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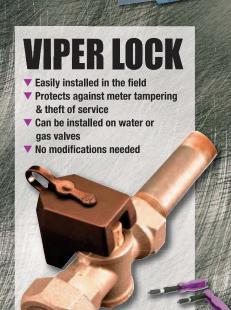
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$I U_{N EW} PA$

In trying to decide what to write in this article, I have been waiting for something to come to me, unfortunately Hurricane Ernesto is going to solve my problem for me.



IURPA Chairman

Today is Monday August 28th and the State of Florida is in the process of preparing for some thing that has become far too familiar to us.

With the southeast still trying to dry out and rebuild from Mother Nature's sometimes warped sense of humor, we are finding ourselves in the same situation once again. Even though we are in the majority of Revenue Protection personnel reading this article, we are faced with the realization of what the past few years have done to not only our systems, rate increases, but also the toll it has taken on ourselves and our customers.

It goes with out saying that the cost of all types of gas (fuel oil), energy and the economy is on the forefront of everyone's mind these days. In these uncertain times of rising prices in energy cost, all companies that produce energy and fuel to homes are not immune to these rising costs, most are doing everything they can to keep these costs as low as possible. When was the last time you went out to a tampering case, and the consumer complained more about what you were charging them on their bill for energy, that the fact that you were pulling their meter. One certainly is a known fact that energy costs are considered a large part of your monthly household budget and most people realize how this expense directly affects your checking account. The reality is the cost of generating energy is spiraling upward in an unrelenting push to new record highs. Companies are deeply concerned about the price of the

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electricity required to facilitate the lifestyle that you and I, as Americans, have grown accustomed.

A highly volatile and unstable market across the USA in the energy producing business has motivated a steady climb in the price of fuel. At the writing of this article a barrel of oil is somewhere around an all time high of \$65.00. Of course, this fact is very noticeable by anyone who has filled their gas tank lately.

Every electric and gas utility in the nation is experiencing a similar crisis with the historic rise of natural gas and fuel oils. Every sector of business in our great nation is being affected by these increases.

Most gas and electric companies do not want to see prices increase and they are doing everything in their power to keep the costs as low as possible. With the increases in natural gas and fuel oils, there is every indication that prices for energy will continue to have price pressures placed on it.

I would like to remind all of our IURPA members that we will be having our Advanced Revenue Protection Training the Hilton Hotel in Altamonte Springs Florida, March 6-7, 2007. The requirements are a little different that last year's class, you are required to either have attended the previous training, or have at least 2 years experience in the field of revenue protection. We have decided to keep the price the same as before at \$395.00, with the hotel rooms being \$124.00, IURPA will have all details very soon on our website.

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THE GOOD OLD DAYS

IURPA

BY RICK GLASS • MCGUARD, ORCHARD PARK, NEW YORK

o you remember the Good Old Days? Sure you do. Everyone does. But exactly when were the good old days? If I asked my mother, she would likely say the fifties. If I asked my grandmother, she would probably say the forties after the burden of the great depression was lifted. For me, as a child growing up in the sixties and early seventies, those were the good old days.

Growing up at that time in a small town taught me several lessons. If you needed an appliance repaired, you called Mr. Todd and he would come to your house that day or the next and make any repairs possible on site. If you needed a

"...peer closely at a lot of outstanding customer service efforts, and what you'll see is the clever use of training, process design, and technology to simulate the old-fashioned relationship with the proprietor of a small business

mechanic, you would call Mr. Spillane. If you couldn't get your car to him he'd come to you. If you needed a haircut, you didn't have to make an appointment. We would simply go to Mr. Godwin on a Saturday morning. Mr. Godwin was a big wrestling fan. You didn't want to be sitting in his chair when the small television (black & white) in his shop had wrestling on. He was a big man who got very excited watching wrestling- with scissors and clippers in his hand. Need I say more? If you needed a doctor, you called Dr. Anderson (purely coincidental that this example followed the last one). If you didn't have a way to get to his office or were too sick to do so he'd come to your home. For those of you familiar with the Andy Griffith Show, my hometown was a lot like Mayberry.

So what lessons did I learn from these examples? First, if any of these service providers said they would do something, they would do it. Bank on it. If they said they would be there within a certain time, they would be there. Their word was as solid as oak. They never once asked my parents to sign an estimate, contract, or invoice. They never had any fine print or disclaimers. A handshake always sealed the deal. Your word was the only contract needed.

Second, these providers didn't have to do all they did. Dr. Anderson didn't have to come to our house when we were sick. He did it because he cared about his patients. Mr. Todd didn't have to drop everything he was doing to take care of our repair needs. He did so because he knew we had an immediate need. Mr. Godwin didn't have to graciously take three little rag tag walk-in boys at his busiest time on a Saturday morning. He did it with a smile because we were regular customers. Mr. Spillane didn't have to come to my grandmother's house to fix her car. To go one step further, he



Rick Glass

didn't have to mow her grass while he was there. What was the charge for driving several miles to her home to do these things? \$10.00. Why so much for so little? Because he knew my grandmother was a widow on a limited income and she had been a loyal customer of his for years. These providers went the extra mile to take care of their customers because it was the right thing to do.

That's why I was particularly disappointed when reading a letter regarding customer service from the editor of a national business magazine. This magazine had just named their annual list of customer service award winners. In his letter he states "... peer closely at a lot of outstanding customer service efforts, and what you'll see is the clever use of training, process design, and technology to simulate the old-fashioned relationship with the proprietor of a small business. It's a tough trick to pull off, because it means routinizing spontaneity, systemizing warmth, and putting a human skin on technology. But when it's done right, it can be powerful stuff." What??? You must be kidding. Simulate the old-fashioned relationship? Routinizing spontaneity? Systemizing warmth? They give awards for that? What ever happened to simply being genuine in your concern for the customer and their needs?

How did we get to this point? I believe providers of products and services have long ago lost sight of the customer's needs while looking only at their bottom line. Yes we're all in business to make money, but we won't be for long if we lose sight of who got us to where we are today.

I personally know the majority of the IURPA Vendor Members. I know they are good companies with good employees who care about their customers. All of those service providers in my hometown went out of their way to meet the needs of their customers. Your IURPA Vendors will do the same given the opportunity. Call them. Try them. You'll see. It just might be like "The Good Old Days."

