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Volume 12, Issue 2

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2002

October, 2002



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2002 – A YEAR OF CHANGE, EXPANSION AND SUCCESS

This year brought about many changes to our organization. As I previously mentioned in the spring edition, the Board began by expanding Officer positions. We now have Mr. Jeff Cornelius of Peace River Electric Cooperative as our newly elected Treasurer for 2003. In an effort to maintain our present course, it was voted that all current Board Members maintain their present positions for the upcoming year. The Board felt the additional experience would be of benefit to all. I will therefore continue my term as Chairman for another year.



George Balsamo,
IURPA Chairman

Our web site underwent a major change. Webmaster Woody Woodward took on the challenge of revamping the entire site. In its present form, the IURPA web site is easier to navigate and provides a level of professionalism befitting the association. Woody accomplished this in an amazingly short time frame, which demonstrates the type of dedicated individuals needed in order to operate a successful organization. We are very grateful for his efforts.

Dedication was also evident at the 2002 Metering Americas conference held in New Orleans this past spring. IURPA was asked to provide a Revenue Protection track for a metering, billing and information oriented conference. Metering International (MI), a South African based organization, has seen the value in revenue recovery efforts and readily agrees that it is tied very closely to MBIS issues. MI sponsors several conferences worldwide each year. IURPA members from North America and the United Kingdom converged in New Orleans for the spring session. Amongst the group were Messrs. Cleve Freeman (2001 Chairman), Michael Szilvagy (2000 Chairman), Kurt Roussel (Vice-Chairman), Tim Hopper (Treasurer), Kent Manning (Secretary), Don Perio (former Vice-Chairman), John Culwell (IURPA Member), Tommy Mayne (IURPA Member), Alan Dick (UK Liaison) and myself. This group enlightened many who attended the Revenue Protection sessions by promoting our ideals, increasing theft awareness and educating

individuals who had never been exposed to our area of expertise.

Also new at the Metering International conference was the IURPA display booth. This year the IURPA display booth has traveled to each regional conference. Our purpose was twofold:

(1) Promote IURPA and revenue recovery ideals in an effort to increase membership.

(2) Participate as a vendor, contributing equally at each conference to assist both participating vendors and regional groups financially.

In the spring of 2002 IURPA became incorporated. Our web site, newsletter and letterhead all reflect this change. The last, most visible change that is occurring is the Newsletter. Our intent is to bring greater value to our members by providing a more aesthetic and informative product. A product that our members wish to display, one that they wish to contribute to and one that promotes the professionalism of those associated with our industry.

I am proud to have been a part of these changes and seen the growth in our industry. It is my sincere belief that the technological and political trend will not only assist our efforts but provide the method that will demonstrate the importance of revenue recovery efforts. There is much to look forward to.

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WHAT'S NEW AT WSUTA

By DANYALE URBAN • 2002 WSUTA PRESIDENT

The surveys received from the 2002 WSUTA conference held at the Palms Resort in Las Vegas, Nevada reflect a successful August seminar. This year's increased attendance indicates a positive reception to the merger between the Northwest Energy Diversion Council (NWEDC) and the Western States Energy Theft Association (WSETA) in 2000. The 2000 conference adjourned with a sealed merger and new name to accommodate the interests and impacts of both groups. This year, 105 attendees represented utilities from California to Texas to Wyoming to Quebec, Canada.

The information packed agenda focused on the 2001 member requests for more Revenue Protection topics including new trends, statistical tracking and law enforcement investigation techniques. The training/evaluation portion of the program was once again facilitated by Arnett Consultants and focused on both Basic and Advanced Revenue Protection Recovery Methods. All participants receiving a satisfactory evaluation result were presented (by mail) Certificates of Completion certified by IURPA and the International Association for Continuing Education and Training.

IURPA Chairman, George Balsamo greeted WSUTA members as the conference began. George highlighted the current news from IURPA through his warm opening reception pointing out the new IURPA display, which depicts IURPA's plan for a fresh new look. George emphasized the importance of unity throughout the regions to stick together and learn from one another as we deal with Revenue Protection issues on the local and international level. IURPA plays an important role in this link.

Next year's conference has been tentatively scheduled to reside again in Las Vegas, Nevada. WSUTA's 2003 President, John Culwell from Arizona Public Service, will announce the dates and confirmation of the location as soon as it is available.



