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IURPA

Looking Back to the Future

ith the end of the year coming in a few months it is amazing to look back over the past two years and think about all the changes we have seen. With a thriving economy to a near collapse, the Revenue Protection business has not noticed any down

turn. In fact, we have had a 28% increase in cases at my company so far in 2009. With jobs being lost and families trying to make ends meat and in several cases paying the electric bill is put on the back burner. A lot of companies are trying to make arrangements and work with customers to pay over due bills. In any case our companies cannot survive without revenue. Our jobs have come to be noticed more than ever by company executives and state officials to insure that our customers are not funding those who will not pay for what they use.

In some cases we as Revenue Protection Professionals are dealing with the same people law enforcement deal with everyday.

With the tough economic times most Revenue Protection conferences have been cancelled. A lot of companies have restricted or stopped all travel, and this is where the IURPA origination has been so beneficial. We can still communicate among members, ask questions, get advice from fellow members who may have seen the same issue. When you think about it, the Fifty bucks we spend for a yearly membership is very cheap for the information and access to the growing experience this membership has. All regional conferences were cancelled except for the WSUTA / IURPA joint conference in Tucson. It was a great conference with speakers from numerous countries. It was a time of learning, training and networking.

ON THE INSIDE MAINTAINING CONTACTS -

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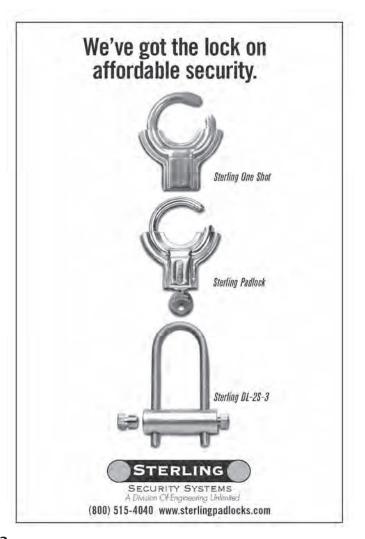
Greg Lee IURPA Chairman

Safety is still the number one priority with any job. There are many hazards left behind as a result of tampering with meter sockets and illegal wiring which makes our job more difficult. There are also more incidents of electrical contacts and flashes occurring with the growing number of cases we have. These are not only our employees or contractors having these incidents but a growing number of so called customers

(some are-some are not) getting shocked or burned or worse tampering with these sockets. In some cases we as Revenue Protection Professionals are dealing with the same people law enforcement deal with everyday. We must remain focused on our job at hand to insure that we go home every night the same way we came to work.

We as Revenue Protection Professionals have a difficult task ahead. We must manage our time, efforts and knowledge to insure the success and safety of the individuals charged with the ever longing battle with those trying to steal our product. Our companies have placed a great responsibility on us to do a job very few know anything about except the name Revenue Protection.

It has been a great honor to chair the IURPA origination for the past two years. I look forward to serving this group of professionals for years to come as an IURPA board member and support the incoming chairman.



5



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Maintaining Contacts - More Important Than Ever

By JEFF MEYER, META PRESIDENT • WE ENERGIES, MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

Theft Association (META) members in America's heartland. Based on everything I've heard from members not only in META, but throughout IURPA, we are all so busy we can barely keep our heads above water. Economic conditions place enormous burdens not only on customers abilities to pay their bills (or the lack thereof, driving the theft of energy), but also on reduced budgets causing staff reductions and cuts in training expenditures. Consequently, this article addresses issues related

I encourage all members to utilize the valuable service provided by IURPA ... we can all learn from the information that is shared.

specifically to that condition.

