To the Point

Point-of-Rental™ Systems Wins
Innovative Product of the Year in Two Categories

Point-of-Rental™ Systems was recently selected the winner of both the Computer Software category and the Technology Enhancement category in the 2011 RER Innovative Product Awards competition, making the software a four-time winner of the award. Established in 2003, the RER Innovative Product Awards recognize excellence in new product development within the equipment rental industry. Each year, a panel of industry judges narrows the pool of entries to one winner in each of the 13 categories. Our winning entries were Dispatch Center with GPS integration that claimed the Computer Software category prize, and integrated Mobile Website Hosting, which won the title in Technology Enhancement.

Dispatch Center with GPS Integration
Point-of-Rental's Dispatch Center module seamlessly gathers and updates contract info from the rental software, allowing the customer service reps, drivers, and the dispatchers to view the same real time data.

"Some other systems require users to enter addresses into a 3rd party program in order to dispatch and track the routes with no updating of the rental software data," stated Jason Albus, Systems Engineer for Point-of-Rental. "Our software transmits contract and jobsite information directly to the truck and tracks the vehicle's progress in real time."

The system monitors the progress of each vehicle and records arrival and departure times along with estimated time to the next stop. If a stop is added or removed from a route, those changes are sent directly to the vehicle and the driver is alerted. In addition, management can view historical on-time statuses, vehicle speed and driving history, and can be alerted if drivers enter non-authorized locations.

Special Event Rentals, the largest event rental company in Western Canada, served as a beta test site for the product. With over 100 employees and 20 delivery trucks, the company has hundreds of deliveries and pickups in any given week. Special Event staff members plan the routes several days in advance and finalize them the day prior, using the integrated address verification system to determine address validity. At two o'clock each morning, the route data is automatically uploaded to each truck so that, when the drivers arrive in the morning, they simply pick up their route clipboards, do pre-trip truck inspections, and hit 'go' on their truck-mounted Garmin GPS units.

Jason Campisi of South Jersey Party Rentals told us, "Dispatch Center with GPS integration is exactly the product that I have wanted for the past five years. No more plotting out every job manually and figuring out the best route. No more typing up truck manifests in Excel. No more looking at a separate company's website to track your trucks. This system makes good dispatchers better and helps inexperienced ones avoid costly mistakes. It creates another level of employee accountability with drive times and onsite times. It also gives the sales team good estimated times of arrival for clients without having to talk to the dispatcher 20 times a day."

Integrated Mobile Website
Point-of-Rental's Mobile Website Design/Services, winner of the Technology Enhancement category, is the newest feature of our integrated web design service, which daily uploads a rental store's inventory from its Point-of-Rental™ System into a website complete with a shopping cart. Now, mobile users who browse Point-of-Rental powered sites on their cell phones are automatically redirected to the optimized version specifically designed for small screens. Utilizing an intuitive touch-screen interface, the mobile version allows customers to search the online inventory without having to zoom in and out. In addition, mobile users can call the store with a simple screen touch.

Chad Clark, Branch Manager for Superior Rents in Missouri, stated that as soon as their smartphone website went live, the business began receiving calls and reservations from customers in near-by towns who searched for rentals on their cell phones.

Gianna Casale of Casale Rent-All in New York also appreciates this handy tool. "Our mobile website has been a huge hit with our customers!" she said. "Right from their smartphones, our customers in the field are able to look at our rental and sales inventory to find the equipment they need... With just a click of a button, they are connected to us. We also love how new products are added to the website the same day that we add them in our POR inventory—no extra steps needed!"
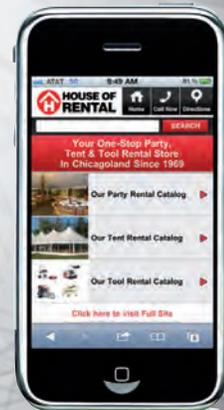
New Litigation Coming?

Written by Les Chayo, CRA General Counsel. The following article originally appeared in the November 2011 *CRA Journal*. Containing information pertinent to our customers, it is reprinted here with permission.

