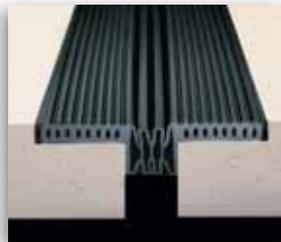




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Industry Notes

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niche sectors, has appointed **Stephen F. Douglass** as Managing Director, Asset Management. He will be responsible for directing development of new retail projects, optimizing operating performance of existing and stabilized retail assets, and implementing “value-added” strategies across the retail portfolio. Douglass will team with **Bob Duncan**, Managing Director, who leads the firm’s new investment activities in infill retail and mixed-use projects.

R. J. Griffin & Co. President Stephen A. Touchton assumed Chief Executive Officer responsibilities effective January 1, 2007. **R. J. “Jim” Griffin Jr.**, the former CEO, remains as Chairman. Touchton is one of the company’s three 1985 founding principals. He started as Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, and has been responsible for accounting, banking, bonding, human resources, risk management and information technology.

Timothy Haahs & Associates has been recognized by Structural Engineer Magazine as one of the Best Places to Work in Pennsylvania, as well as one of the Top 15 structural engineering firms to work for in the nation for 2006.

The magazine hosted the fourth annual contest to honor firms that offer top-notch work environments to their employees, as well as to encourage continued excellence in structural engineering workplace practices. Timothy Haahs has ranked in the top 15 firms since 2004.

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You Are Probably Liable – for Everything ...

BY JOHN VAN HORN

Parking industry professionals face unique insurance exposures. One obvious example is the liability for client's vehicles. This is where Kathy Phillips comes in. Her company, Alliant Insurance Services, is one of the few, if not the only, insurance brokerage firms that specialize in parking operations.

"Insurance companies work off 'standard forms,'" she said. "Businesses like retail stores and manufacturers fall into one standard form or another. Parking had no standard in the insurance industry that meets the needs of their exposures. About 20 years ago, I developed one," said Phillips, First Vice President of the Driver Commercial Group at Alliant. "Insurance can be confusing at best, and with parking, most insurance agents simply don't understand all the ramifications."

The problem, she continued, is that a number of entities are involved. First, there is the facility owner. They probably have liability insurance that covers them in the event of a loss. Another crucial entity is the parking operator that runs the garage. They are not covered by the owner's insurance. This is normally true even if the owner adds the operator as an "additional insured."

The other issue is that owners are now adding a liability clause in their contracts with operators. These are becoming standard and actually place all liability, bodily injury and property damage, in the lap of the operator. Many operators don't read the contract carefully and end up with all liability in the project, including that for the structure, design and other losses completely outside their control. They also may take liability (through the contract they sign with the owner) for existing conditions (such as pedestrian flow, crumbling concrete, bad plumbing).

Phillips said this concept of having the operator accept all liability from the owner is becoming popular with building owners, hospitals, municipalities and other entities with parking facilities.

When a business accepts a client's property for service or storage, it assumes a legal responsibility known as bailment, Phillips said. Most parking operators are familiar with garagekeepers insurance. It is a special type of coverage that addresses the bailment exposure of parking companies.

This unique coverage can be written either as property or liability coverage, she said. When written as property, it is the primary coverage for damage to a vehicle on the premises, regardless of fault. When written as legal liability, the policy responds only in the event the operator was negligent in causing or allowing the damage. The best policies allow substantial flexibility in limits and deductibles to tailor the coverage for each individual risk, Phillips said.

Other unique exposures she noted include valet parking and shuttle services. Valet parking creates an exposure for the operation of non-owned automobiles. This liability includes responsibility for the vehicle itself and for its safe operation on public or private roadways. Shuttle service operation creates a legal

responsibility for the safety of passengers. Shuttle operators are held to higher standards than ordinary businesses for such things as employee screening and training and vehicle maintenance.

"The studies done by insurance companies don't take cars and parking into consideration," Phillips said. "Most underwriters don't like to step out of their comfort level and address these issues. So we had to develop the carriers, to educate them to the specific needs of the parking industry."

Smaller operators think they are at a disadvantage with larger "self-insured" companies. "Not necessarily so," said Phillips. "These companies really aren't truly self-insured. To be a qualified self-insured company, one must file with the state department of insurance and post a bond. They must then have a separate third party loss/claim operation," Phillips said. "The cost of doing this can often outweigh the cost of insurance."

The insurance market for parking risks has been fairly volatile in recent years, and some operators have had difficulty obtaining adequate coverage on reasonable terms. This is particularly true for smaller operations, which are less likely to have formal loss control and training programs addressing areas such as employee hiring and facility security.

The problem is that an insurance company measures two things: the frequency of the claims and the severity of the claims. Operators need to keep the frequency down as frequency leads to severity. Ninety-nine percent of all claims are preventable, Phillips said. Employee hiring is most important, followed by an active training program along with competent management.

