One the objectives of **Rental Guard**, the free on-line database of stolen equipment, is to enable equipment service centers and brokers to quickly and easily identify stolen equipment when it resurfaces for servicing or for sale. This is exactly what happened in late August when Duclos Lenses used **Rental Guard** to identify the actual owner of a set of Zeiss Master Primes that was brought in to their Los Angeles location for evaluation. Within minutes of receiving the lenses, Duclos ascertained their real owner. The lenses had been reported stolen on March 27th 2015 by Foxtelecolumbia in Bogota, Columbia. The estimated value of the 5-piece lens set is $203,000.

In mid-summer a seller approached Los Angeles-based broker/sales and rental company West Coast Cine Video, Inc. about purchasing the lenses. Photos of the lenses showed no complete serial numbers, but three digits of one serial number were visible on the 25mm. Roberts searched Rental Guard with the partial information and found the Foxtelecolumbia report — a five piece lens set with the same last three digits on the 25mm. At this point Roberts was fairly sure these were the stolen lenses, but how to take custody of them? There followed several weeks of sporadic communication from the sellers, during which Roberts prodded them to take the lenses to Duclos for evaluation. Roberts communicated with Martin Pastor, a New York police detective actively involved in cases of equipment theft. Pastor proposed that Roberts show interest in purchasing the lenses and offer cash, which he did. In no time the sellers arrived at Duclos with the lenses in a cardboard box. This happened so quickly, in fact, that Roberts never had an opportunity to notify Duclos. It was the cardboard box that immediately raised suspicion at Duclos, and within a matter of an hour Duclos had confirmed they were stolen using Rental Guard. The police were notified, the lenses were confiscated, an investigation was launched and Foxtelecolumbia was contacted with the news. At this time it is unclear if anyone will be brought to justice, but the lenses are in the process of being returned to Foxtelecolumbia.

The case illustrates two key ingredients for fighting theft. Duclos Lenses is well known for their excellence in service and repair and modification of high quality motion picture optics, but they are also known for their devotion to professional, honest business. Their due diligence, and Jeff Robert’s insisting on getting the lenses evaluated by them, were essential steps in recovering the lenses.

The other key to success was Foxtelecolumbia reporting the loss to **Rental Guard**. Rental companies have sometimes had success recovering stolen equipment themselves when it reappeared for sale on the Internet in the same town where it was stolen, but this is unusual, and almost impossible when the equipment moves across borders. **Rental Guard** has established itself as the central, international repository for stolen equipment data. It pushes notifications to its registered users all around the world. And, there are other ways reporting to **Rental Guard** aids the cause. For example, evaluating the data from theft reports enables us to spot trends and identify preventative actions for our members and their customers. Through our efforts spreading awareness of equipment theft and providing effective tools to fight it, we are pushing back. Making stolen equipment easier to identify and harder to sell has a cooling effect on the stolen equipment market. As our network grows so will its cooling effect.

We strongly encourage anyone who experiences a theft to report it to **Rental Guard** ([missingequipment.org](http://missingequipment.org)). If your company buys, sells, services or rents equipment we encourage you and your staff to register for alerts. We provide the service for the good of the industry for free to everyone. PERG and ASPEC members gain access to additional features of **Rental Guard** that have proved effective in preventing large-scale fraud (theft by rental). To find out more, please contact [harry.box@plasa.org](mailto:harry.box@plasa.org).
Record Turn-out for Oktoberfest 2015

On October 28th PERG and the AICP cohosted the third annual Oktoberfest party in New York. An estimated 230 people attended the event from all sides of the industry—commercial production companies, rental companies, insurance and financial services companies, directors of photography, production managers and producers. Attendees enjoyed German sausage, schnitzel, Oktoberfest beer, and apple strudel while they socialized with friends, clients and colleagues.

Matt Miller, president of the AICP, and Paul Royalty, chair of the PERG Council, spoke briefly. Miller focused his comments on recent collaboration between the AICP and PERG with regard to increasing theft awareness and introducing production companies to Rental Guard.

The same day as the Oktoberfest event, the AICP held a town hall discussion that filled the training room at Abel Cine Tech. The meeting of production and rental companies was on the subject of theft and insurance. The panel included Martin Pastor, a New York City police detective from the Major Cases division, Scott Taylor (Taylor & Taylor Associates), Ken Karpinsky (Chubb Insurance), Alex Baiseri (ProSight Specialty Insurance), and Andrew Colon (Smuggler). Pastor took the audience on a guided tour of what happens during a police investigation, pointing out how valuable evidence can be preserved (or lost).

Also speaking at the Oktoberfest party was Terra Bliss from Panavision, who raised a glass for the late Scott Fleischer. Scotty was a greatly influential and respected figure at Panavision New York and in the industry during his long career. He is missed.

Oktoberfest 2015 was sponsored by Allianz, ARRI Rental, Chubb Custom Insurance, Edge Rental, Feature Systems, Highline Stages, High Output, Marks and Paneth, NEED Financial Services, Panasonic, Panavision, Talamas, Taylor & Taylor Associates, Technological Cine Services (TSC), Wits End Group. The Oktoberfest event was held at the West Bank Café on 42nd St.

The panel conducted a lively question and answer session with the audience regarding insurance protections, and advice on protecting vehicles from break-ins and theft. Major take-aways from the meeting regarded vetting overnight parking arrangements and educating drivers and crew to remove valuable items from parked trucks. Pastor advised everyone that a truck should be relied upon for transportation, not security. The assumption that a bonded lot is secure has proved tragically erroneous. The panel discussion also pointed out why insurance matters need to be dealt with by senior executives within the production companies.

The event is made possible by:
Martin Pastor of the New York City Police has been going after equipment thieves and recovering equipment. He spoke at the AICP Town Hall Meeting about theft prevention and how preserving evidence is central to giving police a fighting chance.