CRA members should exercise extreme caution when "charging customers" fees such as fuel surcharges, environmental fees, administrative fees, etc. CRA has become aware of attorneys soliciting "legal claims" for such cases wherein the attorney will argue "such fees often have little or no relation to the company's actual costs" and are merely "profit centers." Rental centers must assure that any "fees" charged have "a reasonable relation" to the costs and services involved. For example, a rental center that does not pay environmental fees to a governmental agency should not fraudulently attempt to seek reimbursement for such fees from their customers! We anticipate that litigation will develop in a manner similar to the previous Proposition 65 litigation asserted against several rental centers. Rental centers are advised to adequately train their personnel so that they may respond to any request for further information from customers relative to such additional fees and charges. Please contact me [Les Chayo, CRA General Counsel] should you have any questions.

Point-of-Rental™ Systems' First Sale Upgrades to Enterprise

In late 1983, after developing and testing Point-of-Rental™ software in our own store, Steve Husbands and Bob Shaffer introduced the software at local rental association meetings. Although most were yawning prospects, we kept trying and eventually were invited to demonstrate the software at ABC Equipment Rental in Dallas. The demo didn't go well at first because John Wilk, ABC's owner at that time, complained that Bob sounded more like an engineer than a salesman! But John's wife Beverly saved the day when she saw how our software automated all aspects of accounts receivable including statements, account payments, and income accounting. Beverly declared: "John, if this does A/R, you're buying and I am out of here!" Just a few weeks later, ABC became the very first of over 1400 stores to install a Point-of-Rental™ System!

Twenty-eight years later, after just one upgrade from the vintage Alpha Micro AM-1000 to an Eagle Computer in 1998, ABC finally decided to make the leap from Point-of-Rental's Legacy software to our 100% Windows®-based Enterprise software. What made them decide to make that transition?

"Steve Husbands scared us into it," joked Gary Gann, ABC's current owner. "Our server was so old, there was the growing concern that if it did crash, we would be in dire straits."

Because Enterprise shares Legacy's DNA, the transition has been smooth. "Essentially, you get to the same place; you just take different routes to get there," Gary explained. "There is so much more capability with Enterprise, though. We are discovering something new every single day that makes our business more efficient. "

The ability to email or fax invoices is a tremendous time saver for the company, and the software has already projected a better image for ABC. "Our customers have been very impressed with the new format of the laser contracts," Gary said. "I can't wait for them to get the new statements."

Gary predicts that Enterprise's management reporting capabilities will be the most helpful feature for ABC. "The analysis is incredible," he said. "You can look at income trends, top customers, how often the same type of equipment is out at the same time—things that help us make buying decisions."

So, with satisfaction running high, we suspect it may be many more years until ABC's next upgrade!

Photographed in 1984, John Wilk, former owner of ABC Equipment Rental in Dallas, displays the very first version of Point-of-Rental running on the then brand new Alpha Micro computer.
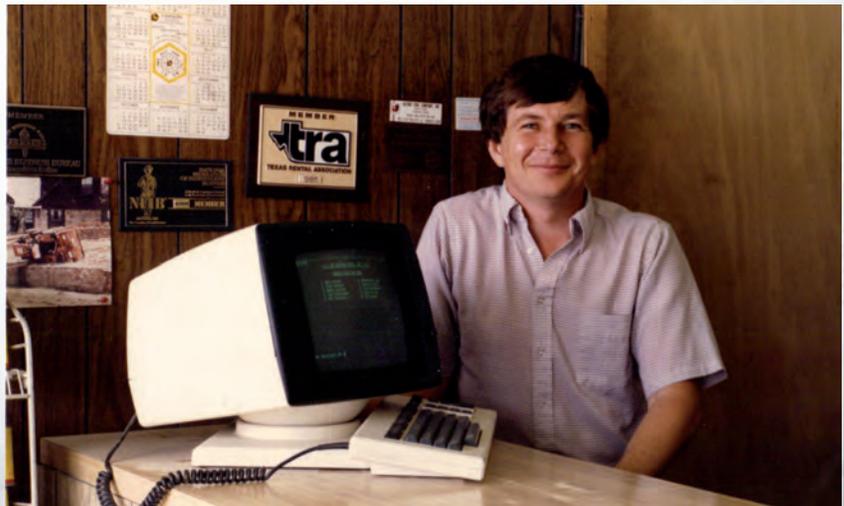
Integrated FedEx® Shipping Options

Point-of-Rental™ Systems recently integrated FedEx® shipping options into the software. Much like the UPS WorldShip® feature introduced last year, FedEx® interfaces with the delivery address in the Point-of-Rental contract record to automatically populate the fields and generate shipping labels. In addition, the software contains an integrated tracking feature that allows you to track shipments directly from your Point-of-Rental™ System. The complete range of shipping options is accessible within the system including air, ground, and international. Designed to help rental businesses reduce shipping errors, the newly integrated feature will noticeably increase shipping department efficiency. For more information on this feature, please go to www.point-of-rental.com or contact Greg Bennett at 800-944-7368.