Employees must understand that care needs to be taken, she said. They need to be trained in how to handle a customer's vehicle and to keep a facility clean, secure and well lit. Simple things such as cleaning oil spots and replacing light bulbs can make a tremendous difference in frequency and severity, Phillips said.

Insurance policies have deductibles. This means that any loss below the deductible will be paid by the operator. The higher the deductible, the lower the insurance cost.

"Partner with your insurance company on risk management," Phillips said. "Do an autopsy of each loss and find out how to prevent it in the future. That will keep your premiums down."

Phillips spends her time crisscrossing the country holding seminars with operators and owners, trying to help them reduce their liability and, therefore, their insurance costs. Her company also provides "webinars" on the subjects of employee hiring, training, safety, OSHA, defensive driving and contracts, and has a separate department to handle human resources and loss control issues specific to the parking industry.



Kathy Phillips

You can reach Kathy Phillips at KPhillips@alliantinsurance.com

PT

West Palm Beach Rings In New Year

When on-street parkers in West Palm Beach, FL, use their cellphones to pay for their parking the first time, they get a surprise: Their parking is free!

They simply call the number and are told that their parking “this time” is at no charge, but they should sign up online. They are sent a text message with the web site address. They can then sign up conveniently at their home or office, and then be ready to park using their cell on their next visit.

Parking meters in West Palm Beach can now be “fed” by coins, meter cards and cellphone calls. Since Nov. 1, 2006, drivers no longer have to look for change; they can simply call a local number and pay for their parking at on-street meters by cellphone.

