

BETHLEHEM

CASE STUDY

Using Parking Meters
to Enhance Partnerships





Innovation and Cooperation Transform Parking in Bethlehem

Bethlehem is a quaint, historic city in Pennsylvania that successfully juxtaposes the old with the new. At the core of the city is a vibrant downtown area which is separated by the Lehigh River, offering residents world-class dining, shopping and entertainment, set against a backdrop of Colonial-era hotels and historic buildings. Known as the “City of Festivals,” Bethlehem hosts 10 major festivals and over 150 smaller festivals throughout the year, drawing visitors – and as a result, vehicles – to the downtown area. The influx of motorists to these popular areas presents the Bethlehem Parking Authority (BPA) with common parking challenges such as educating the public on the available options and generating support for parking initiatives. What is unique is the approach the BPA has taken to tackling these challenges, combining smart parking technologies and a strategic partnership with the Bethlehem Downtown Business Association.

Smart Parking Meters Deployed

In July 2011, the BPA installed 450 solar powered, credit card-enabled single-space parking meters from San Diego-based IPS Group. The smart parking meters were installed in the north and south downtown business areas, in the heart of Bethlehem’s urban center. The meters offer users the ability to pay for their parking with credit/debit card and even their mobile phone. What’s more, each meter is wirelessly networked to a state-of-the-art back office meter management system which has allowed the BPA to monitor its parking assets in a more intelligent and efficient manner.

“The use of IPS meters has been transformational in Bethlehem. Enforcement staffing is at the lowest level it has been at in 10 years. Having multiple payment options enhances compliance, and affords us the opportunity to redirect our focus on service initiatives.”

— Tom Hartley, Executive Director of the Bethlehem Parking Authority.





The Apollo Grill, a popular local restaurant was the first business to be advertised on the meters.

The new meters feature a large LCD graphical display and can support graphics and text in any language. IPS is the only single-space vendor with a programmable meter display which allows customers to feature virtually anything on the display as long as it can fit within a 160 x 160 pixel bitmap. Bethlehem, a city leading the way in implementing innovative parking technologies, was the first to capitalize on the graphics capability of the new meters, partnering with local downtown businesses, to offer free advertising. The Apollo Grill, a popular local restaurant was the first business to be advertised on the meters. The ad was prominently displayed on the meters in the downtown area, featuring the Apollo logo as well as information on the weekend brunch and was well received by the downtown motorists and business owners. The advertising will continue to be offered as a complimentary service to the downtown businesses in the near term. However, Hartley, who is spearheading this innovative new approach hopes to grow the meter advertising into a successful revenue generating initiative and may consider charging for the service once a certain level of demand has been reached. The advertising capabilities of the meters provide a unique partnership opportunity for the BPA and the Downtown Business Association. In addition, it provides a competitive advantage for the businesses advertising on the meters and drives repeat visits to the area while fostering economic development.

Improving Public Perception of Parking

The ability to feature advertising as well as the enhanced payment options is helping the BPA transform public perception of parking from an often negative one to a positive. In addition to local businesses, the BPA partners with non-profit organizations to promote upcoming events. The meters recently featured ads from the public library as well as an announcement for the upcoming Bach Children's Choir Christmas concert. In terms of payment options, the ability to pay with a debit/credit card or by mobile phone enhances the customer experience as well as reduces citations for parking violations. In fact, enforcement staffing levels are at their lowest level in 10 years due to the reduction in violations which also promotes public good will for parking initiatives.



Partnering for Success

Bethlehem is a successful example of the marriage of technology and strategic partnerships to drive economic growth, foster better relations with patrons and businesses and ultimately maximize the city's parking assets. The introduction of smart parking meters has increased revenue, decreased enforcement staffing requirements and created unique partnership opportunities between the BPA and the Downtown Bethlehem Association. Bethlehem's success should serve as a model for other cities to replicate in the future.



About IPS Group, Inc.

San Diego-based IPS Group, Inc. is a design, engineering and manufacturing company focused on low power wireless telecommunications and parking technologies. IPS is proud to manufacture in California and has been delivering world-class solutions to the telecommunications and parking industries for over 20 years. The company is best known for their patented credit card enabled, solar powered single-space parking meter and web-based management system. IPS offers a complementary PROVEN product suite, comprised of new multi-space meters, multi-space upgrade kits and vehicle detection sensors.

For more information about IPS Group's dynamic parking solution, please visit our website www.ipsgroupinc.com

Call for an on-site demo: **858.404.0606** | Toll Free: **877.630.6638**



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