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Security Dealer & Integrator Profiles LifeSafety Power's Unique Modular Power Solution

Integrator Insights

Real time, intelligent power management

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Microprocessors and microcontrollers are game changers for the security alarm industry. And throughout the vertical landscape their proliferation is having a profound effect on the integrated-converged protected premises.

This is good news for systems integrators. Not only are systems and sensors becoming more intelligent, they are allowing for a new, higher level of service to be performed—and the service model is one which successful companies in this industry will continue to embrace—if they want to make it in this increasingly competitive and techno-savvy marketplace.

For large commercial customers and enterprises, monitoring the entire reliability of the infrastructure has become necessary. And now, with recent advancements, even smaller commercial customers will be able to benefit from new power management and maintenance options. One company, LifeSafety Power Inc., Windham, N.H., recently announced a power management system specifically designed for the access control, fire, security, CCTV and mass notification industries.

Called FlexPower, the system is a next-generation power management solution that addresses the critical needs of the life safety industry, according to Joe Holland, LSP and vice president of Engineering for LifeSafety Power. Holland, the former AlarmSaf founder, commented that the life safety industry has seen rapid changes in technology with convergence of systems and power products in the market have not kept pace.

The FlexPower Power Management system includes many advancements that revolutionize how power is processed, controlled and communicated. The power supply use a microprocessor core for intelligence and communication. The microprocessor controls both the battery charge circuit and enables external programming of core power supply functions via a USB or network connection. The charging circuit is microprocessor-based and can bring back a drained 18Ah battery set in 10 hours, or 80Ah in under 48 hours, well within UL requirements.

Service side revolution/remote management evolution.

While this is all super-cool what's really neat is the fact that FlexPower can protect and report on battery conditions, often a major challenge for installers in the field. An on-board serial port allows service technicians to program the proper charge current for optimum battery life and performance and a built-in battery run time counter tracks battery age and allows replacement dates to be programmed in for service. FlexPower automatically determines battery age and provides network notification via SNMP, email, or Web browser so that service calls can be scheduled accordingly.

With the built-in monitoring capability, integrators using FlexPower can monitor large installs from the central office and service the customer at the proper time. "It takes power management to the next level, since the on board microprocessor actively monitors fault events and total system run time and outputs the data to PowerCom, FlexPower's software interface," Holland said. With an added network card due out fourth quarter, fault events will be time/date stamped and logged onto a 500- event FIFO buffer for e-mail notification or retrieval via a browser, additionally giving integrators the ability to remotely monitor and manager power system activity. "Power management is a competitive field, and we have to be able to add real value, which we've certainly done," said John Olliver, vice president of Sales for LifeSafety Power. "There's never been a product with all these features in one," he continued. "With the microprocessor at its core, FlexPower allows for exciting features and value," he added. "The service side of the industry is huge, and this is something integrators have been asking for. FlexPower allows integrators to offer the end users powerful new service capabilities by monitoring and detecting job site power issues on a real-time basis. We're taking the industry in a new direction and bringing a lot of respect to power management," Olliver said.

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