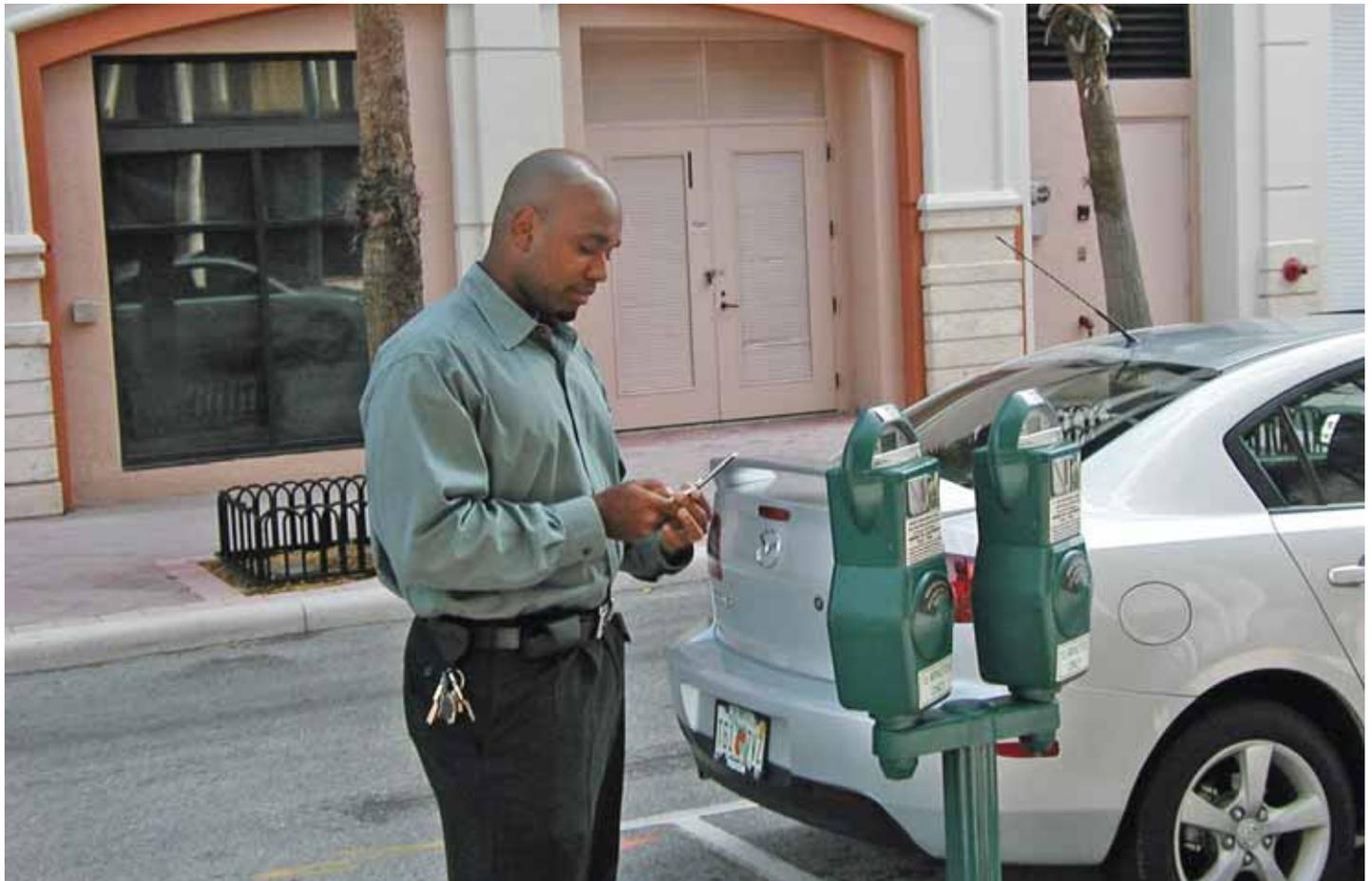


The drivers register their cellphones and a credit card or PayPal account with New Parking’s Cell Parking program. An advantage for the parkers is that there is no sign-up or transaction fee. In addition, the revenue information is downloaded into the city’s parking meter management software, WinEMU, as supplied by MacKay Meters, for added audit control and overall system reconciliation.

This additional way to pay for parking has been the newest step in the city’s planned program to help provide more convenience for its parking customers.

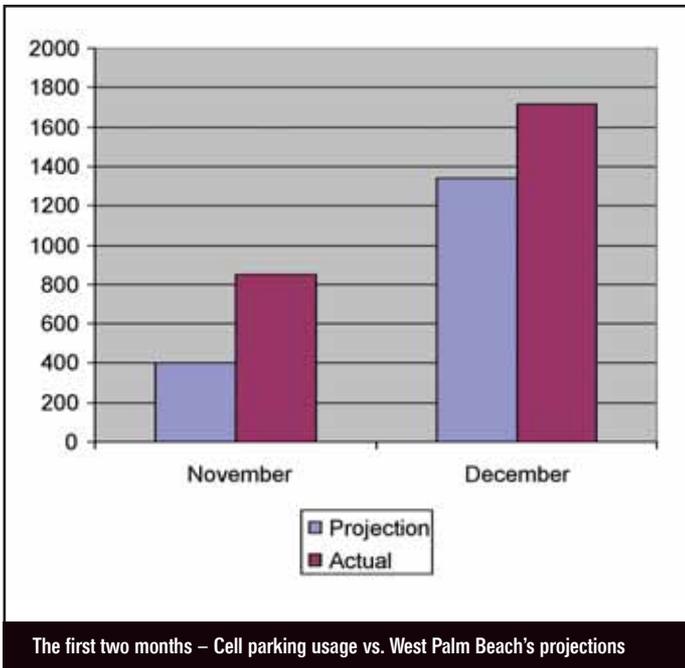
Mayor Lois Frankel said: “I think it’s a great system. I signed up for it before the system came online, and love how easy it is to use. It’s convenient, fast and simple. It’s a great system for the motorists and the downtown businesses.”

With the support of city administration, the Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Development Authority, the program was introduced during a press



A parker uses his cell phone to pay his parking fee in West Palm Beach.

Car With 'Pay-by-Cellphone' Success



conference in October. The media coverage and on-going publicity and promotions have contributed greatly to the success of the program.

Sue Olley, Parking Administrator, said she expected 400 transactions the first month on the 1,500 citywide parking meters. Instead, they had 400 transactions the first week, and finished the first month with 1,300 transactions. The second month finished at 1,700 transactions, with repeat users accounting for more than half of the transactions.

For the city's enforcement system, the preferred PDA carried by the officer is a wirelessly enabled Palm Treo. On the web browser display of the Treo, enforcement officers see which meters have been paid by cellphone. No special application is required to run on the enforcement devices.

According to Olley, because of the simplicity of the program, the costs to implement it were minimal. "We had to re-

WPB parkers using cellphones for the first time get a big surprise.

label each meter to provide clear space identity; purchase three wirelessly enabled Palm Treos (three were donated); and do some manual data entry" to activate site locations in the Cell Parking and WinEMU parking meter management systems.

Total costs for implementation of Cell Parking on the system was approximately \$5,000. Ongoing costs to the city are minimal and directly related to use of the system.

Olley said the benefits of the program over the capital

refresh
Last Refresh Time: 1/3/2007 11:0
ParkingMeter
10104-CClematis100North
12204-CClematis200
12212-CClematis200
14304-CDatura300
14306-CDatura300
14308-CDatura300
82703-CPRosemarySouth700
19421-N4thSt400
16219-REvernia200
16325-REvernia300
16330-REvernia300
18321-RFern300
18326-RFern300
18404-RFern400
18407-RFern400
18417-RFern400
18707-RFern700

The handheld's information – The officer sees the meter number and its location. These are "currently paid." The expiration time is not given to prevent the officers from "targeting."

expenditure savings were immediately apparent. "Our customers were able to park downtown, use a credit/debit card in a familiar parking system, and be charged only for the time they were there," she said. "They can now 'feed the meter' from the comfort of their office, if they are parked in a zone that allows the vehicle to remain in one spot."