WANTED: 2007 META CONFERENCE

BY KURT W. ROUSSELL, ACTING PRESIDENT

It is with great disappointment that I'm writing an article regarding the failure of 2006 META conference, the third straight year that META has not had a conference. It wasn't because of lack of effort...several Revenue Protection professionals got together early in 2006 and said, "let's get it done

Cassandra Shearing of Aliant Energy and Jeff Harris of Missouri Gas Energy stepped up to the plate and agreed to handle registrations and all of the associated duties. Charles McFadden of Columbia Gas, Paul Unruh of Exelon - ComEd, Jeff Meyer & Chris Smith of We Energies agreed to serve on the Program Committee and to solicit speakers. Tommie Gray of Ameren agreed to sponsor the conference manuals for distribution to the participants.Steve Diebold of American Casting and Wayne Willis of Detectent agreed to serve as Vendor Representatives. I agreed to book a facility and had the corporate support of We Energies.

What happened? Our volunteers did an excellent job at putting together what would have been a great event.

... We were ready to go.

What happened? Our volunteers did an excellent job at putting together what would have been a great event. Our traditional vendor sponsors stepped up to the plate. Other "non-traditional" vendors learned of our conference and agreed to participate. We were ready to go.

Then the storm hit! I believe eight (8) people registered Daily, we hoped and prayed registrations would come in. Daily, we hoped and prayed emails would come in saying "we're coming...hold a spot for us!" It didn't happen.

It was a sad day when we had to make the decision to cancel the conference. There would have been serious financial ramifications if we didn't cancel when we did. My name was on the contract for the venue and I'd be personally responsible for \$6,500. While I'm not in a position to speak for the others who worked tirelessly to plan for an informative event, I know the cancellation impacted them deeply.

The conferences held by all of our regional affiliates are put together as a labor of love. In our profession, it is our way of acknowledging the successes of others, learning new skills and information, and establishing relationships to network. It's where we learn of the latest technology from our vendors. It's about heightening our awareness of the issues that confront us daily, and finding out how our peers are addressing the issues. It's all about information sharing.

Where does META go from here? I ask myself this question constantly because I don't have an answer. The survival of META is at stake. Here are our 2007 challenges:



- We have no venue. META needs a host utility that wishes to host the 2007 conference in their territory, and make the necessary arrangements with a conference facility.
- We need a Conference Committee to establish the conference agenda.
- We need a Registration Committee to mail applications and process registrations.
- We need a Speaker Committee to attract speakers.
- We need a Vendor Representative. This usually isn't hard to find.

If a 2007 META conference is to be, all of the above must be accomplished NOW. Again, if META is to survive, we need your help.



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WARMING-HIGHVOLTAGE

THE OL' WATERING HOLE

IURPA

BY JEFF HARRIS • MISSOURI GAS ENERGY

ou know, the mere fact that we are all here, both as members of I.U.R.P.A. and as regulars at The Ol' Watering Hole, demonstrates that we understand and appreciate the importance and value of partnering. After all, we all know that where they are stealing from one of us, they are possibly, if not probably, stealing from others.

I'd like to talk about a resource that most of us have used at one time or another (or more frequently), but that we don't always think of in terms of partnering–Law Enforcement. More specifically, offering Diversion Recognition and Officer Safety Presentations to Law Enforcement Agencies.

Most Law Enforcement Agencies are very receptive to outside sources offering any type of information and/or training to them, especially at no cost! By putting together a presentation that covers diversion recognition as well as potential safety issues to the Officers, everyone benefits. We try to cover a variety of safety issues that Officers should be aware of, regardless of the type of call that they may be handling, anytime that they can smell gas. The presentations do not need to be some kind of extravagant production. In fact, I've found it easier to keep them from twenty to thirty minutes in length which allows you to conduct them as Roll Call Presentations. It is usually easier and quicker to schedule these at the individual Divisions or Stations as opposed to asking that they set aside large blocks of time and doing them on a Department-wide basis.

These presentations will allow you to show them what you are doing, why, and how. That way, when they are called out to meet you on an incident, they will already have a clue as to what is going on. It also gives you the opportunity to show THEM what to look for. Not everyone has a "Handyman" background. I know that back when I was a Police Officer, I could have tripped over a by-pass while walking around a house and not known what it was. Also, Police Officers are definitely creatures of habit. Plant the seed of information, show them the importance, and they will begin to pay attention to the utility hook-ups during the course of their normal duties. For example, approximately two weeks after doing one of these Roll Call Presentations, I got a call from an Officer who used to work for me. The first thing out of his mouth was, "Bleep-bleep" you Sarge, now you've got me looking at the gas meter at every house I go to!" BINGO! Just what we were hoping for! Think about it, how many more sets of eyes on the streets does that give you?

This also gives Officers another tool to think outside of the box with when they are working problem areas or target locations. If all else has failed, check out the utility situation. Are they legal? In most jurisdictions, the fastest way to get rid of them is if the water is or gets shut off. Most City Codes Agencies will post the house and evict the the residents on the spot for sanitation reasons.

Last of all, whenever you have a positive experience with a Law Enforcement Officer, don't forget to acknowledge and thank them for their



Jeff Harris

assistance. It doesn't cost you a thing (except the cost of a stamp) to write a short letter of appreciation to their Commanding Officer or the Chief of Police. The letter will not only be placed in their Personnel File, but it will also filter its way back down to them. I can tell you from experience that in a mostly thankless profession, it means a lot to them when someone takes the time to say thanks. It is also a good way to continue to build on the relationships that you have formed.

Come back next time, and I'll share some of the stories from where these Presentations have paid off. In the meantime, if you have any ideas, comments, suggestions, stories etc., please send them to me at jeff.harris@sug.com.

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A Few Strange but True (and slightly Humorous) SNIPPETS FOR THE OL' WATERING HOLE

-IURRPA

BY DAVE WHIDDEN

There was the time I found a snake in the meter provision (or meter pan). It was quite a surprise for me to find him in there. I suspect that it was more of a surprise for him as his remains were lying in there across both of the line side jaws. Shocking!

