

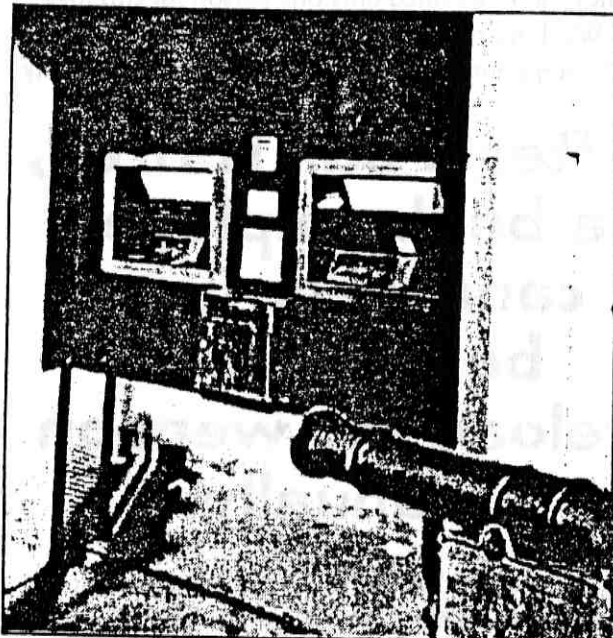
ONION (THE)

MADISON, WI
WEEKLY 23,000

MAR 1 1994

F I N A N C I A L N E W S

ATMs to be Armed with Cannons



A salty pirate demonstrates proper ramrodding procedure at one of the new ATMs

IN THE LATEST ACT OF THE CITY'S GROWING EFFORT TO CURB crime on the streets, Valley Bank of Los Angeles announced yesterday that all its Automated Teller Machines will be armed with a three-ton, cast-iron cannon. The new machines, tentatively known as the Penzance 3000 series, are expected to result in a large reduction of the 18,000 thefts that occur daily at ATMs across the city.

"We had many armament options at our disposal," Valley Bank Chairman Jon Fenner said, "but we found that nothing intimidates quite like a fully-functional cannon from an authentic Spanish Galleon."

Pending final results from Research and Development, including extensive technique and design

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interviews with Barbary Pirates, all cannon should be in place by the first of the month. 250,000 total cannon, many taken from sunken ships along the Pacific coast, are being installed with special voice-activated sensors that activate the firing sequence. The cannonballs, weighing 73 pounds each, have already been fit in most of the city's ATMs without incident.

Many features of the new system are expected to rejuvenate the city's waning enthusiasm for automated teller use. Popular features of the new system include the option of receiving American currency or Spanish Doubloons, special 'hook-friendly' buttons for the disabled, and a 16-gun salute when a successful transaction is completed.

The most fearsome feature of the system, however, is sure to have users scampering to remember their identification numbers. Instead of simply rejecting a user's card when an invalid number is entered, Penzance 3000 will fire a warning shot across the user's bow, thus alerting them to their mistake in exciting pirate style.

Valley Bank spent three months and 30 million dollars in researching Penzance 3000, in hopes of eliminating an ATM theft epidemic that has made common street muggings out of date and socially unacceptable.

But the system is not without its flaws. Some crafty pirate enthusiasts have managed to avoid the cannon's fury by pulling hard-a-starboard right before it fires.

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The system is also plagued by inefficient reloading; after a ball is fired, a bank-employed cannoner must be present to reload the weapon manually. Currently, Valley Bank has hired only one person for this job.

"We don't plan on needing more than one shot at each perpetrator anyway," Fenner said. "I'll tip my

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sailor's cap to the lad who can take a cannonball to the gut and keep coming. Now be gone with ye."

If Valley Bank is successful in curbing the rampant crime that now plagues urban ATM users, other cities might be encouraged to arm their ATMs accordingly. Several New York banks have discussed arming their machines with Sidewinder laser guided missiles, or possibly even easily irked native New Yorkers. Similarly, Chicago banks have said that if they get the go-ahead, they will arm their ATMs with nuclear bombs or hammer-wielding robots. ☐