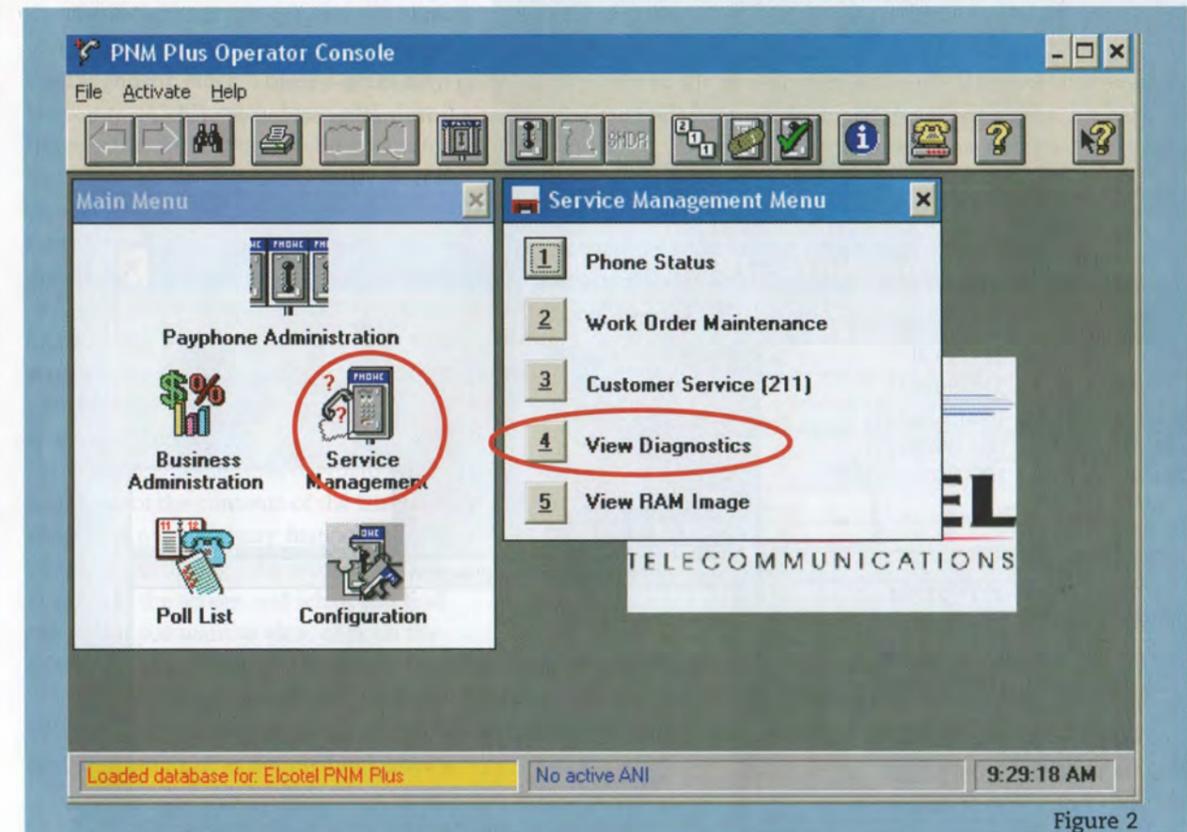


Figure 2

Step 2. Click on Button 4 (View Diagnostics). The Select Phone Information to View screen appears, as in Figure 3.

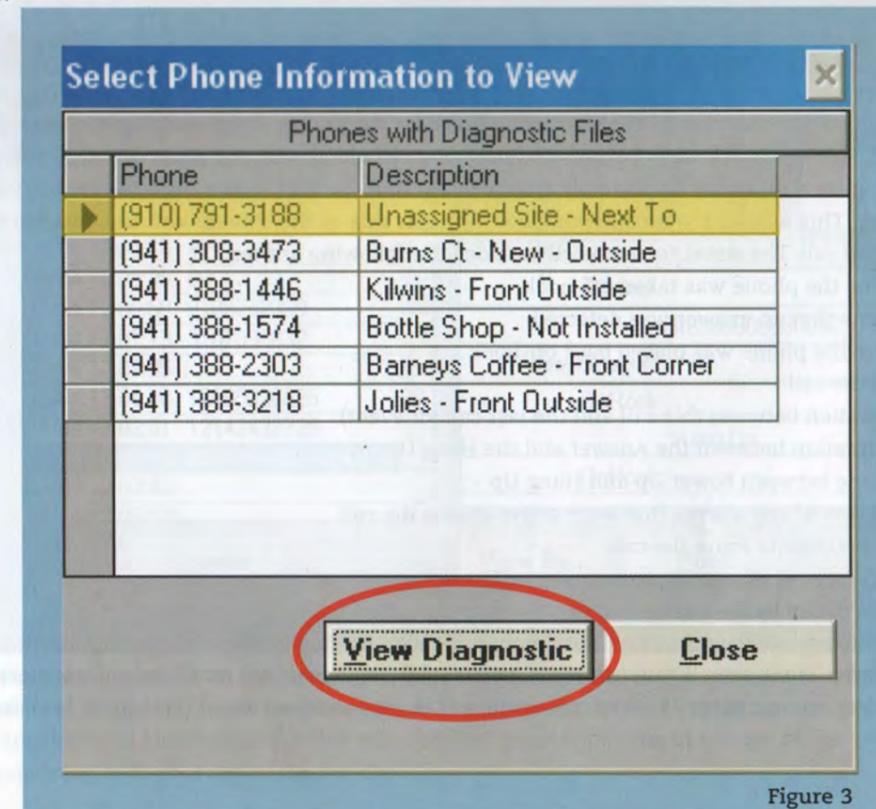


Figure 3

Step 3. Click on the box to the left of the row containing the phone you want to review. In this example, we have selected (941) 791-3188, indicated by the arrow head pointing toward the entry.

Step 4. Click on the View Diagnostic button. The Phone Diagnostic Information screen appears for the phone you selected (see Figure 4).

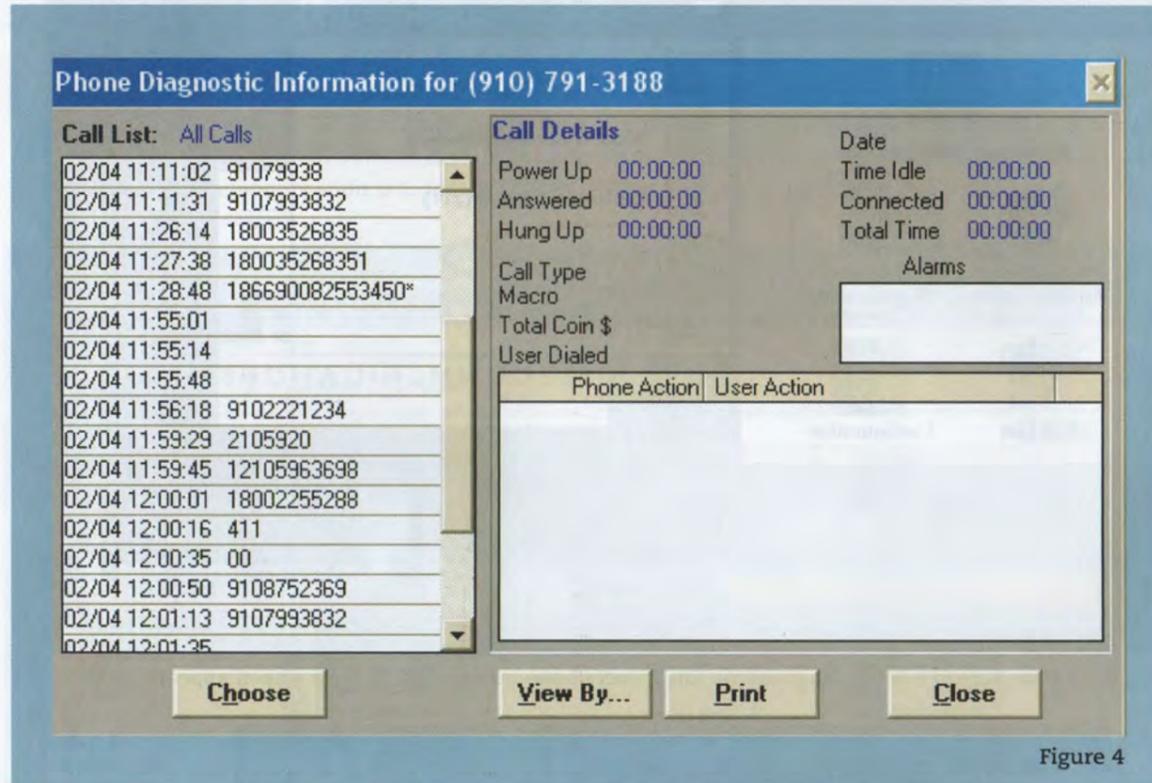


Figure 4

We are now looking at the contents of the Diagnostic Block for the phone. On the left hand side of the screen is the call list. This section details the date and time of a call along with the digits dialed by the user. You will quickly recognize a number of calls to different destinations. To "drill down" into the record, you simply click the entry. This will automatically populate the right side of the screen with the detailed information for the selected call. The detail for each call includes the following entries:

- Power Up: The time the phone was taken off-hook
- Answered: The time that an answer was detected
- Hang Up: The time the phone was placed back on-hook
- Date: The date of the call
- Time Idle: The duration between this call and the last call (or event)
- Connected: The duration between the Answer and the Hang Up
- Total Time: The time between Power Up and Hung Up
- Alarms: A description of any alarms that were active during the call
- Call Type and Macro used to route the call
- Total Coin \$: Total amount of coin deposit during call
- User Dialed: Digits dialed by the user

In addition to the above information, PNM Plus displays the step-by-step Phone and User actions in the bottom right hand corner of the screen. You can restrict your view of the contents of the Diagnostic Block by clicking on the View By... button. Figure 5 shows the options that are presented when this button is clicked.