One day while looking for an address I came across a man who appeared to be tampering with his meter. He never saw me go around the block and then park in front of his house. He didn't notice me until I slowly walked up behind him and took his picture. The camera was an old Polaroid and the click definitely got his attention. The meter was an a-base meter and he appeared to be putting the glass back on it. I asked him what he was doing and he launched into a long story about how he came to accidentally crack the meter glass. He claimed to have dropped a hammer on it while doing roof repair (yeah, never heard that one before!!) and felt bad so he decided to search around for a replacement glass. He finally found one and was attempting to replace the glass (like the good citizen he was). The end results were as follows. Genius had the wrong size meter glass and it didn't fit. I remedied that when I had his meter changed. There was no new roofing material because the roof work never existed. The damage to the glass was on the bottom of the glass and not on the top where a hammer would have impacted. There was also a strange circular scratching on the bottom of the meter disk??

Cost of the investigators time and material? Less than \$200 dollars. A substantial back bill and a picture of an idiot tampering with his meter in broad daylight- Priceless.

What's more fun than the feel of hot sparks flying in your sleeve as you grind off a rusted heavy duty locking ring in the dead of August? The answer would have to be the sudden feeling that you were getting shocked in the legs as you were performing this act and the even more shocking realization that you were standing on a nest of yellow jackets. Needless to say this ring never got replaced until the cold set in.

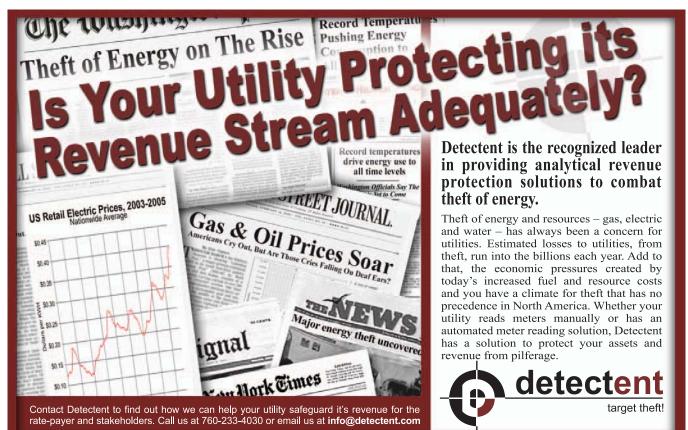


David Whidden

Thank goodness it wasn't a priority because there was no way I was going back there. Bees stink!! Did you ever notice that when we disconnect a meter the new customer always moved in just yesterday?

I was called out to a location to meet an electric service employee at the house and to inspect the meter for possible theft of service. When I arrived I noticed that the meter and cover were on the ground. A closer inspection of same told the story. The customer had been disconnected for collection and in attempting to reconnect his meter he dropped the cover across both line side jaws. Thank goodness the pot tripped and limited the blast. The serviceman had responded to find out what had tripped the pot and was standing by observing our meter inspection. Knowing this I began to bend over at the waist and inspect the ground very carefully. He was following my lead but finally had to ask me what we were looking for. I explained that after a blast like that there was sure to be a noticeable trail on the ground because this fool most certainly must have voided as he ran away. (Definitely from the shallower end of the gene pool).

I could go on and on but the point is we all have a million of these stories (and I've only been doing this job since 1990). Let's get some submitted and share.



OUT OF SOUTH AFRICA SARPA CONFERENCE AND UTILITIES VISIT IMPRESSIONS

IURPA

BY ITZICK MICHAELI, AFULA REGIONAL MANAGER, ISRAEL ELECTRIC CORPORATION

got really excited, when Jeff Cornelius, IURPA chairman, approached me about representing IURPA at the SARPA conference. Visiting South Africa was always on my travel wish list, and I was curious to learn how fighting energy theft is executed in SA complicated environment.

Gillian, SARPA's event manager was extremely helpful, and looked after all the necessary arrangements needed for my trip. Both Gillian and Nass du Preez, SARPA's President, welcomed me at Eskom Conference centre, where the 2 days event took place.

The conference and vendors exhibition were prepared carefully, and everything was very well coordinated and efficient. I found my colleagues presentations most interesting, and again, I was not surprised at all, to hear , that most revenue protection issues discussed, are shared throughout the world . People are doing whatever they can, to get hold of free electricity, and water.

I was the first International speaker of the conference, and my presentation on "Protecting Israel Electric Revenues" was received very well, and followed by many questions.

The conference dinner was enjoyable, and the time was used to make new acquaintances and establish professional relations, with local and international delegates, from Kenya and Ghana, who were sharing our table.

The conference concluded the next day after another set of very interesting presentations, and I was honored to win an award for Best Speaker of the convention, as a feedback from the conference delegates.

I used the weekend following the conference for sightseeing, and traveled to Pilanesberg Park, Sun City and the Kullinan diamonds mine. The next 2 days were dedicated for utilities meetings. I returned to the Eskom College, and spent the day with Deon van Rooi and his Prepayment Development team. Israel Electric has just started to experience prepayment metering, and is looking forward to expand the system, and wishes do it the right way.

I heard some fresh ideas, and learned about the varied prepayment meters and communicating systems.



Itzick Michaeli

On my last visit day, I was picked up from my Sandton hotel by Dirk Byker, Chief Engineer of Revenue Protection in the City of Tshwane. We drove to his office, where I met his colleagues and observed Eben Kleynhans process control software tool. We paid a visit to the Capital Park control centre, and call centre. I was impressed to see the amount of people busy with debt collection.

The next part of the day was truly an eye opening experience. We drove to Atteridgeville, to witness some credit control operations. I am sure, that not many local people or tourists have the opportunity to go deep into such neighborhoods. The scenes I saw there were staggering. We have similar problems in some parts of our country, but the scale is totally different.

The final part of the day and visit was hosted by Timo Nieuwoudt of CRT.

We had lunch at the Farm Inn, followed by a Revenue Protection presentation and took a great drive, encountering lions, giraffes and cheetahs from a very close distance.

I departed Johannesburg, after a full and busy week, leaving behind new fine and enthusiastic colleagues, all united with the goal of protecting the Utilities Revenues.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE META CONFERENCE?

BY STEVE RIOS

was at my desk early one morning when the phone rang. It was Kurt Roussell calling to let me know the META Conference had been cancelled. He was really down about it because he, and several other individuals, had worked really hard to try and make it happen.

I was disappointed, too, for several reasons. On a personal level, this was to be my first trip to Milwaukee. I was looking forward to a long weekend with my significant other, enjoying the sights, sounds and tastes of Summerfest. Plus, I already purchased my airline ticket. Have you ever had to cancel a flight reservation? It's not pretty. And forget about a refund!