As you now know this year's META Conference planned for Cincinnati had to be canceled. The "official" reason was low attendance that made the conference untenable. The real reason of course is time and money. Due to budget limitations that are universal not only are training budgets being reduced but, reduced staffing due to attrition or transfers prohibit Revenue Protection (RP) professionals from leaving their work unattended without facing a massive backlog upon their return from any absence. While addressing these concerns during the frequent conference calls involving the META Board and Conference Planning Committee two things, not so surprisingly, became very apparent to me;

First was the dedication and hard work of the conference committee, and others, to prepare and schedule such a conference. I was proud to be part of a group comprised of such competent professionals as Paul Unruh (ComEd), Dave Denham (People's Gas Energy), Dennis Hurtt (Duke Energy), Jeff Harris (Missouri Gas Energy and META President Emeritus) and Chris Benson (DeWalch Technologies). When necessary we tapped into the expertise of Tommie Gray (Ameren), Steven Glenn (Kansas City Power & Light), Diane Harrison (Mid American), George Balsamo (United

Illuminating) and Kurt Roussell (We Energies and META President Emeritus). Their motivation, desire and attention to detail were inspiring. It strongly reinforced what I already knew; that RP professionals are exactly that-PROFESSIONALS!



Jeff Meyer

The second thing this experience made me realize is that in this time of budget and staffing limitations it is even more important to maintain professional contacts through sources other than a conference. I, and I'm sure all of you, have received occasional emails from other IURPA members asking for advice, guidance or general information our colleagues can use in their investigations or RP programs. In lieu of the face to face contacts at the now few and far between conferences I suspect these electronic inquiries may become more frequent. I encourage all members to utilize the valuable service provided by IURPA (thank you Woody Woodward, Nevada Power) to mass email these inquiries for our mutual benefit. I also encourage all members to respond to these inquiries because we can all learn from the infor-mation that is shared. The IURPA website, www.iurpa.org, also has contact information for the regional sub-groups (such as META), a Members Page and an Electronic Telegraph to share information. The META Board has discussed creating a META website and initial planning and queries have begun towards accomplishing that goal.

Unfortunately I could not attend the IURPA conference in Tucson, AZ however the committee prepared a strong agenda. For those of you who did attend please thank a committee member for all their hard work as they surely deserve it and keep those emails coming. I hope to see you at the 2010 META Conference tentatively scheduled for May in Cincinnati, OH.



NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR THOSE ENGAGED WITH REVENUE PROTECTION AT THE ISRAEL ELECTRIC COMPANY

By Itzick Michaeli, Revenue Protection Manager, Israel Electric Corporation

he first National Conference for those engaged in the field of revenue protection within the Israel Electric Company, took place in November 2007, and was very successful.

In light of the comments by the participants and the lessons learned, it was decided to conduct the conference in 2009 in a different and expanded format.

The 2009 conference was spread over two continuous das, during the month of June.

In the first half of the conference's first day, 80 Company employees, engaged in the handling of illegal electricity use, in the field as well as in the offices, assembled at the Management, Network and Marketing School, located near the central power plant of the Electric Company, in the City of Hadera.

The author opened the conference with a review of the activities that took place during the preceding year, followed by greetings and encouragement of the participants, by the Company's Marketing Division Manager.

Managers of revenue protection from the Company's five districts, made interesting presentations to the participants, describing the development of the handling of one of the special and exceptional cases of electricity theft they encountered during the last period.

Later, the employees heard from a private investigator, a graduate of the secret service, a lecture that concentrated on the Islamic Society's customs and the fundamentals of the religion and the correct manner of behavior and treatment of this population in light of their customs and beliefs. The Islamic society has special cultural traits, which necessitate

using the correct approach and manner of action, in any case of investigating the suspicion of electricity theft.

The lectures session of the conference was concluded by a professional lecture by a Company's attorney, which refreshed to the participants the knowhow with relation to the collection of evidence and exact, correct documentation of the findings in the filed and in the office.

During the second half of the day, the participants divided into six discussion groups, led by the deputies in charge of marketing in the districts, responsible for handling the illegal use of electricity, who were engaged with the following subjects:

- 1. Ways to improve the quality and quantity of electricity theft suspicions reported from the filed.
- 2. The ways to handle the falsification of the extent of the customer's connection;



Itzick Michaeli

- 3. Suggestions as to how to improve the skills of those involved with revenue protection within the Company;
- 4. Improving the office work methods, involved with the preparation of an evidence file and electricity use calculations, during the period in which no orderly meter reading took place, and the negotiations with the customer.
- 5. Electricity theft and the media is it appropriate and prudent to give wide publicity to the activity that takes place with regard to the issue?
- 6. Improvement of the cooperation with external and internal factors, on matters concerning the handling of electricity theft;

The findings of the groups and their recommendations were raised before the full forum of participants, and this concluded the first day of the conference.

