

Innovation, Thy Name is Parking



Parking Location Innovations

MSP is developing another response to customer concerns of finding parking at its Lindbergh Terminal Parking Ramps. The "Blue Card" system is a guaranteed parking service priced between valet and general parking for our frequent business travelers. While fees are not yet determined, it is currently scheduled for operation in the fourth quarter of 2007.

The innovation will meet several customer needs:

1. Guaranteed access to a reserved parking area close to the Lindbergh or Humphrey Terminal on a 24/7 basis. Payment is an automatic, monthly charge via credit or debit card. The primary card payment is backed up by another active, authorized card if the primary fails for any reason; thus, payment and access are guaranteed.
2. A gift card for a pre-set number of parking visits to any parking area (except valet).
3. An airline valued-customer card if an airline desires to pre-pay the parking for a frequent customer. MSP would control the number of cards issued to avoid overfilling this parking area.
4. A service breakdown recovery card. If we, or another merchant, wish to offer a customer a premium airport parking experience as a "thank you" or as a method to earn back business after a mistake, a card could be sold for a single entrance and exit.

tem also required that our credit card processing and revenue control systems never failed.

All inflow and outflow gates accommodate the ePark access/payment method, and no ticket is issued at entrance to worry the customer. The credit or debit card is charged only on the customer's acceptance of the exact charge at the exit gate. The exiting process can take as few as 14 seconds with ePark, as compared with about three minutes with a cashier. If a problem occurs, a real person answers the intercom, or the customer can proceed to one of the two cashiered exits. A receipt is produced at exit upon request.

We now experience in excess of 90% of revenues via credit card. The use of checks and the delay they cause in the exit queues have nearly disappeared. However, ePark's most significant savings is in staffing costs. We reduced overall staff from 117 fulltime equivalents to 77 FTEs (a 34% reduction) during a two-year period, for an ongoing annual savings in excess of \$1.5 million.

As ePark processing costs less than cashiered transactions, we have worked to "market" customer use of it by passing along the savings to our eParkers. To do this and not reduce revenues, we raised the overall rates by \$2 and then offered a \$2 per day discount for using ePark.

As a natural extension of the success of ePark technology, eTrip is our credit card in/out system for commercial, non-permitted vehicle payments. We collect a per trip fee from taxis, limousines, hotel shuttles and buses. This system eliminated a 24/7 cashier.

Airport employee parking is now paid via an automated monthly charge to either a credit or debit card. This has eliminated sending monthly billings to individuals and receiving monthly payments. It has reduced our staffing costs and allowed us to deactivate parking privileges just a few days after payments are due.

The SurePark Innovation

At MSP, parking demand frequently exceeds supply. In 2007, we have overflowed our 12,000 spaces at the Lindbergh Terminal Parking Ramps 15 times. When we fill capacity at the Lindbergh ramps, we execute a staff-intensive "diversion" to inform and redirect incoming parkers to the Humphrey Terminal Parking Ramps once they have entered the Lindbergh in-bound roadway system.

Our revenue control system includes an accurate count system. We monitor occupancy levels from our desk in real-time so we know when to close and then reopen portions of the ramps at either terminal. We can also change parking rates at the incoming gates from our desktop PCs.

Rates are charged based on time of entry and remain with the transaction until the customer exits. To let customers know about parking availability, we are developing SurePark, a three-method link to that information:

Method 1: Customers access the MSP home page via the Internet. A bar graph displays Lindbergh or Humphrey parking occupancy information on an up-to-the-minute basis.

Method 2: SurePark is in test mode to provide this information by voice from quick-access, phone tree-type of menu.

Method 3: SurePark can be set to automatically send a text

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At MSP – Innovation, Thy Name is Parking

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message of which parking areas are open as the customer approaches MSP.

Customer Communication Innovations

Exterior variable message signs are incredibly flexible to meet our many changing airport needs. We use them at entrance and exit and on customer access roadways to promote desired parking behaviors. We promote ePark to inform potential users of its speed, cost savings and convenience. We identify lane usages (cashier, closed, ZipPass only) at exit. We inform customers of icy roads and new airline services.