On a professional level, I was disappointed because I was hoping to renew old acquaintances and make new contacts. Participation in these regional conferences is one way that vendors can emphasize their support for the people working in revenue protection. They also provide us with an opportunity to showcase our products and services to an interested audience.

I've been to many other regional conferences over the years: IURPA, NURPA, SURPA, SCRPA, NCSCRPA, WSUTA and META. Although attendance was anemic for a few years, more utility people are starting to attend these regional conferences once again. And that's a good sign.

So, I started to wonder what's going on with the Midwest utilities, anyway. Is there no energy theft in the Midwest? Hah! Just ask Kurt Roussell - if you have an hour or two to spare.



Steve Rios

Does upper management think energy theft is not an important issue? I think the requirements of Sarbanes Oxley have changed that mindset.

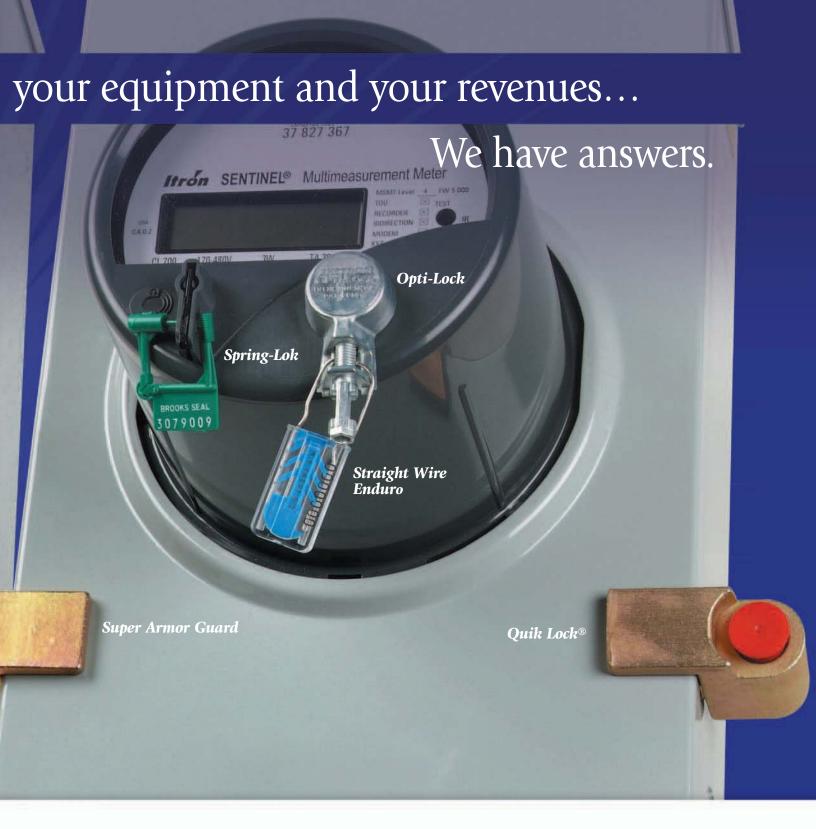
Is it that the Midwest utilities can't afford to send their RP people? I don't think so. And anyway, I've talked to plenty of conference participants that use vacation time and pay their own way to attend a meeting. To me, that proves these regional conferences offer real value to the attendees.

So, what's the answer? I don't know. But I hope that META can regroup and survive. I have relatives and friends in the Midwest that I want to visit!

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HOW TO ... CHOOSE A SECURITY SEAL

IURPA

By Alberto Castro • General Manager, ELC Security Products

The right choice of a sealing system stems from the principle that the value of the losses incurred will dictate the intended level of security and its cost. Any big loss of revenue would point to the necessity and acceptance of a more costly but efficient security system. The following points should be evaluated when choosing the appropriate security seal for your operations.

Physical Resistance

The most popular security seals are of the indicative type, for removal by hand or with a simple tool. On inspection, the seals should always indicate whether any tampering has taken place. Unlike the barrier-type such as the cable or bolt seals, the indicative type offers limited strength or resistance to removal.

Raw-Material

If a seal can be opened and reused without leaving clear signs of tampering its security is questionable. Evidence of tampering should also point out whether the marks are intentional or accidental. Seals used on meters are sometimes exposed to ultraviolet rays, salinity, etc., which over time may cause chinks or accidental marks. For this reason, many utility companies require Indicative seals in Polycarbonate which may last up to 20 years in intemperate climates, and are not prone to accidental damage caused by Mother Nature.

The right choice of a sealing system stems from the principle that the value of the losses incurred will dictate the intended level of security and its cost.

Numbering / Code / Logo

In the same way the identification of the seal number/code/logo - must also be kept immune to weather conditions and tampering. This is essential in order to guarantee integrity of the seal and avoid hindering tracking or audit trails. This is an important point, because the type of identification process used could make the difference between the right or wrong choice of seal. Some of the main types of Identification are:

- 1. Hot and Cold Stamping Process Seals are manufactured plain and its identification is given thorough a secondary stamping process; through hot or cold stamping.
- 2. Ink-Jet Printing Process Again, seals are manufactured plain with its identification being given on a secondary process; through Ink jet printing.
- 3. High Relief Molding Process The seals are manufactured with its numbers and/or logo within one step - the injection process.

- 4. Labeling Process In this numbering process, numbered labels are applied on the seal's tab as stickers or though In-mold-labeling process (IML).
- Laser Hatching Process The laser hatching process is the newest marking process where seals are manufactured plain and numbered through a Laser hatching process on a secondary process.



Alberto Castro

Locking Device

Every security seal will have its "Achille's heel" in its locking device, through which it may be tampered. However, the seal must be able to clearly indicate these tampering attempts; whether intentional or unintentional. Important points about the locking mechanism are:

- 1. Whether the capsule is open or closed. If closed, the seal will offer greater security due to limited access to the locking mechanism.
- Whether the locking device is made of two or more separate pieces. In this case it can only be considered a security seal when all of its separate parts are marked with the same identification.

The control of the seal numbering is an essential part in the security of the sealing process. For instance, in view of the huge amount of sealing operations made by utility companies, it is common to have these operations performed by third parties. This implies the adoption of computerized control systems, which in turn will allow a quick verification of the number sequence.

