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**Thurk et al.**

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(54) **AUTOMATIC TRANSFER SWITCH**

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                    U.S.C. 154(b) by 173 days.

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**H02J 9/06**                      (2006.01)

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CPC ..... **H02J 9/06** (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**  
CPC ..... H02J 9/06  
See application file for complete search history.

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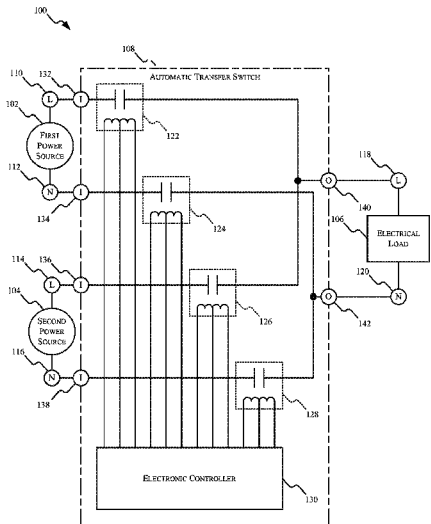
(57)                      **ABSTRACT**

Automatic transfer switch for switching an electrical load between two power sources. In one example, the automatic transfer switch includes four latching relays and an electronic controller. A first power source line connection is connected to an electrical load line connection via a first latching relay. A first power source neutral connection is connected to an electrical load neutral connection via a second latching relay. A second power source line connection is connected to the electrical load line connection via a third latching relay. A second power source neutral connection is connected to the electrical load neutral connection via a fourth latching relay. The electronic controller connects the second power source to the electrical load when a voltage of the first power source is less than a first threshold, and connects the first power source to the electrical load when the voltage is greater than a second threshold.

**19 Claims, 8 Drawing Sheets**

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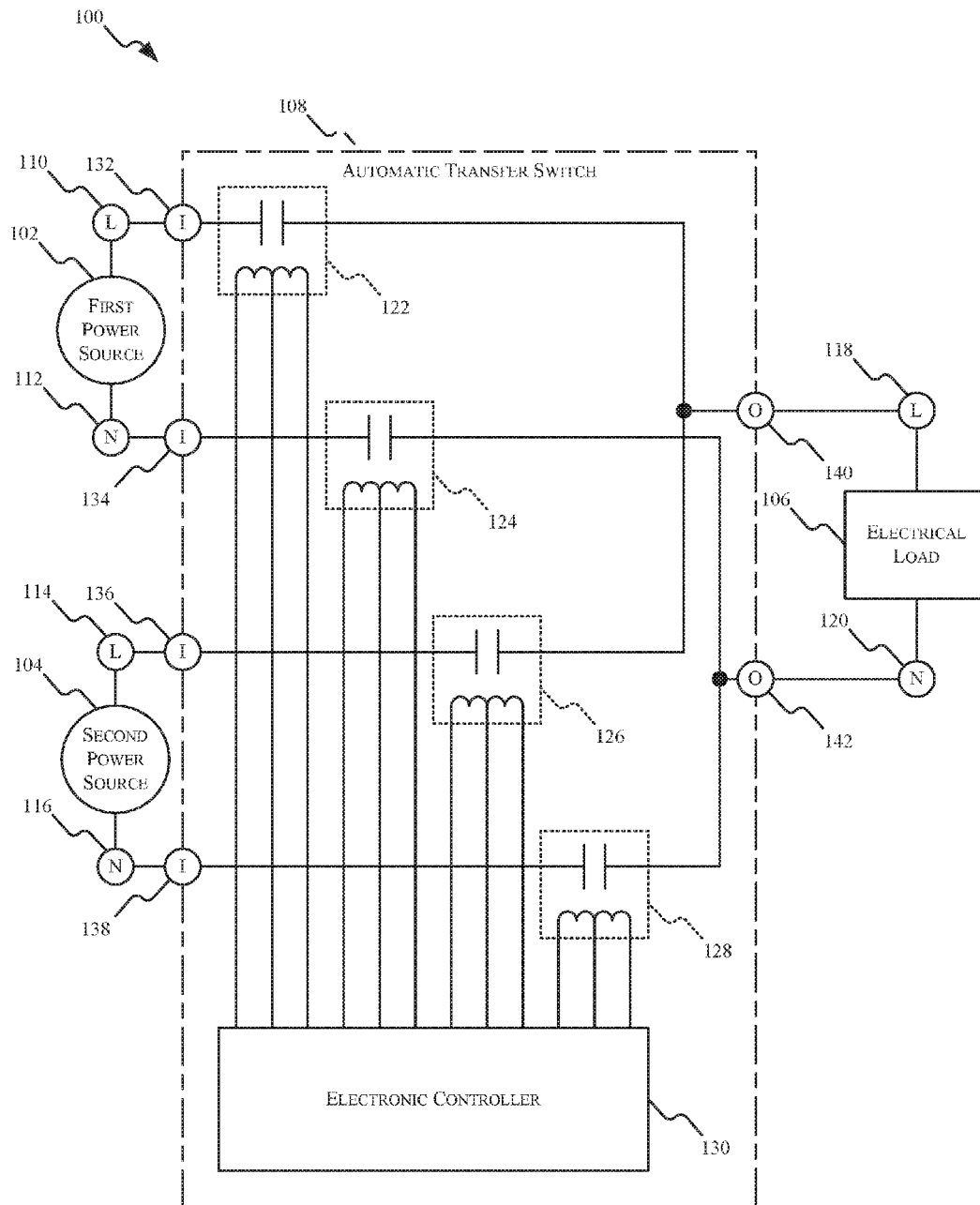


FIG. 1

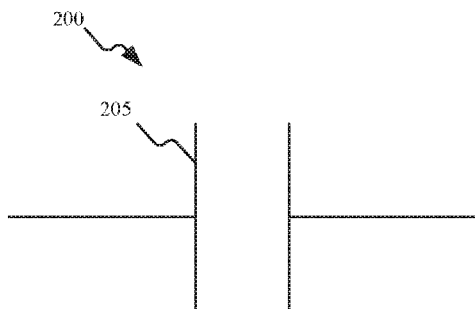


FIG. 2A

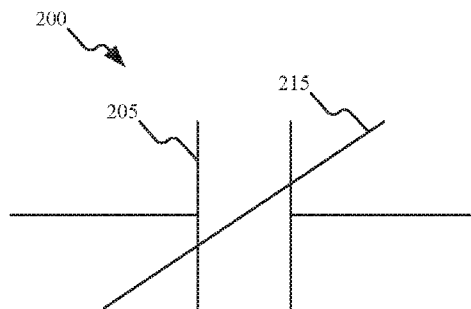


FIG. 2B

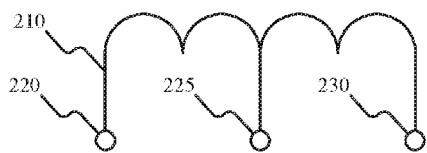


FIG. 3A

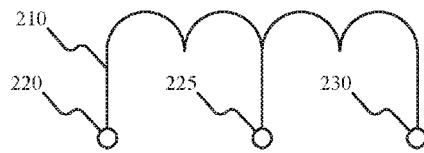
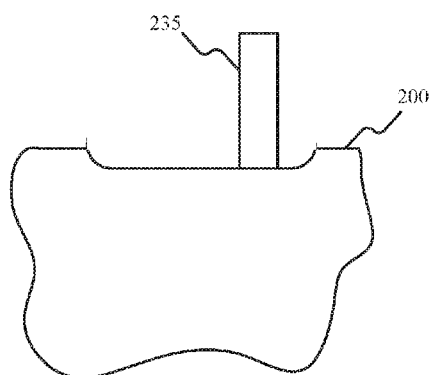
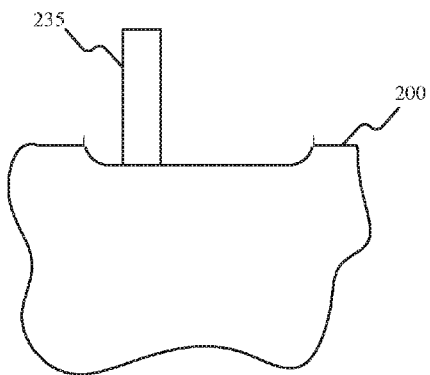