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ELECTRIC RATIONING, HIGH TARIFFS AND REVENUE PROTECTION

By LUIS FERNANDO ARRUDA • IURPA SOUTH AMERICAN LIAISON

As you know Brazil is a very large country. Our national electric system is totally integrated and 95% of our electric energy comes from hydroelectric power plants. During the last five years there has been very little investment in our transmission and generation systems and, together with many consecutive dry seasons, has resulted in a severe electricity-rationing period from May 2001 to February 2002.

In May 2001 our reservoirs were almost empty (in November 2001 the reservoir level was only 12% of total capacity). In addition to electricity-rationing, it was believed that sustained rains would be needed over the next several summers to minimize this problem.

Rationing rules were applied to all commercial, industrial and residential customers regardless of low, medium or high voltage requirements. Consumption had to be reduced between 15% and 25% of the previous year's average and was based on their principal activity. Heavy penalties were imposed if customer consumption was greater than the level allocated by the rationing rules.

After an incredibly good season of rain, electricity rationing has ended however some important lessons have been learned. Customers now realize that rationing electric energy is possible and that utilizing generators and solar power to heat water is a viable alternative. This may result in a decrease in customer consumption. Utilities incurred significant revenue losses during the first five months of rationing. These losses were partly due to the overall reduction in consumption and also attributed to the special discounts provided to low income customers who decreased their total consumption beyond the rationing rules. Nearly a 30% loss was incurred during July 2001.

Non-technical losses increased rapidly during 2001. Rationing rules dictated that customers having two consecutive penalties for energy consumption would be subject to discon-

nect for a three-day period. Despite the federal courts support of rationing rules customers felt justified to tamper with meters. This attitude has now spread as a result of the government's neglect to invest in the infrastructure. Rationing has also brought more attention to the electric meter itself resulting in an increased interest in tampering with the instrument. It has been evidenced that professional fixers have become more prevalent. During the period June to December 2001, a total of 42 fixers were arrested as compared to an average of 6 cases per year in previous years. One recent case recovered approximately two hundred thousand US Dollars. The fixer responsible received about thirty six thousand US Dollars for his work, which was completed in only four months. Many of these fraud cases are yet to be detected.

Some utilities had formed revenue protection departments during the past three years. Their relative newness and lack of structure made it difficult to address the large increase in theft cases. Most utilities lack the sophisticated computer systems needed to detect the inconsistencies in consumption, and yet those that do have these systems must make adjustments due to the change in customer consumption from the rationing.

Energy prices are now 10% higher and it is predicted that they rise will dramatically increase over the next 2 years. This is primarily due to the federal government's interest to invest in their generation and transmission system. We believe that this increased cost will maintain the high level of new fraud cases.

Luis Fernando Arruda is the IURPA South American Liaison. He is employed at CEMIG - Companhia Energética de Minas Gerais - Brazil



Luis Fernando Arruda

A UK NATIONAL QUALIFICATION IN REVENUE PROTECTION

By ALAN DICK • IURPA UNITED KINGDOM LIAISON

Members of the UK Revenue Protection Association (UKRPA) have been involved in the development of a national qualification in RP work. Known as a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) or, in Scotland, a Scottish Vocational Qualification, this sets the standards against which performance of staff can be assessed. The majority of assessment is meant to be carried out 'on the job', but this may be supported by completion of associated training or simulations of situations encountered. Granting of the NVQ essentially means that a candidate has demonstrated that he or she can satisfactorily do the job, rather than has just attended training. It is therefore not only for new staff, but for existing experienced staff, who can complete the modules and gain the qualification without necessarily having to undertake further training. The qualification is then a formal confirmation of the employee's skills, abilities and experience.

The NVQ is divided into modules covering various aspects of RP work such as investigation, collection of evidence, making reports, keeping records, etc. Some are specific to field or to back-office staff, whilst others are common. The candidate can therefore select the modules to suit the job done. At the moment the modules do not cover supervisory/management aspects, but other NVQs in more general management-related areas are available and are an extra option.

Assessment is carried out by in-company staff with experience of the type of work, specially trained in assessment techniques. Overseeing this is an in-company Internal Verifier, ensuring consistency of all training within the company. To ensure national consistency there is a top level of External Verifiers, appointed by the Awarding Body (this is the UK Industry's Electricity Training Association in conjunction with the City and Guilds of London Institute) which administers the NVQ and makes the awards upon recommendations received, through approved Centres.