We also secured an illuminated, solar-powered sign that we can position with a pickup truck. We post this sign on the route to “additional parking” when we fill one terminal’s parking and must divert to another location. The 9-foot-square sign is self-contained on its own trailer. While hardly elegant, it is very visible and effective as we can position it precisely where needed.

Succession Management Innovation

A key business strategy is succession management. There is currently a national shortage of qualified general and assistant general managers within airport parking contractors. These companies usually raid from one another to fill positions when awarded a new airport contract.

In response, MSP is creating a senior airport manager training program with Ampco System Parking. We will use a variety of training resources, including those of the International Parking Institute.

This cost-splitting endeavor benefits Ampco as they can retain and grow airport parking general managers using one of the larger U.S. airports. MSP benefits as our systems are constantly reviewed by their best and brightest managers for 18 to 24 months before they advance to another airport.

Conclusions

Our philosophy at MSP is that innovation thrives when people must live with the results of their decisions. This motivates a more thorough, intentional level of personal involvement in problem identification and realistic approaches to resolving the issues. Our active pursuit to understand how our services and programs impact other airport operations encourages others to voice their concerns and solutions.

Once involved in our pursuit, their approach matches ours. Thus far, our success has allowed innovation and execution to flow from the operational level, rather than being imposed from above. We feel our continued improvements are directly related to the quality of our “partners.” In this innovative atmosphere, we work together to provide and improve the airport parking that our various customers expect as part of their MSP experience.

Rick Decker is Asst. Manager, Parking Operations, Minneapolis St. Paul International Airport. He can be reached at rick.decker@mspmac.org

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CU Testing Parking System That Takes Calls, Credit Cards

According to the Rocky Mountain News, 40 of the University of Colorado's thousands of parking spaces are now accepting phone calls and credit cards.

CU's Parking and Transportation Services recently rolled out the new machines, replacing coin-operated parking meters with three solar-powered, no-cranking-necessary, intuitive parking facilitation units.

Pay-and-display systems print a receipt for display on a vehicle's dashboard. Parking machine kiosks are at three lots on campus; each kiosk controls multiple parking spaces.

The system is on a 90-day trial, scheduled through June, said Casey Jones, CU's parking and transportation director. If successful, as many as 50 machines eventually could appear on campus, Jones said.

Sell Parking Lots? Commission Wants More Info

The City Commission of Grand Rapids, MI, voted to send the idea of selling parking ramps to a private firm back to the Parking Commission.

City commissioners said they didn't have enough information to make a decision on the proposed \$35 million sale of four parking decks, 10 surface lots and the DASH bus service to Third Coast Public Infrastructure.

Commissioners James White and Rick Tormala said selling the parking structures and the two DASH lots could bring the city some quick cash and put those structures back on the city's tax rolls.

But City Manager Kurt Kimball is opposed to the plan, saying the cost of putting the sale together, the cost of paying off bonds owed by the city for parking structures, and the loss of revenue could actually end up costing the city money.

North Park Fully Leased, but Parking Spaces Empty

The more than 14,800 square feet of pedestrian level retail space in the four-level North Park Theatre Parking Structure in San Diego have been leased. However, the parking spaces in the six-level garage remain mostly empty.

The final tenant was a recent five-year, 3,196-square-foot lease by Central Park SD, a dance studio. Other tenants include Disconnected, a hair salon; Mesh, a clothing boutique; The Costume Shop; Student Success Programs (dba The Charter School of San Diego); and Ascent Realty.

The parking garage is a development of San Diego's Redevelopment Agency and private developer Bud Fischer. It was designed by Austin Veum Robbins Parshell. McCarthy Construction was the general contractor.



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It's Not a Garage. It's Not a Structure

Rick Choate, principal of Choate Parking Consultants, gave a presentation to the Park Across America conference in April. A brief summary of his presentation follows.