Software Control

The need to control the seals, from the manufacturing point all the way to the application of the seal is essential to maintain a tight control on the sealing operations. This requirement is met with the use of a follow-up web-based software that allows the tracking of the seal and compartment's serial number. This software may also be used to track the production and distribution of manufactured seals. Information is registered into a data-base and shows when the seal was manufactured, which invoice number it was sold under, and the actual application of the seal, creating a virtual link between the agent responsible for the sealing, the compartment sealed and the seal used.

Manufacturer's credentials

Finally, when choosing the correct seal it is imperative to check the manufacturer's credentials. This will discipline production methods and avoid, in the long run, any doubts about the level of security of the seals and also of their origin.

Alberto Castro is the General Manager at ELC Security Products

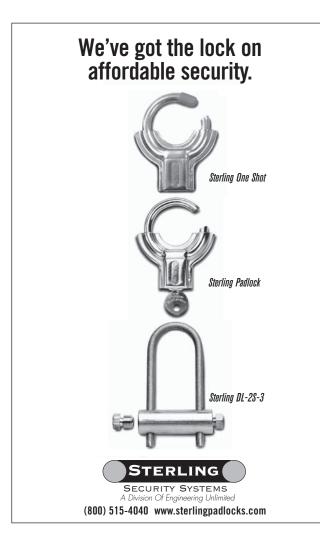
ANALYTICAL PROCESSES PROVE TO BE BENEFICIAL COMPONENT TO AMR

IURRA

BY CRAIG BIALY • NORTHEAST UTILITIES

he majority of utilities have transitioned, or are transitioning to Automated Meter Reading (AMR). This has eliminated the need for each meter to be visually read, cutting labor costs. The down side, however, is that our 'eyes and ears in the field' have been eliminated, increasing the potential for theft.

Although our Revenue Protection team has a solid handle on the investigation of theft of service cases, in early 2004, we found ourselves reevaluating our needs due to the changing/new world of AMR and our shrinking cache of internal resources. While the investigation portion remained solid, we knew we needed more sophisticated means to detect theft of service cases and better ways to determine which cases warrant a more thorough investigation.



At the 2004 NURPA conference, we were introduced to a utility vendor that has created detection algorithms to proactively uncover un-metered (both theft of service and service irregular meter conditions cases) while



Craig Bialy

working seamlessly with existing AMR systems. The vendor's solution is focused on Commercial accounts, which is where the majority of big dollar cases are found. Their algorithms consider historical customer consumption data, information about each business, and environmental conditions. A lot of what they do is based on 'peer anomaly' comparisons. For example, accounts have been segmented into groups based on the end product they produce. Take pizza parlors for instance; the way a pizza parlor uses energy varies greatly based on whether it is a take-out pizza parlor or a sit-down pizzeria. So the vendor has developed ways to segment take-out pizza houses from sit down ones.

The vendor provides us with a dedicated team of individuals that focus exclusively on detecting theft in our service territory. Working with them was very timely as we had just lost our internal analyst due to retirement.

In addition, working with a broad base of utilities has allowed the vendor to gain knowledge from some of the best revenue protection organizations, share information on common metering problems and turn that knowledge into algorithms that NU can take advantage of.

In conclusion, the use of third party vendors to perform the analytical functions that utilities are no longer able or willing to is a trend that I expect will continue. The specialized skills and broad knowledge base that our vendor has brought to the table have proven invaluable for NU, helping it to focus on high probability cases with a shrinking investigative force. Other companies are sure to follow suit.

PPL RESOLVES SIGNIFICANT THEFT CASE

IURPA

BY GIL DEGENHART

A lientown, Pennsylvania—a local newspaper, reported the arrest of a suspect who allegedly used the basement of his new home to run a large and sophisticated marijuanagrowing operation. Alert staff members from PPL's Revenue Protection Department, reviewed the newspaper article and launched an internal investigation that later identified nearly \$12,000 in stolen electric service.

The newspaper article described a high-tech operation that used special lighting and a ventilation system to remove excess heat and odors from the home. Such a sophisticated system would require a lot of electricity. A review of the customer's account showed only average use for homes in that neighborhood. The 2,600 square foot home had a 200 amp service and oil heat. Based on the anticipated electric load for this growing equipment, it was suspected that the subject had created an illegal diversion for his growing operation.

PPL contacted authorities to alert them of possible electric service theft and also developed a solid partnership with investigators from the Attorney General's office, working together to resolve this case.

Revenue Protection Investigators from PPL Electric Utilities utilized the "White Knight Tap Detector" made by Arnett Industries and confirmed there was a tap in the underground line. The suspect's basement also contained an electrical panel that did not receive power from the main panel. After gathering enough evidence to suspect an illegal tap, it was decided to dig up the service. The underground tap was found quickly. The suspect created an illegal tap inside the riser conduit below the meter base. The illegal tap entered the basement through a drilled hole in the home foundation. The electricity used to power the marijuana growing operation was 20 times higher than the usage in the home. The suspect was using 27,000 watts of lighting in the basement of his home, with fixtures similar to the ones used on the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

The company's investigation determined the suspect stole \$11,781.00 of electric service over an eight-month period. The illegal tap was cut out and retained as evidence.



Gil Degenhart

Investigation charges and service restoration charges were an additional amount of \$3,857.00.

The suspect was charged and pleaded guilty to multiple felony counts which included a felony count for theft of electric service.

Typically, theft of service is usually determined after the usage drops dramatically, but that wasn't the case here. PPL Revenue Protection personnel demonstrated great awareness in taking the newspaper article, reviewing the customer's account and taking steps to gather evidence. The end result was building a solid case and obtaining a criminal conviction.

This case demonstrates the value for all Revenue Protection Departments to develop and maintain lasting relationships with internal utility work groups and with outside agencies. PPL Line Crew personnel responded quickly to dig up the evidence and correct the unsafe condition. PPL Engineering and Billing personnel were utilized to develop billing based on UL labels on electrical equipment that was seized from the growing operation. An additional by-product of the investigation was to develop a lasting partnership with representatives from the Office of Attorney General.



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To Prosecute or not to Prosecute?