Citation appeals also have been made even easier. "If a person paid by cellphone and said they had paid through a certain time, report detail allows us to check that to the second," Olley said. "We can show the individual when [the parker] started the transaction and when it finished. The end user also receives a detailed statement of Cell Parking system use, through e-mail, at month's end for expense and tax claims."

Olley said the implementation of this program was another step in the city Parking Administration's search for ways to improve the parking experience for residents, workers and visitors alike. Future initiatives with the Cell Parking program include on-street validations, text messages for expiring meters and a tell-a-friend promotion.

Sue Olley can be reached at solley@wpb.org. For more information about New Parking, log on to www.new-parking.com.

PT

'Craftier Competition' For

BY PAUL FELT

What will downtowns face in the future? The most predictable thing is craftier competition of all sorts, from all sides. Areas competing with downtowns are becoming more sophisticated all the time. So downtown leaders must keep evolving along with the expectations of the marketplace.

"The next few years will bring an expanding set of challenges," said David Feehan, President of the International Downtown Association. "Over the past decade, many downtowns — though not all — experienced new investment, renewed interest and improved public perception.

"Young people are finding lots of reasons to want to go downtown, including a host of new attractions — such as science centers, aquariums, libraries and events, Feehan said. "GenX-ers and baby boomers are finding other reasons — cultural facilities, great dining and entertainment, and new living and working possibilities."

But suburban developers have taken notice and are unveiling a new generation of projects that will make the coming years

exceedingly competitive.

"Most areas are seeing a virtual explosion of 'New Urbanist' mixed-use developments, lifestyle shopping centers, mall makeovers, and whole new communities, often done in faux-historic style," Feehan said.

"Downtown leaders should welcome the challenge these new projects represent, and should use these challenges to improve and enhance downtowns. Too often in the past they bemoaned suburban developments surrounding them, instead of differentiating themselves in a positive way."

Downtown provides value to people to the extent that they can use and benefit from its "human-scale connectivity." People enjoy being able to do a lot on foot in a small area, and the change of scenery and exercise are fringe benefits while they're making their rounds. But it's always frustrating to come to a downtown and not be able to find parking space, to feel somewhat stranded by spotty transit service, or to feel anxiety or isolation over being lost.

"A key challenge is attacking one of the biggest remaining barriers to a positive downtown experience — the parking/transportation/wayfinding dilemma," Feehan said. "Most downtowns

Downtown Leaders Must Plan and Play as a Team

BY DOYLE HYETT AND DOLORES PALMA

Local leaders must realize that in-depth teamwork, at all levels, is a key ingredient for successful downtown revitalization. Teamwork must entail the entire panoply of a community making investments in downtown — of money, time, energy, political capital, etc.

Gone are the days when "working together for downtown" meant a coming together of just the local government and the downtown business community. Today, it is realized that, to succeed, members of the investment team must include a community's elected, business, civic, cultural, educational and philanthropic leadership.

In recent years, a palpable shift has occurred in downtown revitalization. For the most part, local elected officials seem to have come to the understanding that downtown is important to the overall economic health and quality of life enjoyed by their constituents — and, therefore, that downtown is worth investing in.

No longer are those who ask "Can downtown be saved" and "Is downtown worth saving" in the majority. Therefore, more and more, local elected officials are stepping up, providing the leadership, and acting

as the impetus that forms the needed downtown team.

Progressive community leaders who join with local elected officials understand that teamwork means, together:

- Taking a cold, hard look at your downtown's needs and potential;
- Devising a realistic, pragmatic game plan that's success-oriented;
- Making tough decisions;
- Taking whatever actions are necessary — even if they are not popular;
- Putting your money where your mouth is.

The goal of such teamwork is to create a situation where all of downtown's investors realize a greater return on their investments, whether business revenues, real estate values, local tax revenues, a better downtown experience or just "bragging rights."

Teamwork brings results. Unilateral actions lead to frustration. Downtown's success is too important to risk fumbling the opportunity.

ces Downtowns to Evolve



still haven't figured this one out.

"We know how to make downtown parking a great experience, but few downtowns have aggressively taken on this challenge. We know how to create excellent signage and wayfinding systems, but many downtowns remain a mystery to visitors. We know that an integrated transportation system, even in smaller cities, is possible, but we need to invest in these systems.

"All downtowns, big and small, would have much happier customers if they truly managed parking and transportation as an asset and an opportunity to provide extraordinary customer service rather than as a liability to be apologized for," Feehan said.

"Parking will continue to be a hot issue in downtowns, even though in many places the issue is vastly overrated," said Kent Robertson, professor and director of the community development program in the Department of Community Studies at St. Cloud (MN) State University. "In select downtowns, parking demand will continue to increase with new developments coming onboard," Robertson said. "For most, the key will be to make more efficient use of the abundant parking spaces currently available but not always right where people want them."