Enterprise Moves to .NET Framework

Wondering why you haven't received your Enterprise 2012 software update yet? While we pride ourselves in our consistent yearly updates, we've committed to a bigger software project that temporarily requires a lot of programming effort, but in the long run will produce more innovative features you've come to expect. Considering technology's rapid pace, we have chosen to convert our Enterprise software to the Microsoft .NET Framework (pronounced dot net), the platform of choice today for writing "application software" like ours. It enables programmers to build graphically appealing, seamless, and secure applications.

Point-of-Rental programmers began this conversion process two years ago and have programmed our new optional software such as the Business Intelligence Dashboard and Dispatch Center in the .NET language. While the conversion isn't as drastic as our 2001 move from our old character-based product, with over a half million lines of code to convert, it has been time-consuming. We expect the new release, called Enterprise 2012, to be available this summer. Subscribers of our software support service will receive it as part of your regular yearly updates, although under the surface, it is so much more! And, no new hardware is required!

Migrating our current software to Microsoft's .NET Framework will provide a number of short and long-term benefits to our users. So, what can you expect from .NET?

- The look and feel of Windows 7
- Cleaner, sharper, and easier to read display listings (i.e., Inventory)
- One-click export of grids to Excel
- One-click printout of multi-page grids
- Convenience features like built in spell-check and use of the mouse scroll wheel
- The groundwork to switch to SQL server
- Superior reliability and performance
- New menus, dashboards/scoreboards, and tools not available previously

In summary, .NET provides a development platform that will enable Point-of-Rental™ Systems to maintain our lead in rental management software technology well into the future!

ARA Rental Market Metrics™

The American Rental Association, working and consulting with Dan Kaplan, former president of Hertz Equipment Rental, and representatives from Briggs Equipment, Caterpillar Inc., NES Rental, Hertz Equipment Rental Corporation, Sunbelt Rental, United Rentals, and Volvo Rents, along with Rouse Asset Services have announced the development of ARA Rental Market Metrics™ to provide equipment rental companies with a consistent method of calculating and reporting business performance. It specifies industry standards, essentially defining terms and formulae for various financial performance measures down to the asset level. Some of these metrics have been in Point-of-Rental™ software for years. Others are similar, and still others are not reported. To satisfy customers that may want all these metrics, Point-of-Rental will offer an importable file in the format required by Rouse Analytics to run these metrics and report them according to ARA defined guidelines. This feature will be included in a future software update.

Integrated Credit Card Processing

Speed up your credit card processing, eliminate errors, and in all probability save money on your processing costs by selecting this module. Certified as PCI compliant, Point-of-Rental's Credit Card Interface Module integrates all of your credit card processing into the end of day process with one click. It eliminates the need for a separate dial-up phone line since all processing communications use the Internet, and it can store credit card information for one year.

To learn how easy it is to use the Integrated Credit Card Processing module, and how it can help streamline your rental business, give us a call at 800-944-RENT or email sales@point-of-rental.com.

Download the App

Be sure to download the ultimate show guide for The Rental Show 2012 — the official mobile app. Available for iPhone, iPad and Android devices, the mobile app developed by CompuSystems features a handy scheduling tool with a searchable directory of available sessions, exhibitors, and speakers you don't want to miss! Sponsored exclusively by Point-of-Rental™ Systems, the app is FREE for all Rental Show 2012 registrants. Simply search Rental Show 2012 on the iTunes App Store or the Android Market to download.

Charity Auction Benefits ARA Scholarship Fund

Don't miss your chance to bid on an ecclectic mix of items at ARA's Charity Auction, including a Dell Inspiron One touchscreen computer donated by Point-of-Rental. Held in New Orleans on February 7th, the auction funds ARA and its benevolence programs.