The Select Call Category screen allows you to filter your view of the contents of the Diagnostic Block. This is a great way for you to quickly track down and view the specific information you are looking for. For example, you could verify, in real time, a request for a refund by searching for the specific number the caller had dialed. As you are about to see, the resulting record would include the value of each coin deposited, whether the call was answered, the duration of the call and whether the coin deposit was returned or collected.

While it is sometimes useful to limit your view of the contents of the Diagnostic Block, it is not necessary. Instead, you can simply scroll through the records on the left side of the screen and when you find the record you want to view, click on the desired call. The fields on the right side of the screen will automatically be populated with the details of the call.

Let's take a look at some sample call records so you can see the incredible power of this diagnostic tool. We'll start off with an easy one to follow — a record of a technician entering voice telemetry to receive the cash box amount, as detailed in Figure 6.

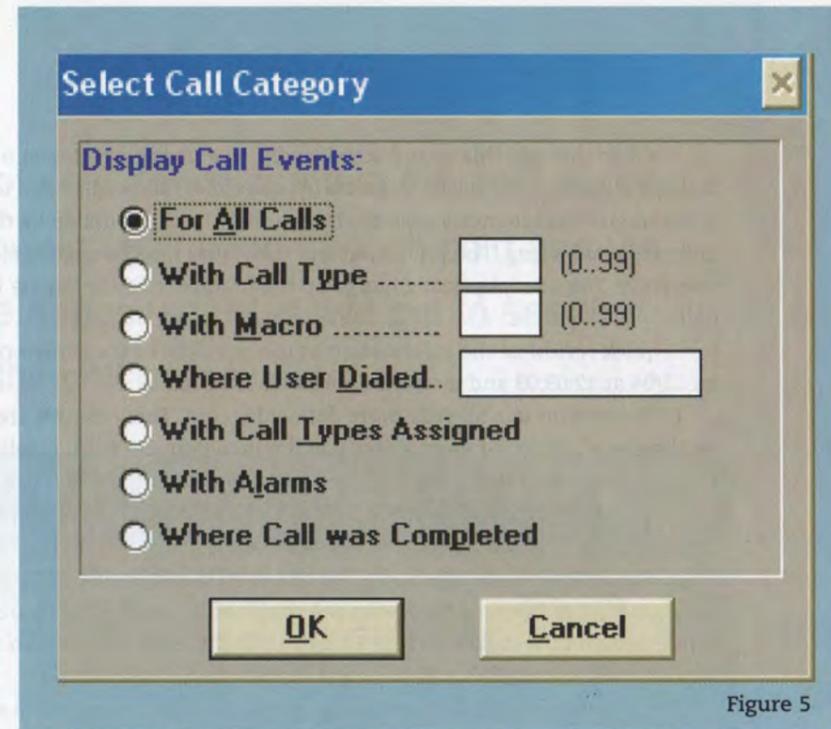


Figure 5

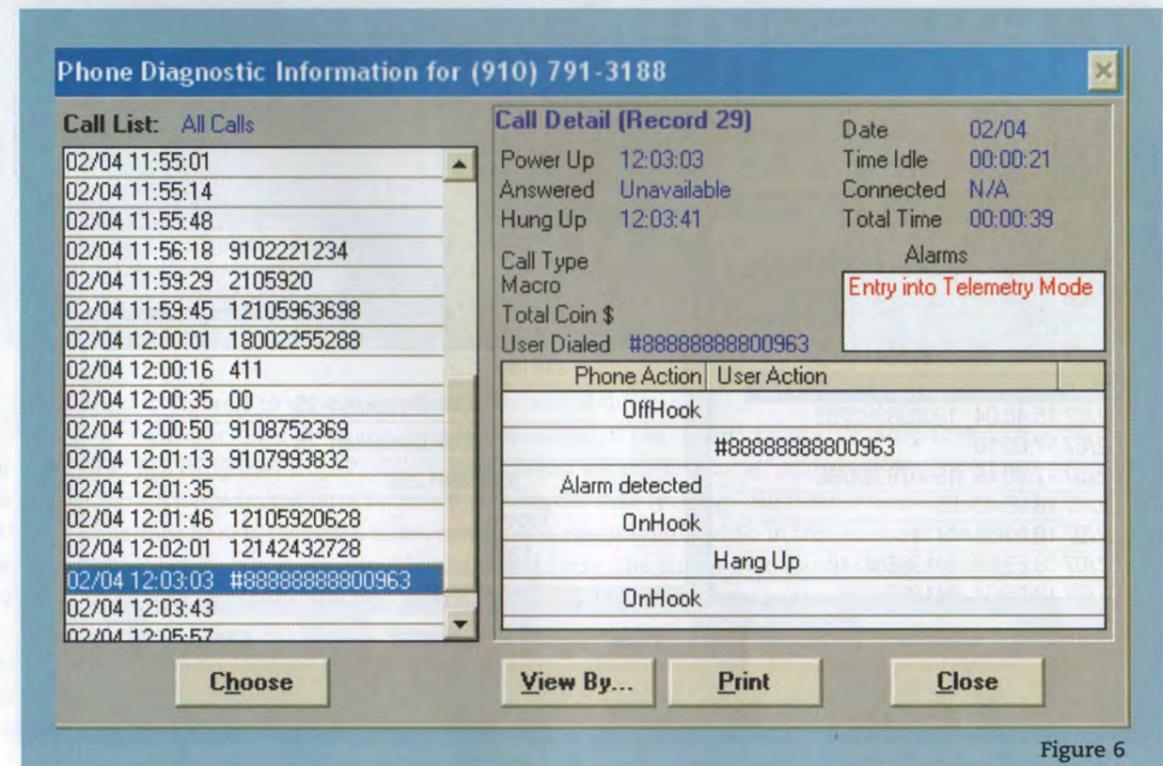


Figure 6

Notice how the details on the right side of the screen are automatically populated when the record on the left is selected. Now we'll focus our attention on the Phone Action and User Action part of the screen. The events are shown in chronological order with the first event appearing at the top of the window and the last event appearing at the bottom of the window.

We'll go through this record step by step. The phone was taken off-hook, the user (technician) dialed #88888888 (the voice telemetry bypass code) followed by 800 to get the cash box total and 963 to terminate the telemetry session. Notice that the digits dialed by the user are shown in a single, uninterrupted string. The phone detects the "Entry into Telemetry Mode" alarm and goes on-hook internally. The user physically hangs up the handset and the phone finally goes back on-hook internally.

A quick review of the information at the top right of the screen reveals that the event took place on 02/04 at 12:03:03 and lasted for a total of 39 seconds.

Let's move on to a slightly more detailed record. This time we are going to view the details of a local coin call. As you follow along, you'll notice that a vertical scroll bar enables us to scroll down through the details that make up the record. As a result, we will use two screen shots to review the entire record. We'll begin with Figure 7, which details the first part of the call, and then we'll transition to Figure 8, which details the last part of the call.

In Figure 7, we have selected a call to a local number (954-1299) on the left side of the screen. On the right side of the screen, we can see that the call took place on 02/07 at 14:21:07. The caller was connected and the call lasted for 4 minutes and 20 seconds. We can also see that the total coin deposit was 50 cents. Now let's look at the details.

The phone was taken off-hook, the user deposited two quarters and dialed 9541299. The phone dialed 954 and typed the call as Type 4 (local coin), and then dialed the remainder of the number the user dialed — 1299.

