

Avery Dennison RFID Inlays Used in SAI Timing & Tracking – Innovative, Portable RFID System Streamlines Timing in Major U.S. Races

SAI Timing & Tracking Systems of Southfield, MI, has developed an innovative, integrated race timing system using the company's UHF Gen 2 RFID Inlays in tags produced by MPI Label Systems.

The modular, portable system was designed by SAI Timing & Tracking System co-founders – David Simms, a 24-year veteran in the sport racing arena, and Arash Kia, of Ultimate Timing in Portland, OR – to resolve a number of issues inherent with the timing systems in place at most races today, which incorporate reusable RFID chips enclosed within cylindrical disks. SAI provides runners instead with a small, lightweight and disposable RFID Gen 2 tag. The RFID readers can be easily transported and installed at the start, finish and any desired checkpoints along the race route – thus eliminating lengthy installation time and the need for large vans or trailers to transport equipment. With the use of low-cost disposable tags, there is no need for event managers or race timers to collect and sort tags at the end of the race – saving many hours of work and cleanup.

According to Simms, the new system has been successful. “With road racing growing in popularity around the globe, many races have grown to more than 10,000 participants. To ensure that read rates were consistent and sustainable even with large numbers, we beta tested the SAI System in real-world race environments with excellent results. We continue to evolve and improve the system, which can be deployed in any road race environment.”

“The integration of the RFID tag with each runner's numbered BIB was critical in making this system a success,” states Shauna Lamp, RFID Division Manager of MPI Label Systems. “We were able to provide a unique, disposable application based on our expertise with RFID, labeling equipment and label constructions. Racing BIBs are much wider than a standard RFID label, so typical methods of printing and encoding would not work. We were able to overcome this challenge and engineer a comprehensive and cost-effective solution to meet SAI's specifications and needs.”

Anne Gault of Gault Race Management (www.GaultRaceManagement.com) tested the SAI Timing & Tracking System in Detroit's Free Press Marathon on October 21st, installing it at the starting point to time-track over 12,000 runners. “While we used our existing system to time the race, we were very pleased with the reaction of the race participants and organizers to the SAI System. We believe the system's quick peel-off labels and disposable RFID tags will dramatically improve the distribution process and efficiency at participatory sporting events,” said Gault. “We would definitely use it again in the future.”

Alex Shamraevsky, Race Registrar and Start Line Coordinator also tested the SAI System at the 5K race start and half-point of the Richard S. Caliguiri City of Pittsburgh Great Race on September 30th. He notes: “This year, we had a significant increase in registration, so timing and efficiency of distributing packets on race day became even more critical. In the past, our 5K walkers often did not pick up their RFID chips, not wanting to be responsible for an expensive item. This year, they were excited about

using the disposable tag without the hassle of returning it. With the SAI System, we also needed less space in the bib pick-up area since the packet was so efficient and self-contained.”

For more information about SAI Timing & Tracking (www.sai-timing.com), contact David Simms, (734) 904-1981 or email david@sai-timing.com.

About MPI Label Systems

Established in 1968, MPI Label Systems has grown to more than 500 employees, eight manufacturing facilities and 35 sales offices. MPI specializes in flexographic & digital pressure-sensitive labels, shrink sleeves, roll-fed wrap labels, booklets, coupons, thermal transfer, and RFID labels. MPI’s Equipment Division is an authorized, licensed sales and service agent for CTM and Label-Aire label application equipment. For more information about our products and services, visit www.mpilabels.com.

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