Buildings, including parking facilities, are user-driven; they serve a functional purpose. The owner's decisions drive aesthetics, function and the economics. These result in a balance or compromise.

These are not garages (that's where you have your car fixed). Nor are they structures (although they are made up of structural elements). They are buildings.

Usually, the decisions made in building a parking facility control two at the expense of the third. For instance, if one stresses aesthetics and function, the price goes way up. If you stress function and economics, the aesthetics typically suffer.

When you plan a "parking facility," you are driven by the site influences. As you begin your design, you consider the building from the inside out. Remember that you have certain dimensions and they are unforgiving. Lanes must be a minimum width, spaces take a certain number of square feet, and turning radiuses are what they are.

Try to keep industry standards in mind. This means the facility must be functional, systems friendly and constructible. The more standards you follow, the easier it is to find a contractor, and

it's more economical.

Parking functional design is determined by the type of user, the size of the site, the number of spaces and the number of levels. The elements involved in the design include the parking geometrics, the vertical circulation, the customer orientation and the entry/exit design.

The type of facility the parking building is supporting and the type of user greatly affect the design. For instance, if it's a shopping mall, the spaces need to be wider (so packages can be easily loaded into the vehicle) than at a university or office building, where parking is longer term and the same people are using the facility over and over.

One of the major issues is the size of the parking space. Although we "feel" that vehicle size has substantially increased in the past two decades, in fact, it has not. This means that the requirements put forth by many municipalities to increase space size, particularly the length, are based on information not supported by the facts.

The average car size on the road in 1983 was 6 feet 3 inches wide and 17 feet 2 inches long. In 2001, the average car sold was 6 feet 1 inch wide and 16 feet 8 inches long.

The configuration of the circulation related to the site. A

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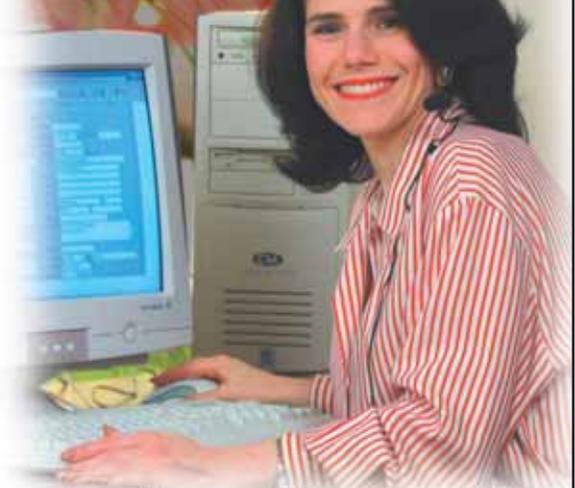
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re. It's a Building.

square facility is different from one that is long and narrow (and more efficient). The location of the ramps (on the side versus the middle) is important, too.

For instance, if the ramp comes up the middle, the driver must make a decision on every floor as to which way to turn. They stop and slow down the process. If they make the wrong decision, it means they miss potential open spaces.

If the ramp is on the side, the driver has no decision to make. As they approach the floor, they can see the available spaces on the floor and can make a reasoned decision as to what aisle to drive down.

The location of the pedestrian "core" is important. If it's located in one area, the pedestrian will have to cross traffic, moving up or down the facility. If in another, they can go to exits, stairs or elevators without coming in contact with vehicles moving through the floor.

Remember, patrons spend more time out of their cars than in their cars in parking buildings.

Although there are many factors in the cost of a parking facility, the number of stories is a critical factor. A two-story facility may have an average cost of \$30 per square foot, while with a five-story, it jumps to \$40, and a seven-story to \$44.

Remember, the layout, space size and geometrics figure greatly into the number of spaces you get in those buildings. The cost per square foot may not relate directly to the cost per space.

Lighting is a major factor in planning for a parking building. Although high-pressure sodium has been popular in the past, new technology in ballasts and bulbs makes fluorescent fixtures a workable solution today.

