



The Bloodhound cell phone detector ‘sniffs out’ contraband cell phones in correctional facilities and prisons

Berkeley Varitronics Systems provides an alternative solution to cell phone jamming that will not interfere with 911 calls, citizens’ cell phone use and public safety communications

December 14, 2009 -- Berkeley Varitronics Systems, Inc. (BVS), a leading provider of advanced wireless solutions and products to the domestic and international wireless telecommunications industry, today announced the release of an advanced hand-held cell phone detector fittingly called the Bloodhound. The Bloodhound will enable security officers to scan real-time for unauthorized cell phone activity in correctional facilities and detect the precise location of the caller using a Direction Finding Antenna.

Security officers are losing the battle as more and more contraband cell phones are being smuggled into correctional facilities in order to conduct criminal activity. According to Texas State Senator John Whitmire, who received threatening calls from a death row inmate with a cell phone, cell phones smuggled inside prisons are the fastest growing and most alarming development in prison contraband in Texas. Furthermore, in 2008 correctional officers confiscated 847 contraband cell phones in Maryland prisons, 2,809 cell phones in California prisons and 1,861 cell phones in Mississippi prisons; and Federal prison officers found 1,623 cell phones.

Correctional officers are playing a cat ‘n’ mouse game trying to locate and confiscate contraband cell phones that are being smuggled in even past the best monitoring sensors, X-ray scanners, metal detectors, drug and bomb dogs. To crack down on the escalating problem, the FCC has been petitioned to allow cell phone jamming; however, according to Steve Largent, President and CEO of CTIA – The Wireless Association, cell phone jamming will not fully address the growing problem. Largent instead proposes a cell detector technology that enables security officers to locate a cell phone inside a correctional facility without interfering with citizens’ or public safety communications.

Building on the 30 plus years of wireless design expertise, BVS has developed just such a tool for correctional facilities to combat illegal cell phone use. The Bloodhound is designed to track down and pinpoint contraband cell phones without interfering with authorized communication channels. Unlike most systems that require an entire network infrastructure of wireless sensors hard-wired throughout a facility, which is expensive and difficult to deploy, the mobile Bloodhound has a high speed scanning multi-band receiver harnessed to a multi-band DF-Direction Finding Antenna. This unique antenna allows security officers to ‘sniff out’ the RF energy as an actual Bloodhound dog can detect a scent that a human could never discern. When hunting down a wireless target, The Bloodhound’s unique algorithm can trigger on to a cell phone while in use. There is a headphone jack with a progressive audible alert tone and an accompanying vibrator that can alert security officers of cell phone activity as they move closer to the source. In addition, the onboard pulsating laser will ID the target with a blinking laser dot while in the DF mode.

Cell phones that are some distance from the base station will transmit at a higher power, whereas output power is reduced as one gets closer to the base station. Since most correctional facilities and prisons utilize a significant amount of steel they are not RF-Radio Frequency friendly producing a reduction in the coupling of the radio waves and thus yielding poorer cell phone coverage. The Bloodhound takes advantage of this anomaly, allowing the instrument to ‘sniff out’ the cell phone much quicker than if one were looking for a cell phone in a mall.

“The Bloodhound will affordably allow correctional facilities to enforce a no cell phone policy since each security officer could potentially be harnessed with a cell phone detector watchdog,” said Scott Schober, President and CEO of Berkeley Varitronics Systems. “We believe correctional facilities will come to depend on the Bloodhound to detect and confiscate the increasing number of contraband cell phones being smuggled in prisons that are not only used to threaten public safety, but also contribute to criminal activity. As a result, some prisoners may not agree all dogs are man’s best friend.”

About Berkeley Varitronics Systems

Berkeley Varitronics Systems, located in Metuchen, New Jersey, has been providing advanced wireless solutions and products to the domestic and international wireless telecommunications industry for over 35 years. Since 1995, BVS has introduced over 50 unique wireless test devices for a variety of applications including the popular Cellular, iDEN, PCS, CDMA, RFID, LTE, Mobile WiMAX, FIXED WiMAX, 802.11b/a/n/g & Bluetooth specifications. For more information visit www.bvsystems.com.

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