During the second conference day, the participants gathered in the specious auditorium located on the 19th floor of the Company's main office building in the City of Haifa, in the northern part of the country. Some 30 senior managers of the Company joined this part of the Conference. The activity and responsibility of those managers includes the area of revenue protection.



The V.P. in charge of customers opened the day by a review and greetings.

Rens Bindeman, a specialist on the subject of revenue protection from South Africa, was invited as an international guest lecturer for the Conference. Rens, a member of IURPA, is the living spirit behind the revenue protection activities in South Africa as well as all over the African Continent, and also a central figure in all that involves the prevention of metals and electric cables theft. His lecture was extremely interesting, and demonstrated very well the complexity of problems unique to South Africa, with which those involved with revenue protection in that country, are involved.

Another interesting lecture was delivered by the manager of the intelligence section of the Israel Tax Authority, who reviewed and emphasized the importance of the intelligence information collection system, and the importance of establishing work relations and information exchange between the intelligence factors within the Tax Authority and the revenue protection filed in the Electric Company.

The manager of the meters unit in the Jerusalem District, presented the special and complex activity of his unit, which succeeded to identify and neutralize electricity theft of huge scales in the Palestinian settlements located within the area of the Palestinian Authority, fed from the Israeli Electricity Network. The activity required the installation and use of special equipment, while all of the activity is performed with

the tied military accompaniment and taking special increased safety and security measures. This activity alone generated for the Electric Company revenue returns valued at 15 million US Dollars, and which will contribute increased revenues for the Company in years to come, because of neutralizing the thefts.

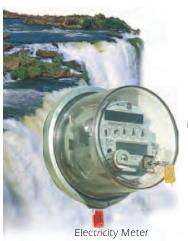
The lecture by the Company's spokesperson on the subject of Spokesmanship of events related to electricity theft was interesting and contributed to the general knowledge of the participants.

For the final lecture of the day, was invited a senior lector from the Haifa University, who succeeded to fascinate all participants with a flowing fascinating lecture on the subject of behavior under conditions of stress.

A discussion panel with the participation of the Marketing Division Manager and the author of this article concluded the second Conference day.

Participants raised a wide variety of questions on various subjects, and received answers on the many subjects that were raised, related to both the current activity as well as the strategic level of the revenue protection field.

About one week after the Conference, a feedback request was distributed among the participants. The responses, comments, and suggestions gathered from the feedback, will serve as a base for the structuring of the schedule and contents for the next annual conference.



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2009 SARPA CONFERENCE HIGHLITES

By Itzick Michaeli, Revenue Protection Manager, Israel Electric Corporation

A year passed and I am again boarding a 9 hours flight, on my way to participate in the annual SARPA – South Africa Revenue Protection Association conference, which takes place this year in the city of Cape Town.

This is my third visit to South Africa, however, this visit is a bit different, because, like many soccer fans around the world, I am curious to see with my own eyes, how South Africa copes with the race against time, to complete all the needed preparations towards the Mondial – The World Cup Soccer Competitions, which will open in less than a year, on June 11 2010.

The city hosting this years SARPA Conference is Cape Town, a unique pearl of beauty, spread beneath the Table Mountain. The panorama from it of the city and its vicinity is breathtaking.

The Cape Town Municipality, also serving as the local power distribution company, placed at the disposal of the conference's participants the nice well-equipped conference room of the City Council located at the Civic Center. The City's mayor, Dan Plato, opened the conference and greeted with warm words the participants and all those who take part in the severe phenomenon of power theft, water, and metals.