He predicts that an increasing number of downtowns will embrace answers such as "Smart Downtown Parking" (see the Perspectives article at www.downtowndevelopment.com);

Continued on Page 22

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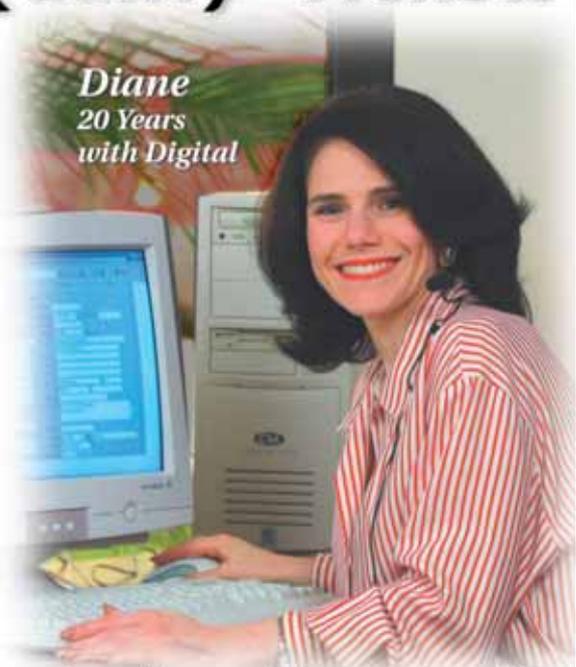


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'Craftier Competition' Forces Downtowns to Evolve

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shared parking; shuttles to parking on the edges of the core; more emphasis on alternative transportation; and innovative parking management programs.

"Diverse, affordable housing is a key to sustaining prosperity and community," said Brad Segal, President of Progressive Urban Management Associates. "The depletion of petroleum, increasing highway congestion, a desire for more walkable and sociable envi-

"In many places, the parking issue is vastly overrated."

ronments, plus many other factors will make downtown living more and more attractive to a broader array of demographic groups.

"Diversified price points and product types for housing will be key to attracting new residents," Segal said. "Rental housing options are particularly important to accommodate diverse incomes and as a hedge against impending instability in the home ownership market."

"Cities need to work to maintain some affordable housing

downtown so that prices do not force out moderate and lower income residents," Robertson said. "The diversity of residents is a plus for downtown."

"No town is too small and no city too big to turn its back on the great power of businesspeople who meet, dream together, and establish goals for short- and long-range implementation," said Robert W. Bivens, a co-author of "**For Great Cities – A Bold Initiative.**"

"Traditionally, government employees lack the creativity needed for community improvement projects, and elected leaders are handicapped by terms of office that may be shorter than the time it takes for big projects.

"Many times," Bivens said, "I've seen great projects die – unfinished – because one mayor started a great project, only to have it ditched by a new mayor wanting to leave his or her own imprint."

Downtown businesspeople are the best positioned to dream great dreams for downtown and guide them to implementation, he said, and the downtown organization should serve as the forum where great ideas are worked out.

"A cohesive, private, downtown organization is a good forum for exchange of constructive ideas," Bivens said, "and for inspiring businesspeople to work together toward common goals for mutual benefit."

Paul Felt is editor of the Downtown Idea Exchange.

For more information, log on to www.downtowndevelopment.com or call (212) 228-0246.

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At least that’s the theory, if you use a new program being introduced by Tom DiVito at Login Parking, a division of Login Lock. “Making this a completely online system gives convenience to the customer, and takes the city out of the loop of having to deal with fulfillment and personal confrontations,” DiVito says. This program eliminates the decade-old problem with in-car devices: the upfront cost to both the city and the consumer.

With the system, you pull into a parking space, take your personal meter out of the spare cup holder, turn it on and walk away. No coins, no cards, no phone calls, no ticket to display. No walking down the block to get a receipt. Just an on/off button.

Here’s how it works. The consumer fills out an online order form. The meter is initialized for security and city rates and sent to the consumer. The consumer uses his password to get online, pays and downloads time for that city via a USB port. The city’s bank account is immediately credited with 100 percent of the downloaded time. The consumer is charged a small fee for the download.

On the street, the consumer turns on the unit, chooses the rate if applicable and walks away. The city is given the unique code of

all active units registered to it for validation. (The software for the enforcement handhelds is provided free.) Lost or stolen units are updated in the enforcement software daily.

The enforcement officer scans the unit to ensure that it is valid (not stolen) and also valid for this city. As the popularity of in-car meters expands, drivers could use a meter from city “A” in city “B.” The scan of the device validates the unit for the location in which it is being used.

When the consumer returns to the car, his meter is turned off and only the time used is deducted. At home or work, the consumer can download an activity report that documents the time, date, duration and rate information. Regular online activity keeps the units active in the city database, maintains current software updates, enables immediate rate change implementation, and allows the city direct and free communication about parking issues.