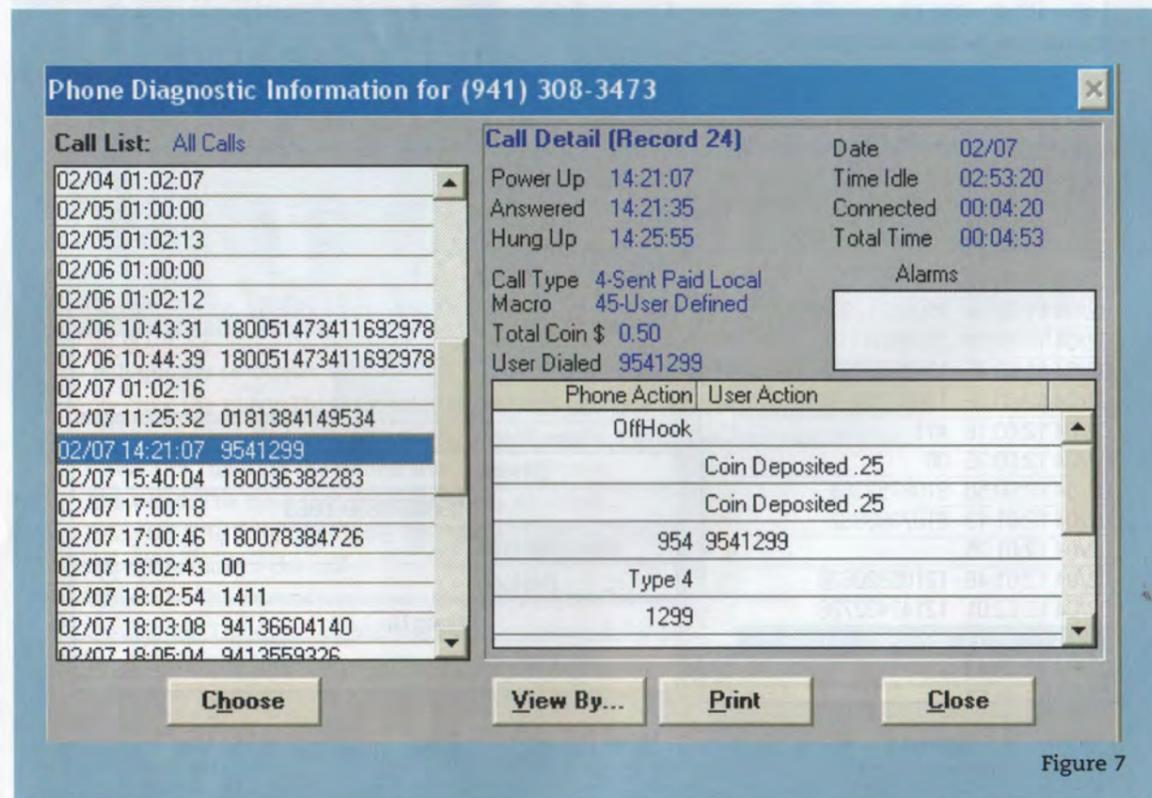


Figure 7

How's that for detail? Not only do we see that the coin deposit was 50 cents, we see the denomination of each coin and the order in which they were deposited. Plus, we get to see the number of rings before the call is answered.

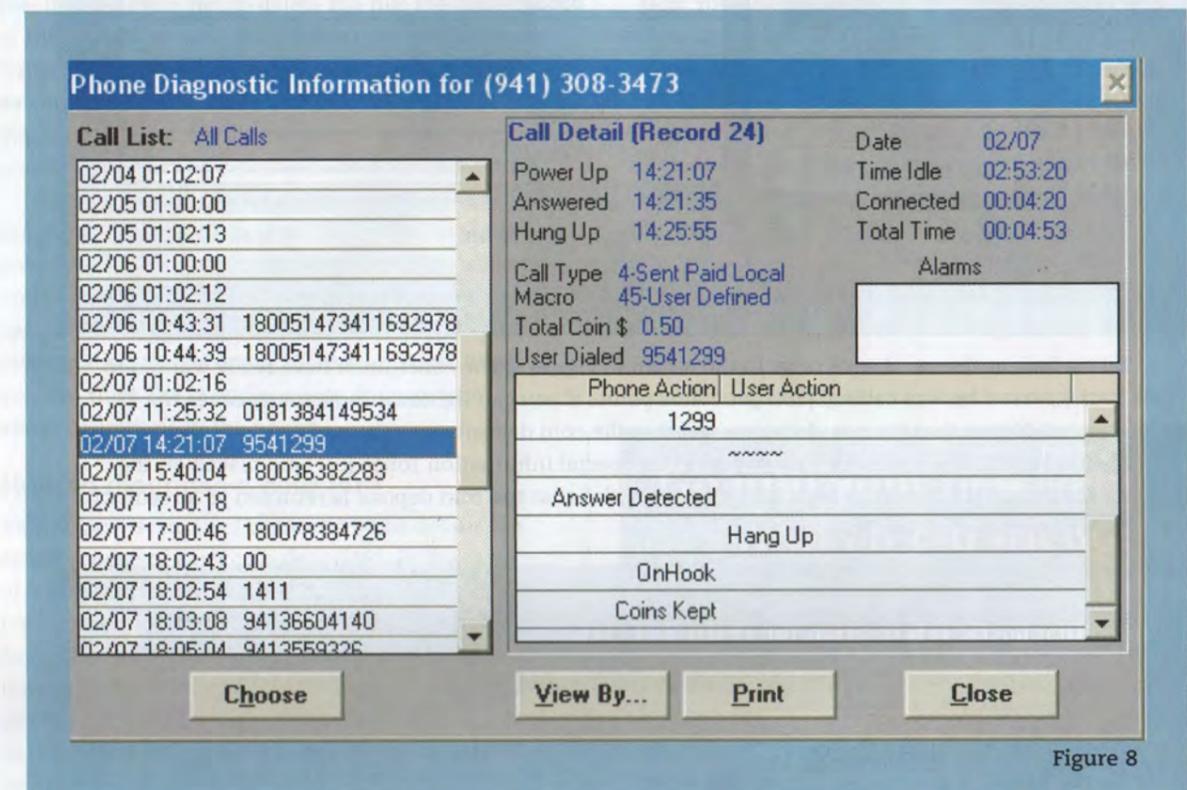


Figure 8

Let's jump to Figure 8 to view the remaining details of this call.

In Figure 8 we've scrolled down through the remainder of the record. (Ignore the entry 1299 on the first line; that is a carry over from Figure 7). Now, do you see the four little "squiggles" in a row? They look like this: ~. The technical term for this symbol is the tilde (you can call them whatever you like). What is important here is that each tilde represents a ring on the line. So in this example the phone rang four times before it was answered by the called party. The phone then detects the answer and eventually the user hangs up. The phone goes on-hook internally and keeps the coin deposit.

How's that for detail? Not only do we see that the coin deposit was 50 cents, we see the denomination of each coin and the order in which they were deposited. Plus, we get to see the number of rings before the call is answered. But what if there was no answer? Well, there will be an entry that shows rings, but no answer detection, as seen in Figure 9.

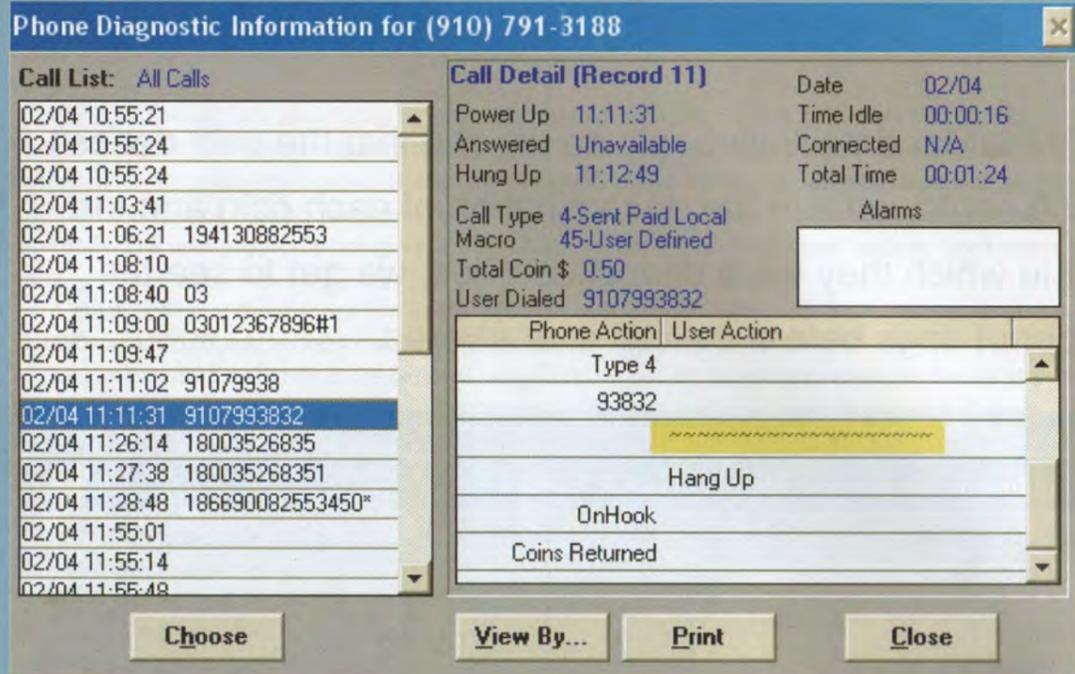


Figure 9

Take a look at the number of rings in the record in Figure 9! The caller must have really wanted to talk to the person he was calling! (You get bonus points if you can figure out how many times the phone rang). Notice that the user hung up and that the coin deposit was returned.

The Diagnostic Block will even show you when Special Information Tones (SIT) are played on the line by inserting "SIT-Tones" as seen in Figure 10. Notice that the coin deposit is returned as a result of the payphone detecting the SIT tone.