Dirk Byker, the SARPA departing president, introduced the subject of the conference – "Are we winning?" In his speech, Byker referred to the reality in which we live, in which the human behavior promises, that those engaged in the revenues protection, are expected to have a life long occupation. He claimed that as long as the behavior of people, as designed along the entire history thru their culture and upbringing, will not internalize and adopt the necessity of keeping the rules of ethics, integrity, responsibility, respect for the laws and regulations, and honoring the rights of others, no improvement can be expected in the harsh reality with which we currently cope.

During the two days of the conference, the participants were presented with a large number of interesting presentations, including success stories, technical subjects, and legal issues.

Greg Stopford, of the Capetown Municipality, chose to present and discuss the need to act according to the 80/20 principle, in order to balance between the "Sardines" and the "Tuna", and differentiate between the large and small perpetrators of electricity theft. Greg directed at the importance of action effort in accordance with the "Glacier" principle, in order to avoid from investing 80% of the invested effort in chasing after only 20% of the losses. The data presented, demonstrated that the value of locating one faulty meter in the yard of a large customer, contributes 5 fold the revenue from handling 8,500 home customers in the yards of which was performed electricity theft. Greg listed a number of success factors, among them: the success of a "Hot Line" to provide information, the high level of team motivation, professional field workers, cooperation with

other departments, vehicles, equipment and fit tools, tracking the actual usage, and the potential of future uses.

To summarize Greg presented his perception, according which:

- RP goes beyond sweeps
- RP goes beyond checking Meter seals
- RP goes beyond detecting tampered meters
- RP goes beyond detecting by-passed meter
- RP goes beyond detecting defective meters
- It is imperative to act in accordance with the 80/20 principle and pay special attention to the large customers
- The centers in which the largest losses danger exist must be located
- It must be examined whether proper resources use was done

Metal theft is widespread in South Africa, and it causes extreme damages to the public infrastructures companies. The SARPA organization is very active in combating this phenomenon. Rens Bindeman, SARPA's technical advisor, was among the prominent activists in establishing a special task force; Non-ferrous Metal Theft Task Team, initiated by the Cape Town Municipality, which gained the nickname "Copperheads". The activity of this task force, brought upon a turnaround in the volume of the phenomenon, and substantially reduced the scope of metals theft. Simultaneously, rigorous activity took place to lead new legislation on the issue, which brought about The New Second Hand Goods Act, 2009 (Ac No. 6 of 2009). The new law comes to arrange the activity of second hand merchandise merchants in general and metal object in particular, including scrap for recycling, it encourages ethics in this type of trade and defines the obligations and rights of merchants and customers, with the declared intention to bring about the enforcement of all relevant laws on the subject.

During the conference, a panel took place on the subject of "Smart metering", with the participation of Rens Bindeman, Roland Hill from the Landis + Gyr Company and the author of the article. During this discussion, many questions came from the audiences, and a large number of question marks came up with regard to the need to replace existing meters with smart meters, especially on the background of the unique usage characteristics of a large part of the South African Population.

In the evening, the mayor of Cape Town hosted the conference participants for a festive cocktail accompanied by artists performance in the Chandelier Foyer of the ArtsCape Theatre, and invited the members of the organization to return and be the guests of Capetown also next year.

At the end of the second conference day, Dirk Byker, the SARPA President gave a farewell from his job, and his place was taken by the new elected president of the organization, Malesele Lelaka, who serves as one of the revenues



"I MISS THE GOOD OL' DAYS"

By Dave Whidden • United Illuminating

h yes.... the good ol' days. Once upon a time my job consisted of investigating theft of service. You know, the good old hands on type. Drill holes with the disc scratched from being pinned. Line to load jumper wires. Upside down meters with the blades worn to copper. Switches on the test link. I never thought I'd find myself missing these things but the world of Revenue Protection has changed so drastically since I arrived here in Connecticut almost 5 years ago.