Implementing the NVQ is still at an early stage although External Verifiers are in place and have already talked to some interested companies in order to assist them in setting up the required structure. For existing staff, the process is expected to take some 9 -12 months and it is hoped that the first awards might be made by the time of the next UKRPA Conference, scheduled for May 2003.

Alan Dick is the IURPA Liaison for the United Kingdom and a member of the UKRPA. If you would like more information contact Alan Dick - alan_dick@electricity.org.uk



Alan Dick

2002 JOINT CONFERENCE A SUCCESS

By GARY SIGNORELLI • 2001 SURPA PRESIDENT

Joining forces with SCRPA to host an International Conference was without a doubt, very gratifying to all SURPA Board members. Everyone on both Boards met the challenge head on, working together as one large Board.

The opportunity to network with fellow Revenue Protection personnel was, as usual, a tremendous benefit to everyone. Many liked Petsey Reynolds' motivational speech. Metro Crime provided some very useful, expert advice on Personal Safety. Every speaker made a favorable impression on the group. All were recognized as having offered valuable information that participants can bring back to their respective companies.

Several favorable comments from the more than 150 attendees included "All the speakers did an excellent job", "Having Woody and the IURPA Website and display booth was awesome!" and "The Bulli Ray dog bite prevention class was incredible!" You could see the level of interest peak as the dogs were brought in and actually interacted with the Volunteers.

Elected to the SURPA Board was Scinda Schrank, Peace River Electric Co-op as Secretary/Treasurer.

The SURPA Board would like to thank Doug Page, Altee Hicks, Dennis Morrison, Kyle Dickie and the rest of the SCRPA organization for the hospitality and commitment to SURPA in making our Conference so successful.

We are looking forward to our combined conference again next year in Altamonte Springs, Florida the week of June 9, 2003



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CONFERENCES – THEY DON'T JUST HAPPEN

By DENNIS MORRISON • 2002 SURPA PRESIDENT

As the SCRPA President for the 2002 joint Revenue Protection Conference let me begin by saying thanks to all that attended the June 18th - 21st Conference in Atlanta Georgia. We were proud to join forces with IURPA and SURPA to present an informative and well attended conference & training seminar in beautiful Atlanta, Georgia.

I have attended numerous conferences since joining the Revenue Protection Group at my company, as I'm sure many of you have. I found that these events afforded me an opportunity to meet and network with various individuals that face the same problems that I face each and every day on my job. Several years back I had my first opportunity to work in the planning and promoting of a Revenue Protection Conference. I was totally surprised at the amount of "behind the scenes" work that transpires long before the registration form arrives announcing and inviting everyone to a conference.

These conferences do not just fall into place, but take many hours of preparation and planning to be successful. It relies on the synergy of the Board members and other planners to formulate an agenda, coordinate their respective responsibilities and participate throughout every step of the conference. Each conference is similar and yet unique in its location and agenda. Location is the first and most important step. What city and which hotel? After many hotel visits and several thousand miles of walking through meeting space and ballrooms the selection is narrowed down considering cost, space, quality, parking and airport access.

After reviewing all of these criteria, it was decided the Atlanta Sheraton would be the best location. I will never forget leaving Charlotte on September 11th to attend one of our planning sessions at the Atlanta Sheraton. We were unaware of the happenings that fateful day until we arrived at the hotel. It was covered in extra security as a result of the attacks in New York that had occurred on that morning.

As we began to plan the agenda, we began to wonder what impact this terrorist attack may have on the conference. We suddenly realized that location was a secondary issue and that travel concerns and safety were now a primary concern.

The agenda was drawn and we began the selection process for speakers. A key to success here is selecting quality speakers. No matter how interesting the subject matter, it is important that the speaker enhances and promotes it with high energy or risk losing the audience. The IURPA Board was very helpful in providing quality speakers for our conference.

Next came advertising and promoting the conference. A variety of resources were used for this process. Mailings, the IURPA Newsletter, the IURPA Website, Metering International Magazine and other promotionals were incorporated to distribute information on the conference.

Finally the date arrives and all of the Board members have the same question lurking in the back of their minds: "What if you built it and they don't come?" Soon your fears are over when, not only those that had pre-registered do arrive, but many, many more attendees arrive unannounced and register at the door. It was a wonderful feeling to see so many individuals attend from all over the United States as well as international locations.