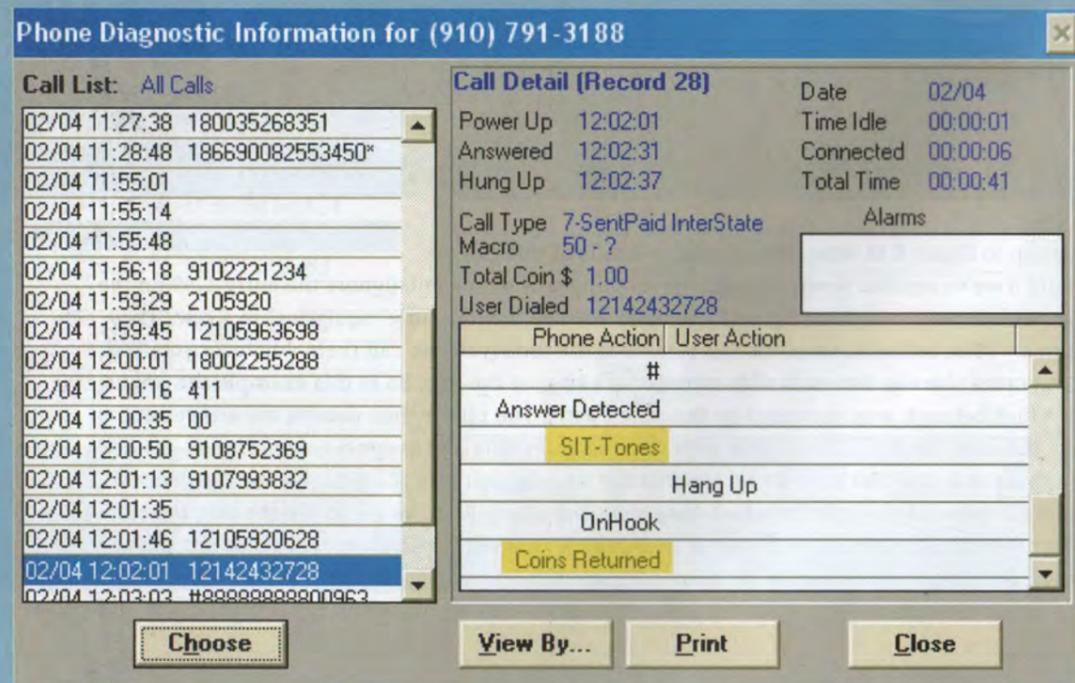


Figure 10

Many people have never used the Diagnostic Block, either because they don't know that it exists or because they think that it is too complex for them.

Once you have finished viewing the contents of the Diagnostic Block, you close it by clicking on the Close button. You will then be asked to delete this file. If you choose not to delete the file, the contents of the file will be available to you until they are overwritten the next time you contact the phone and execute the Upload Diagnostic Block command. If you want to save the file, rename it and/or copy it to another directory as discussed earlier in this article.

The Diagnostic Block can offer you a wealth of information about calls made from your Elcotel payphones. However, it records more than calls and call attempts. It also records internal events such as the triggering of an alarm. By carefully investigating the contents of the Diagnostic Block, you can trace the specific causes or triggers of alarm conditions in the phone.

How to diagnose a coin jam

As you have seen, the Diagnostic Block details the specific value of each coin deposited. In the event of a coin jam in the coin trigger (in the dime slot, for example) the PCM will receive a perpetual input from the coin trigger of a dime being present. This input will be recorded in the Diagnostic Block as a series of \$0.10 entries, indicating that there is a jam in the dime slot of the trigger switch. Now you know precisely where the technician should focus his efforts when he services the payphone.

Quickly move from discovery to mastery

Many people have never used the Diagnostic Block, either because they don't know that it exists or because they think that it is too complex for them. We've walked through the process of uploading, viewing and evaluating the contents of the Diagnostic Block. You've seen how easy it is to use. The challenge now is putting what you have learned to good use in your business.

I suggest that you invest a few minutes to upload and view some of the Diagnostic Block files from the payphones in your route. Go through the records and get a feel for the flow and presentation of the information. Drill down and investigate anything that

stands out as being different or interesting. With a little practice you will soon master this impressive troubleshooting tool.

Now you can put the awesome power of the Diagnostic Block to work for you in your payphone business. When you do, you will find that it is one of the most precise, usable and effective troubleshooting tools you have at your disposal. Best of all, you get to harness all of this troubleshooting power from the comfort and convenience of your office chair. ■

Andy Horton is vice president of sales and marketing for Talk Too Me Coin-Less Services (formerly Elcotel Coin-Less Services), an OSP based in Sarasota, Fla. He can be reached at ahorton@talktoome.com.

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by Stacey L. Bell

Have it your way

Would you like affordable employee benefits like health insurance, dental and vision care and a 401(k) plan? A professional employer organization may be the answer.

Whether you're trying to keep current employees happy, attract new workers or simply boost your own benefits package, help is available — even to sole proprietors. Professional employer organizations (PEOs) make it possible.

Fortunately, your business doesn't need to earn the annual revenue of Burger King to gain access to a similar level of benefits. The first PEOs were founded in the late 1980s, and the *Harvard Business Review* called them "the fastest growing business service in the United States during the 1990s."

In short, these organizations partner with small and large companies to oversee human resources management issues and provide a range of employee benefits. You can pick and choose among which options you'd like, which will determine how much you pay each month. Currently, nearly 3 million Americans receive their benefits courtesy of their employer's arrangement with a PEO.

The benefits of belonging

"The top three attractions when enticing employees to work for your company are pay, health insurance and a 401(k) plan. To be competitive in the marketplace and get the best people, you need to see what your competition is offering and do them one better if possible. PEOs can help," reports Mike Flagg, senior director of public relations for the National Associa-

tion of Professional Employer Organizations (NAPEO) in Alexandria, Va. More than half of the 700 PEOs operating in all 50 states belong to NAPEO.

What exactly do PEOs do? "These organizations allow companies to outsource a wide range of administrative functions, such as payroll processing and related tax filings, employee file maintenance, unemployment claims processing, workers' compen-

sation claims management and employee handbooks. They also take care of much of the employer-related paperwork associated with government compliance and benefits administration," Flagg explains.

PEOs also offer their clients' companies a wide range of benefits, such as health insurance, vision and dental care, retirement savings plans such as a



401(k) or IRA, disability insurance, life insurance, job counseling, adoption assistance, flexible spending plans and education programs. Companies simply select which specific benefits they would like to offer their employees and pay accordingly. The PEO handles all of the paperwork.

Flagg adds that beyond offering employees great benefits, the fact that PEOs manage all of the paperwork and tax filings surrounding employing workers can be a great time and energy saving benefit for company owners.

"The Small Business Administration found that between 1980 and 2000 the number of U.S. laws and regulations surrounding employment policies and practices increased by nearly 60 percent, and small business owners spent up to one-quarter of their time on employment-related paperwork. PEOs remove much of this burdensome responsibility, freeing business owners to focus on activities that will improve their company's operations and increase revenues," Flagg says.

The average client of an NAPEO member PEO is a small business with 17 employees, but professional employer organizations also serve companies ranging from one employee to those with more than 500. In the latter case, the PEO can act as an off-site partner to an in-house human resources group.

"We do have clients that are a one-person band," reports Vicki Abernathy, who is associate vice president of human resources and employee development for AlphaStaff Inc., a PEO based in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (Editor's note: Abernathy was a speaker at APCC 2007.) "PEOs are a great way for sole proprietors to get benefits such as health insurance and workers' compensation for themselves. It's difficult to say just how much money they'd save buying health insurance through a PEO versus on the open market since insurance is regulated state by state. But we find that accessibility can be the biggest issue. In some states, it's really difficult for sole proprietors to afford health insurance, particularly if they have a pre-existing condition. You'll likely enjoy a more comprehensive health care package if you purchase it through a PEO."

Joining a professional employer organization can be worth it for the health insurance access and savings alone. With health insurance premiums rising at double-digit rates yearly, individuals can quickly find themselves priced out of the market. A PEO combines employees at numerous companies

throughout a state into large groups, commanding better prices for HMO, PPO and other health insurance plans. You as the company owner simply select which type of plan you'd like and pay the corresponding premium.

Of course, payphone service providers (PSPs) also will benefit from all of the employee education, paperwork, tax filing and reporting a PEO will do on their behalf. AlphaStaff conducts webinars on various topics of interest to employers and employees and will visit a work site to train workers on safety policies and procedures.

"Once a company has grown to having five or six employees, it can be critical to consider a PEO," Abernathy continues. "You can concentrate on continuing to grow your business, and we will work to keep your employees happy. Your six employees can join with thousands of other employees throughout the state to qualify for affordable benefits they'll appreciate. And once you get to 20 employees, that's a threshold at which many firms think about hiring a human resources professional. It can be expensive to hire someone with experience — if you can even find someone. By choosing to work with a PEO, you often gain access to decades of experience for a fraction of the price you'd pay if you were to have a full-time, internal professional. It's a great way to have your own internal HR department without having to hire additional staff."