IURPA

BY JOHN HAMMERBERG, LEAD INVESTIGATOR • REVENUE PROTECTION DEPT., TAMPA ELECTRIC CO.

t electric utilities across the nation, the age old question continues to rear its ugly head: should we prosecute the "customers" who steal our electricity or not? At Tampa Electric there is no question, the answer is a resounding yes -- we aggressively investigate and prosecute those who steal electricity. The company's revenue protection department is small, with only three investigators and minimal clerical support, but we initiate an average of 65 cases per month. Our goal this year is to bill \$1.0 million and collect \$500,000 and we are well on track to achieve that goal. Think about it this way, suppose the police caught someone who had been sneaking onto your property and stealing tools from a line truck. Each month, for the last 6 months or longer, they took tools valued at \$100 or \$150. Would your company prosecute that person? I certainly hope so. In my opinion there really is no difference.

At Tampa Electric we are fortunate that upper management agrees with the philosophy of prosecuting electricity thieves. Like all electric utilities, Tampa Electric promotes

excellent customer service. We understand that arresting customers goes against the grain of normal customer

service. Let's remember that the definition of a "customer" is a purchaser or buyer. The people we target are not "customers". If we catch someone with a stolen meter, jumpers in the meter socket, a tap at the weather head, a switch on the potential, jamming the meter or anything else that allows them to receive un-metered electricity, more than likely they will be arrested. This does not necessarily mean that all perpetrators go to jail (some do), but they will be arrested and be given a mandatory court appearance. The electricity will be disconnected on the spot and will not be reconnected until we have received all or most of their restitution. Restitution includes the estimated cost of the electricity that was stolen plus our cost of the investigation. Our investigative costs include: investigator time, other employee time (trouble man, meter man, etc.), vehicle time, cost of damaged equipment and the cost of stolen electricity. Virtually any cost incurred by our company is passed on to the perpetrator.

In Florida we are blessed with a very "user friendly" Theft of Electricity Statute (FFS 812.14). Using this statute, we do not have to prove who stole or tampered with the meter, socket or wiring. We merely have to prove that the resident/customer knowingly received the benefit of the stolen electricity. This "knowledge" can easily be proven using good interview techniques. Simple questions such as "come on, you know the electricity is not supposed to be on, right?" or, "since you're not receiving a bill, who did you think was paying for the electricity?" "Receiving the benefit" is easy to prove as well. Finding anything powered by electricity from the obvious such as, lights and air conditioning to the notso-obvious such as, hot water, ice in the freezer, a cold refrigerator or even the little doorbell light will do.

We are also fortunate that law enforcement in our service area is very much on our side when it comes to arresting electricity thieves. The officers know that, when we ask for law enforcement to respond, it is normally going to result in an arrest. Our misdemeanor electricity



John Hammerberg

theft arrests will occasionally result in an unrelated felony arrest. We are often asked by the officers "do you have any more in the area?" If we do, they are usually happy to go to the next one with us. We frequently give training seminars and demonstrations to law enforcement, animal control officers, code enforcement officers, etc. We train them in what to look for, what our color coded seals mean, what they can and, most importantly, cannot touch. If an agency requests that an investigator respond to a suspected theft of electricity location, we quickly respond. The payoff for this quick

Let's remember that the definition of a "customer" is a purchaser or buyer.

response is that, in Tampa and Hillsborough County, when a search warrant is served, drug bust is made or officers

respond to a residence, more likely than not the police officer will also be looking at the meter socket. We get calls almost daily from law enforcement reporting electricity theft.

Another benefit to prosecuting electricity thieves is the deterrent factor. If someone is caught stealing electricity and all they have to pay is the estimated cost of the electricity that they have stolen, I would say that would be a pretty good gamble to take. In Tampa, if you are caught stealing electricity, you could spend the night in jail, end up with an arrest record, pay fines and court fees, be placed on probation for 6 to 12 months, pay the cost of probation, pay our cost of investigation and the estimated cost of the electricity stolen. Pretty big difference isn't there. Think about this, every time we respond with law enforcement to a mobile home park, a neighborhood or apartment complex, all the neighbors are looking at us. They know who we are and what's going on. In the court room, the charges are read out loud so everyone knows why that individual was arrested; they also hear the punishment. An estimated 95 per cent of those arrested for electricity theft in Tampa plead guilty at arraignment, of the remaining 5 per cent that go to trial, 98 per cent are found guilty. Those that are found guilty are normally placed on probation -- a term of that probation is that they must pay Tampa Electricity full restitution.

Our system has worked extremely well for Tampa Electric for over 25 years. We know that we will never completely eliminate electricity theft, but we can certainly make sure that the ones we catch are prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

So now tell me again, why isn't your company prosecuting the people that steal electricity?

Webmaster Washes Out

IURPA

By WOODY WOODWARD

Just proves you can't always tell a story by its headline... Actually, what I mean is it's time for me to write another article, but I'm tired of writing about the IURPA Web Site. This time I'm just going to ramble a while. Those of you who have met me know I'm good at rambling. And then there's the salt.

My company's entire system is locked with locking meter rings or other devices depending on meter and switchgear type. Many of you have told me that you wish your company would allow you to lock up your system. I am a strong supporter of locked systems, especially those that include AMR. After all, what business leaves its cash register totally unattended AND unlocked for years on end? Even with a "sophisticated alarm system"?

Don't get me wrong. A locked system only keeps out the casual thief. Someone who really wants to will find a way around or through the lock. Usually, though, it's much more obvious when the average customer has defeated the lock. That is, of course, unless they have a key and/or are practiced at minimizing and hiding the damage they caused getting through or around the lock. Then all bets are off.

We've seen a marked decrease in inverted meters, open potential links, dial tampering, and other types of theft that require getting into or behind the meter. At the same time, we've seen a marked increase in two specific types of theft. On active (current) accounts we're seeing drilled holes in the meter covers with something stopping the disk. On inactive (no customer) accounts we're seeing jumper cables from the main disconnect to our overhead or underground lines. Sometimes we find active accounts using jumper cables, but it can be tricky. Both of these types of theft should be easy to see, but only if someone actually visits the meter and looks closely, in the case of drilled holes. Salt?

By the way, did you know that here in Las Vegas your home builder / contractor will drill a hole in the bottom of the meter to let the rain water drain out? Apparently our 4 inches of annual rainfall floods the valley so deeply that the water gets over 5 feet deep and fills the meter with water. That's what the customer told us, at least. As to why there was a wire in the hole, he told us that his neighbor was trying to get him into trouble. He had no answer as to why the wire was never in the hole on the meter reading date when we would spot it.

