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WhereNet's Locatable, Active RFID System Improves Land Rover's Efficiency in Processing New Vehicles

Tracking and Managing More Than 150,000 Vehicles Annually Across 300+ Acres, WhereNet System Helps Luxury Car Maker Improve Throughput, Productivity, and Order-to-Cash Cycles

SOLIHULL, United Kingdom and SANTA CLARA, Calif.—Feb. 5, 2008—WhereNet Corp., a Zebra Technologies company (NASDAQ: ZBRA) and the leader in wireless solutions for tracking and managing enterprise assets, announced today that Land Rover's expanded use of the standards-based WhereNet[®] active RFID, real-time locating system (RTLS) technology has helped the luxury automaker automate processing of more than 150,000 new vehicles annually. Deployed at Land Rover's 308-acre assembly plant in Solihull, England, WhereNet's Vehicle Tracking and Management System (VTMS) improves production velocity and throughput, labor productivity, order-to-cash cycles, and vehicle quality. The Solihull plant produces the Defender, Discovery 3/LR3, Range Rover, and Range Rover Sport vehicles.

"We used to spend a considerable amount of time searching our huge facility to locate vehicles," said Dave O'Reilly, manager, manufacturing and purchasing IT for Land Rover. "Now, the precise location of all new vehicles is always at our fingertips. The information the WhereNet system provides is critical in optimizing production, supporting lean manufacturing, and ensuring that Land Rover delivers the highest-quality vehicles."

Real-Time Locating System Powers Multiple Applications, Delivers Million-Dollar ROI

Land Rover's implementation of VTMS is an expansion of its use of WhereNet's RTLS technology; in 2002 the automaker installed the WhereNet part replenishment messaging (PRM) system to efficiently request parts on the assembly line in support of consumption-based demand.

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Leveraging the same wireless location principles used for the PRM system, Land Rover added the VTMS solution in January 2007 to manage vehicles as they roll off the assembly line. The VTMS provides complete visibility of all finished vehicles regardless of where they are parked — in buildings or outside. Land Rover can also use the WhereNet VTMS in off-line areas to manage post-assembly verification and test processes, as well as quality repair, containment, and shipping zones.

The WhereNet system hardware at the Land Rover plant consists of about 4,000 active RFID WhereTag™ transmitters, which are temporarily attached to new vehicles as they roll off the assembly line; 50 WherePort™ magnetic “exciters” positioned at key process points to determine the flow of vehicles as they move around the complex; and a local infrastructure of 130 wireless WhereLAN™ location sensors.

“In addition to expediting the shipping of vehicles on a daily basis, the VTMS technology is extremely beneficial in managing new model launches and model-year upgrades,” explained O’Reilly. “Since we typically ‘build and hold’ such vehicles as part of our quality assurance processes, tracking them down must happen quickly and efficiently. The automated WhereNet system regularly updates (every four minutes) the exact whereabouts of every vehicle on site; and through association of the WhereTag with the vehicle identification number, we have all of the data in a single system to let us optimize work in process.”

Land Rover realized a complete return on investment in less than one year as the WhereNet system provides several benefits, including reduced on-site dwell time of vehicles as a result of better management of their flow through the quality assurance processes. By dispatching cars more quickly into the delivery chain, Land Rover has improved its order-to-cash cycle time, resulting in considerable savings.

The Power of Real-Time Location Information

By tracking and automatically recording the arrival, dwell and departure time for each vehicle at every step of the process, the WhereNet VTMS application generates constant location data, as well as a historical record of the vehicle’s progress through the off-line certification, repair and containment areas. Land Rover can also use this data to monitor adherence to process and process cycle time, and perform flow analysis for continuous improvement.

“Location-aware applications like VTMS are making a tremendous impact in the automotive and industrial manufacturing industries, which are typically characterized by complex, high-volume, high-velocity operations,” said Tom Bacon, general manager, manufacturing and government business, Zebra Enterprise Solutions Group. “Powered by WhereNet’s real-time locating system technology, Land Rover and other OEMs have a ‘bread crumb trail’ of information about every vehicle on site, enabling plant managers to accurately plan, execute and monitor processing within the dynamic off-line environment.”

About WhereNet Corp.

A Zebra Technologies company, WhereNet is the first company to deliver a single wireless location and communication infrastructure that reliably and cost-effectively manages valuable mobile resources and can deliver a complete return on investment within 6-12 months. Based on patented, standards-compliant technology resulting from a collective 100+ years of development, the WhereNet active RFID, real-time locating system solutions enable companies such as APL, BMW, Ford Motor Company, and NYK Logistics and facilities like Tobyhanna Army Depot to reduce inventory, lower operating costs, and improve operations. The company has received the Henry Ford Technology Award; was recognized for strong ROI by Computerworld magazine; was ranked among the top 10 in the InfoWorld 100; and has been recognized as a wireless innovator by Forrester Research, Global Logistics & Supply Chain Strategies, Plant Engineering, and Supply & Demand Chain Executive magazines. Headquartered in Santa Clara, California, WhereNet has offices throughout the United States, as well as in Europe and Asia. For more information, visit the WhereNet web site at www.wherenet.com or call 408-845-8500 (in the U.S.), +32 3 286 84 50 (in Europe), or +86 21 51758558 (in Asia). Information about Zebra bar code, card and RFID products can be found at www.zebra.com.

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