How it works

Once you find a PEO you'd like to partner with (see sidebar), you will be asked to sign a contract, which often runs year to year, Abernathy says. Most PEOs will require you to run your payroll through them, and they will charge you a fee of slightly less than 1 percent to 3 percent of payroll to provide benefits, she says. Flagg adds that some PEOs charge per employee, particularly if screening job applicants will be one of the benefits they provide. In all cases, rates are negotiable, he says.

After you've agreed on a rate and signed on the contract's dotted line, the PEO will then co-employ you and your employees.

"This means that the PEO and client company share and allocate responsibilities and liabilities," Flagg says. "The business owner retains ownership of the company and control over its operations."

But employment liability and risk management concerns can be eased because 1) the PEO will

assume responsibility for reporting and paying federal and state taxes on wages paid to employees, and 2) it will be responsible for developing and helping to enforce other employment practices. For instance, a PEO will develop policies on workplace safety, hiring and firing, employee discipline, sexual harassment, and discrimination to try to ensure that litigation will never darken your doorstep. PEO personnel also will visit your company to conduct training, explain the benefits program to employees and answer any questions.

"Employee handbooks are also an important service we offer," Abernathy explains. "Each state has specific requirements for these handbooks, and there are federal laws that must be followed. So if you're located in South Carolina, for instance, your PEO will make sure that your written policies comply with both U.S. and South Carolina statutes. When

business policies are written and distributed to employees, there is less likelihood that misunderstandings and legal difficulties will arise."

To your health

Certainly, entering into any contractual arrangement with another company shouldn't be taken lightly. For the most successful relationship, first determine which benefits best suit your needs and then follow the tips provided by NAPEO in selecting the best PEO for your company (see sidebar). In the end, hiring a professional employer organization may be your ticket to both better health care and happier employees. ■

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

How to choose a PEO

To hire the right professional employer organization for your company, the National Association of Professional Employer Organizations (NAPEO) offers the following suggestions.

1. Assess your company to determine your human resource and risk management needs. Talk with employees to learn which benefits are most important to them.
2. Meet the PEO personnel in person to make sure you have a good rapport and can work well together. Ensure each PEO you consider offers all of the benefits and services you need.
3. Ask for — and use — references. Speak not only with other clients, but also with banking and credit references to ensure the PEO is sufficiently funded to meet its obligations.
4. Check the company's administrative and risk management service competence. Does its staff have professional training or designations? How much experience do they have in human resource management? Will they outsource calls from your employees to a call center or handle them internally? See if the PEO's risk management services have been certified by the Certification Institute at www.certificationinstitute.org.
5. Verify that the PEO meets all state requirements. Each state has different rules for workers' compensation insurance and state unemployment insurance, so PEO requirements will vary by state. Visit www.staffmarket.com/peo/peo_licensing.asp to review PEOs in your area and associated registration and licensing Acts. You also may check with your state's Department of Labor, Department of Consumer Affairs or Department of Commerce to determine if a PEO has a good record, says Mike Flagg, NAPEO's senior director of public relations.
6. Understand how the employee benefits are funded. Is the PEO fully insured or partially self-funded? Who is their insurance carrier, and is it authorized to do business in your state?
7. Review the service agreement with care. Are each side's responsibilities and liabilities clearly stated and what you discussed? How can you terminate the arrangement? Are you happy with the negotiated price? Asking an attorney to review the agreement to protect your interests can be a wise choice.
8. See if the company belongs to NAPEO, the national trade association of the PEO industry, which promotes a code of ethics and several best practices among its member companies. Visit www.napeo.org/find/members.cfm.



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psp spotlight

by Flori Meeks

Stepping up to the plate

After working for Commonwealth Telephone for 17 years, Paul Morley welcomes the chance to run the company

Paul Morley has spent most of his adult life working in the payphone industry. But since he became the co-owner of Commonwealth Telephone Co. Inc. in 2004, he has had payphones on the brain practically around the clock.

"When you're an employee you can do your job and turn it off at 5 p.m.," says Morley, 41. "Now I'm always on duty. It never goes away. On Sunday nights I'm back in the office planning Monday's route."

But Morley says he's not complaining. He's grateful for the health of the company, which has about 535 payphones. Most of them are in Massachusetts, but the company has locations throughout New England. And after more than 20 years in Malden, Mass., the company has a new home in Peabody, Mass.

Family history

From the beginning, Morley has been working with a family business. His father and uncle, Peter Morley and Don Morley, spent 40 years in the coin vending industry, running jukeboxes, video games and cigarette machines. "My house was where the kids hung out," Morley recalls. "Dad brought home video games on the weekends and snacks from the vending machines." Morley's family hired him to handle video game collections and repairs in 1984 after he graduated from high school.

When the payphone industry opened to independent service providers in the mid-1980s, the Morleys jumped in with both feet. "It had the same aspects as the vending market, and we had the locations," Morley said. In 1987 the family bought its first

phones and established Commonwealth Telephone Co. "I installed the company's very first phone," says Morley, who was assigned to payphone installations and repairs.

Breaking into the payphone industry was slow going at first. Commonwealth Telephone was charging 25 cents a call, and most of the Bell operating companies (BOCs) still were charging 10 cents for payphone calls. "The late '90s was when the business really started growing," Morley says. As it was able, Commonwealth invested in new payphone technology and built up its route. At one point, the company had approximately 1,000 payphones.

The company was evolving internally, too. Don's daughter, Ann Davis, had been working for the company and learning the ropes since 1986. Around the time the company started



Paul Morley became co-owner of Commonwealth Telephone in 2004.



Co-owner Dave Dunn and his daughter Caitlin are happy because the coin mechs are clean.



The company name is listed on the van and on employee uniforms as well.



During the winter months, Morley is never far from his shovel.

growing, Don eased into semi-retirement and gave Davis more responsibility. After he passed away in 1992, she started running his share of the payphone and vending businesses with Don's partner.

Home gaming systems had cut into the coin video game market and health concerns had practically wiped out the cigarette machine sales. But the payphone market was at its peak. In 1994, Davis sold her share of the vending business to her dad's partner and



Enjoying the rare privilege of standing on the field at Fenway Park as part of a Father's Day promotion were Morley, his father Peter and sisters Kathy and Linnea. Participants played ball in the outfield and got a tour of the dugout and locker room. Morley said it was an amazing day of play where "Williams and Yaz roamed."

bought out his share of the payphone business. Davis brought in her three sisters as partners and had Morley as service manager. Commonwealth continued to grow and prosper.

A bold move

Around the time Commonwealth Telephone was hitting its stride, Morley was working as the company's service manager. At that point, he had experience with nearly every aspect of running the company.

Morley would have continued on in that capacity, however, Davis decided to move her career in a different direction. When she invited Morley to buy the company in 2004, he decided the timing was right to accept her offer. "The opportunity was there for me to take charge," Morley says. "I felt the industry was still there. Plus, this is what I did all of my life, and I knew the business inside and out."

Morley formed a partnership with Dave Dunn, the company's head technician. "After my cousin decided to move on to other adventures, I knew I needed help, and I wanted someone I could trust," Morley says. "Dave came aboard because he was a family friend, but he had proved himself over and over again over the last 14 years."

Being the company's co-owner has had its ups and downs, Morley says. "Running the show is obviously a positive aspect, but the negative part is the worrying," he says. "There are sleepless nights now."

Morley was especially troubled the first time he had to lay off an employee. The man was a reliable worker with a good attitude, but Morley had simply ran out of work to give him. "I was fretting over that for weeks," he says. "I've had to do that twice now. I didn't want to."

Currently, the company has four employees and

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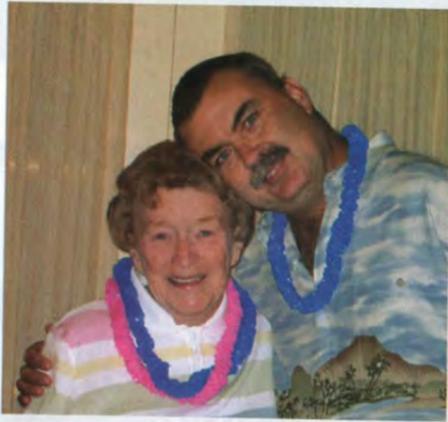
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This definitely fits the definition of "snowed in." Customers of Nina's, a c-store, were happy to have a clear path to the phone.

the part-time help of Morley's dad, Peter.

The company's success, Morley says, will depend on smart management. "It has to be run efficiently. You do have to watch every nickel and dime. You have to put out quality equipment that works so your customers are happy, and you're not spending money going out and fixing it." Morley also makes the time to check all of his phone bills for accuracy. "A bill off by \$5 every month for a year can add up to a lot for 500 phones," he says.

In many cases, it's the little things that make a difference, Morley says. He places great value in creating positive impressions. "Your employees should have clean uniforms on so people know who they are and what they are doing," he says. "You want good employees who are honest and pleasant. The employees represent the company to the public."

Morley strives to be a good ambassador himself. "Be honest and give respect to people, and you'll get respect back," he says. "That's part of my general philosophy."

In addition to its own route, Commonwealth Telephone brings in extra income by maintaining other companies' payphones throughout New England. "We have the knowledge and the technicians out on the road," Morley says. "Subcontracting out the work to us can be cost-effective for some nationwide companies."