This program works with any hardware on the street. It even works if there is no hardware on the street. This is designed to be a time-saving device for all large users, a convenience solution for personal consumers, and a revenue increaser for the city. In this system, there are no fees paid by the city (credit, debit, telephone, WiFi, etc.). Plus, there are reduced collection costs and more convenience for the parkers. The city also collects revenue in advance.

For more information, contact Tom DiVito at tom@loginparking.com.

PT

JVH comments on Parking News every day at PT Blog – log on at www.parkingtoday.com. Each month, there are at least 40 other comments like these, posted daily.

Central Sold?

NOTE: THIS WAS WRITTEN IN EARLY JANUARY – CHECK PT'S BLOG FOR CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS.

Like the Swallows returning to Capistrano, Central periodically hires a financial adviser to develop "alternative strategies" for moving forward. In November they hired the Blackstone group to handle this year's pass. The goal, most likely – prepare the company for sale.

That possible sale, PT has been told, is well under way, and may reach fruition in the next few days. Insiders in Nashville reveal that a number of Investment banks have made proposals. Standard parking has signed a non disclosure agreement with Central, and The Gates Group, owner of Impark, is also working the room.

Central has gone down this path in the past, only to find that the deal wasn't right. The world's largest parking operator owns a lot of property, has thousands of management contracts, and is the largest player in Manhattan. But its profits from operations has been flat, stock erratic, and its mammoth size shrink-

ing. Will this be the time that Central's board decides enough is enough and will take one of the offers?

What will this company look like if it is purchased by a non parking entity? Will the headquarters be moved, perhaps to the Big Apple from where the majority of its profits, if any, come? Who will be tapped to run the company? Will it be divided up and sold off, with the management contracts be divvied up to the operators that are strongest in a particular market? Will the real assets be sold to help the buyer pay for the deal?

I'm sure these are questions that are being asked, not only by its employees, but also by its more than 3,000 customers and its shareholders.

It will be an interesting couple of weeks in the parking business.

A Shoupista Explanation

Cooper Marcus gives an excellent post on why so few people oppose the theories of Professor Don Shoup. Here it is:

Most parking seems to be managed through a non-coherent "strategy" that evolved over time without any consistent adherence to guiding principles. Shoupism is the exact opposite – a broad strategic approach to parking management that needs to be consistently applied through a variety of tactical measures. Why so few anti-Shoupistas? Because very few people ever think about overall parking management strategy, so they aren't even

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in a position to oppose a strategy different from their own!

Additionally, Shoupism makes so much sense, when rationally considered, that anti-Shoup arguments are simply difficult to make without resorting to obviously emotional or self-serving justifications.

In the future, there will be only two groups of parking managers – Shoupistas, and those that have not yet considered they even have an overall strategy beyond their day-to-day tasks with occasional “firefighting” for big picture items that have gone unnoticed for too long.

Privatization – Are On-Street Rates Taken Into Consideration?

When companies spend a billion dollars to buy public garages (OK, to lease them), do they take into account what the city can do with on-street parking rates? OK, Chicago might be a unique case since the garages are in areas without a lot of on-street parking, but what about other cities that want to sell or privatize their facilities?

Let’s say a certain city has a garage it wants to sell. That garage is surrounded by on-street parking with meters. What is to keep the city from being “nice” to its residents (read that voters) and keeping the on-street pricing low while that new garage owner must charge higher prices just to make his payments to the city?

There is usually a lot of parking available in areas surrounding a parking deck. It is usually unused because people park in the deck. However, if the deck is being run like a business, those folks may be motivated to park where it’s cheaper, and the business will have a problem.

What if the city decided to start a cheap on-street valet program to support local clubs and restaurants? The merchant bank that bought the garage might have budgeted for a lot of nighttime parking, but with the on-street valet, they would be stymied there.

Hmmmmmm. Do these big banks know what they are buying when they buy a city-owned garage? Do they know they also are buying into the parking policies of the city in question? Policies that can readily put them out of business.

I wonder.

‘Socialized Parking’

That’s “socialized” as in “socialist,” not “social.”

I received a copy of a letter to the editor from the Frederick (MD) News Post. It comments on the “100 years ago” column that notes that, in 1907, local developers were to provide off-street parking for their facilities as well as places for “off-loading.” The writer has been trying to find if that policy had been revoked.

Money quote: “I’m now wondering if the city fathers changed this 100-year-old ordinance before they started us down the road of socialized parking. I challenge any city official past or present to explain to us taxpayers why we are forced to provide parking when a 100-year-old ordinance clearly states that it is up to the property owners to do so.”

Heh – Socialized parking, huh. Although many public

Continued on Page 26



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parking projects begin as self funding, I'm not sure they end up that way. My guess is that the writer is a closet Shoupista; he just doesn't know it. If the city were required to charge what it would take to cover the cost of parking garages, the entire "look" of downtowns might change, and for the better. Private firms would build garages if they were needed, and would be able to charge what it takes to do so.

