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Volume 13, Number 5-May 2008

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PARKING TODAY

volume 13 number 5

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Video Citations, Parking Therapy, Talking to a Wall



BY JOHN VAN HORN

Just don't buy it. The UK is going to authorize local municipal authorities to issue parking tickets using video. In other words, they can watch a parking spot by video, and if a certain car is seen to have overstayed its welcome, they can mail the owner a ticket. They also are allowing enforcement officers to write a ticket without putting it on the windshield. Just mail it in.

This is absurd. I have mentioned this before, but the whole idea of a parking ticket is deterrence. Getting a ticket five days or more after the fact deters nothing and only makes people madder. If I'm standing there and see the ticket under my windshield wiper and then look at the sign and realize that I broke the rules, I can be angry, but actually only at myself. When I'm home going through my mail and find a ticket and I can't even remember where I was five days ago, I will immediately get my dander up over "Big Brother" and the like.

This just isn't good policy. Period. But it's typical of someone sitting in an office somewhere trying to come up with an "idea" to raise more revenue, the parking public be damned. If cities want more money, charge more to license a car, but don't do it by increasing fines and using all sorts of nefarious means to collect the money.

Along the same lines, I have learned that those red-light and speed cameras are getting hit hard by the courts. Often they are out of calibration and in some cases work too well. One city noted that they weren't getting as many fines because people knew the cameras were there and didn't speed or run the red lights. "We weren't collecting enough to pay for the cameras."

Well, la-di-da. Here's proof of what we knew all along. The purpose of these suckers wasn't to save lives or enforce the law; it was to collect money. Our government just has to get out of this money-grabbing mode. If it doesn't ... well, remember the reason for the Boston "Tea Party." It was a hell of a lot more about taxation than about representation.

Even the comics couldn't bring me back. In a recent Home & Garden section of the LA Times, there was a freelance column by Joe Robinson, titled "When Parking Gets Personal."

The gist of it is that in residential neighborhoods, people are at one another's throats because they are, can you believe it, parking on-street in front of the neighbor's house. This is due to the "fact" that Americans are buying too much "stuff" and it's filling the garages. Most people don't use their garages, and the result is open parking warfare.

The solution – hire a shrink. Yes, hire a mediator to come in and mediate your problem with your neighbor. For \$100 an hour,

subsidized by the city, you can take the nincompoop next door who is parking in your petunias downtown and the two of you will leave in an hour singing "Kumbaya" and begin living in parking heaven. Give me a break.

There is only one real, fair, completely reasonable solution for this problem: Charge for on-street parking in residential areas. Nothing will motivate residents to clean out and use their garages than a monthly bill for \$50 for on-street parking. It also might prod them into getting rid of that junker in the driveway so they can park their "other car" off-street.

But only in La La Land would the city come up with an idea of having "conflict resolution" available for neighbors who simply are too lazy to throw away a bunch of junk in their garage or have a periodic yard sale.

Pass the Advil.

The then-head of parking in Fresno, CA, was fired in 2006 for sexual harassment. He supposedly asked an employee to raise her shirt in exchange for \$300 in city funds. She did. She also went to the city and complained. The city paid her an additional \$150,000 and fired the parking director.

Oh, it doesn't stop here. Robert Madewell, who had worked his way up through the ranks to run the parking, maintenance and landscaping department for the central California city, was put on trial in March on four felony counts, including sexual harassment, accepting \$6,200 in baseball tickets in exchange for lower parking rates for the team, and nepotism (contracting with his brother to do some research, parking related).

The legal wizards in Fresno, the raisin capital of the world, went to trial and couldn't even convict him on the baseball ticket charge, which he freely admitted.

When Madewell became head of parking, the city was netting 400K a year. In 2006, it netted \$3 million. The deal he cut with the local ball club gave him the ability to pass out tickets to his employees and enhance morale. As for his brother – the problem was nepotism, not the contract. For all I know, his brother was an expert in holding car shows on unused parking lots.

Obviously, there wasn't enough smoke here to fan the flames in a jury's heart.

