

The San Diego

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COUNTY FINAL

35¢
TAX INCL.

Anti-theft chip instrumental in bid to keep music playing

By Frank Green
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A man strolls into a music store hoping to sell a rare 1957 Fender Stratocaster for a mere \$2,000.

It seems like a bargain. An electric guitar like that could sell for \$10,000. But is the shiny piece of rock 'n' roll memorabilia his property, or was it stolen from some band on tour?

No problem. The clerk runs a handheld scanner over the guitar's surface and up pops the original factory serial number, emitted by a microchip embedded beneath the custom blond finish and gold-plated hardware.

He then refers to a Web site run by Escondido-based Snagg, which maintains a registry for identifying and recovering music gear, to access a detailed history of the guitar's ownership.

That's the concept, at least, behind new anti-theft technology that could strike a chord with many musicians — even heavy-metal wanna-bes living in a panel truck.

SEE Musicians, C14

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