HPS fixtures, once turned off, cannot be restarted for 15 minutes. This causes problems with power failures and in cases where you want to use timers and motion detectors to lower electrical costs. Fluorescent fixtures can be turned on and off at will, and work particularly well when you want to turn off the lights in an area and have them go on only when the area is in use.

Security is a major factor in design. An open-plan floor gives a potential attacker the feeling of insecurity, since they are visible. It also gives the user a feeling of security since they can see and be seen. Good lighting, grilles at the ground level, and open stairwells and glass-backed elevators all add to the security of the building.

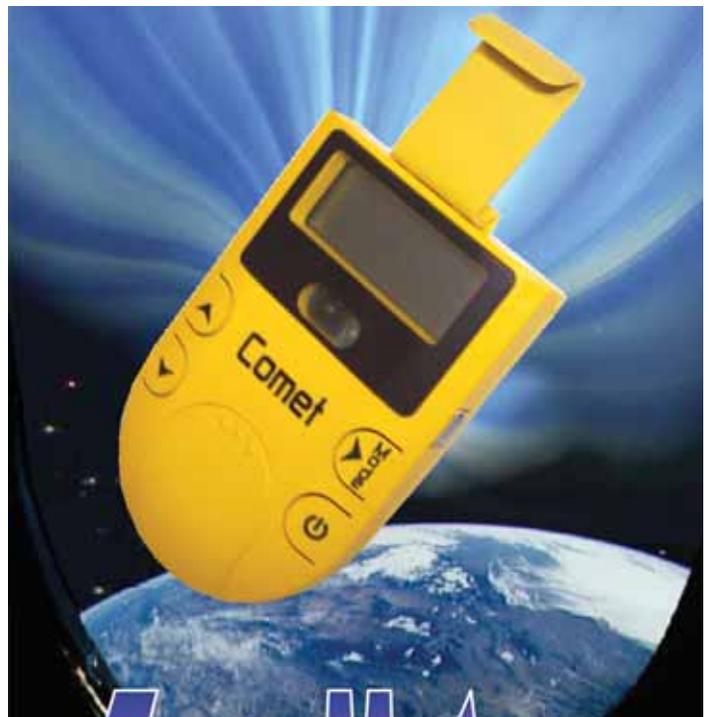
It is important to think like a contractor builds. The design should "fit" into the construction methods being used, whether poured-in-place or precast.

There are many other aspects to the parking building, and that's why you have consultants, designers, architects and engineers to assist you.

A good designer determines the site influences, designs from the inside out, develops the functional characteristics, thinks like the contractor builds, avoids convoluting the base structure, and embellishes the exterior to fit the surrounding area.

Rick Choate can be reached at rick@choateparking.com. A DVD of his presentation is available at www.parkingtoday.com. For information on October's Park Across America conference, log on to www.parkingtoday.com and click on conferences.

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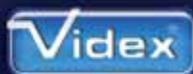
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JVH comments on Parking News every day at PT Blog – log on at www.parkingtoday.com. Each month, there are at least 40 other comments like these, posted daily.

L.A. Wins Lawsuit Against Operator

Here's the story: A Los Angeles Superior Court judge has ordered Prestige Parking to pay \$238,000 in delinquent rents owed to the city. The city sued Prestige in December 2005 for failing to pay \$20,000 in rent in 2002 and paying no rent from December 2004 to April 2005 on a city redevelopment agency-owned lot it had leased. A criminal case is pending against Prestige and its principal for failing to pay thousands in city parking taxes.

My sources tell me this has been a long process. The operator hasn't paid its rent, and the recourse the city had was to sue. This is a civil action to collect the rent money. The criminal action, which could result in jail time, follows. The criminal action relates to underreporting income and not paying the parking tax.

The procedure began when the city of L.A. hired an outside firm to audit parking garages and discover whether they had been reporting all the income in a number of garages it operates. The result is that the operator had underreported income

substantially and has not paid the resulting taxes and fees. I understand that this process has taken years; however, even though the wheels of justice grind slowly, they do grind.