FIG. 3B



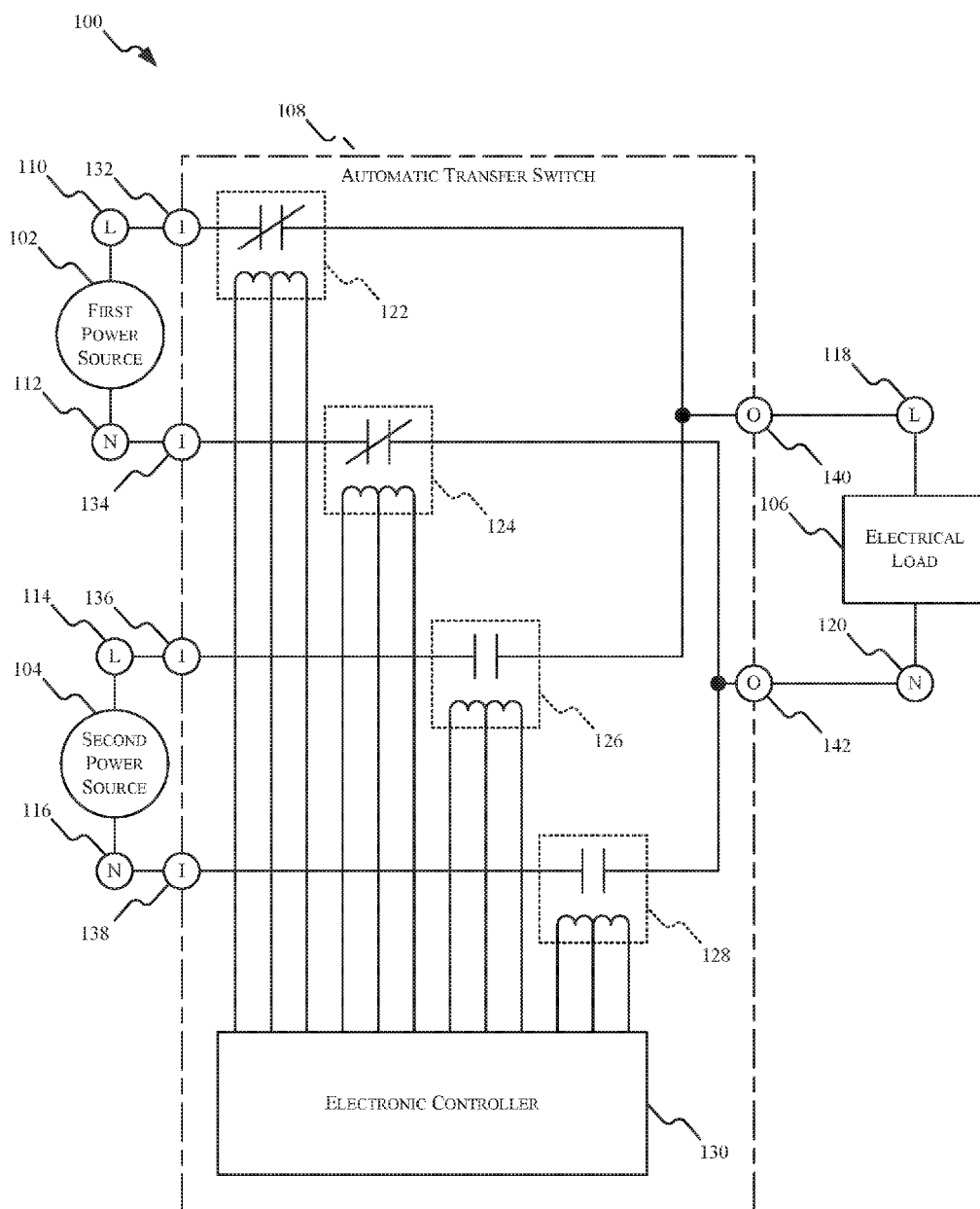


FIG. 4

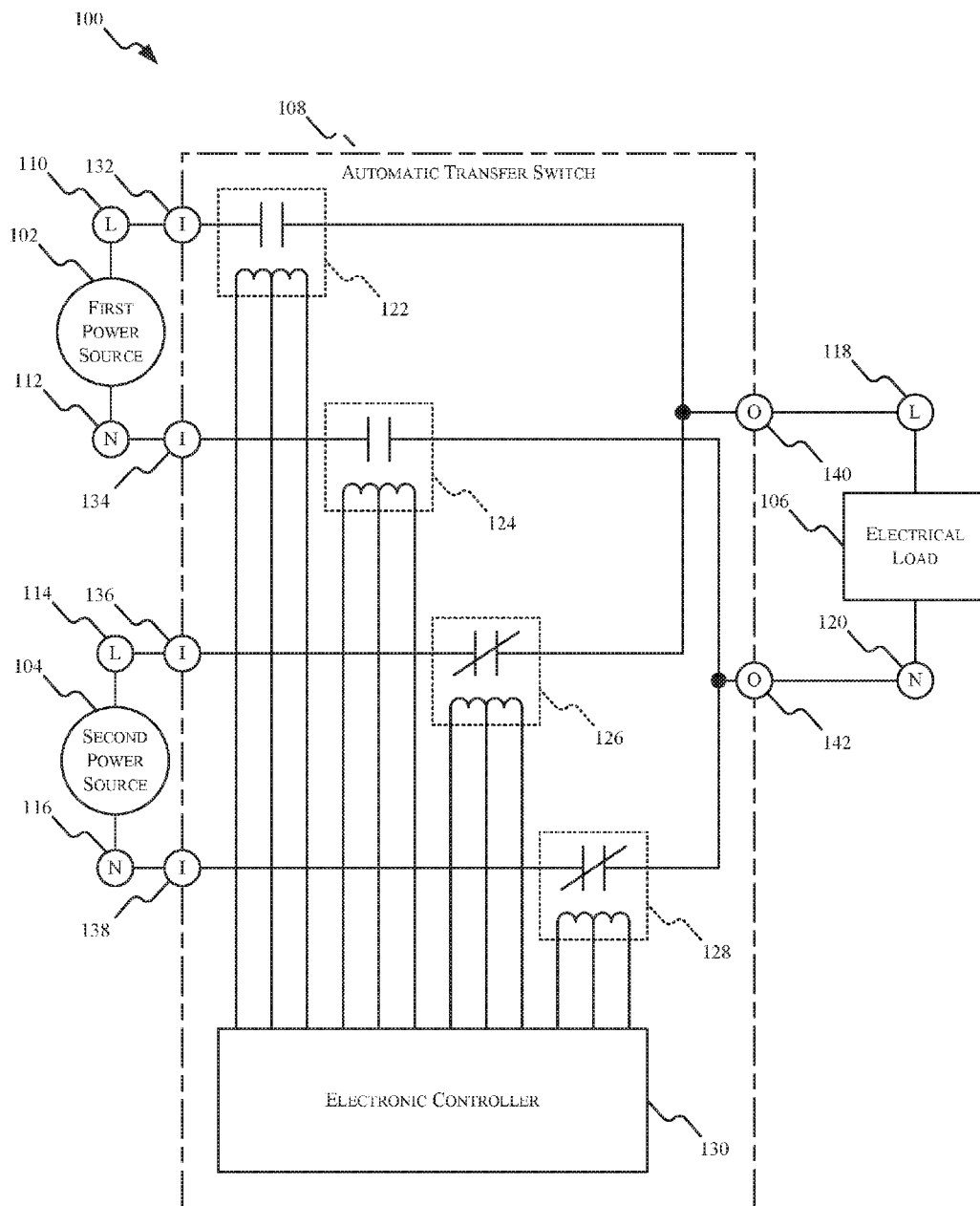


FIG. 5

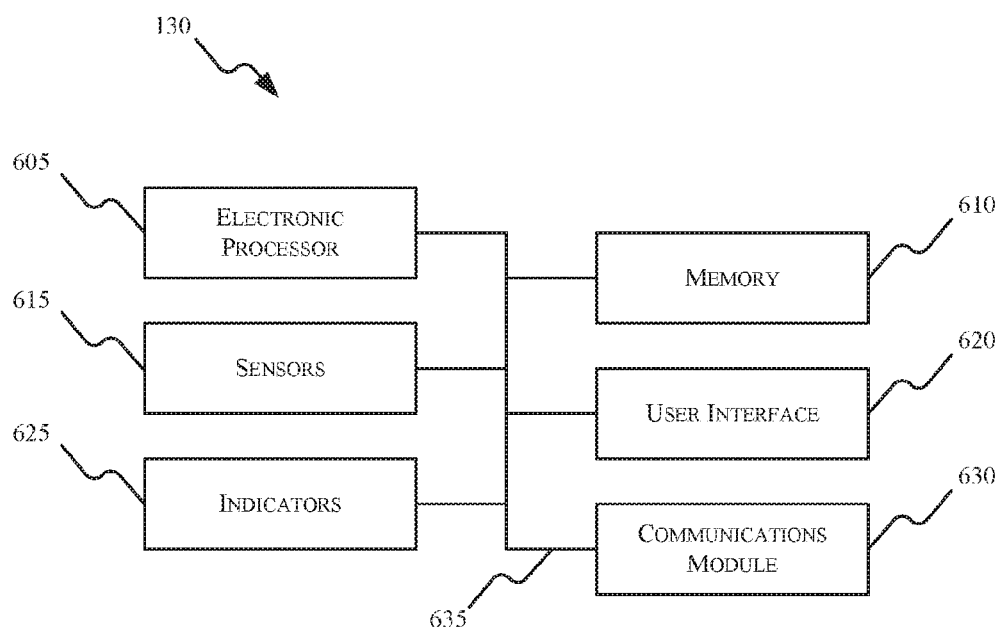


FIG. 6

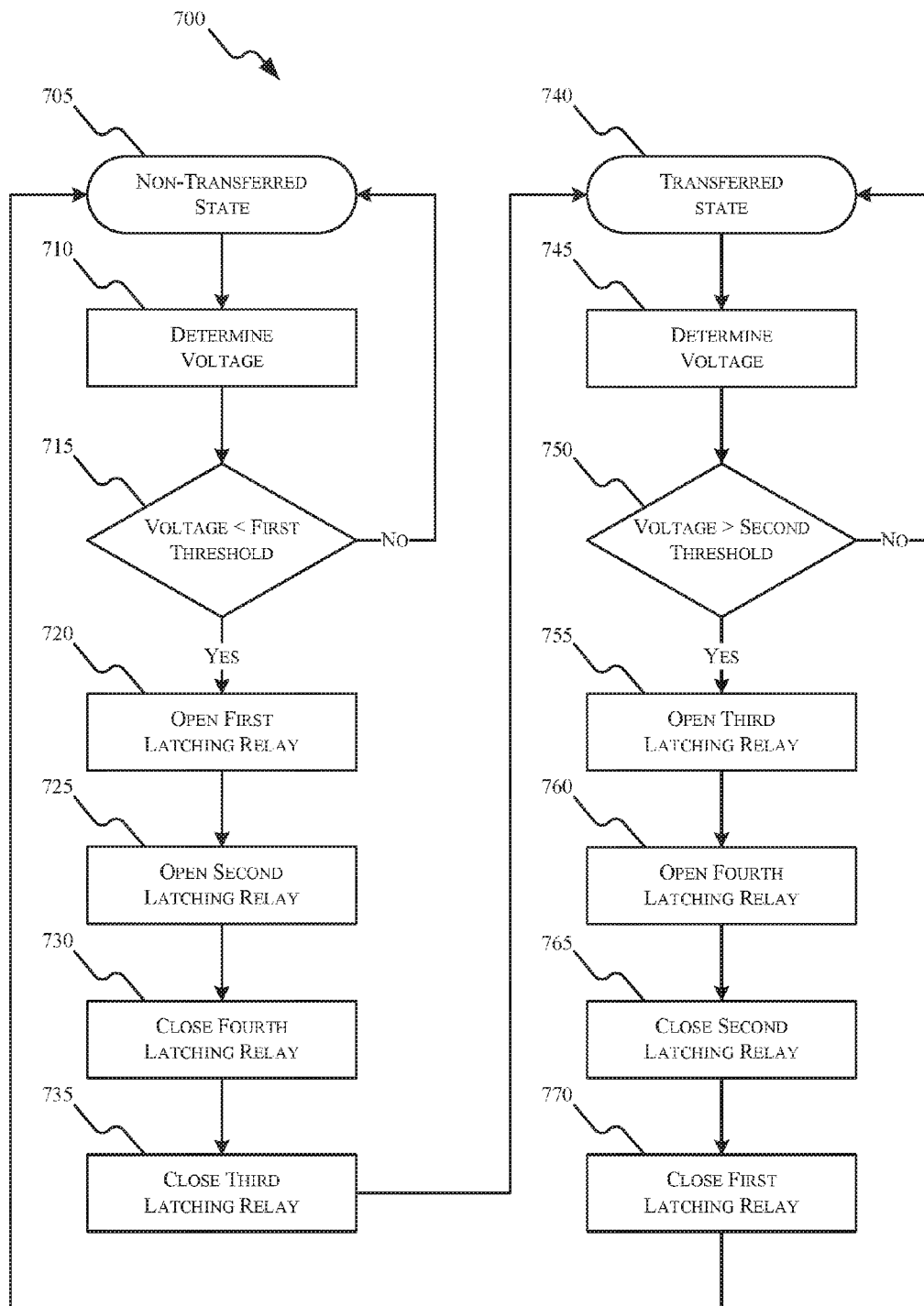


FIG. 7

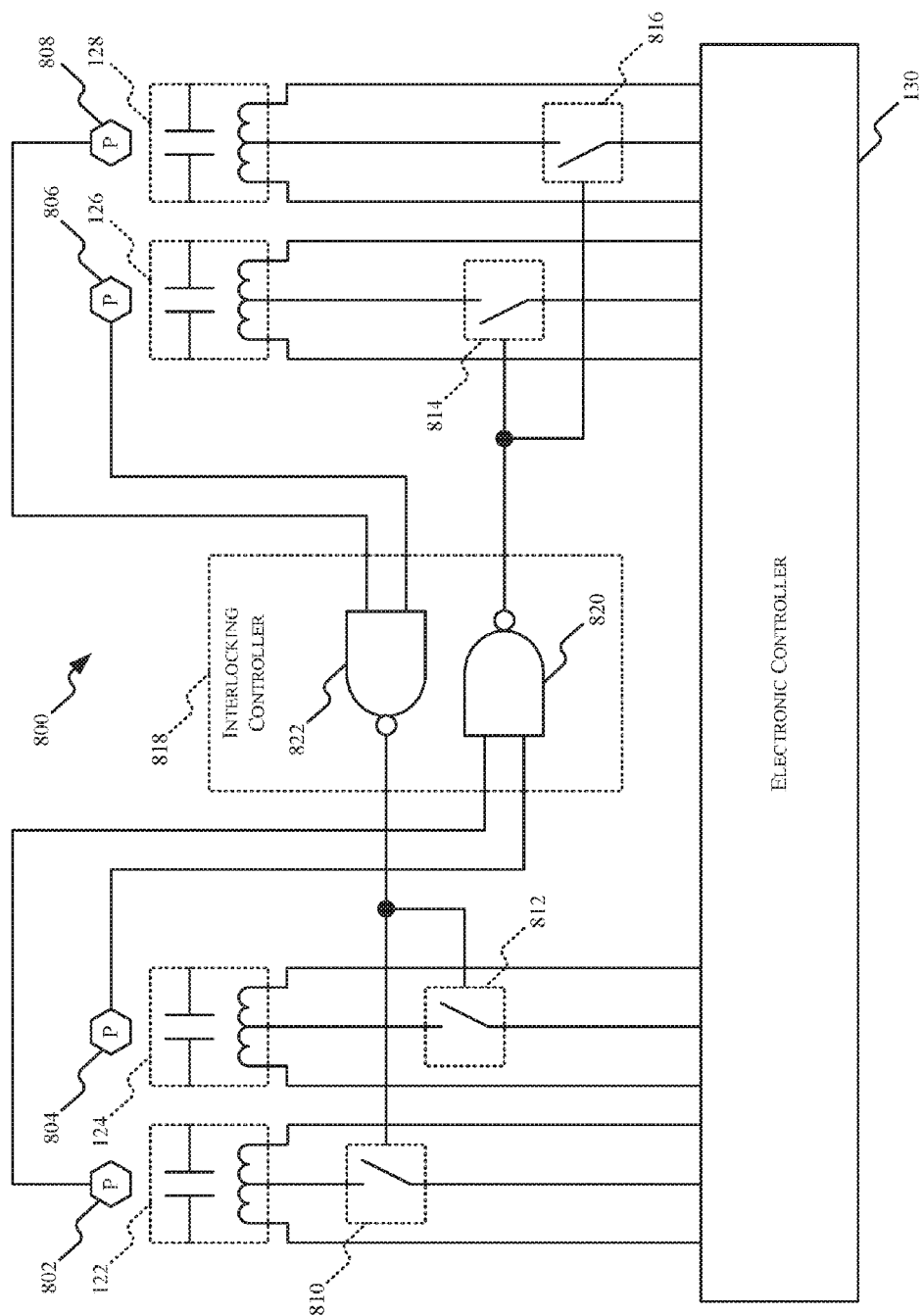


FIG. 8



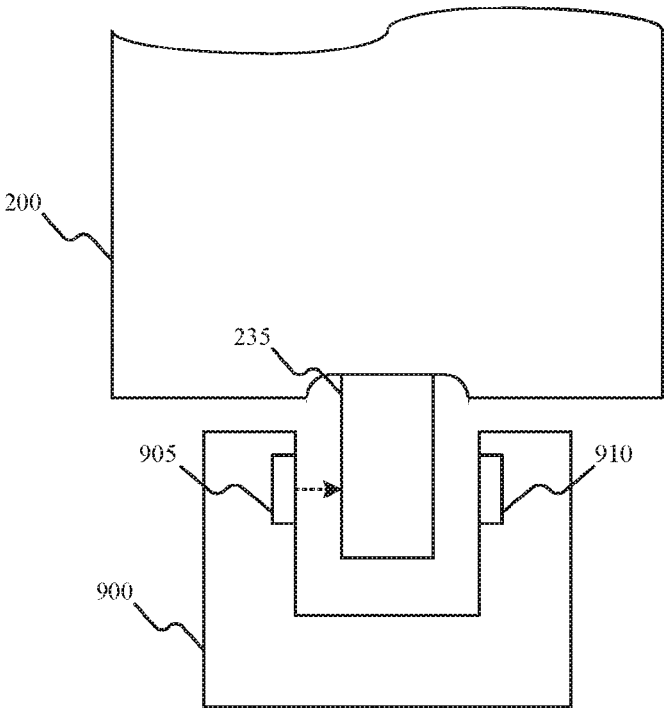


FIG. 9A

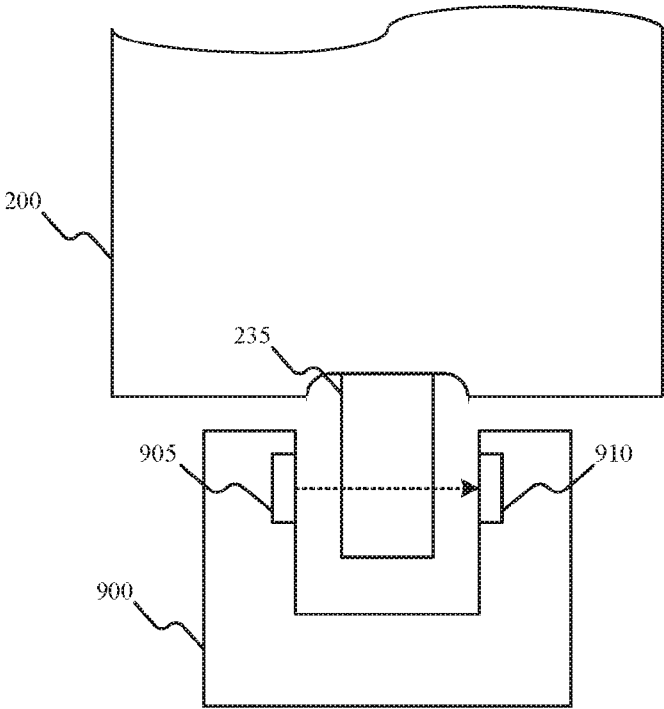


FIG. 9B

## AUTOMATIC TRANSFER SWITCH

## BACKGROUND

The disclosure relates to systems and methods of switching an electrical load (for example, a lighting load) between primary and backup power sources.

Power distribution systems for critical electrical devices (such as emergency lighting) often include a primary power source and a backup power source. These power distribution systems include automatic transfer switches which automatically switch the electrical devices to the backup power source when the primary power source fails. General-purpose automatic transfer switches that are designed to comply with electrical safety standards (such as those typically used for feeder circuits) are large and expensive. Smaller conventional automatic transfer switches (such as those used for branch circuits) often do not comply with current electrical safety standards such as National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 70, Underwriters Laboratories (UL) 1008, and the like.

## SUMMARY

The disclosure provides an automatic transfer switch. In one example, the automatic transfer switch includes a first latching relay, a second latching relay, a third latching relay, a fourth latching relay, and an electronic controller. The first latching relay has an opened state and a closed state. A line connection of a first power source is connected to a line connection of an electrical load via the first latching relay when the first latching relay is in its closed state. The second latching relay has an opened state and a closed state. A neutral connection of the first power source is connected to a neutral connection of the electrical load via the second latching relay when the second latching relay is in its closed state. A third latching relay has an opened state and a closed state. A line connection of a second power source is connected to the line connection of the electrical load via the third latching relay when the third latching relay is in its closed state. The fourth latching relay has an opened state and a closed