

## Lamar Testing Solar-Powered Digital Billboards

The proprietary digital technology uses solar power and light-reflecting digital ink instead of light-emitting diodes

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A Lamar Magink billboard

Lamar Advertising is testing a new digital billboard technology that could provide a strong alternative to the digital billboards populating the country. Developed by U.K. and Israel-based Magink, the proprietary digital technology uses solar power and light-reflecting digital ink instead of light-emitting diodes.

For the past few months, Lamar has operated a poster-size billboard equipped with Magink's technology in Pensacola, Fla. By April, Lamar plans to move the sign to New York to make sure it works under different weather conditions.

Because the sign uses less power than current LED billboards and reflects light rather than projects light, Lamar is hoping the technology will pan out for its recently acquired Vista Media inventory in New York and Los Angeles.

"We hope this will be less expensive to operate. The unique benefits of this technology also allow us to go into neighborhoods and areas and not have light projecting into the area," said Bobby Switzer, VP of operations for Lamar.

Looking more like paper than a lighted sign, the technology also offers higher resolution than LED boards, offering more creative options for advertising.

"You can advertise fine jewelry or cosmetics. Flesh tones will look better" Switzer said.

The technology just might help outdoor media companies that have faced municipal and legislative opposition to building out digital boards, such as the current controversy in Los Angeles. (see Mediaweek, Feb. 9, Billboard or Blight?)

"LED is a great solution for Times Square and on highways. But within denser areas there is a lot of resentment towards installed LED boards," said Gadi Tirosh, chairman of Magink

Founded in 2000, Magink first deployed its technology on smaller signage. Earlier versions had to be air conditioned and enclosed in glass. Both JCDecaux and Clear Channel Outdoor have tested the second generation in London. Lamar is testing Magink's third generation, which can be scaled to any size.