Oh, my comment on the sexual harassment. If he did it, Madewell should be drawn and quartered. However, this is a most difficult crime to prove, and it is usually settled, as in this case, out of court with everyone agreeing to keep quiet and a lot of money being paid to someone. I just wish there was a better way to deal with folks who use their authority to ply favors ...

We are seeing more and more of this: common sense – even directed at oneself. According to the Republican-American news-

Continued on Page 8



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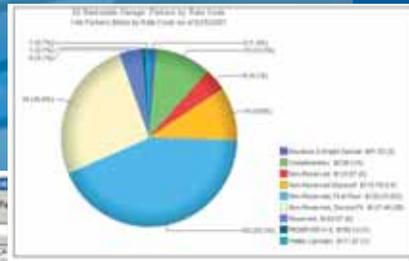
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Table: Parkers Tar Exempt/Notable

Table: New Existing

Table: New Existing

Table: New Existing

Name	Card	Photo	Access Level	Effective	Expires	Notes
Mr. Vaughn	1001		1/1/2004	12/31/2004	None	
Mr. Vaughn	1002		1/1/2004	12/31/2004	None	
Mr. Vaughn	1003		1/1/2004	12/31/2004	None	

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Point of View

from Page 6

paper of Waterbury, CT, merchants in the village of Seymour are concerned about their parking and know who causes the problem – the merchants. Read on:

Larry Foster hasn't opened his shop on Bank Street yet, and he said he already knows the "parking games" that get played in downtown Seymour.

Looking out of the window of his new store, Daddy's Goods, Foster said he can count how many cars parked on the street are owned by local business owners. Tapping on the side of a cash register he installed over the weekend, Foster admitted that he wasn't parked in the municipal lot two blocks away while he unloads heavy objects into the store.

"If everyone who either owned the shops or worked in the shops parked in the municipal lots, there really wouldn't be that much of an issue parking," said Foster.

Complaints about downtown parking problems — an almost daily issue on the minds of many business owners in the four or five downtown blocks — have crept up again. Community Police Officer Joseph DeFelice told the Board of Police Commissioners that he had fielded several complaints [in February] from merchants and professionals.

Couldn't have said it better myself.

However, the Jackson County Chronicle reports that businesses in downtown Black River Falls, WI, are in a quandary. They admit that business owners and employees park downtown and take the spaces, but they don't want tickets written because "ticketing is destroying downtown businesses."

So let me parse this for those of you for whom it isn't clear. The downtown businesspeople are parking in front of their stores and taking parking space so it can't be used by customers; however, when the police try to enforce the rules, they complain that the police are destroying the downtown businesses. Huh?

This is one of the problems with on-street parking availability in downtown cores. The other – and I can almost guarantee you this is the case in Black River Falls – is that they don't charge for parking downtown. They probably have a "two hour" limit or some such rule, and that, in itself, is difficult if not impossible to enforce.

I have to agree with the head of the downtown merchants association who said that talking about the problem to businesspeople is "just like talking to a wall."



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PEOPLE IN PARKING

Zeag USA has entered the California market via its direct factory office in Culver City. The company will work directly with its customers as it does in so many other states in the USA. For more information, contact the Vice president of Operations, Don Graham, via e-mail at Don.Graham@zeagusa.com

The **American Concrete Institute** notes that the latest edition of one of its best-selling publications, the "Manual of Concrete Practice" (MCP), is now available. ACI offers the 2008 MCP in a traditional hard-copy version, which contains a set of six books and a separate index; in an easy-to-use CD-ROM version; or in an online version. To order, please call (248) 848-3800 or visit its website (www.concrete.org). ACI also announced six educational seminars to be offered this spring to help the concrete professional remain up-to-date on concrete construction and technology. For more information, go to its website.

Global flooring manufacturer **Flowcrete Group** has created the role of Global Marketing Manager to spearhead its worldwide marketing function. **Ian Dawson**, currently Flowcrete's International Market Development Manager, has been appointed to the position, with responsibility for the company's 30 offices and 12 manufacturing plants around the world. He will be based at the company's Malaysia office, the hub of operations for its Asia Pacific and Middle East markets.