state. A neutral connection of the second power source is connected to the neutral connection of the electrical load via the fourth latching relay when the fourth latching relay is in its closed state. The electronic controller is electrically coupled to the first latching relay, the second latching relay, the third latching relay, and the fourth latching relay. The electronic controller is configured to determine a voltage of the first power source. The electronic controller is also configured to connect the second power source to the electrical load when the voltage of the first power source is less than a first threshold. The electronic controller is further configured to connect the first power source to the electrical load when the voltage of the first power source is greater than a second threshold.

The disclosure also provides a method of switching an electrical load between a first power source and a second power source. In one example, the method includes determining a voltage of the first power source with an electronic controller. The method also includes opening a first latching relay when the voltage of the first power source is less than a threshold. The first latching relay is connected between a line connection of the first power source and a line connection of the electrical load. The method further includes opening a second latching relay after opening the first latching relay. The second latching relay is connected between a neutral connection of the first power source and

a neutral connection of the electrical load. The method also includes closing a fourth latching relay after opening the second latching relay. The fourth latching relay is connected between a neutral connection of the second power source and the neutral connection of the electrical load. The method further includes closing a third latching relay after closing the fourth latching relay. The third latching relay is connected between a line connection of the second power source and the line connection of the electrical load.

The disclosure further provides an automatic transfer switch. In one example, the automatic transfer switch includes a first voltage input, a second voltage input, a third voltage input, a fourth voltage input, a first voltage output, a second voltage output, a first latching relay, a second latching relay, a third latching relay, a fourth latching relay, and an electronic