

## “What Do We Need to Buy for ISBT 128?”

### The 411 on ISBT 128 Label Printers

United Blood Services is transitioning from Codabar to a new blood labeling code, ISBT 128, which will be in use by June 2007. Many of you are asking how the change will affect your facility and what you need to do to prepare for the transition. What special equipment will be required to read or print the new blood product labels? Our account managers are reporting that some customers

are receiving sales calls from printer manufacturers who are pressuring them to buy a \$6,000 printer. But is that really what your medical facility needs if you only print out 30 labels a month?

In order to print ISBT 128 labels, you will need a 300 dpi (dots per inch) thermal transfer printer. You will also need adhesive label stock sized to accommodate the labels you wish to print, such as 4 in. x 4 in., 4 in. x 2 in., or 4 in. x 3 in. (for syringes and pediatric units). ISBT does allow for printing shrunken labels for smaller pediatric units and syringes, but you must buy software and label stock that enables it. All label adhesives must comply with US FDA 21 CFR 175.105. You will need software to drive the printer

and will need to decide if you wish to use online software or stand-alone software that will be installed in your facility computers. In addition, you will need a barcode scanner that will read ISBT 128 and you will need to decide if you would like your scanner to concatenate or not. (More information on scanners will be forthcoming in a future issue of *BloodNews*.)

Thermal transfer printers are priced anywhere from \$500 to \$3000. What are the major differences between an expensive printer or a lower priced one? Speed is not

really a consideration, as all thermal transfer printers print at about the same speed. When shopping for a printer, consider whether you will want to batch print or print and dispense a single label at a time. If you want single label capability, the printer you purchase should have an internal rewind, which usually means a larger, more expensive printer. These “print and dispense” printers strip away the backing liner and present a single label ready to use. Lower cost printers without this feature print the label and dispense it with the backing liner still intact. The other difference in price is due to the fact that larger printers will accommodate larger rolls of label stock so replacement is required less often than with a smaller desktop printer.

For example, one vendor lists a 300 dpi printer with internal rewind and “print and dispense” capability for \$2585. The smaller model, with the exact same printer head but without the single label printing capability, lists for \$895. If you’re printing fewer than 100 labels a day, there’s probably no need for the larger printer and you can save a considerable amount of money with the smaller printer.

Consider how many labels your facility prints in a week when determining which size printer would best suit your needs. You can also discuss bundling your printer with other options, such as a scanner and software options, which will affect the price. Most printer dealers are willing to work with you on a package deal.

While there are many manufacturers and resellers of ISBT 128 printers and scanners, United Blood Services can provide the names of two sellers as a starting point:

Computype Corporate  
2285 West Country Road C  
St. Paul, MN 55113-2567  
(800) 328-0852  
Fax: (651) 633-7122  
[www.computype.com](http://www.computype.com)

Digi-Trax Corporation Sales West  
13017 Artesia Blvd., Suite D-122  
Cerritos, CA 90703  
(310) 508-3977  
Fax: (720) 559-4387  
Chicago, IL Corporate Office  
(800) 356-6126  
[www.digi-trax.com](http://www.digi-trax.com)

### The Quest for Green

Who remembers when Kermit the Frog sang “It’s Not Easy Bein’ Green”? He might have been right, since doing all we can to maintain a healthy environment takes some work, but it sure is worth it. Just ask anyone in the Purchasing Department at our national office. They practice environmentally preferred purchasing, or “green purchasing,” to make our facilities environmentally safe and healthy.



In June 2004, Blood Systems (our parent organization) became a Champion for Change Member of Hospitals for

*Continued on page 2 >*



**The Quest for Green**

*Continued from page 1*

a Healthy Environment (H2E), a national non-profit organization dedicated to environmental sustainability in health care. Members embrace safer building products, clean air, energy and water efficiency, safe working practices and a commitment to public health demonstrated by reducing the volume and toxicity of waste.

To show our commitment to H2E and the customers we serve, Blood Systems outlined objectives and strategies for our environmentally preferred purchasing program when we obtained our Champion status two years ago. “We’ve experienced significant progress and success in pursuing our goals as an H2E Champion, but there is always more that can be accomplished,” says Blood Systems’ Director of Purchasing and Contract Support Services Mike Peck. “Besides conserving natural resources and reducing waste, we’ve also experienced cost savings for many of our products and services.”

Recently, Mike gave H2E a progress report on our environmental purchasing program. Below are some of the highlights. Since becoming a Champion member of H2E, Blood Systems has:

- Eliminated all thermometers and blood pressure devices that contain mercury at all facilities.
- Reduced biohazardous waste at Blood Systems Laboratories (BSL) by converting to reusable biohazardous containers (instead of disposable).

- Identified every chemical in use and in inventory at every facility for Blood Systems’ MSDS (material safety data sheets) via a new online categorical database.
- Required current and potential major vendors to provide a copy of their company’s environmental program with all contracts and proposals.
- Reduced styrofoam usage at many facilities by switching to biodegradable paper products.
- Installed Forbo flooring for our construction projects. Forbo linoleum is made from renewable materials such as linseed oil, rosins, wood flour and jute and is both long-lasting and cost effective.
- Contracted with environmental-friendly pest control companies in many of our facilities.
- Evaluated hybrid vehicles for possible addition to our fleet.

Our environmental preferred purchasing program is an evergreen endeavor for Blood Systems. Mike explains that we’ll continue to update H2E on our progress toward environmental excellence.

“We are very proud of our accomplishments to date in our green purchasing program,” says Blood Systems’ CFO Susan Barnes. “Many of our hospital customers are members of H2E and our status in the group shows them that we share their commitment for an environmentally-friendly health care environment.”

**Two Customers Win Trips to AABB Meeting in Miami Beach, FL**

Congratulations to Sherri Coplan and Cheryl Richards, who are going to the AABB 2006 Annual Meeting in Miami Beach, courtesy of United Blood Services! Sherri (top right) is a Sr. Medical Technologist in the Blood Bank and Coagulation department at Navapache Regional Medical Center in Showlow, AZ. Cheryl (below right) is a Blood Bank Manager for TriCore Reference Laboratories, and is based at Presbyterian Hospital in Albuquerque, NM. Their prizes include meeting registration, transportation and accommodations. United Blood Services set up the drawing this past summer to encourage people to visit the new hospitals & physicians section of our Web site at [www.UnitedBloodServices.org](http://www.UnitedBloodServices.org).



**Visit Us at AABB in Miami!**

Stop by our booth at the AABB Annual Meeting and TXPO and meet people from Blood Systems Laboratories, one of the nation’s leading high-volume donor testing laboratories; Blood Systems Research Institute, among the most respected and productive transfusion-focused programs in the world; Quality Source, our quality consulting service, and United Blood Services local, regional and national staff. Visit booth #1214 and pick up a CD of the variety of informational posters we’ll have at AABB.