I extend my gratitude to all of the Vendors that contributed to this event and to all of the SCRPA, SURPA and IURPA Board members who gave their time and effort.

So the next time you attend a Revenue Security Conference, think of those that made it possible. And if (by chance) there happens to be a topic that you may have heard before, remember not only are there others hearing it for the first time, but everyone forgets 64% of what they hear within the first 24 hours. Repetition is not always a bad thing.



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THE UNCERTAIN ALLIANCE: REVENUE PROTECTION AND AMR

BY RALPH E. ABBOTT • PRESIDENT, PLEXUS RESEARCH, INC.

Most progressive utilities have at least some form of automatic meter reading (AMR) system in place for a handful of their larger customers. An ever-increasing number of utilities are deploying very large AMR systems with 1 to 5 million metered end points. How can these utilities justify that huge expense, for both the procurement of the AMR system and for the costs of installing and integrating it? These are often \$50 million to \$200 million commitments. Very serious money! What sort of business case are these utilities looking at?

Utilities often face a formidable challenge with the economic justification for a large AMR installation covering a large percentage of customers, prominently including residential. Most utilities soon discover that their cost/benefit model is right on the ragged edge and that there is no single feature or function that clearly justifies the system installation. No, it is the confluence of benefits from many smaller



but significant attributes of the AMR applications that make the huge difference necessary to justify the system. As a consulting engineering firm that is specialized in AMR, metering and customer technologies, Plexus Research has developed dozens of AMR business cases for electric, gas and water utilities. Easy? No. None of these were a slam dunk. In fact, sometimes the justification is simply too marginal to proceed. That can happen when the whole case must hang on just one or two attributes, like saved labor cost or fewer billing errors, or depends upon hard-to-quantify benefits like "improved customer satisfaction." Every business case tries to round up and incorporate every reasonable economic benefit. Every penny, or two pennies, or five pennies per month of captured justification helps to strengthen the business case. That can make the difference between a go and a no-go.

Most vendors advertise that their AMR system "has tampering detection." On close examination we see that each AMR vendor has his own idea about what "tampering detection" means to them. Some suppliers include magnetic reed switches that will raise a "flag" when data is next acquired. The flag is actually a status bit in the data stream. A power outage flag may sometimes be used in conjunction with wider area outage information to inferentially deduce whether there is an outage or whether there may be a tampering attempt by

removing, inverting or substituting a meter. Ekstrom Industries has developed an interesting technique for conclusively distinguishing between a power outage on the supply side and a power outage in the metering/AMR device due to a separation of the meter from the socket. This technology will soon be made available to selected AMR system and meter manufacturers at low cost, and may become a standard feature for many AMR systems.



Ralph E. Abbott

Ideally, the AMR system would notify the utility immediately, in real time, if tampering was detected. But 2/3 of the AMR systems that are currently being installed by utilities are the walk-by/drive-by systems. These can only communicate data when an interrogation device comes within a few hundred feet of the meter. Some of the "fixed network" AMR systems are also not capable of autonomous notification. The devices on the meters in the field "speak only when spoken to" and cannot originate a message on their own. So any business case assessment of the value of a particular set of tampering detection mechanisms must establish separate values for real time notification versus notification that can be 30 days or more after the tampering event.

Revenue protection professionals have often observed that installation of an AMR system may actually encourage determined energy theft perpetrators. Why? The argument is that AMR systems obviously exist to dramatically reduce or eliminate having a meter reader visit the customer premises. A potent force for detecting theft is lost when the eyes and ears of that human are gone. Those eyes may be adept at spotting a tap ahead of the meter at the weatherhead, seeing the missing seal, noticing burnished metal on a socket, observing a drag wire, and the myriad of other clever attempts to obtain energy without paying for it. Those ears may hear a customer complaint about an obnoxious neighbor who has bragged about the energy he uses but doesn't pay for. But sometimes those eyes and ears may not be paying attention. How much theft are your meter readers actually finding now? Bounties for meter readers who discover energy theft are an important incentive, we believe, without which the meter reader may have little interest in doing anything more than gathering the reading.





