

Axis and NAVCO bring PGA tourney security up to par. Valero Texas Open uses hosted video solution to keep successful charity tournament running smoothly and without loss.



Organization:
Golf San Antonio

Location:
San Antonio, Texas, USA

Industry segment:
Leisure

Application:
Loss prevention and
crowd safety

Axis partner:
NAVCO

Mission

When the PGA Tour hosts the annual Valero Texas Open, its prestigious professional golf tournament in San Antonio, tens of thousands of fans turn out for the 4-day event. In 2011, Golf San Antonio (GSA), the local charity organization that runs the tournament, decided to augment its onsite security force, which includes sheriff's department officers and private security guards, with network surveillance cameras via a hosted video service. GSA felt that video surveillance at the TPC San Antonio AT&T Oaks Course would add an essential layer of protection to its security and loss prevention program.

Solution

Piggybacking on a temporary network infrastructure installed for the event by AT&T, security systems integrator and Axis partner NAVCO deployed eight Axis network cameras to monitor the main ticketing gates, merchandising tents, refreshment areas, golf cart storage area and staff parking lot.

Leveraging the AXIS Video Hosting System (AVHS) platform, the cameras streamed live across the network to NAVCO's Videometrixx.com cloud portal where the video was securely stored while being immediately available to tournament staff for review on demand.

Result

According to vendors, local law enforcement and the event's security contractor, the network cameras were such successful deterrents that any losses were negligible. The busy operations department also used the surveillance coverage to oversee countless activities simultaneously – such as cash handling issues at the ticketing booth as well as monitoring incoming bus traffic and bottlenecks with golf cart usage – to prevent any minor problems from escalating.

"With Axis cameras and NAVCO's hosted video services helping us prevent any major security issues, we avoided having to pay out insurance deductibles for damages or theft. And every penny we saved meant more money we could give to the charities we support."

Ted Kneale, tournament operations coordinator for the Valero Texas Open.

In April 2011, the Valero Texas Open raised more than \$9M for 180+ children's charities across the U.S., making it one of the largest fundraising events on the PGA Tour. GSA credited the success of the four-day event to the generous support of sponsors, business partners and volunteers who solicited pledges for every birdie made during the week. "In addition to providing a great entertainment experience for our spectators, we also had to protect the property entrusted to us by our business partners," shares Tony Piazzi, president and CEO for Golf San Antonio.

To keep the tournament incident-free, GSA relied on the local sheriff's department to direct traffic, oversee locker room and clubhouse security, as well as monitor crowd activity from its mobile command center. GSA also contracted with a private security firm to check bags and patrol the premises. Adding network cameras to the mix for the first time presented an interesting challenge since the temporary structures erected for the tournament (tents, concession booths, etc.) weren't built to support a typical surveillance installation. It was clear that a hosted solution made the most sense.

Providing an elegant, unobtrusive hosted surveillance solution

"We had to make sure not to disturb the beauty of the golf course without compromising coverage of the key security risk and loss areas," explains David McVicker, national account manager for NAVCO. According to McVicker, it would have been impractical to run cable all the way back to a recording site. Since all the Axis cameras supported Power over Ethernet, NAVCO was able to use short runs of Cat-5 cable from the cameras to the closest network modem or router temporarily installed for the tournament. Using AVHS, NAVCO streamed live video to a cloud-based storage server and provided essential personnel with a secure portal to access the video and gather actionable intelligence. "The One-Click Camera Connection feature made setup quick and easy," shares McVicker. "We just pre-programmed the camera IP addresses at our office so the minute we plugged them in they started streaming video to our hosting site at Videometrix.com."

Matching the camera to the task

NAVCO selected three different Axis outdoor-ready cameras to serve GSA's surveillance needs. Two AXIS P1346-E Network Cameras, with options for 3MP and 1080p HDTV performance, covered the golf cart parking area, main entrance and employee parking lot. "As a day/night camera, AXIS P1346 gave us great quality images 24 hours a day, which was especially important for the safety of GSA staff heading to their cars after dark," shares McVicker.

NAVCO deployed low-profile AXIS P3344-VE Fixed Dome Network Cameras at the admissions area and overlooking the registers in the Valero Corner Store. "We didn't have the room to mount cameras very high in these high-traffic areas," explains McVicker. "So we wanted to choose Axis models that were vandal-proof yet could provide GSA with a wide view."

NAVCO also mounted two highly visible AXIS Q6034-E PTZ Dome Network Cameras at the exit from the main tent, which housed the Valero Corner Store and the TPC Apparel Store, as well as atop the main hospitality venue.

Improving tournament operations

GSA and NAVCO have discussed ways they could use surveillance video to streamline operations next year, like improving security guard efficiency, keeping closer tabs on the golf carts rented for the tournament and tracking shuttle bus occupancy. "We have over 40 buses running from five pickup locations," explains Ted Kneale, tournament operations coordinator for the Valero Texas Open. "If I see an empty bus, I can cut it out of the schedule and save some money. Conversely, if a bus is packed, I can call the shuttle company to immediately add another bus to the route."

"We put a lot of hours before, during and after the tournament," says Kneale, "and we juggle hundreds of details at a time. With the Axis cameras and NAVCO giving us a turnkey hosted video service, it's made our hectic lives easier."



"The One-Click Camera Connection features of Axis network cameras made setup quick and easy. We just pre-programmed the camera IP addresses at our office so the minute we plugged them in they started streaming video to our hosting site. Tear-down was equally fast, just a matter of unplugging the cables and unscrewing the camera mounts." David McVicker, national account manager for NAVCO



NAVCO