I long for the comfortable and familiar things of my early days as an Investigator at Lilco. My days now seem to be filled with fraud. People are struggling because of the economy. It's not that I don't understand, because we're all struggling. But many of our "customers" think nothing of fabricating a story to avoid paying their debts. I often ask them if they would go out to eat and then expect to just leave without paying the bill? Their answer is usually "no" but many of them have no problem with playing a game that we call "name rotation". I'm sure you all know the game because unless I miss my guess, we're all struggling with the same scenarios. The account has a high balance, it's been disconnected or is about to be disconnected and lo and behold a new party just moves in. What a coincidence! A background check usually reveals that this new party either has a bad i.d. (a fictitious or stolen social security number). Sometimes the check shows they have lived at this very address for some time or they provide a good social security number but the check shows it just happens to be a minor

child who is related.

Many of these cases turn into investigative nightmares and many times we end up reconnecting the service knowing the problem wasn't solved. It seems a bit unfair to the vast majority of good customers we serve.

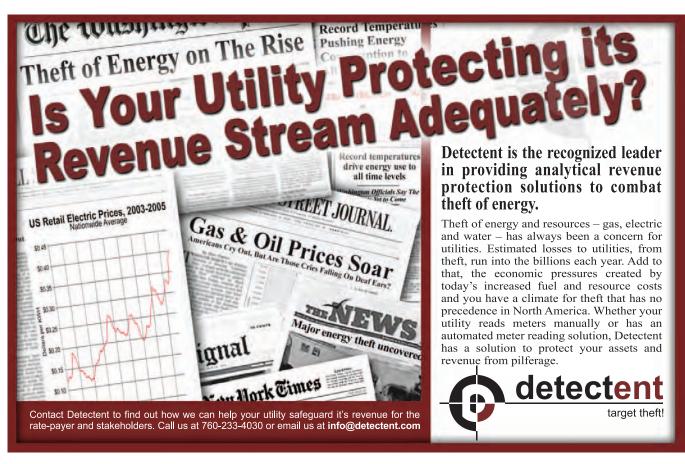
So what can we do? I think the answer is simply to understand the problems and do our best to address



Dave Whidden

them. If Revenue Protection has morphed into fraud investigation as well, then so be it. We'll do that to the best of our ability because Revenue Protection has always been the "go to" department when you absolutely, positively, need to get it done and get it done right. I think we need to advocate for our customer base and become lobbyists in our local, state and the federal government. We owe it to our honest bill paying customers (who are struggling too) to insist that legislation be passed that properly addresses identity theft and fraud. There is a serious need for better legislation and I know first hand that my company has been very active in this area. I realize it is not an easy road but at least we keep trying. It's not just our industry that is suffering from this endless string of crime but it's critical to realize that giving up isn't the answer either.

Then again, Revenue Protection professionals don't tend to give up.









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WHAT IS YOUR SAFETY AWARENESS?

By Kelly W. Thomas, Revenue Protecton Investigator • Progress Energy, FL

Then asked to write an article for this publication I struggled to come up with a topic. Should I write about my most memorable case, interview techniques, or marijuanagrow houses? I chose safety after reading a book last month Safety 24/7 by Gregory M. Anderson & Robert L. Lorber, Ph.D. This book helped me to see safety in a

Our profession requires us to be on the customer's property working with energized equipment and is inherently dangerous.

new light.

It has been my pleasure over the years to meet other Revenue Protection professionals from across the United States and some international. The past 25 years I have worked in the electric utility industry, and the last 14 years as an investigator. I have never been involved in a work related incident (knock on wood) so I thought I was safety conscious. But am I? Are You? After reading Safety 24/7 I realized I have what is referred to as "Bullet proof mentality". I am sure most of you reading this have it too! We work safe, but think we won't or can't get hurt as a result of our actions or behavior. I believe it is necessary to be extremely confident while working in the field. Our profession requires us to be on the customer's property working with energized equipment and is inherently dangerous. Reading this book was an "ah ha moment" for me.

I now realize I have been very fortunate. Safety is a choice. My company has spent a great deal of time and

money making sure I have the proper training and equipment to work safe. I have to admit, I have not always had the correct attitude. You need to ask yourself "What affects a person's attitude towards safety?" In Safety 24/7 it refers to these attitudes as "at risk behaviors". These behaviors may be impacted by personal issues. Personal issues often affect our state of mind. This could



Kelly Thomas

cause an "at risk behavior" without our conscious-ness being aware. For example: family issues, the death of a spouse, parent or even a friend. I know I fell into this category in 2007 when I lost my Father and niece within six months of each other. Having a clear head and being able to focus on the task is a must to remain safe.