Matt Miller, president of the AICP, spoke warmly about the cooperative work the AICP and PERG have been engaged in together.
PERG Announces Sponsorship Opportunities for 2016

If you are looking for a way to position your company as a leader in your market, consider becoming a sponsor of a PERG event, or become an Annual Sponsor and gain exposure year round. Over the past five years PERG has built attendance at annual events like the General Membership Meeting at NAB, Oktoberfest in New York, Cinco de Mayo mixer in Los Angeles, and Cine Gear events.

This year we have announced sponsorship opportunities for these events in advance. There are levels to suit every budget starting at $700 (see page 5 of this newsletter). Our events reach an elite group of production companies and rental companies. Sponsorship spots are limited and are first come first served. This is an excellent opportunity to promote your company and your support is greatly appreciated. For more information, please contact harry.box@plasa.org.

PERG Pulse Surveys – Help Businesses See a Bigger Picture

Help us help you. We have lots of juicy survey topics coming up in the months ahead and we would love to get every PERG member company to weigh in. PERG Pulse is a micro-short survey that is delivered by email to our main contact at each member company. The survey returns data to you in less than a week. The data is valuable, giving you a snapshot of where your practices fit into the industry overall. In addition some surveys are designed to provide us with the ammunition we need to draw attention to industry issues.

The more companies that participate in the surveys the more significant and reliable the results. When 50 or 60 companies weigh in on a subject, you can really get a sense of the industry. We know you are busy, that’s why these monthly surveys are very brief and carefully targeted (like 8 questions, bam, you are done).

Please watch for the next PERG Pulse announcement. 
... and send us your idea for a survey topic!

Meeting in Atlanta

The PERG Council is holding its January council meeting in Atlanta. While we are there, on Wednesday January 20th we are planning an evening event to bring together rental companies from all over the city. We’d love to see you there. For more information, please contact harry.box@plasa.org.
Sponsorship Opportunities for 2016
There are two ways to sponsor: **Annual Sponsorship** or **Event Sponsorship**.

**Annual Sponsorship**

Platinum Annual Sponsor (1 available): $10,000
Annual Sponsor (7 available): $4,400

As an Annual Sponsor your company logo appears on the signage/projections at every PERG event throughout the year. Your logo appears on every event invitation and on the RSVP web site. Your company receives a verbal thank you at all the events. Your company name is listed in all event press releases and articles. Lastly, before NAB and Cine Gear we send our members an email blast highlighting the product announcements and events of our sponsors.

**Annual Sponsors also receive the following exclusive benefits:**
- Access to PLASA database
- PERG Newsletter: logo with link, photo and 250 words or 1/2 page ad
- Banner on PERG website
- Name in special recognition ad in Protocol magazine
- Placement of literature at event
- Annual Sponsors’ logos appear above event-specific sponsors under special banner
- Platinum Annual Sponsor receives top billing and logo placement for all events

Payment may be made in one lump sum due Feb 1st 2016, or we can invoice in four payments due four weeks prior to each event.

**Event Sponsorship**

Chose specific PERG event(s) to sponsor:

- **Oktoberfest**—New York, end of October (7 available): $1500
- **Cinco de Mayo**—Los Angeles, end of April (7 available): $1500
- **NAB**—PERG General Membership Meeting (7 available): $700
- **Cine Gear**—PERG booth/event (7 available): $700

As an Event Sponsor your company logo appears on signage/projections at the event. Your logo appears on the event invitation and on the RSVP web site. Your company receives a verbal thank you at the event. Your company name is listed in press releases and articles associated with the event. Before NAB and Cine Gear we send our members an email blast highlighting the product announcements and events of our sponsors.

**Event Sponsors receive the following additional benefits:**
- Name on PERG webpage for event
- Event Sponsor’s logos are displayed at the same size as Annual Sponsors’ logos

Payment due four weeks prior to the event.
PERG Member Resources

RENTAL GUARD –
http://www.missingequipment.org

AICP/PLASA Sample Terms and Conditions –
http://na.plasa.org/perg/aicp-perg_terms.htm

PLASA Job Board – A full-featured employment resource.
http://jobboard.plasa.org
  • Job postings
  • Resume search
  • Self service management of postings
  • Notification of new candidates with the qualifications you are looking for.

Members receive one free job posting on the new job board. Additionally, members receive 25% off subsequent purchases using your member discount code. Contact membership@plasa.org for information.

Media cards and storage devices are commonly returned with sensitive images still on the device. PERG brought together representatives from every side of the industry to discuss the issue and created the Recorded Content Disclaimer and the Media Handling Guidelines for Rental House Employees.

Membership Benefits – http://www.plasa.org/association/
Take full advantage of your PLASA membership.

PERG Website – http://na.plasa.org/perg/perg.htm
Learn about upcoming and past PERG events and programs. Connect to other members.

Become a Member – http://www.plasa.org/benefits/join.asp
Please contact Harry Box (harry.box@plasa.org) to learn more about joining PLASA as a PERG member. Join the growing international network focused on the challenges and opportunities faced by professional rental companies in the film, television and commercial production market.

Save Money with American Express
PLASA is delighted to welcome a program with American Express which will offer members the low rate of 2.8%. If you already accept American Express and want to lower your rate, or if you would like to begin accepting American Express, email Frances Thompson (frances.thompson@plasa.org).

Help Your Colleagues in Need
Learn more about Behind the Scenes – a charity that provides grants to entertainment technology professionals who are seriously ill or injured. See the video, Behind the Scenes: In Their Own Words, an informative and moving testament to the success of this unique charity. If you know of someone in need please tell them about Behind the Scenes. Visit http://www.behindthescenescharity.org.