Digital Payment Technologies, a leading supplier of electronic parking meters and Internet-based management solutions for the global parking industry, recently received an order from the city of Riverside, CA, to supply 32 LUKE parking pay stations to its downtown Justice Center. The pay stations accept

credit cards, bills, coins and Pay-by-cellphone transactions. Using the city's Wi-Fi network, they will be networked to provide capabilities to parkers such as the ability to add time at any pay station. City officials also will have online access to real-time revenue reports and the ability to remotely change screen messages and rates.

High Concrete Group has been recognized by the **International Parking Institute (IPI)** in its 2008 Awards for Excellence program. An independent panel of judges selected the Lehigh University Alumni Parking Garage in Bethlehem, PA, for one of five awards in the category of Architectural Achievement. The IPI award is the fifth earned by High Concrete for the Lehigh garage. Last year, the project won the Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute (PCI) Design Award as well as recognition by McGraw-Hill Mid-Atlantic Construction, AIA Philadelphia and the Pennsylvania Parking Association.

Standard Parking Corp. has been awarded contracts to provide parking management services for Yankee Stadium in New York, the Washington Square Office Complex in Minneapolis and the City Center in Columbus, OH. (1) Standard was awarded a multi-year contract by the **Bronx Parking Development Co.** and the **New York City Economic Development Corp.** to provide parking management and special-event services at the 10 existing parking facilities currently serving Yankee Stadium, plus three garages to be built by 2010 in conjunction with the construction of the new stadium. (2) **National Office Partners** awarded Standard a contract to manage the parking operations at the Washington Square Office Complex. It entails more than 1,600 parking

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spaces in two garages and three surface lots. (3)The **Columbus Downtown Development Corp.** awarded Standard a multi-year contract to manage its two City Center parking facilities, containing 4,400 parking spaces. The company will install pay-in-lane technology, upgrade existing control software, enhance credit card capabilities and add Standard Parking signature amenity programs in order to provide a cost-efficient, customer-friendly operating platform. “

Carl Walker Construction has been awarded a \$16 million contract from **Winthrop University Hospital** to add three floors to its existing parking structure in Minneola, NY. The new parking capacity will be used to accommodate employee parking at the medical center. The addition will provide approximately 700 parking spaces on three newly constructed levels. The structure is three bays wide, and has a footprint of approximately 70,000 square feet. The additional spaces will essentially double the garage's capacity.

Hi-Tech Solutions (HTS), a developer and provider of optical character recognition computer vision systems, and **Daloso Industrial Systems** (DIS), a provider of port automation and traffic control solutions, have established **HTS Europe** – a joint operation that will provide European customers with innovative solutions for port security, container handling and automatic license plate reading. Located near Rotterdam, the Netherlands, HTS Europe will offer comprehensive solutions based on HTS's vision-based license plate recognition and container code recognition products, integrated with DIS's gate gantries and portals, laser truck profiling systems, gate control system, pedestal control system, and damage inspection systems, among others.

EZ-Assure, an emerging leader in information systems for physical security, has opened a UK office, led by **Paul Lowman**. “EZ Assure has established this new office to better serve our growing UK and European customer base” said **Brent Van Loggerenberg**, VP of Sales and Channel Development. The software company, which is based in Santa Barbara, CA, provides customers comprehensive information about their physical security, as well as remote control of who accesses anything secured with an electronic lock.

Genetec has announced that within the last four months, five police departments in Texas have selected AutoVu, its advanced license plate recognition solution, to automate recovery of stolen vehicles: Houston PD, Corpus Christi PD, Del Rio PD, El Paso PD and the Montgomery County Sheriff's Department. Previous to the automation of checking license plates, officers would either manually punch license plate numbers into their mobile data terminals, which would then compare plate numbers to an online database of stolen vehicles, or they would call in numbers to dispatch centers if for some reason suspicion was raised.