Does your RP department handle dead (failed) meters? If not, you're missing out on a great source of revenue stats for your department. Who better than a trained investigator to take the time required to truly determine the reason the meter isn't registering? If the meter is stopped due to tampering, is there anyone better than an RP investigator to spot and properly handle it? How about the billing corrections? Who better than the RP department to assure the account is properly billed as your tariffs allow? Salt?

What about meters that have been disconnected but continue registering consumption? Does your RP group handle those? Sure, sometimes it's a mis-read, but sometimes the person who did the disconnect did a "soft" or "virtual" disconnect, and the resident sees no need to sign until it's really off. Someone needs to get those people to sign for service and bill them appropriately. And those who damage your gear to connect their own service should be held accountable for their actions, not to mention the safety mess they may have created.

Salt. What is it with the salt? We're finding sealed zip lock bags with a couple of ounces of salt inside on the top of the meter covers. One customer told my investigator that "where they come from that's how they dry their



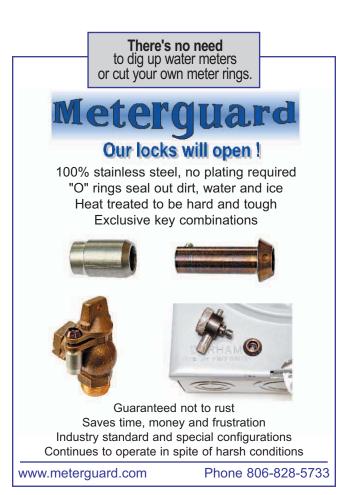
Wody Woodward

salt". Do they buy their salt wet? Dry it in a sealed bag? Hey, we're in the desert. I know it didn't get wet on the shelf.

Now I've got it! Our customers are driving up to Salt Lake City and filling zip lock bags with water from the Great Salt Lake. When they get home, they sit the bag of salt on top of the meter to dry. The combination of the desert heat and the electromagnetic field from the meter quickly causes the water to evaporate, leaving pure white iodized table salt crystals.

Actually, in years past, in moist climates, burlap bags of salt were placed on or under the meter in the hope that the fumes would cause corrosion in the meter and slow it down.

Ok, that's enough for now. I'm a two fingered typist and my fingers are sore.



A BIZARRE TALE INVOLVING A FAMILY

IURPA

BY ED BROOKS

n September 3rd, 2003 I received a report of possible meter tampering. An employee had an order to turn on the service for a Max Demento. I arrived at 850 Fates Street and found the meter cover had a small hole, at the 6:00 position, apparently made by using a drill. A small piece of wire was inserted through the hole, stopping meter rotation. I removed the meter, tagged it for evidence and locked it in my truck. As I was securing the meter panel, Max came out to talk to me. He claimed that his Dad, Peter had tampered with the meter. However, I discovered that Dad had passed away in April 2003. And I noted that there was still usage, after April. Indicating that someone on this property was still "working" the meter. After talking with Max, he let it slip that he and his brother lived here with Dad. Based on this information, we billed Max for the tampering and investigative costs.

Warning! Disclaimer Ahead The names of the guilty have been changed to protect their innocence!

On June 6th, 2006 another Investigator went to check a meter for a malfunction, at 2978 Palm Tree. He attempted to gain access to the meter, but was unsuccessful. He came back to the office, at the end of the day and started talking about this order. He talked about the dogs, how secure the gates were, and he mentioned how unusual the customer name was, Demento. I immediately turned around and asked him to repeat the name. I told him, I know that name. I checked my files and sure enough, it matched the case I had worked at 850 Fates, for Demento, in 2003.

This got me to thinking, that is an unusual name. I wonder how many Demento's are in our system. I did a search and found we had a total of six active customers. 850 Fates, 2978 and 2956 Palm Tree, 3050 Barstow Mountain, 107 Northward and 7966 Blue Ox. We also had a closed account at 540 Dumbbell. I created orders on all active accounts to check them on June 7th, 2006.

On June 7th we headed out in the field. 850 Fates had no tampering at this time. At 2956 Palm Tree and 3050 Barstow Mountain we discovered drill holes, but nothing inserted at this time. 107 Northward was a problem with the customer. He was very defensive, and kept yelling at me to get out of his yard. I didn't want to tip our hand at this point, so I exited his yard. But I did observe glass shards in the bottom of the meter cover. When I checked 7966 Blue Ox, I found not only a drill hole, but there was indeed a wire inserted, stopping meter registration. I had no access to the meter and had to use binoculars, from the neighbor's property, to see the wire. I still took photos, but I had no hope that the wire would show up, which it did not.

We discussed this dilemma at length. Knowing that if we took one family out of service for tampering, that we might lose the evidence at the rest of the accounts. So we decided to attempt to document all of the accounts. Now keep in mind that most of the accounts are locked down, and some had dogs. So we decided the best approach would be to use binoculars and document with photos, as much as we could.



Ed Brooks

On June 8th I went out and checked

540 Dumbbell. I did find a drill hole, but based on usage patterns I believed the current customer did not know about the drill hole, or at least was not using the hole to adjust his bill. When checking the usage pattern on our system though, it did appear while it was under the name of Demento the meter was definitely running slow. We did not pursue any action against the current customer based on my findings.

On July 25th, 2006 we decided to try some of the houses again. At 2956 Palm Tree we found a wire inserted in the drill hole stopping the meter from registering. It was documented. At 107 Northward I was able to access the yard without the customer's knowledge. I found the meter did have a drilled hole, but no wire was inserted. But, the lock in the ring had been tampered, the lock on the lineside cover was missing and it appeared that the panel had been upgraded. With the wrong meter installed.

On August 27th, 2006 I checked 3050 Barstow Mountain. I found a wire inserted in the drill hole, this was an access problem so I used binoculars and documented with photos, hoping they would show the wire. I was lucky, the wire was just visible.

Since we were having trouble gaining access to 2978 Palm Tree and we had no luck at catching the wire actually inserted in the drill hole at 107 Northward, I went back to our system. I documented the billing for the last three months, our highest usage months, for these two properties. I then used our local Assessor's web site to get the square footage for each property. This web site also allows us an aerial view of the property. Which I used to compare the footprint of the suspects homes, to other properties in the same development. I found 4-5 homes that matched the square footage and pools, of each of the suspect's homes. I than took the usage from our system on the sample homes and compared those to the suspects usage. It showed a drastic difference, approximately 75% lower bill at each suspect's home.