I know we all know how to work safely. I know we all know we should complete a pre job assessment every time. Do You? Managing our safety starts by consciously recognizing the hazards of the job. Are you aware of the risks associated with the job? Have you become complacent? Do you let the desire for a thrill put you at risk? "Risk assessment is consciously and purposefully deciding how we are not going to get hurt". Everything we do carries an element of risk and our safety depends on how well we manage those risks.

In conclusion, I have one question. What is your safety awareness? It only takes a few seconds to assess the potential obstacles that threaten your safety. Remove them if you can. I hope that you will re-evaluate your safety on the job and at home. Do it for your family. Do it for yourself. JUST DO IT!

AN ODE FOR UTILITIES

There once was a man who complained That the power bill his checkbook it strained "That Power Company's greedy. I'll be sneaky, I'll be speedy. My 'lectricity will be freely obtained."

So he quickly used a match and a nudge Till the dial was stuck, it won't budge The reader he found Broken matches on the ground Now Speedy has to go see the Judge

There once was a lady who never Would pay water on time or if ever She'd cut the lock off Turn the meter back on And thought her little pranks were quite clever The last time her cutters came out Criminal charges were brought about Her good name's in trouble And the fines cost her double Now she's the best paying one on the route

And then there's the unlucky cheater Who wanted free heat for his heater Despite all the signs He rerouted the lines So he'd get all his gas with no meter

"Don't it stink out tonight," he wondered As he lit up a smoke then heard thunder That night cold and dark First the hiss, now the spark They say the whole town heated up. Well, no wonder!

AROUND THE GLOBE



Power Thieves' Woe

May 28, 2009 11:35am

A COUPLE whose rented house burnt down while they were using illegally-connected power have been fined in court.

The couple have been fined a total of \$850 after pleading guilty to stealing power from Aurora Energy.

Power to the Queenstown house Kathy and PJ Stevenson were renting was disconnected in November, 2007 after the couple failed to pay a disputed electricity bill of \$3000.

Mrs Stevenson then lived in the house alone with no heating, hot water or cooking facilities for several weeks while he husband looked for work on the mainland.

A friend suggested he could tamper with the electricity supply and re-connect the house without detection.

Mr Stevenson returned to Tasmania and the couple continued to source power through the illegal connection for about six months.

The house was destroyed by fire while the Stevensons were on a trip to Devonport in August, last year.

While the cause of the fire was not ascertained, Justice David Porter said there was a "distinct possibility" the illegal electricity connection was to blame.

Defence counsel Tamara Jago said the Stevenson's had paid a high price for their dishonesty.

"It has been a salient experience. They lost everything when the house burnt to the ground and had no insurance," Ms Jago said.

The couple now live in a Housing Tasmania property in Penguin.

Aurora Energy is seeking a compensation order of \$3000 based on the last bill issued for the Queenstown property.

"The amount stolen is in dispute however, because it is based on a disputed account," Ms Jago said.

Justice Porter adjourned the hearing of the compensation order indefinitely.

Religious Ruling (Fatwa) against Electricity Theft by KESC

Pakistan - India

he Karachi Electric Supply Company (KESC) following the footsteps of Lays has obtained a fatwa (religious decree) from 12 top Ulema against electricity theft, declaring it a 'sin' as reported by BBC. The thieves are costing KESC 1bn rupees (\$12.3m) a month. Typically, people steal electricity by hooking up a wire (locally known as Kunda) to overhead electricity cables, siphoning off power without paying for it. Another way people steal power is to slow down their electricity meters. Most of the people who steal electricity can afford to pay for it but they choose not to.

Fatwa has been issued by religious scholars of Jamia Darul Uloom, Jamia Binoria, Jamia Hamadia. According to it,

'The illicit use of any commodity is a sin and as in this case, the organization producing electricity represented many people, its use without permission and pay makes it an even bigger sin. Legal action against such people committing electricity theft is fair.'