James Meany has joined the **Skidata** sales team as its Eastern District Sales Manager in Vehicle Access. He has more than 20 years of parking experience in sales, management, and technical service. His responsibilities will include working with regional clients to expand Skidata's sales and distribution network within the Eastern US, increasing its municipal market presence nationally and overall product brand recognition.

Walter P. Moore has added top structural engineering talent in its Los Angeles office with expertise in secure and seismic engineering design services. Managing Director is

Continued on Page 12

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PEOPLE IN PARKING

from Page 11

Joseph M. Ales Jr., Ph.D., P.E., a Principal who relocated from its Tampa office. Ales was instrumental in helping the firm attain status as a recognized leader in Building Information Modeling and in establishing its secure design capabilities. **Rafael Sabelli**, S.E., has joined the firm as Principal and Director of Seismic Design. Recognized as an industry leader in seismic issues in structural engineering, he is co-winner of the 2008 T.R. Higgins Lectureship Award from the American Institute of Steel Construction for work on buckling-restrained braced frames, an emerging load-resisting system.

Quixote Transportation Technologies (QTT) has appointed **Mike Corbett** as Director of Operations. In He will be responsible for directing, coordinating and overseeing project and material management, manufacturing, quality assurance, field installations, customer service, training, and post-delivery technical support. Additionally, Corbett will provide leadership and direction in executing new customer service strategies that will ensure that QTT remains a leader in the transportation industry.

Tina Kitts, Owner of **Chain of Events**, was awarded the parking contract to oversee and manage the parking operations for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society events scheduled for April in San Diego and Carlsbad, CA.

Lisa Parker, an AutoCAD technician with the Minneapolis office of **Walker Parking Consultants**, has earned the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Accredited Professional credential. The distinction differentiates building pro-

fessionals who have the training to successfully move a development through the LEED certification process. This accreditation demonstrates a thorough knowledge of the "green" building process and LEED rating system.

Metric Parking has appointed **Sandy Mace** as Development and Systems Manager. The defining point in his career so far has been the contactless credit card development. Mace, who has taken over Metric's R&D and Systems Department staff of 21, says the technology is the future for the parking industry. "There is no question that it is the way forward," said Mace, whose new appointment is set to transform the R&D and Systems operation at the Swindon, UK, factory.

McMahon Associates has promoted **Casey A. Moore**, P.E., to Principal and **Mark A. Roth**, P.E., to Associate. Moore is Vice President and serves as the firm's Director of Business Development. Roth is General Manager of the firm's office in Yardville, NJ.

TagMaster has received a significant order for RFID equipment to be used within the German fast-moving consumer goods industry. Last fall, the company was qualified as the chosen supplier to a German system integrator. Tests led to a large initial order (1.8 million Swedish kroner), with delivery during Q1 of 2008. "A German media company has created a unique, shopping-related direct marketing concept for supermarkets. The concept allows suppliers and store owners to map customers' buying behavior, with the knock-on effect of increasing sales. This is a fantastic new application with great potential," said **Peter Thorander**, Director of the AVI business unit.

PT

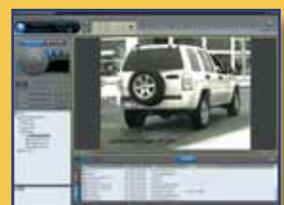
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Pay by Cell Test Running in



Test Participant John Hammerschlag adds time to his parking with his cell phone.

Halfway through an interview Bea Reyna-Hickey, Director of the Department of Revenue for the city of Chicago, got that glint in her eye and remembered the person that a reporter had mentioned a few minutes before. She had personally interceded on a parking citation improperly written during the test of the city's latest technological advancement, the use of pay by cell phone and in-car meters to provide parking services to its residents. "I remember him, he didn't follow our instructions."

Reyna-Hickey, who is responsible for collecting much of the taxes that pay for the city's services, sees metered parking not only as an income producer for her city, but also as a service that the city must provide in the best possible way.

"When we started to move away from single space meters and to Pay and Display, we had decisions to make. They were operational, service oriented, as well as technological. We elected to go with Pay and Display for a number of reasons, some having to do with our residents' needs, some with the streetscape and our merchants. It's important to blend and balance everyone's needs as much as possible."