controller. The first voltage input is electrically coupleable to a line connection of a first power source. The second voltage input is electrically coupleable to a neutral connection of the first power source. The third voltage input is electrically coupleable to a line connection of a second power source. The fourth voltage input is electrically coupleable to a neutral connection of the second power source. The first voltage output is electrically coupleable to a line connection of an electrical load. The second voltage output is electrically coupleable to a neutral connection of the electrical load. The first latching relay selectively connects the first voltage input to the first voltage output. The second latching relay selectively connects the second voltage input to the second voltage output. The third latching relay selectively connects the third voltage input to the first voltage output. The fourth latching relay selectively connects the fourth voltage input to the second voltage output. The electronic controller is configured to open and close the first latching relay, the second latching relay, the third latching relay, and the fourth latching relay.

Other aspects of the disclosure will become apparent by consideration of the detailed description and accompanying drawings.

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a diagram of an exemplary implementation of a power distribution system.

FIG. 2A is a diagram of a latching relay, capable of being used in the power distribution system of FIG. 1, in an opened state.

FIG. 2B is a diagram of the latching relay included in FIG. 2A in a closed state.

FIG. 3A is a partial exterior view of the latching relay included in FIGS. 2A in an opened state.

FIG. 3B is partial exterior view of the latching relay included in FIG. 2B in a closed state.

FIG. 4 is a diagram of the power distribution system included in FIG. 1 when a first power source is connected to an electrical load.

FIG. 5 is a diagram of the power distribution system included in FIG. 1 when a second power source is connected to the electrical load.

FIG. 6 is a diagram of an exemplary implementation of an electronic controller included in the power distribution system of FIG. 1.

FIG. 7 is a flowchart of a method of selectively connecting either the first power source or the second power source to the electrical load in the power distribution system of FIG. 1.