Today, much parking in downtown areas is built by the city because they are in competition with private developers. Then they set the parking rates very low and private operators have difficulty competing. The garages don't "pencil out" for the private groups, so they leave parking up to the public sector.

If the government would simply keep its hands off parking (off-street) and set the on-street rates higher than off-street rates, all would be right with the world.

Go Frederick, Maryland.

A Response from Jacksonville

Well, it had to happen, someone disagrees with me. Here's a response on the recent Jacksonville post:

Parking enforcement in downtown Jacksonville, FL, was draconian and cited by every large business closure since 1984 as the major contributing reason for their closing.

Woolworths, Iveys, May Cohens, Furchgott's and a few other stores were the backbone of Jacksonville's retail community. With the exception of Furchgott's, they still exist and are still thriving across the country.

The only difference between their successful stores and their failure downtown was the oft-cited metered parking. The law needed to be changed, and it was.

The old guys who own the stores cited in your article are all that are left of a generation of Merchants Association leaders in our downtown that presided over the worst business failure of any downtown in the United States.

Actually, the comments above are off quite a bit. First of all, if you read the history of Jacksonville, you will find that in addition to parking meters, it was the addition of "toll" bridges and boat traffic that caused considerable congestion into the downtown area, which was the harbinger of the end of Downtown Jacksonville. (Read all about it here.)

Although the author of this article is happy to blame parking meters, you will note that the heyday of downtown Jacksonville continued until 1955; however, parking meters were installed in 1942. The author isn't quite correct. He says growth stagnated with the installation of meters. But he goes on to point out that the fact is the city continued to grow until 1952, a full decade of meter use, and that the growth became flat only after the building of toll bridges. I won't contest that a marketing

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campaign by the big mall on the edge of town touting “free” parking did its damage.

However, one must consider this – A true Shoupista doesn’t just support charging for parking on-street (and charging the right amount). One also must take the money and reinvest it into the area whence it came. The article infers that the city got its claws on the parking meter money and kept it. It wasn’t reinvested. My guess is that laws keeping the zoning ordinances in place that required certain numbers of parking spaces per type of building kept different types of businesses from moving into the area.

Let’s see – I get a fresh, new, shopping center with shops, restaurants, bars, theaters and events, or I get a drab, old downtown where I have to pay tolls to cross the bridge and traffic congestion makes driving almost impossible. Where am I going to go?

My guess is that if the downtown area had ...

1) Taken the money generated from parking and used it to revitalize the area

2) Looked inward for the problems, rather than blaming virtually everything else

3) Taken marketing and other ideas from the malls surrounding the downtown area and used them to increase business

4) Adjusted pricing on- and off-street to make it convenient for workers downtown to park off-street and easy for visitors and shoppers to park on-street

5) Advertised that parking money was being used to revitalize the city, not just to line the “general fund”

... the downtown could have competed with the malls. It’s happening now in cities across the country. People are streaming back into trendy downtown areas and out of jammed and commercial malls.

Oh, I don’t know about you, but I haven’t seen a Woolworth’s in a decade (that name hasn’t been used for years – it’s

now Foot Locker, by the way – The “May” part of May Cohens was purchased by Federated and now operates as Macy’s or Bloomingdale’s.)

Times change – names change – the mood of the public changes. Cities that move and react to those changes have vibrant and active downtowns. (Chicago, Seattle, San Francisco, New York, Boston, Atlanta, San Diego, Denver, Portland – all come to mind.) More are on the way in smaller communities such as Santa Monica, Pasadena, Redwood City ...

In virtually every case, a lot of work, money and sweat went into making those downtowns what they are today. They have been reborn, rebuilt, and stand as examples of what can be done. and in virtually every case, they have parking meters on every street. Charging for parking doesn’t destroy downtowns. It’s held forth as an excuse for inaction and poor management, most often by local government.

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**National Valet
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On-Street Theft – Sledge

BY LARRY DONOGHUE

Cheating by patrons and theft of parking meter revenues by employees and by vandals or professional meter theft rings is common. More than 50 percent of U.S. cities have had serious theft scandals. The losses in the United States have ranged from \$20,000 to \$30,000 on the low side in smaller cities to more than \$3.6 million in larger cities.

Theft by Collectors

One of the worst examples was in New York City. A Brinks Express collection crew of five men, on the day they were arrested, had stolen \$5,800 in coins. That is nearly \$1,200 per man. Our company was an expert witness in that case. Brinks was found guilty of and received a

fine of \$2 million for compensatory damages; it also was fined \$5 million for punitive damages.