Legitimate operators applaud this effort by the city. They collect and report income, pay their taxes, and then find themselves in a non-competitive position with operators that don't. The tax in L.A. is a lowly 10%, but that can make a big difference when bidding a location.

It Really Does Work – Uncoupling Parking Costs

The city of Vancouver, British Columbia, is removing some parking requirements on condo developers. By doing so, the developers are able to reduce the cost of construction enough so that they can drop \$55,000 off the price of the units.

I have been railing for a year about the uncoupling of parking costs and other costs in buildings and now it's beginning to happen. What it means is that people who live in the city and elect to reduce the number or type of vehicles in their households can pay less for housing.

Of course, the local government is looking at the plan as a "green" one, but that's OK – call it what you will. The result is that housing costs less, and it also proves a point that parking does, in fact, greatly impact the cost of construction and therefore the cost of rent, housing, office buildings and the like.

Drivers should pay their way, but people should also elect not to pay for parking if they don't own a car.

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New Orleans is Back

At least the parking is. According to a Times-Picayune (dontcha just love that name) newspaper article, traffic officers are writing about as many parking tickets as they did before Hurricane Katrina. Most of the P and D machines installed and then destroyed by the storm have been replaced, as have most of the staffers let go. The 170-person parking department was down to 10 but now is rocking and rolling.

Of course, more tickets means more complaints, so they have opened a hearing office and hired four additional hearing officers to handle those who wish to contest their citation.

The Big Easy - Welcome Back.

It Boggles the Mind

The Lee County Port Authority – that’s the outfit that runs the Fort Myers, FL, airport – performed an audit. Here are some of the quotes from the newspaper article:

Port Authority director Bob Ball said people frequently lose tickets, and lost tickets don’t necessarily mean lost money. “No system runs perfect,” he said. “But we’re very, very pleased with the results of the audit.”

Ball said the old computer worked fine, which is why it was brought over from the old terminal. “Sometimes things that are old work better,” he said.

Chief Auditor Chuck Short says he has no reason to suspect missing funds. He says auditors are very careful, however, especially after they uncovered the theft of more than \$40,000 from county toll proceeds in 2005.

As I understand it (the article is a bit confusing, but I will attempt to parse it for you), the county auditors did an audit of the airport parking facility. They found just over 12,000 tickets missing for last year. That’s about 1% of the tickets issued. They say the place is under control and the results are great!

Let’s see – if you figure that the average person who parks at the airport stays three days (a conservative guess, I think), that means each of those tickets is worth \$30. That means that the city lost \$360,000 last year ... and that’s just in missing tickets.

I wonder ...

I wonder if the auditor counted the “lost ticket” slips turned in. If they did and got \$120,000, that means the city lost only \$240,000 (lost ticket pays full daily rate).

I wonder if the lost tickets were swapped for the big money tickets – like, say, the people who stayed a week. So if only half the lost tickets were swapped for seven-day tickets (the one-day tickets were kept and the seven-day tickets “lost”), our numbers are back up to \$360,000 stolen.

I wonder if anyone looked at the counters in the lanes (assuming there were counters in the lanes) and discovered just how many cars actually parked in the facility.

I wonder if anyone took a look at the cashiers and checked out what kind of cars they drive.

Continued on Page 34

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from Page 33

I wonder if the county auditors have ever audited a parking facility before.

Oh yes, the other great quotes:

Chief Auditor Short says there's no way to know whether any money is missing, but a spot check done on Feb. 27 found the automated system counted 68 cars in the long-term lot for 10 days or longer. The nightly license count had 60.

That's only a 12% error factor on one day... looking better and better.

"There's a lot of missing tickets, and there's gaps in the numbers," said Short. "The company (I assume this is the operator) was very cooperative, and they're going to make some changes."

I'll bet they did...

This is why airports typically make operators responsible for every ticket. The numbers are so large that even a 1% error factor can mean big bucks.

