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New parking meter available on campus

Binghamton University is the only college in the Northeast to offer personal parking meters to drivers who park on campus.

The meters, available in a pilot program for \$30 plus a \$10 refundable deposit, come loaded with 50 hours of time. They can be used in any lot on campus except for the parking garage and paid lot, as well as at meters.

Dan Chambers, deputy chief of University Police, notes that the cost of the device compares favorably to buying \$5 day passes to park on campus – and to tickets, which cost \$20 at an expired meter or \$25 for being in a lot without a permit. They also eliminate the familiar search for quarters required for many traditional parking meters.



Deputy Police Chief Dan Chambers holds a portable parking meter, which drivers can use to pay for parking on campus.

The bright-yellow personal meters, roughly the size of a cell phone, hang inside the driver's window. Drivers activate the meters when they leave their cars and turn them off when they return, so they never pay for unused time if a class or meeting is cancelled. And, unless the prepaid meter is running low on time, they're certain to avoid a ticket for an expired meter too.

"This way you're only paying for exactly what you use," Chambers said. "As soon as you get back, you can turn it off."

The meters, made by an Israeli company called Ganis Systems Ltd., are used by the City of Buffalo as well as some Midwestern universities. They're already popular in Europe.

Chambers came across the easy-to-use gadgets at the International Parking Association Meeting and thought they'd be perfect for infrequent campus visitors as well as for people who park on campus frequently for short periods.

He also thinks they could work well for departments that bring guests to campus. The department could leave the meter at the Information Booth for the guest, and have an employee walk to the car with the guest at the end of the meeting or interview to retrieve the meter.

Twenty-five meters are available this semester through the pilot program. Chambers will see how well they work and whether they're in demand before deciding whether the campus should sign on with Ganis.

Ganis offers several models of in-car meters, all of which are basically maintenance free and resistant to fraud and counterfeit attempts.

The Spark is the one now in use at Binghamton. Another model called the Comet, looks a bit like a diabetic monitoring device and can be reloaded with time over the Internet or telephone.