Ulema also directed citizens to pay back an amount equal to the power they had stolen while The Company already has the right to fine those caught stealing electricity.

Karachi, known as the "city of lights" has a population of about 16 million and is Pakistan's biggest city and commercial hub, has been facing chronic electricity problems. Power consumers frustrated by load-shedding and breakdowns often vent their anger by blocking roads, burning Tyre and throwing stones in street demonstrations.

It is definitely a cosmetic approach towards a problem. There should be a crack down against those who are involved in electricity theft. Everyone knows that stealing electricity is illegal and it is a crime but to obtain a fatwa shows that people are not serious about quitting their habit of using Kunda despite of many warnings from the company. On the other hand Ulema haven't said anything about those who are suffering from over billing, marathon running meters and hours long load shedding. They should also condemn these acts of company and decide a punishment for it.



THE OL' WATERING HOLE

By leff Harris • Missouri Gas Energy



Jeff Harris

would like to thank everyone who took the time to respond to my request for submissions for The Ol' Watering Hole. The assistance is greatly appreciated, and I'm sure our "regulars" here will appreciate it as well! I will do my best to ensure that all submissions

get published as the space allows.

Allow me to introduce Mr. Patrick Wakalila Simwinga. He is the Inspectorate Coordinator for ZESCO Ltd., Lusaka Division, in Zambia. He was good enough to send in this submission on pre-paid meter diversions.

ENERGY THEFT ON PRE-PAYMENT METERS

Thanks for the invitation to make a contribution to the newsletter. I have an interesting case of a pre-paid meter bypass which we came across here in Zambia.

Our utility company ZESCO Limited embarked on a project to install pre-paid meters on all residential and commercial customers in 2005.

Initially, this technology was received with a lot of mixed feelings by a number of customers who thought that they were spending more on electricity with the pre-payment meters compared to the time when they had credit meters. The Inspectorate department which is tasked to detect and prevent energy theft, has since uncovered a lot of incidences

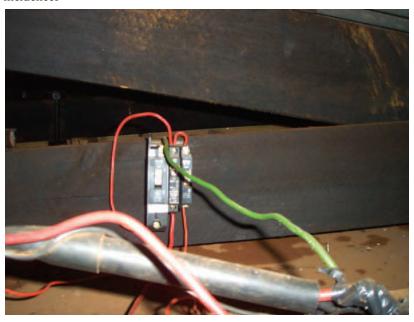
on some customers with pre-payment meters. The cases range from meter tampering to meter by-passes. On one particular incident, the inspectorate team came across a pre-paid meter by-pass on a residential premise. First it was difficulty to gain access into the premises as the owner of the house denied the inspectors access even after producing their identity cards. After sometime, the inspectors where allowed to enter the yard and do the inspections. The usual meter trip tests were done and loads were also checked if there was supply after tripping the meter. However, it was observed that all socket outlets including the

cooker had power even when the pre-payment meter was in trip condition.

This necessitated for further investigations and the findings revealed the following things:

- 1. The main distribution board inside the house was split into two by cutting the common live bus bar into two. One bas bar was feeding MCB's for the socket outlets while the other bas bar was feeding MCB's for the lighting system. Only the lighting system MCB's were passing through the pre-payment meter.
- 2. Further investigations revealed that there was another set of MCB's concealed in the roof of the house which was feeding the cooker and the water heater but was not passing through the pre-payment meter. This by-pass was done by tapping supply from the main incoming supply service cable on the roof before the metering point. See attached photo.

The supply to this customer was then disconnected and the case handed over to our security department for further interrogation and possible prosecution. After the inspectors had left the premises, the customer quickly removed the bypasses and normalized the connections in the distribution box and went to complain to some government officials claiming that the ZESCO inspectors had harassed them and



WHY IS IURPA IMPORTANT TO YOU?

By Robert J. Putnam, Utility Services Investigator • Los Angles Department of Water and Power

A s I eased into my ergonomically correct chair, hoping today would be the day I would get a chance to attack the stacks of work on my desk, my supervisor walked by and muttered, "Did you write a draft of information about utility protection, so I can write the article for the IURPA newsletter?"