Now, Reyna-Hickey's department is in the final phase of a 1000 person test of a pay by cell phone system using in-car meters. Why both? We have seen in many communities where Pay by Cell works very well on its own.

"We have a unique situation here in Chicago," she said. "Most of our citations are visually enforced, and hand written by the

The parker can be in the middle of a major purchase, but then has to go feed the meter.

police. Citations are written by our own enforcement staff using handhelds. The in-car meter allows for visual parking enforcement similar to pay and display meter receipts. To require the police, for instance, to carry an additional piece of equipment on their belts to identify whether a meter is expired, would not be realistic at this time. Our police are there to protect and serve first, and write tickets second. The in-car meter system we are testing allows the police officer on the beat, or the parking enforcement aide to do their jobs without any changes."



The "in car meter" displays the zone, time and date of expiration.

Chicago

When the motorist uses their cell phone to purchase parking, the system sends a message to the meter in their vehicle and sets the display with the payment zone selected and the time by which the car must be moved. The officer then simply looks at the meter and can write the appropriate citation in their normal manner, should the meter be expired.

The system also gives the motorist the ability to compare the citation with their monthly record of parking charges. If the ticket was written at 3 PM, and the record shows that the parking purchased expired at 2:30, there is little question that an issued citation is valid. Conversely, should a ticket be issued in error, the motorist has proof of paid status.

According to records, the city has collected nearly \$60,000 in meter fees since inception of the pilot program in October 2007. "It's working well," Reyna-Hickey said. "People seem to love it."

Pay by cell has a lot of advantages particularly in climates like the Windy City. Drivers can make their payments in the warmth of their car. They can also be notified when their time is about up and can "top up" their payment from the present location, if they like. However, all metered parking time restrictions still apply.

One of the issues merchants have with parking is that the parker can be in the middle of a major purchase, but then have to go feed the meter. That could mean a lost sale. The pay by cell phone alleviates that issue.

As for the errant motorist she personally helped. "We knew the pilot system would have a few bugs so we set up a special in-car meter toll free number for customers to call with any problems. We have staff on hand to handle any issues brought up by the new system. In this case, the motorist was correct. The ticket was issued in error, and has since been withdrawn. This could have been resolved more quickly if the motorist had called the in-car meter customer service number, but we were happy to resolve the matter."

Note: The Vendor used in the Chicago Test was Park Magic.

PT

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Parking Industry Exhibition Breaks All Records

The Parking Industry Exhibition, sponsored by Parking Today and held March 30-April 2, in Chicago broke all previous attendance records for the show. According to Show Manager Andy Van Horn, the event hosted nearly 800 people, of whom more than 550 were attendees.

“Not only did we have a record number of parking folks attend,” said Van Horn, “but we also sold out the exhibit hall with nearly 100 companies represented. It was fantastic.”

Attendance isn't the only thing involved in these events, continued Van Horn. “We also want the attendees to return home with information not just from the exhibit floor, but from the seminars as well. We changed the program this year so the exhibits were open only four hours daily. The seminars were not run during the exhibit hours.”

He explained that “this enabled the experts from the vendors' companies to become involved in the seminars and add their knowledge to the programs.

“-- is an 'intimate' show, with most booths being small, 8x10 affairs. This levels the playing field a bit and gives all vendors a more equal chance at the attendees,” Van Horn said.

“I like the way PIE gives you the chance to spend time with individual attendees,” said one exhibitor. “We aren't overwhelmed. We had time to talk, both when the show was on and afterwards.”

More than 120 attended PIE's “Boot Camp.” The program, for those new to the parking industry, is held before the conference opens and is designed to give attendees a basic background on which to build their careers in parking.

“Speed networking” was very popular, added Van Horn. This take-off on “speed dating” enabled attendees to quickly meet one another, find those who have similar interests, and exchange contact information.

“I thought PIE was a regional show,” said one vendor during the vendor meeting. “But, frankly, I have met people from all over the country. How did you do it?”