AMR is here to stay, and the number of AMR installations in increasing at more than 20% per year. The utility task teams charged with selecting the AMR technology and the AMR system supplier face a very complex task in constructing the business case, and most often rely upon expert outside help. The revenue protection implications of AMR should be an important part of that effort. Usually the utility team leaders and expert consultants are quick to pull in any contributions of value to the overall business case. This includes revenue protection. Non technical losses are between 0.75% and 1.5% of revenue for most US utilities. If AMR can help reduce even a third of those losses, there is a lot of money at stake! Yes, AMR systems can detect some forms of tampering. Those forms and mechanisms of detection are being refined and improved. AMR will simply not detect certain forms of tampering. Other means must be retained or developed for that purpose. That is often a once a year on-site physical inspection by a meter reader or other person with suitable training to spot obvious and less obvious forms of intrusion.

Revenue protection professionals have an obligation to their companies and to the industry to actively and constructively participate in the evolution of metering and AMR strategies for their companies. Help your colleagues understand that AMR systems will not eliminate tampering or detect all forms of tampering, but will help detect tampering in some instances. Identify the team members who are struggling with the AMR business case. If possible, join the team. Help your colleagues extract the realistic financial benefits that can and will pertain to revenue protection benefits from the system. Be a contributor, not a naysayer. Provide the perspectives and



expertise that only you can. You should be involved. And if you handle this issue constructively you will elevate the status and consciousness of revenue protection throughout your company.

Ralph Abbott is a founder and President of Plexus Research, Inc., a boutique consulting engineering firm located at 629 Massachusetts Avenue, Boxborough, MA 01719. Formed in 1982, the highly respected firm serves utilities and institutional clients worldwide, specializing in metering strategy, AMR, telecommunications and advanced customer technologies. The firm recently completed an exhaustive investigation into the costs of energy theft for EPRI. Mr. Abbott is a Registered Professional Engineer, holds a number of patents, is a well recognized author/speaker at industry forums, and serves on the technical advisory boards of both the DistribuTECH Conference and Metering Americas. He may be reached at 978-263-6080 or by Email at: RAbbott@plxs.com

NURPA PLANNING FOR FALL 2003 CONFERENCE

This years NURPA fall conference and training seminar was cancelled. The affects of restructuring throughout the northeast has limited travel for many. The NURPA Board regrets having to have made this decision and will be planning for the fall 2003 conference. Information with respect to next years conference will be posted on the IURPA web site and is expected to be available before the end of this year. We hope to see everyone in October 2003.



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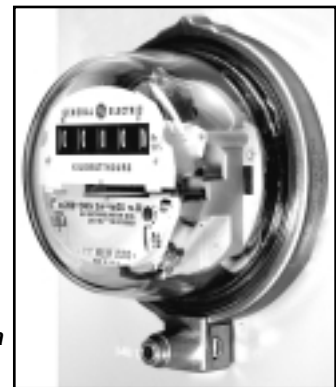


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IURPA AND METERING INTERNATIONAL THE PERFECT PARTNERSHIP

The first time I experienced the IURPA spirit was at Metering Americas 2001 held in Miami. I had only just joined the Metering International team, and will never forget the impact the IURPA team had on me. Talk about positive! It was clear that the IURPA and Metering International would continue with the synergistic relationship that had been formed a few years previously—and what a brilliant partnership it has been.

Then Chairman, Cleve Freeman represented IURPA at our Metering Africa 2001 conference and exhibition held in Accra, Ghana, and had his audience on the edge of their seats. The very first IURPA exhibition stand was introduced at our Metering, Billing and CRM/CIS Americas 2002 conference, held in New Orleans from 29 April – 3 May. Chairman George Balsamo and a team of IURPA members were at the stand to talk about the Association and its activities to the many people who visited the exhibition hall and stopped by to get more information.

Metering, Billing and CRM/CIS Americas 2002 attracted around 500 utility professionals, who gathered to share their experiences and ideas and gain fresh insights into the future. There is no doubt that the show would not have been the resounding success it was without the monumental contributions made by many IURPA members. IURPA was instrumental in the program formulation, speaker management and presenting of the revenue protection sessions held on the second day of the conference. An IURPA board meeting took place at the same time under the same roof.

The IURPA team themselves are experts at putting together events which allow participants to share their views on revenue protection. I was fortunate enough to be given the opportunity to attend the annual IURPA conference, which this year was held at the Sheraton Atlanta, Georgia, from 19 – 21 June. The

event attracted revenue protection experts from across the globe, and as always, the professional and welcoming atmosphere was apparent.