At one point, the company offered terminals where customers could pay \$1 for five minutes of high speed Internet access. But interest in the terminals tapered off as free Wi-Fi hot spots became available. "They ran

Dunn congratulates Ethel Beecy at her retirement party. Including the vending operations, Beecy was the company's secretary for 45 years.

Peter Morley, who works part-time, is the resident coin expert.

their time, I guess," Morley says. "Right now we have all of our eggs in one basket."

Tapping into resources

Since the early years of the company, Commonwealth Telephone Co. has been active with the New England Public Communications Council (NEPCC) and the American Public Communications Council Inc. (APCC). When Davis was running the company, she was an NEPCC officer, and Morley is a long-time member.

"Over the years, they've been very, very helpful," he says. "It's been a place to share information and mutual respect for what we do." There was a time when he saw 50 to 60 people at the association meetings. Those numbers have dropped, he said, but those who attend remain strong advocates for the industry. "I believe there will always be a pay-phone industry out there," Morley says. "Public service phones will always be a necessity."

Beyond the phones

Morley does find himself married to his company these days, but he carves out time for his passions, beginning with sports. "I am an avid, avid Red Sox fan," he says proudly. In fact, Morley usually spends his vacations visiting stadiums around the country and catching Red Sox games in different locations. He and his dad have had a standing date since 1983 to attend the team's opening day together.

Morley also plays softball and loves attending college hockey games. "In the summers, you might find me making service calls on my motorcycle," he says.

Ultimately, Morley has found ways to weave his work commitments with life in general. "Life is too short. You do need to find something you enjoy doing. Do your best at it, and success and happiness will follow." ■

Flori Meeks is a freelance writer who is based in Houston. She has 20 years of writing and editing experience, and has been writing for *Perspectives* for nine years.

20
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2008

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www.apcc.net

APCC 2008 GENERAL EDUCATION CLASSES

Whether you own a payphone business in Massachusetts, Texas, California or elsewhere, we are all facing similar challenges. APCC 2008 proves that even in tough times, resilient people and companies still find ways to compete and expand into new areas. We've gathered PSPs from across the country to lead an important series of GENERAL EDUCATION CLASSES. Their industry knowledge, entrepreneurial spirit, and willingness to share their success is so inspiring, you won't want to miss a single session.

What's working - from coast to coast.

New session just added! The National Perspective: Payphones, Public Perception, and the Power of Grassroots Initiatives

We all know the headlines – "Payphones disappearing from the national landscape;" "AT&T pulling out of declining payphone marketplace." What is real, what's not? How do decisions and actions on NST, USF, and dial around compensation impact our industry's profitability? How can we influence these decisions and whose support can we enlist to help us make our case? This APCC 2008 education session is a start. Panelists will speak to the tough issues facing the payphone industry, outline APCC's objectives, and detail what you can do at the local, state, and national levels to raise public awareness and take action in support of payphones.

East Coast Keeping You in the Game: Small Change Adds Up

Semi-public phones. 1-800 numbers. Understanding your customers and your route. The future of your payphone business may lie in your ability to identify who your customers are and to think creatively about what you can bring to them. Learn what products and services this established east coast PSP is using to meet the needs of his customers while adding incremental value to his company's bottom line – without large capital expenditures.

West Coast Town Hall: Innovative Products, Services, and Marketing for Today's Independents

Get involved to get ahead. Be proactive in defining your company's future. While other payphone providers are looking to sell, this west coast PSP is growing. Come find out how he's doing it in this dynamic idea exchange. We promise you this - his excitement for our industry's potential is contagious.

Southern Hospitality: Business Opportunities and Regulatory Issues - Inmate Phones

It's rare to hear about growth potential in the payphone industry, but that is just what this session is all about. The number of independent public payphone providers moving into the inmate phone service marketplace has grown substantially over the last few years. Learn what's happening today to make this a viable opportunity for independents, the strategies and precautions required for success, and products available from some of the top vendors and manufacturers currently serving the prison marketplace.

Central Time on Business Strategies: Leave No Rock Unturned

Route consolidation. Expense sharing. Local advertising. AT&T's exit from the public payphone business. Networking. Networking. Networking. This session will be presented by PSPs who are intent on finding new revenue sources and are willing to share what they've found. Where can you find new business opportunities? How do you analyze your strengths and weaknesses? Why do some succeed and others fail? An unvarnished presentation that will address how to cut costs, where to look for additional capital, and how to protect your assets.



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Host of A & E's hit reality series "Big Spender"

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Based on the speaker's new book by the same title, Larry Winget takes on every aspect of business. From sales to customer service, to teamwork and leadership, Winget attacks traditional business wisdom and offers simple truths in his direct, thought-provoking, and hilarious style. Now the host of A & E's hit reality series, "Big Spender," Larry Winget was the highly rated guest speaker at APCC 2003. On the occasion of APCC's 20th anniversary, he's back – and better than ever.

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Computer Lab and Programming Clinic classes are open to all registered APCC 2008 attendees. Detailed descriptions of the classes can be found on APCC's web site, www.apcc.net. Just click on the APCC 2008 "Computer Lab and Programming Clinic" link.

- **Mastering Basic Word Documents**
- **The Basics of Managing Excel Spreadsheets**
- **Using APCC Services' Exclusive Web Site Tools to Better Manage Your Dial Around**
- **Using Excel Spreadsheets to Analyze Data Files**
- **Payphone Programming Clinic**

EXHIBITOR BONUS MINI SESSIONS

APCC's 2008 conference program will include a continuation of the popular Bonus Mini Sessions – the powerful information-packed series run exclusively by APCC exhibitors and highlighting some of the products, services, and resources available on the Expo Hall floor. Bonus Mini Sessions are open to all registered 2008 attendees.

A CURRENT LIST of APCC 2008 BONUS MINI SESSIONS is posted on APCC's website, www.apcc.net. Just click on the APCC 2008 "Bonus Mini Sessions" link.

20th ANNIVERSARY INDUSTRY CELEBRATION

We're going to party like it's... 1988!

Thursday, June 26, 2008
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No APCC tradeshow is complete without a little let your hair down, blow off some stress fun. This year, we're partying 1980's style.

Not sure what to wear to APCC's 20th Anniversary Industry Celebration? The look for this party is all about color, volume, and hair. So pull out the acid-washed jeans, tease up the hair, throw on some sunglasses, and get ready to have some fun.

Visit www.apcc.net for complete APCC 2008 details and updates.

Registration and Hotel Information

3 Easy Steps to Register for APCC 2008

1. Complete the APCC 2008 Pre-Registration form.

You'll need to choose between the All Inclusive Package or the Expo Hall Package. Details about what each package includes can be found on the pre-registration form.

2. Mail or fax completed form to:

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625 Slaters Lane, Suite 104
Alexandria, VA 22314

3. Contact Caesars Palace Hotel to make your room reservation.

Call Caesars Palace directly at 1.800.634.6661 or register online at www.apcc.net. Simply click on the **APCC 2008 Hotel and Attendee Registration Information** link and follow the directions for online registrations. APCC's contracted room rate with Caesars Palace is just \$169.00 a night. Be sure and reference **APCC Group Code SCAPC8** to access this special rate. Important note: you cannot go to the Caesars Palace web site and input APCC's group code. When registering online, you must use the special link provided on APCC's web site only. Pending availability, the **cut-off date for all registrations using the APCC Group Code is May 30, 2008.**

Attention Golfers!

Information on the APCC 2008 golf tournament is now available on APCC's web site, www.apcc.net.

Just click on the APCC 2008 link "Golf Tournament" for your update!

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| ALL INCLUSIVE PACKAGE Entrance to all APCC 2008 events including Welcome Breakfast, all education sessions, all Expo Hall events, the computer lab and the 20th Anniversary Industry Party. | APCC/APCCS Rate* | \$245 | \$295 | \$ |
| | Additional Member Rate (if you are registering multiple attendees from the same member company) | \$195 | n/a | |
| | Non-member Rate | \$495 | \$595 | |
| EXPO PACKAGE Entrance to all Expo Hall events and the computer lab. Tickets to other APCC 2008 events may be purchased separately. | APCC/APCCS Rate* | \$95 | \$125 | \$ |
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| INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCE SESSION TICKETS (pricing is per session) | All Attendees | \$50 (times the number of sessions purchased) | | \$ |
| WELCOME BREAKFAST TICKET | All Attendees | \$35 | | \$ |
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June 24-26, 2008

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or email APCC2008@apcc.net

For exhibitor information,
contact Jannette at (864) 278-3013
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20 Years Standing Strong

state briefs

California

Effective Feb. 23, 2008, the 657 area code was added as an overlay to the area of Southern California served by the 714 area code. The new 657 area code overlay covers the same geographic region as the 714 area code, which includes the communities of Anaheim, Brea, Buena Park, Costa Mesa, Cypress, Fountain Valley, Fullerton, Garden Grove, Huntington Beach, La Habra, La Mirada, La Palma, Orange, Placentia, Santa Ana, Westminster and Yorba Linda.

As a result of the overlay, callers in the affected area should dial 1 + area code + telephone number. Calls using the old dialing procedure of seven digits will still be completed until Aug. 23, 2008, at which time callers in the affected area will be required to use the full 10 digit dialing procedure in order for their calls to be completed.

