



Access Partnering With Casino Technology Provider

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Through the partnership, Genesis Resource will integrate Access' active RFID tag system into its existing key-tracking applications. The company will likely also include the technology in other casino applications.

Texas-based RFID systems provider Axxess International has just completed an agreement with Genesis Resource, a Gilbert, Arizona-based company specializing in security systems for the casino industry. Under the terms of their agreement, Genesis will resell an Axxess RFID system for slot-machine key control, as well as other Axxess real-time location systems with applications in the casino and gaming industry, such as workforce-productivity tracking and vehicle tracking.

Casinos are known for having high-tech and ubiquitous security, but their motivations for such precautions are not purely internal. Each state's gaming board sets stringent requirements regarding casino business practices. For example, casino employees use keys to open slot machines when removing accumulated coins or gaming tokens. If any keys end up missing—which can happen quite innocently if, for example, an employee leaves work with one in a pocket—the casino must shut down part or all of its facility and re-key any machines the missing key opened. This helps ensure the security of the slot machines, since any keys removed from the building or lost could be duplicated and used to steal money from the machines. For large casinos, the costs associated with shutting down part of a facility and re-keying machines can total \$100,000.

To avoid such high operational costs and maintain consistently high customer service, casinos are turning to RFID-based tracking solutions to keep tabs on the keys. One such solution from Axxess International is in use at approximately 20 casinos, according to the company's marketing manager, Kelly Stark.

Genesis Resource's president, Sherry Olson, says her firm has already deployed a key-tracking system that provides many of the largest casinos in Las Vegas with a means of tracking which personnel have possession of slot-machine keys and other important keys. This can be done through a number of ways, such as requiring personnel to enter personal identification numbers into a keypad linked to a lockbox containing the keys. Another authentication method utilizes a biometric reader to open the lockbox when approved personnel submit to a fingerprint scan. The security layer includes software that can be set to let personnel remove specific keys (secured inside the lock box by a secondary solenoid lock), and only when making such a request during scheduled work

shifts. However, Genesis Resource's system lacks a means of alerting casino staff if a key removed from the lockbox is being taken from the premises.

Under the Axxess system, the company attaches its active tag—which transmits at 315 MHz using Axxess' proprietary air-interface protocol—to each slot-machine key. The tag does not constantly transmit its signal. Rather, it remains dormant until reaching a 126 KHz activation field generated by the Axxess activator device. Several such devices are installed near doorways leading out of the casino or at specific zones within the building, as required by rules set up by management. Once the tags wake up and receive the activator's signal—which includes an ID representing the activator's location in the facility—the tag transmits this location along with its unique ID to Axxess receivers. These devices are also installed near doorways, designed to trigger alerts to casino staff whenever it senses a tag. Security personnel can then respond to the alert by looking for casino staff near the exits.

"Axxess is very proactive in the casino market, has an excellent training program and is open to developing new types of applications," says Olson. Many users of RFID technology seek an open, standards-based approach so they can source tags and readers from multiple vendors. Olson says Axxess' use of a proprietary RFID protocol is one thing that made it attractive to Genesis. "We want an application that we can have [total] control over," she says. "To us, it's better to have a proprietary application because then a tag that can't be read by a standard reader."

According to Stark, Genesis personnel have gone through Axxess' training program and know how to use and deploy the key-tracking application. Olson says Genesis has integrated the RFID application into its existing key-tracking systems, and is in discussions with a number of casinos about adding RFID tags and readers to their key-tracking systems, as well.

The agreement between the companies stipulates that Genesis may also provide other Axxess systems to its casino customers, such as productivity-tracking solutions in which personnel are issued RFID-enabled badges that the system reads as they move about their work area. Axxess software can also analyze tag reads to determine workers' movements in relation to their tasks. This could be applied to a wide variety of apps, from ensuring that cocktail waitresses are servicing an entire assigned casino section, to making sure members of the bell staff are always at the ready to assist customers.

"There are a lot of different applications for RFID in the casino industry," says Olson, "and we're excited to brainstorm about how this technology can be used with our existing customer base."