Case Study Background

Intermec was designing a new compact cost-effective network reader that supports diverse RFID applications. The IF2 RFID Network Reader supports both enterprise and industrial environments that require a scalable RFID system with a low cost per read point. The IF2 shown in Figure 1 is permanently mounted and is intended to work maintenance free for many years. The Intermec engineering team required a Real Time Clock and MCU power backup device that would last the life of the product – no battery change-out.

Figure 1: Intermec IF2 Network Reader with EnerChip power backup

Project Design Requirements

The Intermec design team requirements were:

1. Provide power back-up for a Real Time Clock function in the microcontroller in the event of a main power failure for several hours.
2. Battery must be rechargeable to support a lifetime of power outages.
3. Battery must have a small device footprint to fit into a tight board space.
4. Must use surface mount technology and reflow solder for assembly.
5. Battery must last the life of the IF2 Network Reader
6. Must never have to change the battery
7. Battery must have less than 2% self discharge per year
8. IF2 Network Reader with battery installed must be able to be shipped via air
9. Battery must be RoHS and WEEE compliant

Design Solution

The Intermec design team implemented the **EnerChip™ CC CBC3150** solid state battery with integrated power management to meet their design requirements for power back-up of the real time clock function in the MCU.

Many systems utilizing microcontrollers and/or real time clock chips require non-volatile date retention and/or real-time clock operation in the event of main power interruption. Normally, this is accomplished with the use of a supply supervisory circuit coupled with a backup power source such as a coin cell or supercapacitor. When main power is interrupted - as during line power outages or when the main battery is removed for recharging or replacement - the backup power source provides enough energy to maintain the data in the embedded SRAM or keep the internal real-time clock operational. Many MCUs have an internal supply supervisor circuit that can be used to control the switchover function from main power to auxiliary power. When the supply voltage threshold level is reached during power droop or complete power loss, the MCU can be programmed to generate an internal interrupt that places the MCU into a low power state for maximum run time from the backup power source.

The EnerChip CC is a surface mount device that co-packages a rechargeable solid state battery with integrated battery management. The EnerChip CC performs the charge control, discharge control, threshold voltage detection, and supply supervisory functions all in one low profile package. It operates over the range of 2.5V to 5.5V.

Using the EnerChip CC to provide power back-up to the Microcontroller is a very simple circuit as is shown in the following schematic diagram example:

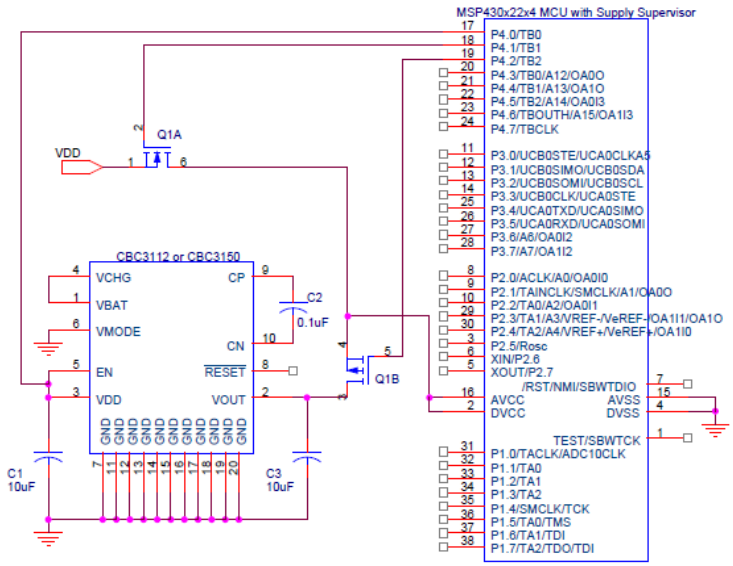

Figure2: Microcontroller RTC power backup example using EnerChip CC CBC3150

Technical design information for applications such as the Intermec IF2 Network Reader can be found in the following Cymbet.com Design Center website pages:

- Application Notes for Power Backup of several different Microcontrollers are at http://www.cymbet.com/design-center/microcontroller-back-up.php
  - TI MSP430
  - Freescale HC
  - Atmel PicoPower AVR
  - Microchip PIC
  - ST Micro ST62
  - EM Microelectronics EM
- Application Notes for Real Time Clocks are at http://www.cymbet.com/design-center/rtc-backup.php
  - TI BQ32000
  - Epson RX-8564
  - Dallas-Maxim DS1340
  - Dallas-Maxim DS1390
  - Micro Crystal RV-2123
  - Microchip MDP79410
  - NXP PCF8523

Evaluating Cymbet EnerChip Solutions for Your Next Project

This Case Study demonstrates how the design team at Intermec used EnerChip Solid State Batteries to improve the capabilities and competitiveness of their new IF2 RFID Network Reader. You can use EnerChip devices to reduce costs and improve the functionality of your products as well. Cymbet provides a set of evaluation kits that can be utilized to accelerate new product development schedules. For Power Back-up designs an ideal evaluation kit is the EnerChip CC RTC Power Back-up CBC-EVAL-06 kit. This easy to use USB based stick as shown in Figure 3, has a Micro Crystal RV-2123 Real Time Clock chip and an EnerChip CC CBC3112 solid state battery.

For additional information call Cymbet Applications Engineering at +1-763-633-1780 or use the Support form on Cymbet.com.