The California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) advises that payphone signage changes reflecting the new area code should take place before Aug. 23. Questions about the required signage change may be directed to Janeen Long of the PUC at (415) 703-1246 or via e-mail at jl3@cpuc.ca.gov.

Central Atlantic Payphone Association

The Central Atlantic Payphone Association has scheduled the following meetings for 2008 — April 16 and Nov. 5. Both meetings will be held at the Sheraton Harrisburg-Hershey. Exhibit space and meeting sponsorships can be secured by contacting Marcella Farina at (717) 697-5948 or via e-mail at capaoffice@aol.com.

New York

The Independent Payphone Association of New York (IPANY) held a general membership meeting on Jan. 9 at the LaGuardia Crowne Plaza in East Elmhurst, N.Y.

It was reported during the meeting that the IPANY holiday party was a great success with more than 125 members and friends in attendance. Attendees included New York City Council members David Weprin, Melinda Katz and Eric Gioia as well as former Councilman Morton Povman. New York State Assemblymen Ivan Lafayette and Rory Lancman and Assemblywoman Nettie Mayersohn also attended the party.

IPANY representatives also discussed their January meeting with the New York City Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT). The



Dennis Danforth, Lester Shafran



Rick Scarinci, Danny Smith



Ray Mastroianni, Doug Wohl, Rick Scarinci, Lester Shafran, Bruce Sandys, Alex Steiner, Dennis Novick



Ashley Brown, Frances Schultz, Michael Schultz, Samantha Starnes



Ivan Lafayette (Deputy Speaker of the New York State Assembly), Lester Shafran, Ray Mastroianni, Eric Gioia (New York City Councilman)



Susan Unger, Alan Rothenstreich



Sher Wagner, Barry Selvidge, Linda Selvidge



Elkei Yau, Bineeta Singh, Helen Lee, Raymond Tse

infrastructure and IPANY's ability to move forward into a new mayoral administration in 2010.

IPANY also is working with Con Edison to clarify issues concerning electrical installations for payphone kiosks. Several members have reported that they have failed inspections after illuminating their kiosks. The association is working to have a citywide specification that will be distributed to all city districts.

In other news, IPANY sent letters to congressional representatives regarding the new services test refund petitions filed with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the need for refunds.

Additional IPANY meetings for 2008 are scheduled for May 14, July 9, Sept. 10 and Nov. 12.

association addressed the following issues with DoITT: reducing the \$2,000 fines for violations (except no access to 911); fines not being imposed until after at least two inspections; and the "out of order" handset sticker issue.

The association also addressed the extension of the payphone franchise issued by New York City beyond September/October 2010, when the initial 11 year franchise expires, including the need to project telephone importance to the city's communication

Ohio

Monthly conference call meetings of the Payphone Association of Ohio for 2008 will be held on the third Thursday of each month, except the months of April and October. For the remainder of 2008, conference calls will be at 11 a.m. (EST) on May 15, June 19, July 17, Aug. 21, Sept. 18, Nov. 20 and Dec. 18.

For the months of April and October, in-person meetings will be held at 10:30 a.m. (EST) on April 10 and Oct. 9 at the Marriott in Columbus, Ohio. For additional information, contact Margaret Dodds at (440) 951-0604. ■

APCC announces board appointments

State payphone associations in the former Bell Atlantic region recently elected Ray Kadingo to serve an additional three-year term as a state association director on the American Public Communications Council Inc.'s (APCC's) board of directors. Kadingo's new term will expire on Dec. 31, 2010.

In addition, the state associations in the former Southwestern Bell region elected Ralph Tipple to serve an additional three-year term as a state association director on the APCC board of directors. Tipple's new term will expire on Dec. 31, 2010.

FCC releases report on state telephone subscriber levels

On Feb. 4, the FCC released its latest report on telephone subscriber penetration levels. Based on data through July 2007, the telephone subscriber penetration rate for the entire U.S. was 95 percent, an increase of 0.4 percent over the rate from July 2006.

Among U.S. states, the penetration rates ranged from a low of 89.8 percent in Mississippi to a high of 98 percent in Vermont. After Mississippi, the four states with the lowest penetration rates were Indiana (91 percent), New Mexico (91.1 percent), South Carolina (91.6 percent) and Georgia (92.2 percent). A copy of the report can be downloaded from the FCC's Website at: http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-279997A1.pdf.

state payphone association meetings calendar

Central Atlantic Payphone Association
(717) 697-5948
Sheraton Harrisburg-Hershey
April 16
November 5

Illinois Public Telecommunications Association
(847) 808-8988
6 p.m.
Jimmy's Charhouse, Riverwoods, Ill.
July 15
November 11

Independent Payphone Association of New York
(718) 776-8179
6-8 p.m.
Crowne Plaza LaGuardia
May 14
July 9
September 10
November 12

Midwest Independent Coin Payphone Association
(636) 922-5213
Holiday Inn - Oakland Park (airport)
June 11
September 10
December 10

Payphone Association of Ohio
(440) 951-0604
10:30 a.m.
Columbus-Marriott
April 10
October 9

San Diego Payphone Owners Association
(888) 289-0011
9:30 a.m.
Cocos Restaurant
La Jolla
May 15
July 17
September 18
November 20

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

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- Campgrounds

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US Interconnection Services Inc.

industry briefs

product news

Custom Teleconnect Inc.

Custom Teleconnect Inc. (CTI) now offers the CTI Correctional Control Network.

CTI's platform is designed to offer payphone service providers (PSPs) a simple, cost-effective system for providing inmate phone service.

Operating in a correctional institution can be an expensive, involved process, said William Perna, CTI's general manager. PSPs are required to provide a long list of security features. Until recently, meeting these requirements usually required PSPs to bring expensive equipment to the corrections facility, and in many cases, to hire specialized technicians to keep it running.

CTI developed its inmate service platform to accommodate the growing number of clients that have been dealing with this situation.

The company used the same model it had in place for its existing operator services. It created a centralized, Web-based platform that allows users to remotely access and manage multiple correctional facilities around the clock. No equipment is needed by the payphone provider other than access devices at the customers' premises.

This system allows PSPs to brand inmate services to their companies while CTI operates behind the scenes as a network service provider.

CTI designed its system to be easy to use and simple to install with few maintenance requirements. Its features include phone control, call blocking, call diversion and redirect abort, investigative alerts, live call monitoring, call recording, reverse lookup, one-time name recording, automated bank card collect, prepaid debit cards and around the clock network monitoring.

"PSPs are able to provide any of the features and functions the large inmate service providers can offer," Perna said. "It doesn't matter if they're in a 1,000-bed facility or a two-phone facility, they can deliver service and make money."

For more information, call (702) 368-3324 or (800) 672-9080, or visit www.customteleconnect.com.

people & places

National Extra Effort Payphones

National Payphones of Humble, Texas has purchased Houston-based Extra Effort Payphones.

The resulting company, National Extra Effort Payphones, is based at Extra Effort's original headquarters.

Last year, representatives from Extra Effort approached National Payphones with interest in purchasing the company. Instead, National Payphones offered to buy Extra Effort.

Company representatives negotiated a deal, and National Payphones purchased Extra Effort Payphones in July 2007.

National came to the deal with 2,200 payphones, and Extra Effort had 4,100.

The combined company has about 4,000 payphones in the greater Houston area and 2,000 spread throughout Texas.

The company continues to seek operations to acquire, said Ross McEathron, field operations manager.

For more information, call (713) 681-3444 or (866) 333-3678.

EMBARQ

EMBARQ has been awarded a multi-year contract to provide and manage inmate phone services for the Nevada Department of Corrections (NDOC).

Chart correction

Editor's note: Perspectives would like to correct an error we made in the February issue. We ran an "Inmate phone rates" chart on Page 10 as part of our feature article on opportunities in the inmate phone market. We incorrectly described the chart as featuring rates for a 10-minute inmate local collect call. In fact, the chart featured rates for a 15-minute inmate local collect call. We apologize for any confusion caused by the error. For those of you who are interested, the rates for a 10-minute inmate local collect call and a 15-minute inmate local collect call are the same in all states except the ones listed below.

| State | 10 Min. | 15 Min. | Diff. |
|---------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Illinois | \$ 4.00 | \$ 4.64 | \$ 0.64 |
| Louisiana | 1.81 | 2.31 | 0.50 |
| Maine | 2.74 | 3.44 | 0.70 |
| Massachusetts | 4.00 | 4.50 | 0.50 |
| Nevada | 1.83 | 2.08 | 0.25 |
| New Jersey | 1.53 | 1.79 | 0.27 |
| New York | 2.75 | 3.25 | 0.50 |
| Rhode Island | 3.65 | 4.60 | 0.95 |

The exclusive contract announced by EMBARQ Payphone Services and NDOC covers the entire NDOC system, which includes 21 facilities housing 13,000 inmates, said Lorraine Bagwell.

"We continually look for ways to operate a more efficient correctional communications system," Bagwell said. "The EMBARQ package provided the flexibility and features we needed as we looked to upgrade and streamline our system and lower prices."