FIG. 8 is a diagram of an exemplary implementation of an interlocking circuit for the automatic transfer switch included in FIG. 1.

FIG. 9A is a diagram of an exemplary implementation of an optical sensor and the latching relay included in FIG. 3A in an opened state.

FIG. 9B is a diagram of the optical sensor included in FIG. 9A and the latching relay included in FIG. 3B in a closed state.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Before any implementations of the disclosure are explained in detail, it is to be understood that the disclosure is not limited in its application to the details of construction and the arrangement of components set forth in the following description or illustrated in the following drawings. The disclosure is capable of other implementations and of being practiced or of being carried out in various ways.

Also, it is to be understood that the phraseology and terminology used herein is for the purpose of description and should not be regarded as limiting. The use of “including,” “comprising” or “having” and variations thereof herein is meant to encompass the items listed thereafter and equivalents thereof as well as additional items. The terms “mounted,” “connected” and “coupled” are used broadly and encompass both direct and indirect mounting, connecting and coupling. Further, “connected” and “coupled” are not restricted to physical or mechanical connections or couplings, and can include electrical connections or couplings, whether direct or indirect. Also, electronic communications and notifications may be performed using other known means including direct connections, wireless connections, etc.

It should also be noted that a plurality of hardware and software based devices, as well as a plurality of different structural components may be utilized to implement the disclosure. Furthermore, and as described in subsequent paragraphs, the specific configurations illustrated in the drawings are intended to exemplify implementations of the disclosure. Alternative configurations are possible.

The vast majority of automatic transfer switches used for emergency lighting systems fall into two categories. The first category includes switches that are designed to meet Underwriters Laboratories (UL) safety standard UL1008. These switches are large systems that typically include industrial contactors to switch electrical loads between primary and backup power sources. These switches are expensive and are typically designed for feeder-level transfer functions.

The second category includes transfer switches for branch circuits. Conventional branch circuit switches include standard relays (for example, electrically-held relays) to switch electrical loads between primary and backup power sources. While smaller and less expensive than general-purpose transfer switches, conventional branch circuit switches suffer from many shortcomings. Conventional branch circuit switches include designs that do not comply with the UL safety standard UL1008. Conventional branch circuit switches are not capable of handling high inrush current from lighting loads and can often fail due to contact welding at turn on. Further, conventional branch circuit switches employ switching schemes that can cause or allow electrical shorting between the primary power source and the backup power source.

The disclosure described herein relates to systems and methods of switching an electrical load (for example, light-

ing or emergency lighting) between a primary power source and a secondary (or backup) power source. FIG. 1 is a diagram of one exemplary implementation of a power distribution system 100. The power distribution system 100 illustrated in FIG. 1 includes a first power source 102, a second power source 104, an electrical load 106, and an automatic transfer switch 108.

The first power source 102 includes a line connection 110 and a neutral connection 112. In some implementations, the first power source 102 is a normal power source (for example, utility, primary). In some implementations, the first power source 102 is mains power having nominal line voltages between, for example, 90 Volts and 305 Volts AC and frequencies of approximately 50-60 Hertz (Hz). In some implementations, the voltage of the first power source 102 is equal to the voltage difference between the line connection 110 and the neutral connection 112 of the first power source 102.

The second power source 104 includes a line connection 114 and a neutral connection 116. In some implementations, the second power source 104 is an emergency power source (for example, backup, generator, auxiliary). In some implementations, the second power source 104 has nominal line voltages between, for example, 90 Volts and 305 Volts AC and frequencies of approximately 50-60 Hz. In some implementations, the voltage of the second power source 104 is equal to the voltage difference between the line connection 114 and the neutral connection 116 of the second power source 104.

In some implementations, the electrical load 106 includes, for example, a luminaire, a light fixture, a plurality of light fixtures, lighting, emergency lighting, or any combination thereof. In alternate implementations, the electrical load 106 includes other types of electrical loads. The electrical load 106 includes a line connection 118 and a neutral connection 120. In some implementations, the voltage supplied to the electrical load 106 is equal to the voltage difference between the line connection 118 and the neutral connection 120 of the electrical load 106.

The automatic transfer switch 108 is an electrical device that switches the electrical load 106 between the first power source 102 and the second power source 104. The automatic transfer switch 108 illustrated in FIG. 1 includes a first latching relay 122, a second latching relay 124, a third latching relay 126, a fourth latching relay 128, an electronic controller 130, a first voltage input 132, a second voltage input 134, a third voltage input, 136, a fourth voltage input 138, a first voltage output 140, and a second voltage output 142.

In some implementations, the voltage inputs 132 through 138 include input connectors, and the voltage outputs 140 and 142 include output connectors. The line connection 110 of the first power source 102 is electrically coupled to the first voltage input 132. The neutral connection 112 of the first power source 102 is electrically coupled to the second voltage input 134. The line connection 114 of the second power source 104 is electrically coupled to the third voltage input 136. The neutral connection 116 of the second power source 104 is electrically coupled to the fourth voltage input 138. The line connection 118 of the electrical load 106 is electrically coupled to the first voltage output 140. The neutral connection 120 of the electrical load 106 is electrically coupled to the second voltage output 142.

The first latching relay 122 is connected between the first voltage input 132 and the first voltage output 140 (i.e., between the line connection 110 of the first power source 102 and the line connection 118 of the electrical load 106).

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The first latching relay **122** has an opened state and a closed state. When the first latching relay **122** is in its opened state, the line connection **110** of the first power source **102** is disconnected from (i.e., not electrically coupled to) the line connection **118** of the electrical load **106**. When the first latching relay **122** is in its closed state, the line connection **110** of the first power source **102** is connected (i.e., electrically coupled) to the line connection **118** of the electrical load **106**.

The second latching relay **124** is connected between the second voltage input **134** and the second voltage output **142** (i.e., between the neutral connection **112** of the first power source **102** and the neutral connection **120** of the electrical load **106**). The second latching relay **124** has an opened state and a closed state. When the second latching relay **124** is in its opened state, the neutral connection **112** of the first power source **102** is disconnected from (i.e., not electrically coupled to) the neutral connection **120** of the electrical load **106**. When the second latching relay **124** is in its closed state, the neutral connection **112** of the first power source **102** is connected (i.e., electrically coupled) to the neutral connection **120** of the electrical load **106**.

The third latching relay **126** is connected between the third voltage input **136** and the first voltage output **140** (i.e., between the line connection **114** of the second power source **104** and the line connection **118** of the electrical load **106**). The third latching relay **126** has an opened state and a closed state. When the third latching relay **126** is in its opened state, the line connection **114** of the second power source **104** is disconnected from (i.e., not electrically coupled to) the line connection **118** of the electrical load **106**. When the third latching relay **126** is in its closed state, the line connection **114** of the second power source **104** is connected (i.e., electrically coupled) to the line connection **118** of the electrical load **106**.

The fourth latching relay **128** is connected between the fourth voltage input **138** and the second voltage output **142** (i.e., between the neutral connection **116** of the second power source **104** and the neutral connection **120** of the electrical load **106**). The fourth latching relay **128** has an opened state and a closed state. When the fourth latching relay **128** is in its opened state, the neutral connection **116** of the second power source **104** is disconnected from (i.e., not electrically coupled to) the neutral connection **120** of the electrical load **106**. When the fourth latching relay **128** is in its closed state, the neutral connection **116** of the second power source **104** is connected (i.e., electrically coupled) to the neutral connection **120** of the electrical load **106**.

FIGS. 2A and 2B are diagrams of one exemplary implementation of a latching relay **200** in the opened state and in the closed state, respectively. Unlike electrically-held relays which require a constant current supply to hold their positions, the latching relay **200** remains in its opened state or closed state without a holding current being supplied to the latching relay **200**. In some implementations, the latching relay **200** includes a 2 coils latching, 1 Form A (1A) latching relay. In some implementations, the latching relay **200** includes a miniature high power latching relay (for example, the HFE10 miniature high power latching relay from Honga™). In the implementation illustrated in FIGS. 2A and 2B, the latching relay **200** includes a relay **205**, a coil **210**, and a contact **215**. The latching relay **200** is in its opened state when the contact **215** is open (illustrated in FIG. 2A) and in its closed state when the contact **215** is closed (illustrated in FIG. 2B). The coil **210** includes a first coil that is energized to close the contact **215** of the latching relay **200** and a second coil that is energized to open the contact **215**

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of the latching relay **200**. The coil **210** also includes a plurality of terminals **220**, **225**, **230**. The electronic controller **130** selectively provides electrical signals between different combinations of the plurality of terminals **220**, **225**, **230** to energize the two coils. As an example, in some implementations, the electronic controller **130** sends an electrical signal between terminal **225** and terminal **220** to open the contact **215** and sends an electrical signal between terminal **225** and terminal **230** to close the contact **215**.