As I grabbed my pencil, I was thinking, this has to be a trick question. The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power has thousands of employees, and maybe a few hundred of them know we have a utility theft unit. I am sure you could walk up to the General Manager and ask the question, "What does IURPA mean to the Department?" and he would respond with a quizzical look: What is an IURPA? Of course, you might get the same response to the question, "What does your Revenue Security Unit mean to the Department?"

This is the reason why IURPA, WSUTA and all the other revenue protection groups are so important. Utility theft investigation is an esoteric function and is understood by few outside of the field. At the last WSUTA conference I attended, we met the contingent from San Diego Gas and Electric at the vendor's reception. They were quite excited to run into us, and asked if we would sit next to them so we could share information. A vendor took a couple of groups of utility representatives to dinner that evening, (You've got to love those vendors) and we again ran into the San Diego group. When the subject of our time working in the revenue protection field was questioned, my supervisor's answer of "two weeks" was a surprise. The highly experienced supervisor from San Diego half jokingly commented, "Maybe we should find someone else to sit next to."

I did not tell this story to get even with my supervisor. I think it illustrates the importance the utility representatives in attendance put not only on what is officially presented to

them, but also on what they can learn from the other attendees at break, lunch, and after the conference is over. I know we are all hoping we can learn something new: possibly a better way to handle a situation that will make our everyday struggles a little easier. And, yes, we did share information with the other group. I'm sure we all benefited from each other's expertise, despite my



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supervisor's limited experience on the job. (I'm sure he would want me to add he had 20 years of field experience before he became the Revenue Security supervisor.)

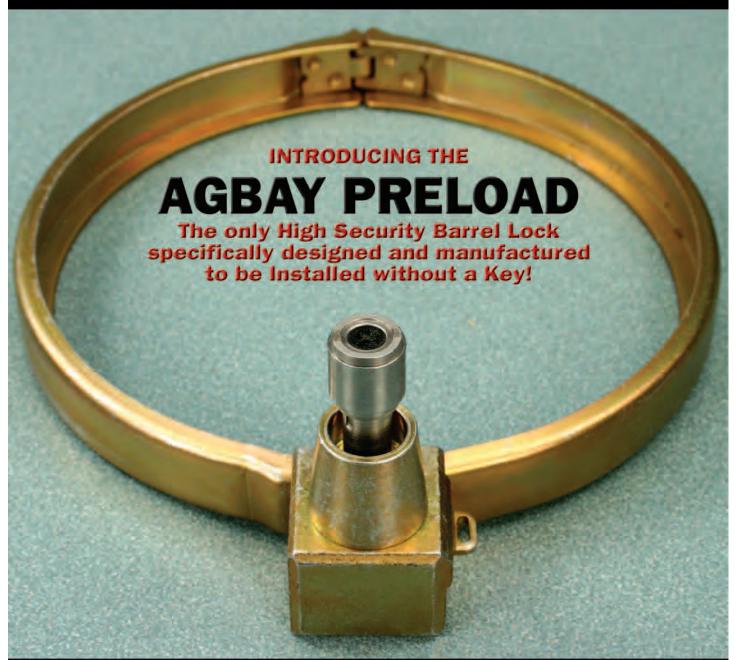
The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power is the largest public utility company in the country and is split into separate divisions: Power, Water, and, our division, Customer Service. We recently made a presentation to all the managers within our division explaining all the field groups' functions and how we interact with the other units within our division. I am not surprised that many employees from the other divisions do not know we exist or understand what we do. One thing I noticed when I gathered information for the presentation was the steady increase in revenue recovered by LADWP over the last ten years. We have recovered 5 times the revenue recovered just 10 years ago; and IURPA has played a large part in our increased success.

I know we are just scratching the surface of the revenue lost to the City of Los Angeles. So, I guess I should answer the question of what IURPA means to the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. It means we recover more revenue, we do a better job deterring future theft, and we make the City of Los Angeles a safer place - even if the majority of LADWP and its customers are unaware.

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IURPA • 19 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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