

A Look at Advanced Physical Security: Westgate City Center

Not so long ago, state and local governments deployed and maintained separate networks and management systems for all of their physical security systems: video surveillance, building access controls, parking structure gates, and more. Now, by converging all physical security systems onto one network, organizations have increased their ability to protect people and assets and maintain business continuity.

Integrated Safety and Security

Consider Westgate City Center, a “city within a city” in Glendale, Arizona, with retail stores, restaurants, offices, and residences. The community already attracts more than 2 million visitors annually and eventually will have 7500 residents and 10,000 workers. One anchor is the 18,000-seat Jobing.com Arena, home to the Phoenix Coyotes National Hockey League team. Just 300 yards south of the complex is the 80,000-seat University of Phoenix Stadium, home to the Phoenix Cardinals National Football League team and site of the 2008 Super Bowl XLII. “The security of our tenants, residents, and guests is our highest priority,” says Mark Bell, director of security for Westgate City Center, a project of The Ellman Companies, a privately owned real estate corporation.

To support growth, the center’s planners knew they needed to supplement a staff of 25 full-time security officers with advanced physical security solutions such as video surveillance and building access controls. “Advanced security systems increase our appeal as a landlord and as a major events venue,” Bell says. “Our goal is to make sure that everyone who visits has a good time, knowing that they will be safe.”

Video Surveillance

For guidance on physical security requirements, Bell consulted with the Department of Homeland Security and the Arizona Counterterrorism Information Center as well as Benson Systems, an Arizona-based systems integrator. Benson Systems designed a Cisco® IP network infrastructure that would allow centralized monitoring and control of IP video surveillance cameras, access-card readers, parking structure gates, automatic pop-up barriers used to close roads, and intrusion detection systems.

Benson Systems was recognized for the Westgate City Center project with the 2008 Integrated Installation of the Year SAMMY Award from Security Sales & Integration magazine.

In the command center, security personnel can:

- Monitor the video from IP video surveillance cameras on a 45-inch LCD for crowd control, traffic flow, and incident detection.
- View video from specific areas of the property on one of eight 20-inch displays. “On days when we have thousands of guests onsite for an event such as Super Bowl XLII, we might focus our attention on our large parking lots,” Bell says. “On other occasions we might monitor specific entrance such as a parking garage elevator.”
- Use a joystick to pan, zoom, and tilt the cameras to focus on an area of interest if a tenant or security officer calls to report suspicious activity. Each camera has several preset configurations, so security personnel can just touch a button labeled with the name of a restaurant to immediately zoom in on that area.
- Compare video of a person entering a secured area to the photo associated with the access card used to gain entry. If the images do not match, the person might be an intruder using a stolen card.
- Record and play back surveillance video, which can be used as evidence if a crime occurs.
- Control other IP-based physical security devices such as pop-up road barriers and parking-structure gate controls.

Faster Response, Peace of Mind

The Cisco Physical Security Solution acts as a force multiplier, helping the Westgate City Center security staff monitor more areas without more people. Earlier this year, security staff in the command center noticed from a video surveillance camera feed that there was smoke in a parking structure, and was able to notify the fire department even before the fire alarm went off.

Advanced physical security systems support government goals for economic development by increasing the area’s appeal to businesses and residents. In fact, the Westgate City Center sales staff always brings potential tenants to the command center. “Tenants like the fact that we monitor 24 hours a day for suspicious activity,” Bell says. “I have had guests tell me that they feel very safe here.”

For More Information

To find out more about Cisco Physical Security solutions, visit:

www.cisco.com/go/physicalsecurity

To read more about the Cisco Open Platform for Safety and Security, visit:

www.cisco.com/web/strategy/government/national-open-platform.html



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