FIGS. 3A and 3B are partial exterior views of one exemplary implementation of the latching relay **200** in the opened state and in the closed state, respectively. In the implementation illustrated in FIGS. 3A and 3B, the latching relay **200** includes a lever **235** that is mechanically connected to the contact **215** of the latching relay **200** such that movement of the contact **215** causes movement of the lever **235**. In some implementations, the lever **235** is part of a manual switch included in the latching relay **200**. When the contact **215** is opened (i.e., the latching relay **200** is in the opened state (FIG. 2A)), the lever **235** is positioned at a first location, as illustrated in FIG. 3A. Alternatively, when the contact **215** is closed (i.e., the latching relay **200** is in the closed state (FIG. 2B)), the lever **235** is positioned at a second location, as illustrated in FIG. 3B.

The automatic transfer switch **108** has a first state (for example, a non-transferred state, a normal state, a default state) and a second state (for example, a transferred state, an emergency state). Referring to FIG. 4, when the automatic transfer switch **108** is in the non-transferred state, the coils of the first latching relay **122** and the second latching relay **124** are de-energized and the contacts of the first latching relay **122** and the second latching relay **124** are initially closed (the “closed state”) to connect (i.e., electrically couple) the first power source **102** to the electrical load **106**. The coils of the third latching relay **126** and the fourth latching relay **128** are de-energized and the contacts of the third latching relay **126** and the fourth latching relay **128** are initially opened (the “opened state”) such that the second power source **104** is disconnected from (i.e., not electrically coupled to) the electrical load **106**.

Referring to FIG. 5, when a transfer operation to the transferred state is commanded, as will be described below in more detail, the coils of the first latching relay **122** and the second latching relay **124** are energized to open the contacts of the first latching relay **122** and the second latching relay **124** to disconnect the first power source **102** from the electrical load **106**. Next, the coils of the third latching relay **126** and the fourth latching relay **128** are energized to close the contacts of the third latching relay **126** and the fourth latching relay **128** to connect the second power source **104** to the electrical load **106**.

FIG. 6 is a diagram of one exemplary implementation of the electronic controller **130**. In the implementation illustrated, the electronic controller **130** includes an electronic processor **605** (for example, a microprocessor or microcontroller), memory **610**, sensors **615**, a user interface **620**, one or more indicators **625**, and a communication module **630**. The electronic processor **605**, the memory **610**, the sensors **615**, the user interface **620**, the indicators **625**, and the communication module **630** are connected to each other by one or more control or data buses **635**, or a combination thereof. In alternate implementations, the electronic controller **130** may include fewer or additional components in configurations different from the configuration illustrated in FIG. 6.

In some implementations, the electronic controller **130** includes a plurality of additional passive and active com-

ponents such as resistors, capacitors, inductors, integrated circuits, amplifiers, or any combination thereof. These components are arranged and connected to provide a plurality of electrical functions to the automatic transfer switch **108** including filtering, signal conditioning, voltage regulation, or any combination thereof. For descriptive purposes, the electronic controller **130** and the electrical components populated on the electronic controller **130** are collectively referred to as the electronic controller **130**.

The memory **610** may include read-only memory (ROM), random access memory (RAM), other non-transitory computer-readable media, or a combination thereof. The electronic processor **605** is configured to retrieve instructions and data from the memory **610** and execute, among other things, instructions to perform the methods described herein.

The sensors **615** are operably coupled to the electronic processor **605** to determine, for example, the voltages supplied by the first power source **102** and the second power source **104**. In some implementations, the sensors **615** include voltage sensors configured to determine, for example, the voltage difference between the line connection **110** and the neutral connection **112** of the first power source **102**. In alternative implementations, the sensors **615** include current sensors configured to determine, for example, the current supplied by the first power source **102** on the line connection **110**.

In some implementations, the sensors **615** also determine the positions of the latching relays **122** through **128**. In other words, the sensors **615** determine whether each of the latching relays **122** through **128** are in the opened state or in the closed state. In some implementations, the sensors **615** include at least one optical sensor for each of the latching relays **122** through **128**. In alternate implementations, the sensors **615** may include other sensors to determine the positions of the latching relays **122** through **128**, such as, Hall Effect sensors, micro switch sensors, and electrical feedback sensors. In some implementations, the all or a portion of the sensors **615** are separated from the electronic controller **130**.

The user interface **620** is included to control the automatic transfer switch **108** or the operation of the power distribution system **100** as a whole. The user interface **620** is operably coupled to the electronic processor **605** to control, for example, when the automatic transfer switch **108** is in the non-transferred state or in the transferred state. The user interface **620** can include any combination of digital and analog input devices required to achieve a desired level of control for the system. For example, the user interface **620** may include a computer having a display and input devices, a touch-screen display, a plurality of knobs, dials, switches, buttons, faders, or the like. In some implementations, the user interface **620** is separated from the electronic controller **130** or the automatic transfer switch **108**.

The one or more indicators **625** (for example, light emitting diodes (LEDs) or a liquid crystal display (LCD)) indicate various statuses of the automatic transfer switch **108**. As an example, a first indicator may indicate when the automatic transfer switch **108** is in the non-transferred state and a second indicator may indicate when the automatic transfer switch **108** is in the transferred state.

The communication module **630** sends and/or receives signals to and/or from one or more separate communication modules. Signals may include, for example, information, data, serial data, data packets, analog, and fire alarm signals. The communication module **630** can be coupled to one or more separate communication modules via wires, fiber, and/or a wirelessly. Communication via wires and/or fiber

can be any appropriate network topology known to those skilled in the art, such as Ethernet. Wireless communication can be any appropriate wireless network topology known to those skilled in the art, such as Wi-Fi, ZigBee®, Bluetooth®, and the like.

The automatic transfer switch **108** determines when to place the automatic transfer switch **108** in the non-transferred state and in the transferred state based in part on the voltage of the first power source **102**. In some implementations, the electronic controller **130**, or more particularly, the electronic processor **605** executing instructions, performs or causes the automatic transfer switch **108** to perform the method **700** illustrated in FIG. 7 to selectively connect either the first power source **102** or the second power source **104** to the electrical load **106**. The method **700** is described in terms of the power distribution system **100** illustrated in FIG. 1 to provide one example. The method **700** may be applied to other power distribution systems and is not limited to the power distribution system **100** illustrated in FIG. 1.

In the implementation illustrated, the method **700** includes the automatic transfer switch **108** being in the non-transferred state (at block **705**). As described above, the first power source **102** is connected (i.e., electrically coupled) to the electrical load **106** and the second power source **104** is disconnected from (i.e., not electrically coupled to) the electrical load **106** when the automatic transfer switch **108** is in the non-transferred state.

The electronic controller **130** determines a voltage of the first power source **102** (at block **710**). In some implementations, the electronic controller **130** determines the voltage of the first power source **102** based on a voltage difference between the line connection **110** and the neutral connection **112** of the first power source **102**. In some implementations, the electronic controller **130** also determines a voltage of the second power source **104**.

The electronic controller **130** compares the voltage of the first power source **102** with a threshold (for example, a first threshold) (at block **715**). In some implementations, the first threshold is a minimum voltage required to provide adequate power to the electrical load **106**. As an example, when the first power source **102** is configured to supply a nominal line voltage of approximately 110 Volts AC, the first threshold may be set at 90 Volts. If the voltage of the first power source **102** is greater than the first threshold, the electronic controller **130** determines that the first power source **102** is supplying adequate power to the electrical load **106** and the automatic transfer switch **108** should stay in the non-transferred state. On the other hand, if the voltage of the first power source **102** falls below the first threshold, the electronic controller **130** determines that power supplied by the first power source **102** is insufficient for the electrical load **106** and the automatic transfer switch **108** should be placed in the transferred state. In some implementations, the electronic controller **130** determines that the automatic transfer switch **108** should be placed in the transferred state when the voltage of the first power source **102** is less than the first threshold for longer than a defined continuous period of time (for example, one second). In some implementations, the electronic controller **130** determines if a voltage of the second power source **104** is present and adequate (for example, greater than a threshold) before placing the automatic transfer switch **108** in the transferred state.