The keynote address was delivered by Mr David Bown of the UKRPA who had a great deal of valuable insight to share from his experiences in the United Kingdom. The program was full of interesting presentations, ensuring that all delegates left having gained a great deal of knowledge from the experience. I especially enjoyed a presentation delivered by a dog bite prevention unit. Delegates had the opportunity to feel the force of some of the most dangerous dogs that might be encountered in the field.

What is the way forward for our two organizations, based as they are at opposite ends of the earth? The answer lies in the inextricable link between revenue protection and metering, billing and CRM/CIS. Revenue can be lost at any stage of this information flow, and as we know loss usually occurs at the meter as a result of meter tampering. However, revenue may also be lost during the transfer of information from the meter to the utilities' CIS system or between this system and the point at which the customer physically receives the bill. The applications for revenue protection are far wider than the meter itself.

The relationship between IURPA and Metering International of Spintelligent, South Africa is thus one which offers great benefit for both organizations. May we grow and learn together as we shape the future of our worlds.

Metering, Billing and CRM/CIS Americas 2003 takes place in Chicago in May – see you there!



Craig Raeside
Exhibition Manager,
Spintelligent

2002 META CONFERENCE OVERVIEW JULY 23-26, 2002 • COLUMBUS, OHIO

The 2002 Midwest Energy Theft Association (META) conference celebrated its 20th anniversary at this year's conference in Columbus, Ohio. META was originally known as the Ohio Utilities Fraud and Theft Organization in 1982, and over the years has experienced a vast growth in its membership. The membership outgrew the utilities of the State of Ohio, and became META in 1987.

Presentations at the conference included "Virtual" Investigation Resources and Techniques, Legal and Ethical Considerations in Investigative Work, Aggression Management and Investigator Safety, and several topics on increasing the investigative resources of your Revenue Protection Department. The focus of the conference was to enhance our member's current operations in order to enhance efficiency during this period of reduced budgets.

William Daniel of American Electric Power (AEP) was installed as the new president of META. The other officers include Tim Hopper of Commonwealth Edison, who will serve as the Vice-President, along with Patrick Flynn, who graciously remains as Treasurer. Outgoing President Kurt Russell, will now serve on the Board of Directors.

The 2003 joint conference of IURPA/META is scheduled for July 23 - 25, 2003 in Chicago, Illinois. Mark that on your calendars now!



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META OFFICERS

REVENUE PROTECTION TODAY INCLUDES MORE THAN METERING

By Kurt W. Rousell • 2002 IURPA VICE CHAIRMAN

If you were approached today and asked, "What does your Revenue Protection Department do?," what would be your response? The typical response is something on the order of "they investigate theft of service through meter tampering or current diversion." In many cases, this would be true. However, if your RP Department is focused only on the mechanical methods of theft and theft detection, a large amount of revenue is escaping their grasp. They need to investigate those revenues stolen from your company by customers through fraud.

Miriam-Webster defines fraud as:
1 a deceit, trickery; specifically: intentional perversion of truth in order to induce another to part with something of value or to surrender a legal right b: an act of deceiving or misrepresenting.

Today, identity theft is the largest growing crime in America. People are using the identification characteristics (names, date of birth, and social security number) of others to purchase goods or services without their consent. Most frequently, customers with large outstanding balances who may or may not have been denied service, will use the identity of another person to escape their responsibilities. Historically, most typically, it is the name of a child or some other family member. However today, it is a stranger who has gathered your information from your garbage, employer, health care provider, or via the Internet.

Generally, the person whose identity has been stolen, has no knowledge this has occurred until they attempt to purchase something on credit, and are denied due to the negative credit reporting that has been placed into their credit file. It then becomes the responsibility of the utility to investigate the complaint in a timely fashion. If the person's identity has been compromised, any negative credit bureau reporting must be corrected. Revenue Protection Departments should investigate who is responsible for the charges, bill the appropriate party and not "write off" the amount as uncollectible. In the more egregious cases, law enforcement assistance may be warranted.



Kurt W. Rousell

Due to the large scope of the problem, identity theft statutes have been enacted at both the state and federal levels. For example, in the State of Wisconsin, the theft of one's identity to purchase goods or services is a felony, punishable by up to 5 years in prison.

It is recommended that all companies review their policies, procedures, and investigative resources to combat this rising crime, which is affecting innocent people, and potentially will increase the uncollectible expenses of your company. For more information on this topic, I recommend checking out the U.S. government website on identity theft at www.consumer.gov/idtheft.