A Problem in Louisville

This is rich – a Louisville lawyer (wouldn't you know it) discovered that if the city hadn't notified a person who had a parking fine BY CERTIFIED MAIL within seven days, they couldn't collect the money. It appears this is a state law. Louisville uses regular mail.

The deal is that the lawyer is telling all the folks in Louisville not to pay their fines, and he is considering a class action lawsuit.

I have a really quick solution for the city. I would raise the fines \$20. (The certified mail costs \$2.75 plus handling.) I would then mail all future fines out certified, and if anyone complained about the increase in the costs, I would give them the lawyer's phone number.

Most people will pay their current fines, and those who don't, just ignore them. Draw a line and begin following the state rules. I didn't do the numbers,

but my guess is that the additional \$15 per fine would more than make up for any lost revenue.

All is right with the world, and the lawyer would have to move out of town.

JVH

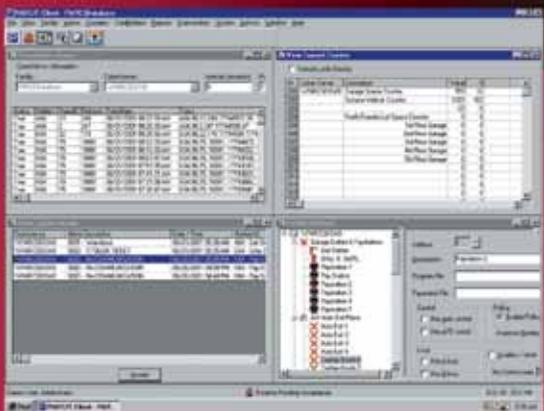
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British Form New Parking Association for Individuals

BY PETER GUEST

I am not making this up (1):

I recently was given the translation of a new parking law in a country that shall remain nameless. One of the offenses for which you could get a parking ticket was to park a car without license plates. Think about it.

I am not making this up (2):

The UK government is encouraging people to use cars less and buses, trains and metro more. How do they (the government, that is) do this for Birmingham, Britain's second-largest city? By proposing to withdraw the money they pay local rail operators to provide free parking at stations and so introduce charges for parking at these stations. The government call it joined up thinking!

The annual Parkex show here in England seemed to go pretty well by all accounts. It ran for three days alongside the biennial Traffex show in Birmingham, and all three days were pretty crowded, with most booth occupiers pretty happy with the show.

One thing that always puzzles me at shows like this is the people who spend thousands of dollars to be at the show and then sit at the back of their booths reading a paper! News flash: If you are not interested in the visitors, why should they be interested in your products?

The British Parking Association had two major launches at the show.

The first was the official launch of the Institute of Parking Professionals. The BPA has been around for about 40 years and has always been an organization of organizations. However, as the industry has grown, there has been a growing call for a body that represents the people who work in our business, rather than just the companies that employ them.

This ambition has now been achieved with the launch of the Institute of Parking Professionals on April 17. Membership is open to anyone working in the parking industry, with four grades of membership, depending on the individual's age and achievements.

At launch, we had 120 founder members, and given the level of interest shown by people at the show, I wouldn't be surprised if this figure has already doubled and may even pass 1,000 by the end of the

year. Membership is open to anyone working in the parking industry, and if anyone out there wants to know more, you can find details on the BPA website (www.britishparking.co.uk).

At the same time, we have also started a program, called the Sector Skills Strategy, to develop formal recognized qualifications for the parking industry. It will start with enhanced qualifications for people involved in ticket writing, with the ambition that eventually the qualification will become a license to practice, so that only qualified people will be able to do this job. The goal is to develop a whole range of suitable training courses to raise standards in the industry.

The BPA's second launch at Parkex was a new code of practice for parking enforcement on private land. Many landowners seek to protect their car parks from misuse by issuing parking tickets for people who abuse the facility

We have had a long-term problem here where organizations of questionable legitimacy have been writing tickets in these situations, and then instead of enforcing the charge through the courts, they have relied on threats and intimidation to collect quite unreasonable charges.



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