The new contract is expected to result in reduced phone costs for inmates' families, Bagwell said.

"We're very excited to bring our voice and e-messaging services — as well as our commitment to service — to the citizens of Nevada," said Paul Cooper, EMBARQ director and general manager-public access.

EMBARQ provides inmate phone services for the states of Kansas, South Carolina, Michigan and Wisconsin, in addition to numerous county facilities. The NDOC system transition from the current provider is expected to be completed in April.

For more information, visit embarq.com.

AOL News

(Editor's note: The reader entries were not edited).

A group of readers responding to an AOL News article about AT&T recently demonstrated a good understanding of the vital role payphones play in the United States today.

The Dec. 4 article announces AT&T's decision to leave the payphone market by the end of 2008, and it explains some of the reasons behind the move.

AOL News posted five pages of reader comments below the article. Most of these postings make a case for maintaining payphone service.

"Pay Phones are essential," one reader writes. "The cell phones are not always in use sometimes the Batteries are dead or out of range. Not everyone has one."

Another reader cites payphone's reliability during natural disasters. "When we had hurricane Katrina, hurricane Rita, hurricane Wilma in the second part of 2006, the only thing that really worked were pay phones in South Florida," he writes.

Basically, the postings say, plenty of people rely on payphone service.

For a look at the article and the comments, visit www.switched.com/2007/12/04/atandt-to-phase-out-pay-phones-by-2009/3.

Belize Telemedia

Belize Telemedia Ltd., based in the Central American country of Belize, recently announced the installation of its 1,000th payphone.

Payphone usage in the country seems to be surging, company representatives say.

When payphones were introduced to Belize in the early 1970s, they strictly were used to access operator services and make coin calls. Today, customers can make local, national and direct-dialed international calls using prepaid cards or calls placed through the operator.

Though cellular phone usage has been increasing

during the last five years, the company has been able to more than double the number of its payphones in service during that time. Further, increasing numbers of mobile phone users are receiving calls from payphones, Belize Telemedia reports.

The company's 1,000th payphone was installed Jan. 23 at St. Joseph Primary School in Belize City.

For more information, visit www.belizetelemedia.net. ■

Across

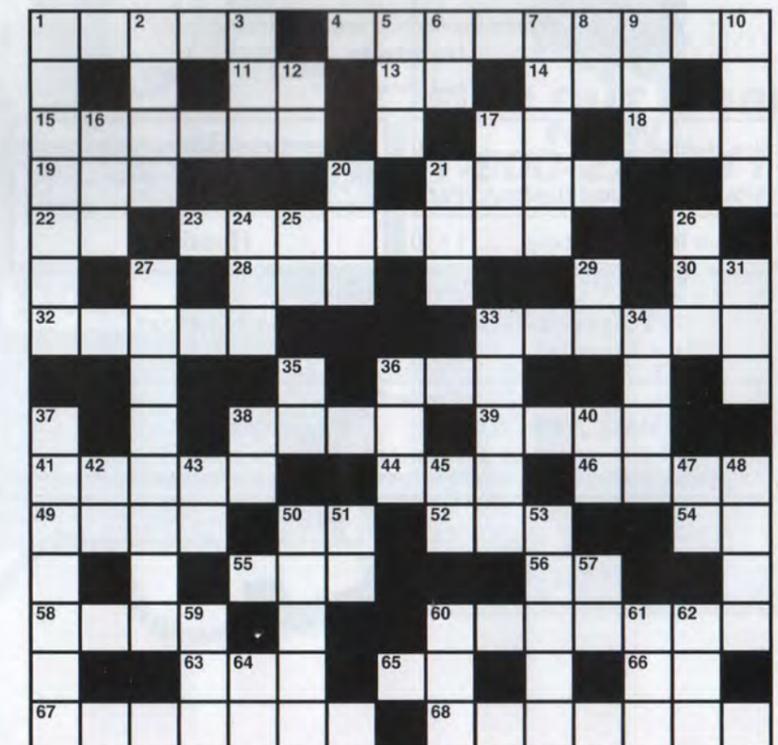
- Old name for PSPs
- Crazy city document
- Wireless Internet (goes with 17 across)
- DC alternative
- Carrier that provides operator services on payphones
- Mobile computer
- See 11 across
- Curve
- Like a busy switchboard, with up
- Window frame
- 21st century communication technique
- FCC Bureau
- Network monitoring location
- Operation, for short
- Divestiture judge
- See 67 across
- Adapt to
- USF administrator
- Founded in 1988
- Charges
- Fire
- Touchtone
- Approve
- 11
- Text telephone
- Credit, abbr.
- The point at which LECs connect with an IXC
- Article checker
- Podium aid
- 49.4 cents
- Navigation aid
- Where dumb phone intelligence resides
- Maine to the U.S.
- Coin signaling device
- APCC CC

Down

- Cold ___
- Public access line
- ___ way communication

- Sheep or memory?
- Site of APCC's first show
- Any part of the signal which produces an undesirable sound on the communication channel
- Top grades
- NXX-XXXX starter
- Common charge
- Type of address
- Goal
- Cooler
- Company we love to hate
- Doo doo doo
- Night stay place
- Read only, for short
- Rhymes with clock
- Popular Perspectives column
- Frequent phone call first word
- High level degree
- Moral stance

- Diplomacy
- Thousands of bucks
- 499-A is an ___ form
- Blue collar
- America
- Storage device
- Anchorage locale
- 2008 is one (political) (abbr.)
- In that location
- Event controller
- Toll- ___
- 11 years at APCC
- Jet propulsion, abbr.
- Decorative sticker
- Evil or No?
- Goes with nog
- "What's up ___?"
- Annie
- Hamilton bill
- Film rating



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Crossword Solution (puzzle on Page 39)

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| E | T | E | D | A | C | R | A | T | E | S | K | E | M | I | K | E | M | I | K | E | M | I | K |
| E | C | R | E | D | D | T | D | J | R | J | A | V | O | K | A | V | O | K | A | V | O | K | A |
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| U | S | P | O | S | A | C | A | C | W | I | W | O | A | W | I | W | O | A | W | I | W | O | A |
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last word

by Flori Meeks

Vegas baby Vegas

Here are 20 reasons why you should come to APCC 2008

So you really want to come to the show but say you can't because there's no one to watch your route, or you just can't spend the money. Well, wait just a minute. We can give you plenty of reasons why you should come, 20 to be exact.

1. The business ideas/tips/solutions you'll get from the show will more than pay for the trip. Your opportunities for learning are wide and varied: the education sessions, expo hall floor, bonus mini sessions and networking with fellow PSPs.
2. Yes, you can leave your route for a few days. If you really do not have anyone to cover for you, then just come for two days — poll your route the day you leave and immediately upon your return. It's a very brief absence; your business will be just fine. Plus, you can be very diligent by checking your voice mail and e-mail and getting back to customers right way.
3. You can talk to APCC Services' staff about your DAC to your heart's content, face to face.
4. You've been hoping to brush up on your computer skills, and our awesome computer lab will do that for you.
5. You deserve a break. Plus, the business portion of your trip is tax deductible.
6. It's APCC's 20th anniversary; that's reason enough.
7. Our exhibitors always give away really cool free stuff. Plus, their hospitality suites usually rock!
8. You can talk to APCC board members about any concerns you may have.
9. We're having an '80s themed party. How long has it been since you went dancing? That's what we thought.
10. The Divine Miss M (Bette Midler) rules the roost at Caesars now. Her show sounds awesome.
11. You'll get to see David Rossé and David Fielder in action as DJs. That alone is worth the price of admission.
12. You can see old friends and make new ones.
13. We're bringing back golf.
14. You can play and have fun, and you don't do near enough of that anymore.
15. Food glorious good. Las Vegas has become a major dining destination in recent years. We're talking celebrity chefs, fine cuisine and distinctive Vegas flair. Want the Vegas buffet experience? One Mirage restaurant has more than a dozen food stations with barbecue, Italian, Japanese and Mexican themes, among others. The foodies in the crowd will enjoy L'Atelier de Joël Robuchon, where diners can interact with a team of French chefs.
16. Only in Vegas. Where else are you going to find an Atomic Testing Museum and the Liberace Museum in the same city? For you adventurous types, the Mirage's Trainer for a Day program puts guests in a wet suit and lets them help a professional trainer teach a dolphin to jump. How cool is that?
17. Stunning natural beauty. You can find dozens of state and national parks within driving distance of Las Vegas.
18. Hoover Dam. This is a national icon. The dam, which is 30 miles southeast of the Strip, stands 726 feet high and is 1,244 feet long. Don't forget to check out the artwork incorporated into the dam.
19. More cool stuff. The volcano in front of the Mirage erupts every 15 minutes after dark until midnight. You can take gondola rides at the Venetian. The Eiffel Tower observation deck at the Paris offers an incredible view of the Strip. The Forum Shops attached to Caesars Palace present animated statue shows.
20. And here's the thing. You haven't been here for far too long. Come on. You can find the registration form in this very magazine. ■



APCC 2007

Flori Meeks is freelance writer who is based in Houston. She has 20 years of writing and editing experience, and has been writing for *Perspectives* for eight years.

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