Win a FREE iPad2

Point-of-Rental™ Systems is giving away a free Apple iPad2. Entry forms for the drawing will be available at the Rental Show in Point-of-Rental booth 5525, located between general equipment and special event areas. Demonstrations will show how Point-of-Rental™ software may be used with the iPad2 and other wireless devices so rental store owners and managers may access their store's system from virtually anywhere. In addition, customers can view firsthand our award-winning Integrated Mobile Website feature as well as the award-winning Wireless Alerts. The drawing for the iPad2 will be at 10 a.m. on February 15, 2012, at Point-of-Rental headquarters. The winner will be notified by email.
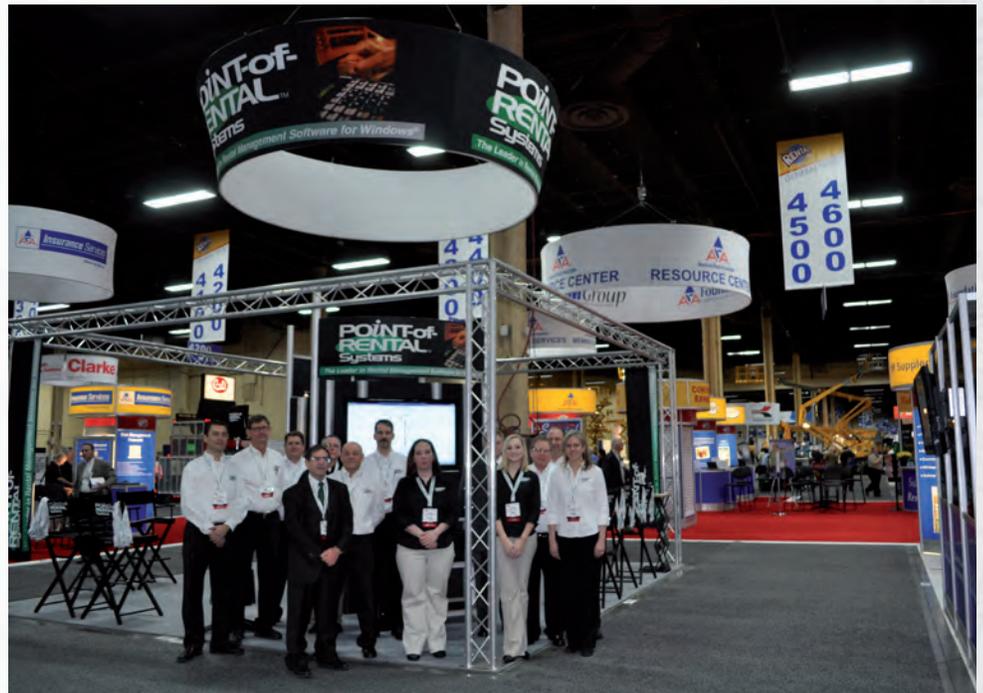
Greet your Point-of-Rental™ Systems team at our annual meeting on February 4. See article below.

Join Us for Training in New Orleans

Point-of-Rental™ Systems will host our free annual training seminar just prior to The Rental Show in New Orleans. Open only to Point-of-Rental users, this annual meeting updates users on the latest features and enhancements added to our award-winning software. This year's meeting will be held on Saturday, February 4 from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., in the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center (Room 281), New Orleans. Owners, managers, bookkeepers, accounting personnel, or any key employees wanting to learn more about the software are encouraged to attend. While the training event is free, participants must register by January 30, 2012. Register online at www.point-of-rental.com or call 800-944-RENT. Don't miss this great opportunity to meet with Point-of-Rental staff members and learn how to take advantage of our most recent software innovations.

Then on Sunday, February 5, join us for our Operational Development Training Seminar. While this day's seminar does require a registration fee of $215 for the first registrant and $180 for each additional person, it covers a full day of training, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. with lunch provided. Located at the Courtyard New Orleans Downtown, near the convention center, this seminar will help you problem solve using tools from your system, develop operational processes to enhance workflow, and maximize productivity and profitability. Topics cover the following:

- Controlling the rental process at the counter
- Inventory Control by Overbooking, Critical Booking, Rental Cases, and Availability Delay
- Subrentals and Purchase Orders
- Equipment Maintenance, Repairs, and Service Calls
- Training and Knowledge Resources
- And much more...

Register online at www.point-of-rental.com/regional-training-sessions.asp. Also, check out the other regional training opportunities near you, or schedule your own. See the website for full details.