

Using IP-Based Video Management to Reduce Crime

How do you patrol nearly 2,000 households over a 7.2 square mile area? The Trenton Housing Authority (THA) in Trenton, N.J. was relying on 11 unarmed security guards to do the job, until it realized that, due to the prevalence of drugs and guns in the area, that method was dangerous for both the unarmed officers and the THA residents. The THA wanted to create a safer environment, where people could feel comfortable walking to and from their housing units, regardless of the time of day. THA officials also wanted to provide officers with tools that could help them become more efficient and effective.

“While the security guards were out in the street at all times, it was just not an effective way for us to see everything,” said Herb Brown, deputy executive director of the THA. “It was also better to get them out of harms way,” he added.

In existence since the late 1930s, the THA provides decent and affordable housing for low and moderate-income residents throughout the city of Trenton. For the past 30 years, it has served about 2,000 households. Today, the THA is an autonomous body that is chartered by the State of New Jersey, partially funded by the federal government and governed by a seven-member Board of Commissioners.

To solve its security challenges, THA had a full-scale security system installed by integrator ComTec Systems, Inc. of Vineland, N.J., using a video management system from Honeywell Video Systems.

SEEKING CONVERGENCE

In addition to keeping his security officers safe, Brown said that he wanted the new security video system to deliver a rapid and appropriate response to crimes and emergencies that took place on the THA property.

The housing communities are spread across multiple locations throughout the city, so Brown said he also wanted complete



The Trenton Housing Authority has increased operator productivity and reduced crime investigation through the installation of an IP-based video management system.

convergence of all THA video. He also wanted the video to be centralized so he could manage it more cost-effectively.

ComTec designed a wireless network to transmit security video, access and other data to a command and control center on THA headquarters. The wireless solution proved to be especially economical, Brown said, since it did not require putting fiber in the ground and trenching or digging up existing environments.

A piece of the installation is Honeywell's MAXPRO® VMS – a video management system that bridges the gap between analog and digital video systems.

Using the facility's existing video infrastructure, the system manages and presents video in a clear way. “The new command

center is not only a camera system, it is a whole security system,” Brown said. “It includes keyless entry systems so that our tenants can buzz people in. It also includes a number of different cameras totaling about 200 that can tilt and pan into areas.”

The control center is manned by two guards per shift, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with another guard in a car on patrol who can be quickly dispatched to areas where crimes are occurring. In addition, the system allows multiple operators to share incidents with other operators using drag-and-drop functionality. Brown said this increases operator productivity and reduces investigation time.

Brown added that the new system also allows his guards to send local police more information about crimes before they arrive on a scene. Police can go to the THA command center to view criminal activity, and camera shots can also be sent to a desktop in a patrol car, further aiding investigations.

Brown said that overall, he is pleased with the new system. Since its implementation, crime has decreased, and illegal dumping and unauthorized use of certain areas has also been significantly reduced. Most importantly, he said, the community feels secure, fulfilling the THA's mission to create safer communities for its residents. **SECURITY**

The Advantages of IP-based Video Surveillance

More companies, such as the Trenton Housing Authority, are installing IP video surveillance to monitor and secure large areas. The technology can offer real-time delivery of video and still images from a crime or emergency scene via a LAN or the Internet.

Other advantages include:

- Monitoring of multiple cameras from one remote location
- A better picture quality
- Digital images can be encrypted for security purposes
- Adjustable frame rates
- Remote or shared viewing can be done over the Internet or through a wireless connection
- The ability to add IP surveillance cameras individually or in groups.