METER SEAL MANAGEMENT

By PHIL DUDLEY • NATIONAL SALES MANAGER, E. J. BROOKS COMPANY

It has been estimated that over two billion dollars worth of energy is stolen in the United States every year – as much as 3 percent from each utility. The primary means of security at the meter/cash register is a security seal that typically costs less than twenty-five cents.

Are we crazy?! How much security can a twenty-five cent seal provide?

A lot, or a little, it is up to you. As for the status of your sanity... - I'll leave that up to you too!

Seal selection and the thoroughness and frequency of on-site interrogation are important components of meter security. However, in between the selection and application of a security seal there is a critical component that is often short changed: CONTROL!

Unique Decoration or Stamp

You have to start with a unique security seal—purchase your seals with your utilities name, logo or initials stamped on them. There is no extra charge for personalized stamping after the initial die stamp charge, which is typically less than \$200. After you have paid for a die stamp a reputable securi-

ty seal manufacturer will not sell seals to anyone else with your stamp on them.

Packaging and Distribution

No one wants to force their personnel to carry seal presses with unique engraved dies any longer – if you remember these things you are probably an old-timer! But they served an important security purpose – seals were traceable to the installer. The seal installer signed his work when he pressed his number onto the seal.

To replace this concept without the use of a press you have to record the seal type, sequential number[s], and color as they are distributed to your employees. Then the seals are traceable and you can identify who signed for the seal. With traceability your people are again signing their work when they place a seal on a meter, and you should see greater care taken with the seals and the work.

To facilitate the record keeping with seal distribution manufacturers offer security seals packaged sequentially in lots of



Phil Dudley

Two new ways to protect your "cash register"

New!
High-Security Padlock Seal



Features a colored insert within an acrylic body and 1/8" diameter plated-steel hasp. Printed label has company name, seven digit number and bar code, encapsulated to protect from tampering or adverse weather. Secures pad-mount transformers, and a perfect replacement for padlocks to secure gates and valves.



Brooks' Multi-Lok Cable Seal offers cost-efficient meter security. Available in 1/16", 1/8" and 3/32" diameters, Multi-Lok is supplied with name and consecutive numbering. The flexible, narrow-gauge cable is ideal for awkward sealing points. Also shown: Ekstrom Handi-Ring® and Brooks Spring-Lok® and Enduro® seals.

Fast-Ship
More ideas at
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Find the correct seal or locking device fast with Brooks' FastShip program and its search-by-industry feature at www.ejbrooks.com. The FastShip menu is available from the Home page and guarantees 24-hour service on select items.



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Toll free: 1 800 458-SEAL

100 with the seal number enclosed marked [or bar coded] on each box. This extra packaging will only add about a penny to the price of a seal.

Some utilities have balked at implementing a meter seal management program because it impacts several departments and creates extra paperwork [minimized if utilizing bar coded packaging]. Support of upper management is a requirement. If necessary, crew trucks can be given a temporary seal color that is replaced [after a complete inspection] when the next authorized employee visits the installation. Each seal should be traceable to an authorized utility employee – not a truck.

AMR

Security will be more important than ever when utilities stop sending employees out every month to read meters. Security safeguards built into AMR meters are not foolproof and customers will be emboldened by the absence of monthly visits. To further improve the security of your meters, consider making the serialized seal number a part of your CIS records, and verify the seal numbers with periodic system-wide safety and security audits.

The implementation of an AMR system is the time to consider upgrading your meter security. A barrier type seal or a

superior tamper indicative seal should be employed in the absence of monthly visits to the meter by utility personnel. Barrier type seals are, in essence, inexpensive one-time-use padlocks that cannot be removed without cutters. Should they be found missing it would stretch credibility to blame neighborhood children.

At the very least the implementation of AMR would dictate a change in seal color with tighter seal distribution controls on the new seals. An ancillary benefit to the new colors would be quick visual evidence that the AMR install team has been to the installation.

Summary

Meter seal management is an important component of security. In the digital age there does not have to be a lot of extra paperwork to achieve the level of security that we used to get from a sealing press. Bar coded packaging and seals simplify the process. RFID seals are on the horizon that can be encoded with installer information, and date. With up to three percent being lost to theft your effort is sure to realize a positive return. Start working on your management for their support today!



OPTI-LOCK protects optical data transfer ports

Opti-Lock* is a new secure, sealable cover for protection of optical data ports found on many of today's commercial billing meters. Unprotected ports are an open window to hackers seeking access to metering and billing data. The Opti-Lock is an inexpensive and verifiable means of protection.

