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Firm introduces patented solar flashing warning lights for range of automated gates

GAMA SONIC USA, Inc., a leading manufacturer of solar products, is releasing its patented solar warning lights for the automated gate market. "The new SOL-GATE brand is a clever green product that has potential to greatly impact the gate operator business," said Ben Steltzer, who is vice-president of business development. Steltzer spent the last five years

working for LMT-Mercer Group, where for two-and-a-half years he served as vice-president of sales and marketing and the last two-and-a-half years as manager for a product line unrelated to the fence industry.

Steltzer said that he gained valuable experience and insight at LMT, when he played a major role in marketing solar post caps to the fence and deck industry.

"When I first joined LMT, commercial solar lighted post caps were relatively new and unknown to the fence industry," he said.

"But in the past few years the industry has seen numerous designs and materials for solar post caps come on the market."

Steltzer said there are three crucial concerns about solar lights: How bright is the light? How long does the light last throughout the night? And how many years will it work?

He added that during the development stages of SOL-GATE warning lights, he was keenly aware that a safety warning light had to be tough and durable for the commercial industry.

Solar lighted post caps and the common garden solar lights use monocrystal solar panels which require several hours of direct sunlight and don't always recharge well on the short winter days, Steltzer noted. "But we knew we needed a light that could function well in all types of weather, climates, and limited sunlight conditions. This was crucial for working on barrier, slide, swing, and lift gates, which need to function in all types of situations for safety concerns."

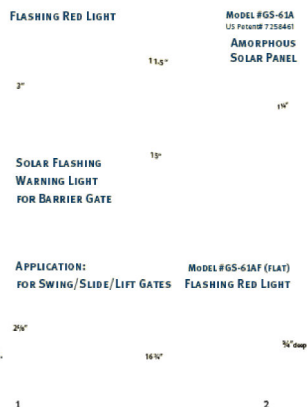
GAMA SONIC fitted the SOL-GATE light with an amorphous solar

Above, the SOL-GATE GS-61AF (flat) unit has a built-in amorphous solar panel in the center that angles back for maximum capture of sunlight. The GS-61AF could also be used on barrier gates, but its main application is for swing, slide, and lift gates. Shown below is the GS-61A, specifically designed for use on barrier gate arms. An adapter kit, GS-61AR, pictured at bottom, provides curved end plugs that are interchangeable with the standard plugs on the GS-61A to allow it to be mounted to round pole gates.
(GAMA SONIC photos)

SOLAR FLASHING WARNING LIGHTS FOR BARRIER GATES

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The next concern was durability, so thick polycarbonate was used for the housing, said Steltzer, and sealing end plugs are made of hard rubber with UV inhibitor.

"GAMA SONIC relied on its patented technology which manufactures the brightest solar lights in the marketplace at this time," said Steltzer. "Application of this technology was used in the SOL-GATE design."

The next item addressed was how long the SOL-GATE lights would last throughout the night.

"After extensive testing and integration of patented technology, the SOL-GATE flashing light functioned for 20 consecutive nights without requiring a recharge from the sun.

"Honestly, I was amazed at the results. For instance, you might try to imagine that the sun is eclipsed for 20 consecutive days and the SOL-GATE light comes on for 20 consecutive nights," he said.

GAMA SONIC extensively tested the product in its labs, but Steltzer noted that he personally conducted numerous tests and experiments on his own.

In one experiment he placed the model SOL-GATE GS-61A (for barrier gates) under his bed and the red flashing light worked continuously for 200 hours, which translates into 20 nights.

He said that combining the high
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level of performance without the need to frequently recharge and the amorphous solar panel was the perfect solution for the commercial industry.

The next decision was to use two Ni-Mh AAA rechargeable batteries which should last three to five years.

The weight of the SOL-GATE light was of concern due to balance issues on the barrier arm, and the engineers kept the weight to 16.2 ounces, which would not impact or cause problems on the barrier arms, he said.

After perfecting the first model and extensive environmental testing, the SOL-GATE model GS-61A (for barrier gates), was ready for test mar-

keting. Steltzer said he knew it was essential to also develop a design for swing, slide, and lift gates. His concern was to capture the entire electric gate market and not be limited to just barrier gates.

He then worked closely with engineers to design a flat version of the SOL-GATE for barriers that was only three-quarters of an inch thick and would not interfere with the opening and closing of slide gates.

The SOL-GATE GS-61AF (flat) had a built in amorphous solar panel in the center that angles back for maximum capture of sunlight. The new SOL-GATE GS-61AF (flat) could also be used on barrier gates, but its main application is for swing, slide, and lift gates.

Another concern was how to install the SOL-GATE GS-61A on round pole gates. The engineers designed rubber end caps that are curved to fit the round pole gates as an additional option to the standard barrier arms.

Steltzer said he was aware that the gate operator business was already familiar with solar, as numerous manufacturers offered solar powered gate operators. "The SOL-GATE warning lights would be a complimentary product solution in an industry that was continuously developing solar products," he added.

The next stage was test marketing and deciding how to bring SOL-GATE to market. Steltzer said he met with some of the leaders of the gate operator manufacturing industry, and that "the reaction was one of surprise but very positive."

"After careful consideration GAMA SONIC decided to test the market by contacting experienced dis-

tributors, and the response was overwhelming," he said. "Encouraged by the distributor response, we decided to offer SOL-GATE directly to distributors who were large enough to impact the market and develop the exposure that SOL-GATE needed."

Among the selling points of SOL-GATE is the fact that only four screws are needed for installation of the GS-61A and two screws for the GS-61AF. Also, no electrician or electrical power source are required, and therefore no electric bills. In addition, the product is "green" in that it uses a renewable energy source – sunlight.

"We understood that identifying market opportunities together with distributors would help to spark interest in the product," he said. He sent selective distributors concepts for market opportunities unique to the product. These included:

1.) Installation on existing gates which could require or benefit from a warning flashing light.

2.) Use on new installations of electric gates.

3.) Inclusion in gate operator maintenance programs that would include the SOL-GATE lights as part of the maintenance program.

Steltzer said he also began identifying specific potential markets such as road barriers and other types of barriers. Another possible application could be public and private pool gates as a warning signal. Other important applications could include security fences and homeland security projects, as well as airports, universities, military facilities, and industrial security situations.

"Several distributors told us that barrier gates are often broken by vehicles and that they felt that SOL-GATE could greatly reduce this problem, if not eliminate it," said Steltzer.

GAMA SONIC was established in 1985 as a manufacturing and marketing company which supplied emergency lights and related electronic products.

In 2001 the firm began focusing on the solar lighting market and developed over 18 unique designs and innovative lighting solutions with multiple installation options.

GAMA SONIC USA, Inc. manages the marketing and distribution for the United States and Canada with corporate headquarters in Atlanta, Ga., and its north east office in New Jersey.

GAMA SONIC distributes its products in 21 countries which include Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Italy, Greece, Turkey, and various other nations and regions.

For distribution opportunities of SOL-GATE warning flashing lights, contact Steltzer at 732-681-1965.

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