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Automated parking garage brings vehicle to driver

LEETONIA, OH—Tomorrow's parking garages may go one step further in customer service—by parking the car for you. Robotic Parking has been awarded a U.S. patent for its modular automated parking system (MAPS), which simultaneously parks and retrieves multiple vehicles on one or more contiguous garage floors, in buildings as high as 20 stories.

The patent gives the company ownership rights to this new automated parking technology, including lifts, pallets and sensing devices, which can be modified and added to after installation. A desig-



nated ticketing machine allows customers to pick up and drop off their car and gain access to the garage. Retrieving the car may take as little as a minute. The system brings the vehicle to the customer, ready to be driven off in a forward drive position.

The ticketing machine can be customized to accept debit cards, bar-coded or magnetic stripe cards, punch tickets, cash or any combination of these, according to Peggy Guignon of Robotic Parking. Only vehicle pick up customers can access the parking facility by using their card or ticket. An on-site 486 Pentium 133 PC running Windows NT, which

SEE PARKING PAGE 47

PARKING

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

can be accessed on site or from remote locations, monitors the system. Any trouble with vehicle movement, which is shown on screen in real time, is indicated immediately with an onscreen flashing red light. The system allows PC operators to point and click on system diagram screen displays to show specific details.

Standard security features include video cameras at entrance/exit stations and key garage interior locations to identify customers, vehicles and vehicle license plates, and numerous lights in the customer areas, said Guignon. Another