To place the automatic transfer switch **108** in the transferred state, the electronic controller **130** starts by disconnecting the first power source **102** from the electrical load **106**. In the example illustrated, the electronic controller **130**

first opens the first latching relay **122** (at block **720**) and then opens the second latching relay **124** (at block **725**) to disconnect the first power source **102** from the electrical load **106**.

The electronic controller **130** connects the second power source **104** to the electrical load **106** after disconnected the first power source **102** from the electrical load **106**. In the example illustrated, the electronic controller **130** first closes the fourth latching relay **128** (at block **730**) and then closes the third latching relay **126** (at block **735**) to place the automatic transfer switch **108** in the transferred state (at block **740**).

While the automatic transfer switch **108** is in the transferred state, the electronic controller **130** determines a voltage of the first power source **102** (at block **745**). The electronic controller **130** compares the voltage of the first power source **102** with a threshold (for example, a second threshold) (at block **750**). In some implementations, the second threshold is equal to the first threshold. In alternate implementations, the second threshold is not equal to the first threshold (for example, greater than or less than). As an example, the first threshold may be set to 85 Volts and the second threshold may be set to 90 Volts. If the voltage of the first power source **102** is less than the second threshold, the electronic controller **130** determines that the first power source **102** cannot supply adequate power to the electrical load **106** and the automatic transfer switch **108** should stay in the transferred state. On the other hand, if the voltage of the first power source **102** rises above the second threshold, the electronic controller **130** determines that power supplied by the first power source **102** is sufficient for the electrical load **106** and automatic transfer switch **108** should be placed in the non-transferred state. In some implementations, the electronic controller **130** determines that the automatic transfer switch **108** should be placed in the non-transferred state when the voltage of the first power source **102** is greater than the second threshold for longer than a defined period of time (for example, one second).

To place the automatic transfer switch **108** in the non-transferred state, the electronic controller **130** starts by disconnecting the second power source **104** from the electrical load **106**. In the example illustrated, the electronic controller **130** first opens the third latching relay **126** (at block **755**) and then opens the fourth latching relay **128** (at block **760**) to disconnect the second power source **104** from the electrical load **106**.

The first power source **102** is connected to the electrical load **106** after the second power source **104** is disconnected from the electrical load **106**. In the example illustrated, the electronic controller **130** first closes the second latching relay **124** (at block **765**) and then closes the first latching relay **122** (at block **770**) to place the automatic transfer switch **108** in the non-transferred state (at block **705**).

In some implementations, the automatic transfer switch **108** includes an interlocking circuit **800** which prevents simultaneous connection of the first power source **102** and the second power source **104** to the electrical load **106**. FIG. **8** is a diagram of one exemplary implementation of the interlocking circuit **800**. The connections between the latching relays **122** through **128**, the first power source **102**, the second power source **104**, and the electrical load **106** are omitted from FIG. **8** for illustrative purposes. In the implementation illustrated, the interlocking circuit **800** includes a plurality of position sensors **802** through **808**, a plurality of electrical switches **810** through **816**, and an interlocking controller **818**. In some implementations, as illustrated in FIG. **8**, the interlocking circuit **800** is separate from the

electronic controller **130**. In alternate implementations, the interlocking circuit **800** is included in the electronic controller **130**. In some implementations, the interlocking circuit **800** is a hardware-only electrical interlock which performs interlocking functions without any interaction with any form of software. As an example, in some implementations, the operation of the interlocking circuit **800** is unaffected by any software running in the electronic controller **130**. In other words, the electronic controller **130** and the interlocking circuit **800** operate independent of one another. Separate, hardware-only electrical implementations of interlocking functions (such as the example illustrated in FIG. **8**) are reliable and can avoid intense compliance testing required for software-based interlocking functions.

The plurality of position sensors **802** through **808** are configured to detect the positions (for example, opened and closed) of the latching relays **122** through **128**. As an example, position sensor **802** detects the position of the first latching relay **122**. In some implementations, the plurality of position sensors **802** through **808** includes optical sensors. In alternate implementations, the plurality of position sensors **802** through **808** may include other types of sensors to determine the positions of the latching relays **122** through **128**, such as, Hall Effect sensors, micro switch sensors, and electrical feedback sensors.

FIGS. **9A** and **9B** are diagrams of one exemplary implementation of an optical sensor **900** and the latching relay **200** (illustrated in FIGS. **2A** and **2B**). The optical sensor **900** includes a light emitting device **905** (for example, a light emitting diode (LED)) and a light detection device **910** (for example, a phototransistor, a photodiode, and the like). The optical sensor **900** is positioned relative to the latching relay **200** (for example, next to the latching relay **200**) such that the lever **235** is selectively positioned between the light emission device **905** and the light detection device **910** based on the position of the contact **235** in the latching relay **200**. When the latching relay **200** is in the opened state, the lever **905** is positioned such that it intercepts the output (emitted light) from the light emission device **905** to prevent it from being irradiated on the light detection device **910**, as illustrated in FIG. **9A**. Alternatively, when the latching relay **200** is in the closed state, the lever **235** is positioned such that it does not intercept the output from the light emission device **905**, as illustrated in FIG. **9B**.

Returning to FIG. **8**, the plurality of electrical switches **810** through **816** are configured to selectively prevent the electronic controller **130** from sending control signals to the state of the latching relays **122** through **128**. As an example, electrical switch **810** is connected between the electronic controller **130** and the first latching relay **122**. When electrical switch **810** is opened, a connection between the electronic controller **130** and the first latching relay **122** is broken and the electronic controller **130** is unable to change the state of the first latching relay **122**. When electrical switch **810** is closed, the connection between the electronic controller **130** and the first latching relay **122** is complete and the electronic controller **130** is able to selectively change the state of the first latching relay **122**. In some implementations, the plurality of electrical switches **810** through **816** includes transistors (for example, bipolar junction transistors (BJTs) and field effect transistors (FETs)). In some implementations, electrical switches **810** and **812** are replaced by a single electrical switch, and electrical switches **814** and **816** are replaced by a single electrical switch.

The interlocking controller **818** connects the plurality of position sensors **802** through **808** to the plurality of electrical switches **810** through **816** in a configuration that prevents

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the electronic controller **130** from simultaneously connecting the first power source **102** and the second power source **104** to the electrical load **106**. This configuration also prevents the electronic controller **130** from transferring the automatic transfer switch **108** between the non-transferred and transferred states in the event of a welded relay contact. In the implementation illustrated in FIG. 8, the interlocking controller **818** includes a first NAND gate **820** and a second NAND gate **822**. In alternate implementations, the interlocking controller **818** includes other logic-based elements. In some implementations, the interlocking controller **818** may include the components or a subset of the components included in the electronic controller **130**.

Position sensors **802** and **804** are electrically coupled to an input of the first NAND gate **820**. An output of the first NAND gate **820** is electrically coupled to electrical switches **814** and **816**. When both the first latching relay **122** and the second latching relay **124** are in the opened position, the first NAND gate **820** generates an output signal which causes electrical switches **814** and **816** to close. Otherwise, when either the first latching relay **122** or the second latching relay **124** is in the closed position, the first NAND gate **820** does not generate the output signal and electrical switches **814** and **816** are opened. Similarly, position sensors **806** and **808** are electrically coupled to an input of the second NAND gate **822**. An output of the second NAND gate **822** is electrically coupled to electrical switches **810** and **812**. When both the third latching relay **126** and the fourth latching relay **128** are in the opened position, the second NAND gate **822** generates an output signal which causes electrical switches **810** and **812** to close. Otherwise, when either the third latching relay **126** or the fourth latching relay **128** is in the closed position, the second NAND gate **822** does not generate the output signal and electrical switches **810** and **812** are opened.

As explained above, in some implementations, the electronic controller **130** determines a voltage of the first power source **102** based on a voltage difference between the line connection **110** and the neutral connection **112** of the first power source **102**. However, the difference between the line connection **110** and the neutral connection **112** of the first power source **102** may not represent the current maximum voltage potential that the first power source **102** is capable of supplying. As an example, when the first power source **102** includes a dimmer circuit, the voltage on the line connection **110** of the first power source **102** may represent the current output of the dimmer circuit, as opposed to the current maximum voltage potential that the first power source **102** is capable of providing. Therefore, in some implementations, the electronic controller **130** determines the voltage of the first power source **102** based on a voltage difference between the neutral connection **112** of the first power source **102** and a separate sense connection of the first power source **102**. As an example, in addition to a line connection **110** representing the output of the dimmer, the first power source **102** may also include a sense connection representing the current maximum voltage potential that the first power source **102** is capable of supplying.