- Prevents unauthorized access to metering data.
- Discourages vandalism of port.
- Protects port from the elements: UV light, harsh environments, nest-building insects, etc.
- Easy to install, no special tools required.
- Large sealing slot for use of long-term or demand seals.
- Economical and reusable.



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E-Mail: _____

Utility Type: Gas _____ Electric _____ Water _____ Cable _____ Other _____

Payment Method: Check Enclosed _____ Credit Card _____

Credit Card Payments Information:

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Billing Address: _____

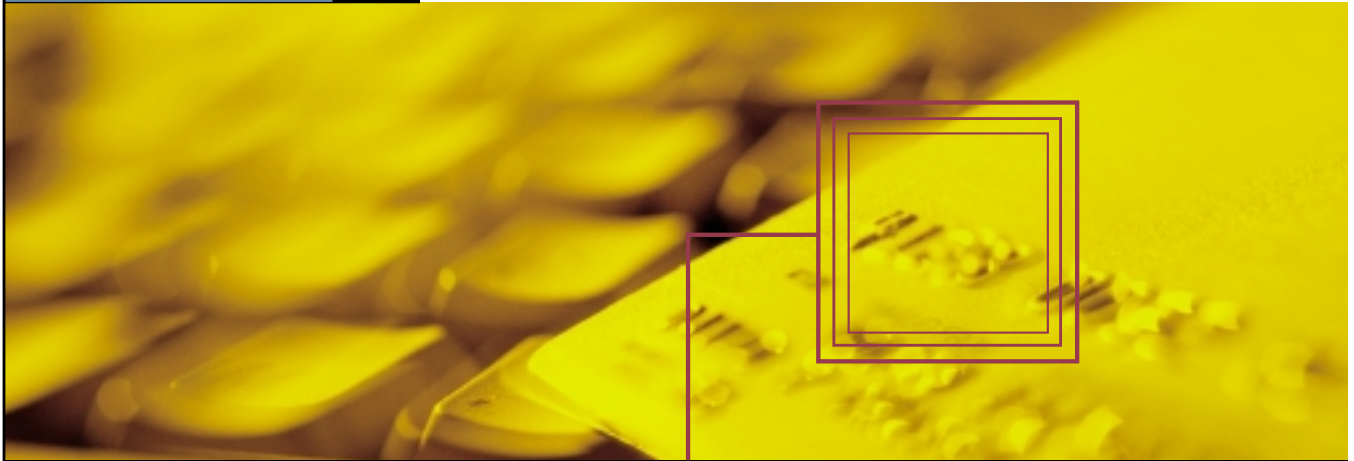
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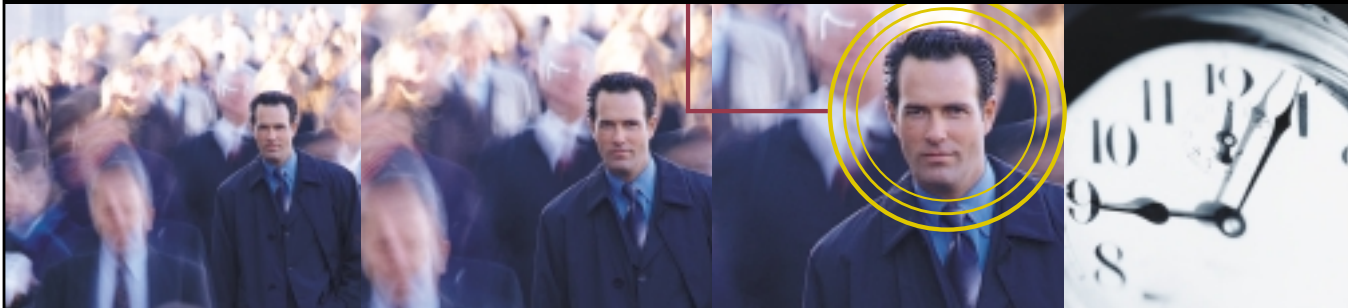
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IURPA • 12 Years

The International Utilities Revenue Protection Association was founded in 1990 to protect member utility companies worldwide from revenue losses associated with unauthorized use of service. In twelve years, the organization has grown from a small regional group into an association that includes representatives of more than 400 utility companies around the world.

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