This case just goes to show you what's in a name!! And that you should always run the name against your system and a people search on the Internet, like Privateeye.com or Zabasearch.com.

We are currently waiting on approval to disconnect the services. When we get approval, we plan on disconnecting all services at the same time. We plan to have company security on site, and to alert local law enforcement of our activities.

Edward Brooks is a Field Service Investigator for Nevada Power Company.

UKRPA CONFERENCE

IURPA

BY IAN MAIN • UKRPA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, REVENUE MANAGEMENT OFFICER, SCOTTISH POWER

The ninth United Kingdom National Revenue Protection Conference has taken place in Bromsgrove near Birmingham in the heart of England. The setting for the 2-day event was the Bromsgrove hotel, which was used for the third consecutive conference and offers excellent conference and leisure facilities. The organising committee, chaired by Angie Mann, had high hopes that the springtime event would be a success and were not to be disappointed as the event lived up to expectation, with even the erratic British weather providing 2 days of glorious sunshine.

The chairman of the United Kingdom Revenue Protection Association, Neil Wills, opened the conference and warmly welcomed all attendees. In his own inimitable style, Neil provided a brief outline of what the delegates could expect over the 2 days before handing over to Chris Johnson to provide the keynote address to the delegates. The on going 'Theft of Energy Review' was then brought into the spotlight with an update provided from the chairpersons from the working groups and this provided many areas for discussion over the course of the conference. As is now traditional, the platform was then handed over to the Energy Regulator, Ofgem, and then to Energywatch who act as an independent energy watchdog to address the conference.

Following a break for coffee, the conference was then treated to a superb presentation from The Director of the Scottish Drugs Enforcement Agency who provided a fascinating insight into this area and to what they do to tackle this menace in our society. This was particularly interesting to delegates due to the obvious link between energy theft and cannabis growth in the UK. Day 1 was then rounded off with a question and answer session involving all of the speakers from the first day and it was then over to the exhibitors, who provide an excellent service to the Revenue Protection Industry.

A lovely evening then ensued, starting off with drinks in

the main reception area before all enjoyed a splendid dinner. It was also a chance for everyone to be reacquainted with old friends and of course meet many new ones. A charity raffle and auction took place raising nearly £800 for a local Children's Hospice. A presentation was then made to David Bown for his exceptional contribution to the UKRPA and to the Revenue Protection Industry over the years.



lan Main

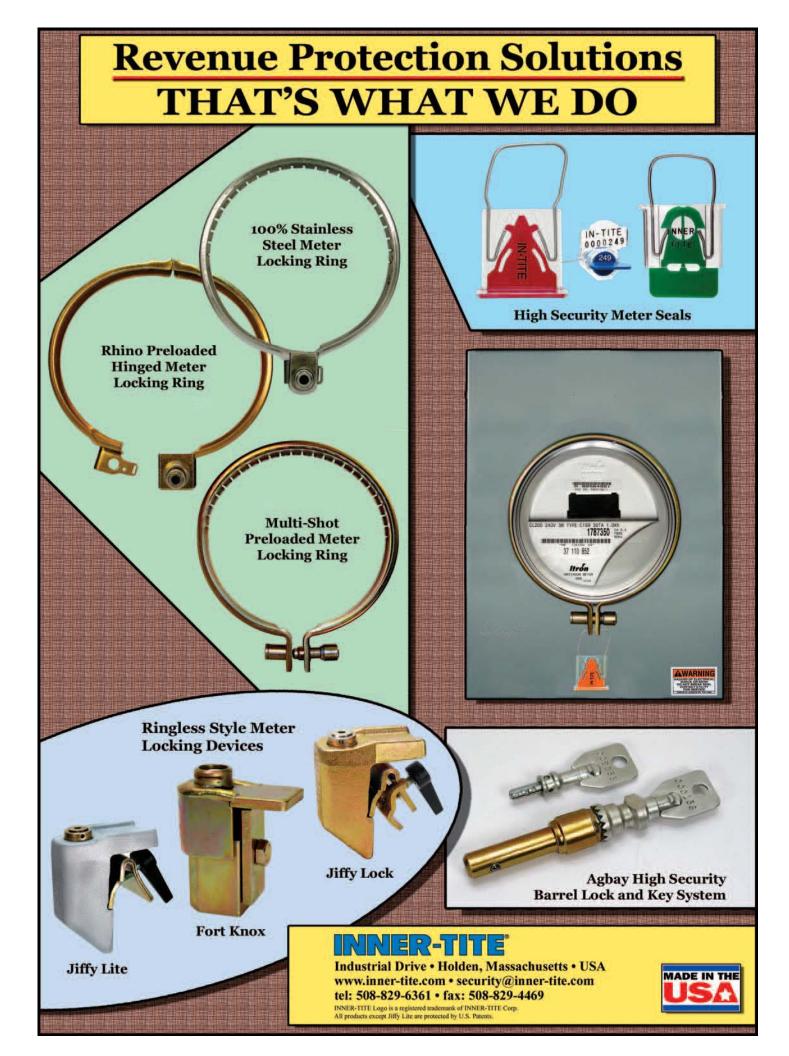
Following a late night for most, a bleary eyed group of delegates assembled the next morning which was to focus on our overseas presenters. The group were again greeted by Neil Wills who then handed over to IURPA Chairman, Jeff Cornelius (pictured) to provide a fascinating presentation. Jeff was then followed by Rajat Majumder from India who provided an insight to energy theft in India and how they have tackled this over the years. It was then over to our good friend, Itzick Michaeli to share his knowledge on energy theft and advise of what is happening in Israel.

The delegates were then treated to 4 separate breakout sessions, covering case studies around energy theft link to drugs, Forensics, Personal Safety and Data Protection.

After the breakout sessions, Neil carried out a review of the conference and invited all delegates to stay if they so wished for a debate on Smart Metering, which was conducted after lunch and many obliged. Thus closing the conference for another year.

All in all this was a resounding success with very positive feedback received from all who attended. We will soon be planning our next conference due in 2007 and would be delighted to welcome members of IURPA to join us. Keep up to date with up and coming events at our website www.ukrpa.co.uk

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IURPA • 16 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 fifteen 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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