In some implementations, the automatic transfer switch **108** includes a light sensor configured to detect a specific wavelength or a specific range of wavelengths of light (for example, red laser light). In some implementations, the electronic controller **130** is configured to switch the automatic transfer switch **108** from the non-transferred state to the transferred state for a predetermined period of time when the light sensor detects light (for example, five seconds). After the predetermined period of time elapses, the electronic controller **130** switches the automatic transfer switch

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**108** back into the non-transferred state. This feature may be used to initiate testing of the automatic transfer switch **108**, for example, when it is positioned in a remote location.

In some implementations, the automatic transfer switch **108** includes a manually-operable switch (for example, a pushbutton switch, a toggle switch, and the like). In some implementations, the electronic controller **130** is configured to switch the automatic transfer switch **108** from the non-transferred state to the transferred state for a period of time when the manually-operable switch is operated (for example, when the manually-operable switch is pressed). When the manually-operable switch is released, the electronic controller **130** switches the automatic transfer switch **108** back into the non-transferred state. This feature can be used to initiate testing of the automatic transfer switch **108**.

In some implementations, the automatic transfer switch **108** changes from the non-transferred state to the transferred state based on signals received via the communication module **630**. As an example, in some implementations, the automatic transfer switch **108** changes into the transferred state when the electronic controller **130** receives a fire alarm signal via the communication module **630**.

Thus, the disclosure provides an automatic transfer switch **108** and method for switching an electrical load **106** between multiple power supplies. Various features and advantages of the disclosure are set forth in the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. An automatic transfer switch comprising:

- a first latching relay having an opened state and a closed state, wherein a line connection of a first power source is connected to a line connection of an electrical load via the first latching relay when the first latching relay is in its closed state;
- a second latching relay having an opened state and a closed state, wherein a neutral connection of the first power source is connected to a neutral connection of the electrical load via the second latching relay when the second latching relay is in its closed state;
- a third latching relay having an opened state and a closed state, wherein a line connection of a second power source is connected to the line connection of the electrical load via the third latching relay when the third latching relay is in its closed state;
- a fourth latching relay having an opened state and a closed state, wherein a neutral connection of the second power source is connected to the neutral connection of the electrical load via the fourth latching relay when the fourth latching relay is in its closed state; and
- an electronic controller electrically coupled to the first latching relay, the second latching relay, the third latching relay, and the fourth latching relay, the electronic controller configured to
  - determine a voltage of the first power source,
  - connect the second power source to the electrical load when the voltage of the first power source is less than a first threshold, and
  - connect the first power source to the electrical load when the voltage of the first power source is greater than a second threshold.

2. The automatic transfer switch of claim 1, wherein the first latching relay is latched in either the opened state or the closed state without a holding current supplied to the first latching relay.

3. The automatic transfer switch of claim 1, wherein the second threshold is greater than the first threshold.

4. The automatic transfer switch of claim 1, wherein the first latching relay and the second latching relay are in their

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closed state when the first power source is electrically coupled to the electrical load, and wherein the third latching relay and the fourth latching relay are in their closed state when the second power source is electrically coupled to the electrical load.

5 5. The automatic transfer switch of claim 4, wherein the electronic controller is further configured to disconnect the second power source from the electrical load when the voltage of the first power source is greater than the second threshold, and  
10 disconnect the first power source from the electrical load when the voltage of the first power source is less than the first threshold.

6. The automatic transfer switch of claim 5, wherein the first latching relay and the second latching relay are in their opened state when the first power source is disconnected from the electrical load, wherein the third latching relay and the fourth latching relay are in their opened state when the second power source is disconnected from the electrical load.

7. The automatic transfer switch of claim 1, further comprising an optical sensor electrically coupled to the electronic controller, wherein the electronic controller is further configured to  
25 receive a signal from the optical sensor, and responsive to receiving the signal: disconnect the first power source from the electrical load, and  
connect the second power source to the electrical load.

8. The automatic transfer switch of claim 1, further comprising an interlocking circuit including:

a plurality of position sensors configured to detect positions of the first latching relay, the second latching relay, the third latching relay, and the fourth latching relay,

a plurality of electrical switches positioned between the electronic controller, the first latching relay, the second latching relay, the third latching relay, and the fourth latching relay, and

an interlocking controller electrically coupled to the plurality of position sensors and the plurality of electrical switches, the interlocking controller configured to selectively open and close the plurality of electrical switches based on the positions detected by the plurality of position sensors.

9. The automatic transfer switch of claim 8, wherein the plurality of position sensors includes at least one type of sensor selected from a group consisting of an optical sensor, a hall effect sensor, a micro switch sensor, and an electrical feedback sensor.

10. The automatic transfer switch of claim 9, wherein the third latching relay and the fourth latching relay are their opened state when at least one of the first latching relay and the second latching relay is in the closed state, wherein the first latching relay and the second latching relay are their opened state when at least one of the third latching relay and the fourth latching relay is in the closed state.

11. The automatic transfer switch of claim 1, wherein the voltage of the first power source includes a voltage difference between the line connection of the first power source and the neutral connection of the first power source.

12. A method of switching an electrical load between a first power source and a second power source, the method comprising:

determining, with an electronic controller, a voltage of the first power source;

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opening a first latching relay when the voltage of the first power source is less than a threshold, the first latching relay connected between a line connection of the first power source and a line connection of the electrical load;

opening a second latching relay after opening the first latching relay, the second latching relay connected between a neutral connection of the first power source and a neutral connection of the electrical load;

closing a fourth latching relay after opening the second latching relay, the fourth latching relay connected between a neutral connection of the second power source and the neutral connection of the electrical load; and

closing a third latching relay after closing the fourth latching relay, the third latching relay connected between a line connection of the second power source and the line connection of the electrical load.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the threshold is a first threshold, wherein the method further comprising:

opening the third latching relay when the voltage of the first power source is greater than a second threshold; opening the fourth latching relay after opening the third latching relay;

closing the second latching relay after opening the fourth latching relay; and

closing the first latching relay after closing the second latching relay.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the second threshold is greater than the first threshold.

15. The method of claim 12, further comprising: detecting, via an optical sensor, an optical signal; disconnecting, via the first latching relay and the second latching relay, the first power source from the electrical load in response to detecting the optical signal; and connecting, via the third latching relay and the fourth latching relay, the second power source to the electrical load.

16. The method of claim 12, further comprising: receiving, via an communication module, a signal; and disconnecting, via the first latching relay and the second latching relay, the first power source from the electrical load in response to receiving the signal; and connecting, via the third latching relay and the fourth latching relay, the second power source to the electrical load.

17. The method of claim 12, wherein the voltage of the first power source includes a voltage difference between the line connection of the first power source and the neutral connection of the first power source.

18. An automatic transfer switch comprising:  
a first voltage input electrically coupleable to a line connection of a first power source;  
a second voltage input electrically coupleable to a neutral connection of the first power source;  
a third voltage input electrically coupleable to a line connection of a second power source;  
a fourth voltage input electrically coupleable to a neutral connection of the second power source;  
a first voltage output electrically coupleable to a line connection of an electrical load;  
a second voltage output electrically coupleable to a neutral connection of the electrical load;  
a first latching relay selectively connecting the first voltage input to the first voltage output;  
a second latching relay selectively connecting the second voltage input to the second voltage output;



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a third latching relay selectively connecting the third voltage input to the first voltage output;  
a fourth latching relay selectively connecting the fourth voltage input to the second voltage output; and  
an electronic controller configured to open and close the first latching relay, the second latching relay, the third latching relay, and the fourth latching relay.

**19.** The automatic transfer switch of claim **18**, wherein the electronic controller is further configured to  
determine a voltage difference between the first voltage input and the second voltage input,  
open the first latching relay and the third latching relay when the voltage difference is less than a threshold,  
close the third latching relay and the fourth latching relay when the voltage difference is less than the threshold,  
close the first latching relay and the second latching relay when the voltage difference is greater than the threshold, and  
open the third latching relay and the fourth latching relay when the voltage difference is greater than the threshold.

\* \* \* \* \*

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