“We have a large database of telephone numbers of those in the parking industry – more than 12,000,” said Van Horn. “We had our staff literally call each of these numbers, twice. We left messages and personally invited attendees. Of course, there is also a very large number of people who have banned e-mails from Andy Van Horn. We were persistent.”

The Parking Industry Exhibition will return to Chicago in March 2010. Responding to industry input, the event is going to an every-other-year format.

PT





Rx for Hospital Parking

BY RICHARD C. RICH

Designing hospital parking requires careful attention to the structure's function. It generally serves a variety of users, including employees, inpatients and outpatient surgery patients, visitors and emergency services workers – and sometimes even med-flight helicopters. Additionally, hospital parking structures often require more handicap parking than is typical. These various uses require design features that other types of parking do not.

Most efficient parking structures consist of the sloped floor making the transition between levels. In hospital parking, this transition should occur on only one of the modules if possible, leaving one or more modules of flat space within the structure for the parkers to re-circulate between floors when looking for a place to park. This design approach also provides greater flexibility for providing handicap parking since all points on that floor are level.

Generally, employees are assigned parking on the slope floors and upper levels of the structure, leaving the flat sections of the first few floors for patients and visitors. Some larger structures with large flat areas use shuttles to transport patients from the remote parking spaces to the elevator towers.

Beyond the engineering components of parking design, there are several additional design features to be considered. The first is lighting, which should be provided

at uniform levels throughout the structure. Many designers make the mistake of providing only direct lighting in driving aisles, which undermines visibility.

Visibility is a key, not only to parker convenience, but to security as well. Structures with high visibility permit parkers to see hazards long before they approach them. As a rule, areas around stairways and within 30 feet of elevator cores should have 30- to 40 foot-candles of light, while driving aisles can be illuminated at somewhat lower levels.

Another important passive security feature is the use of glass in lobbies and elevator towers to improve visibility within and outside the structure. Additionally, building codes often per-



Hospital parking structures must be designed to meet a variety of users, including patients, visitor, staff and even sometimes med-flight helicopters.

Security is a paramount concern in any parking development.

mit open stairs within garages, fire stairs or larger areas of glass to make stairways safer.

Many hospitals also include active security in their structures. For instance, security cameras can be strategically placed to provide a view of activity in parking areas. Some cameras, upon noting differences in motion, can automatically ring an alarm to summon security officers.

Many structures also have sound-monitoring systems that can alert security personnel to problems, and which include two-way communication capabilities so officers can speak directly with patrons.

These security features should be prominently displayed to reassure users that parking areas are being monitored.

In fact, security is a paramount concern in any parking development. And since visibility is a key to safety, all parking facilities should be as open as possible.

While many hospital planners prefer parking lots because of their openness, it is possible to achieve the same sense in parking structures by keeping them well illuminated structurally open. Additionally, structured parking can actually be easier for security staff to monitor through security cameras and audio equipment. And, of course, structures aren't impacted by inclement weather.

The next important component of parking design is wayfinding. There must be sufficient signage to direct all users

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Security video and audio systems permit security officers to constantly monitor activity within the parking structure.

Rx for Hospital Parking

from Page 18

to appropriate parking areas, and to their ultimate destinations in the hospital. These signs should be as clear as possible, with large easily read lettering.

If possible, hospitals should consider installing dynamic signs that can direct parkers to areas within the structure that have available spaces. Today's LED technology is very efficient and, as a result, these signs are inexpensive to operate.

Similarly, LED technology has made lighting much more efficient. LED lights can provide as much light as traditional metal halides, yet use just one-third of the power. Although the initial expense of installing LED equipment is higher, the low operating cost ensures that it will soon pay for itself.

Design features aren't the only consideration when developing hospital parking. Choosing the right materials is also essential. Many structures today are constructed of precast concrete, which provides more rapid construction and often at a lower initial cost. When creating parking facilities with precast, there are a number of design rules of thumb that must be adhered to. For instance, placement of the shearwalls should not impair vision or create areas where someone could lurk.