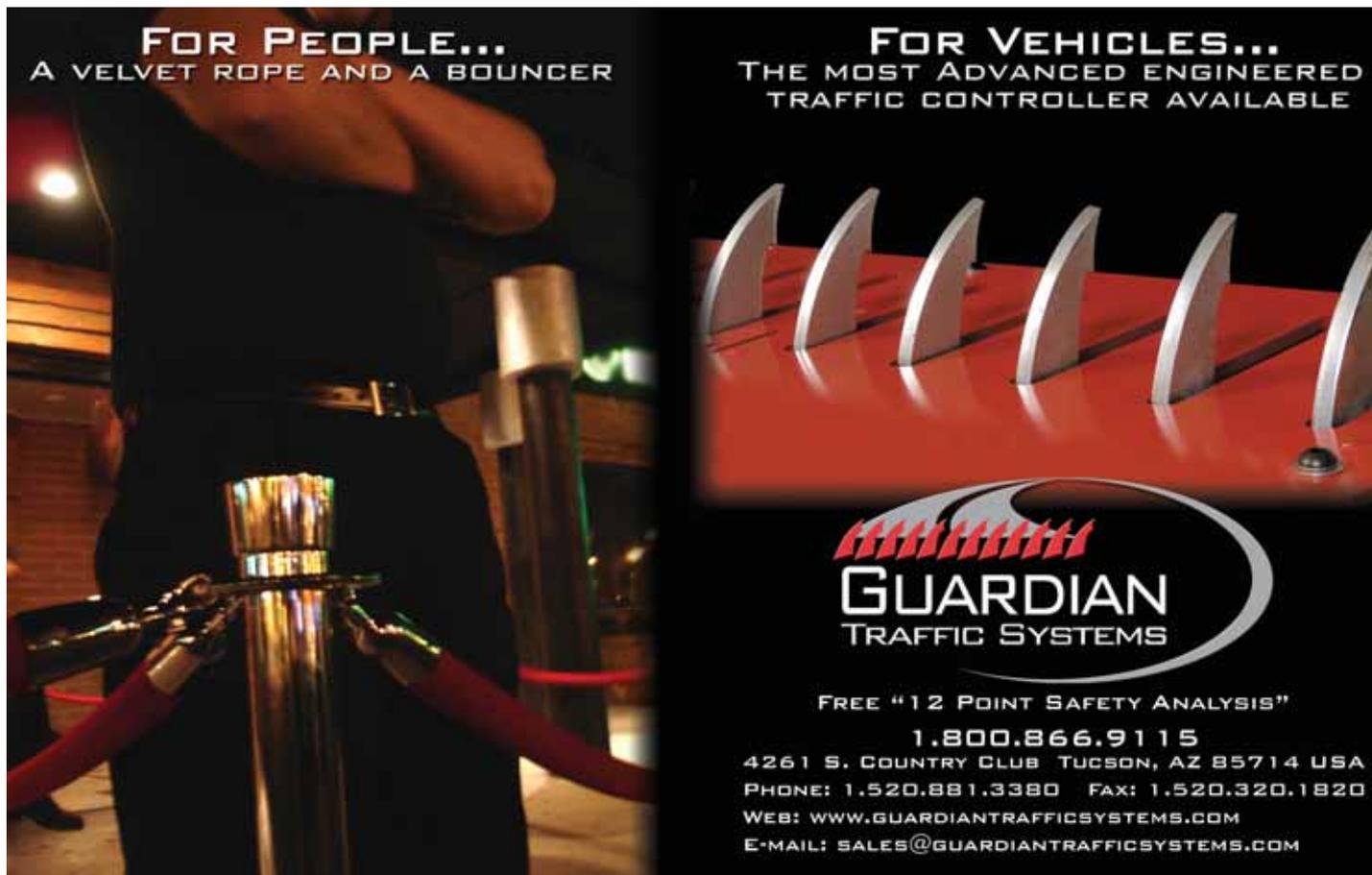
Professional Meter Theft Ring

Professional meter theft rings operate over wide geographic areas moving from city to city on a daily basis. The average meter ring attack results in losses of \$20,000 to \$25,000 as a result of a single night's attack. We were instrumental in capturing a meter theft ring in Coral Gables, FL. It consisted of a ringleader (a corrupt locksmith) and two collection crews and two lookouts that operated in broad daylight. They would come to a city during the night and cut off meter heads in about three to five zones. The cut-off meter heads were then delivered to the ringleader, who would be in a nearby motel. He would cut open the meters with a power saw to obtain the locks. With his lock-making tools, he would fabricate keys that worked in each of the zone's

locks. The next day, the crews would go out to rob the meters. The van they used was equipped with five sets of various colored uniforms to closely match the color used by meter collectors of the city that they were attacking.

The actual theft took place using two technicians, a uniformed meter collector with a wheeled collection canister and a person in regular civilian dress to serve as a lookout. They communicated with each other by means of walkie-talkies using throat microphones and earpieces so their communications were not apparent to the general public. The collector would start down a block with the fabricated keys. The lookout would give a signal if the coast was clear to start opening meters.

After the crew's arrest, the ringleader admitted to netting, after all expenses, more than \$500,000 during the previous calendar year. The police found meter keys for three nearby communities in his possession for cities that they planned to



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