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DOUG TOWNER, Senior Parking Enforcement Officer, Las Vegas, Nevada

Success Story: City of Las Vegas



IN BRIEF

Challenge: It was obvious that the addition of a new Regional Justice Center, high-rise living spaces and business facilities would create an increased demand for metered parking in downtown Las Vegas. The City began its search for advanced parking technology that would accommodate the growth and keep the downtown area convenient and accessible to citizens. The main goals were meters that accept a variety of payment options and that could communicate with Duncan Solutions' AutoCITE™ electronic ticket writers the City has used for 10 years.

Solution: Duncan® Pay-by-Space Parking Meters provided by Duncan Technologies®

Results:

- > 17 meters installed, offering convenient payment options and efficient management of 170 spaces
- > Convenient payment by credit and debit cards and cell phone has been readily accepted by customers – credit cards already represent 31% of total revenue from area meters
- > Time spent on coin collection and enforcement has decreased
- > Real-time reporting due to integration of ticket writers and meters results in stronger adjudication and decision making
- > With credit card transactions 300% larger than coin transactions, revenues are increasing

BACKGROUND>>

As the City undergoes dramatic commercial and residential growth, Las Vegas' local government is making every effort to ensure that the quality of life enjoyed by its citizens will continue. That means keeping ahead of the technology curve, according to Doug Towner, Senior Parking Enforcement Officer for Las Vegas. Realizing that downtown redevelopment would bring in an additional nine million residents and workers to the area, City management underwent a search for advanced parking solutions. After reviewing a number of multi-space meters, Las Vegas decided to test 15 Pay-by-Space Meters from Duncan Technologies, a division of Duncan Solutions, Inc. Las Vegas became one of the first cities in the country to let drivers pay for on-street parking with both credit cards and cell phones.

Two additional Duncan Pay-by-Space Meters have already been installed, bringing the City's total to 17. According to Mr. Towner, the City is looking at adding more meters in the near future.

DETAILS>>

“We looked at numerous multi-space machines,” says Mr. Towner. The decision to select Duncan Pay-by-Space Meters was based on factors such as:

- Customer convenience — accepts payment by credit or debit card and by cell phone
- Synergy with AutoCITE — the only integrated handheld ticket writers and meters available on the market
- Increased efficiency — easier enforcement, reduced coin handling and extensive reporting capabilities

Ultimate in Customer Convenience

“Searching for change for the parking meters and worrying whether time is running out are chief concerns for drivers,” Mr. Towner says. “The Pay-by-Space Meters eliminate both problems. Plus, we've found that people paying the meter with coins tend to pay the minimum or with whatever coins they have readily available. But, with credit cards, people tend to put in a lot more, generally the maximum. Our current average credit card transaction is \$2.22. But, our average coin transaction

is only 74 cents.” Credit card use currently represents more than 31 percent of total meter transactions in the downtown Las Vegas area. That's expected to rise as Mr. Towner says customer feedback is very high. Cards are swiped just as they are with ATMs, and each meter has a touch pad for entering the parking space number. On-line approval takes place almost instantaneously, serving as a way to eliminate bad debt.

“With the addition of the Regional Justice Center, the ability to pay by cell phone had special appeal to the City,” Mr. Towner notes. “In particular, lawyers have trouble leaving court to run out to feed the meter when it expires. The Duncan Pay-by-Space Meters have the potential of eliminating this problem.” After using a cell phone to pay for meter time through a toll-free number, customers get an added benefit: a text message can be sent to their cell phones about 10 minutes before meter time expires. Drivers can then purchase more time by simply making a cell phone call. “We like the idea of giving drivers every opportunity to avoid getting a ticket.”

“We’d rather bring in revenue through our meters than through ticket issuance. With the ability to pay by credit or debit card and with a cell phone, the Pay-by-Space Meters make it easier for people to do the right thing.” Doug Towner

Real-Time Management for

Ultimate Control The fact that Duncan Pay-by-Space Meters communicate with AutoCITE handheld ticket writers was a selling point, according to Mr. Towner. The Pay-by-Space Meters communicate in real-time through an infrared download. They download the status of every space directly to the AutoCITE. In addition, this information is almost instantly available via desktop through a secure, password-protected website. Mr. Towner commented on the specific advantages of this unique integration capability:

- **More efficient enforcement.**

Officers make just one stop, view a single computerized screen that shows negative or overdue time on all vehicles using the Pay-by-Space Meter. “It takes much less time to enforce violations and they’re more accurate.”

- **Powerful management options.**

Provides access to real-time information about meters, enabling proactive planning, easy rate adjustments, understanding of trends and dynamic reporting. “We never had this level of information available before and it helps our decision making tremendously.”

- **Just-in-time collection system.**

From any desktop, you can see how much money is in each meter, so collections only need to be made when capacity is near. “Since we collect coins only when needed rather than routinely, we’ve decreased personnel time.”

- **Decreased downtime.** Real-time alarm system alerts technicians to any problems. Wireless communication keeps staff apprised of ongoing equipment status. “Keeping one meter maintained rather than ten requires much less time.”
- **More effective adjudication.** Quickly validates drivers’ claims of paying the wrong meter or of being “just a few minutes late.”

Maximizing Good Will and ROI “With the growth in population in the downtown area, we saw a huge increase in citation issuance,” Mr. Towner notes. “But, issuing more tickets is not our goal. We’d rather bring in revenue through our meters than through ticket issuance. With the ability to pay by credit or debit card and with a cell phone, Duncan Pay-by-Space Meters make it easier for people to do the right thing. Our goal is to leave people feeling good about their dealings with the City.”

City Manager Doug Selby agrees. “We’re trying new parking meter technology to make it more convenient for customers to enjoy a downtown that is accessible and a place where people can easily conduct business,” he says.

However, the City of Las Vegas is likely to see a quick return on its investment, according to Bob Levin, Regional Vice President, Duncan Solutions. “One city

recovered the cost of their Pay-by-Space Meters in just four months due to increased revenue,” he says. “Considering that these meters function for about 15 years, the ROI is fabulous.”

>> As a division of Duncan Solutions, Inc., a global leader in parking and enforcement management solutions, Duncan Technologies has the resources and expertise to generate success stories. For a turnkey solution or a single program, we’re the strategic outsourcing partner of choice. Contact us to find out how we can improve results for you.

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