Many contemporary shearwalls are built as "K" frames,

which feature crisscrossing beams that provide visibility to the shearwalls. Although they cost more than traditional precast shearwalls, they dramatically increase visibility and light throughout the structure. Generally, if the "K" frame is not used, enhanced lighting should be incorporated on all four corners of the shearwall in the center of the building. Shearwalls should not be placed at the ends of driving aisles because they can impede drivers' ability to see turning vehicles.

Because of the wide variety of types of parkers who must be served by hospital parking facilities, hospital parking provides a number of unique challenges. However, by following a few basic rules of thumb, hospitals can readily meet these challenges.

Richard C. Rich is Founder and President of Rich and Associates. He can be reached at parking@richassociates.com

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The 28% Solution

BY CLYDE WILSON

I had a conversation with PT Editor JVH over lunch a month or so ago, and the content of the conversation ended up anonymously in the PT blog. We have these conversations because we both are very driven to improve the public perception of the parking industry. Plus, we have had some version of this conversation many times over the years, and it usually revolves around how much money is not collected by the parking operations and the operators not really wanting the owners to know the truth.

Since it is no fun to have a meaningful conversation where both sides agree, I usually take the position that the parking operators aren't trying to hide anything. Everyone seems to believe the amount of parking revenues missing is about 10%, and the cost of getting that considerably lower is too great. Parking operators have an obligation to always try to collect 100%, and owners have to balance costs vs. return. The owners usually win, so 100% is not in the cards.

Then one day, sitting in an airplane seat (one of my assistants a few years ago always said I had my best ideas up high where there is a little oxygen deprivation to the brain; I never could figure out how to turn that into a compliment; anyway, she no longer works for us), I thought: The Parking Network audits some of the highest-profile operations in the country every year; why not take our audits and drill down to the actual revenue-lost findings and see what the real average turns out to be.

The result? The average of the last 10 audits we had done – all class-A office buildings in well-known cities – was 28%. Oooops. Now 10% may not be much of a problem, but 28% becomes something you may want to consider hiding from the owners. Nothing like a good cover-up to spark good conversation over lunch.

The 28% number is really not a good average because it is specific to one type of operation: commercial office buildings. Operations such as airports, universities, public garages and events would not have some of the issues that caused the 28% average. Over the next year, we will get a good look at some other types of operations and try to refine an industry-wide number. I am sure it will be much smaller.

The 28% number didn't surprise JVH, but I remember well late at night working on the audit findings and finally coming to a number that I thought was defensible; I was not surprised at all. In the job we do, we really get to see the insides of hundreds of parking operations every year. As a result, we begin to see common themes that can very easily be transferred into large amounts of revenue loss. So, you ask, "Why does this happen?"

The parking industry operates as thousands of little packets of space and revenue – none of which operate exactly the same. One commercial parking operator in a city with 100 locations can have three or four different brands of parking control equipment that represent as many as 20 different generations of hardware and software. They also may have 70 or 80 different landlords that have different levels of understanding of the parking operations and have different (usually low) levels of commitment to dollars for upgrades or maintenance.

Therefore, instead of a Wal-Mart or McDonalds that looks virtually the same in terms of cash control technology from Portland, ME, to Seattle, WA, you really have something that looks more like a bunch of mom-and-pop operations. Nothing is standard at almost every level. Therefore, training of the people on the streets becomes difficult at best. As we audit from facility to facility, we see different procedures in place or no procedures at all.

"You are not going to believe this: this is the worst operation I have ever seen"

That tells us there really isn't a formal training program, because if there were, it would be training to a standard set of procedures. If every manager being hired to manage and be responsible for a \$3 million revenue stream had to go through a parking accounts receivable class, a cash control class, and a "how in the heck do I keep up with validations" class, my 28% number would drop to below 10%.

Instead, the frontline managers are not being trained as professionals, and the real expertise is at the top of the organization, not on the streets where parking really happens. So we have a bunch of frontline managers operating locations generating millions of dollars in revenue with little or no training and never having a seasoned, experienced manager with a little time on his hands giving pointers.

At a large operation just a few months ago, I experienced the