

A healthy dose of parking lot security with Axis Communications. Good Samaritan Hospital uses Axis network cameras to ensure employee safety and vehicle security.



Organization:
Good Samaritan
Hospital

Location:
West Islip, New York,
USA

Industry segment:
Healthcare

Application:
Remote parking lot
surveillance

Axis partners:
A+ Technology
Solutions, IPVideo Corp.

Mission

When Good Samaritan Hospital Medical Center on Long Island, NY began construction of a satellite parking lot for employees, the location presented a surveillance challenge. The hospital wanted to stream video back to its security operations center for 24/7 monitoring but, with the lot several blocks from the main building, Good Samaritan couldn't incur the expense and disruption caused by trenching cable between the sites.

Solution

A+ Technology Solutions, a NY-based integrator and Axis channel partner, designed a wireless solution to transmit video from an array of Axis pan/tilt/zoom (PTZ) network cameras back to the hospital. A+ Technology connected an access control system for the parking lot gate to a Motorola PTP500 55MBPS Link and installed emergency call buttons at four bus shelters.

The latter allows employees to request a shuttle bus or report an emergency. The entire system is centrally controlled by an intuitive DynaView video management system (VMS) from IPVideo Corporation, an Axis application development partner.

Result

The network cameras augment the hospital's mobile security force that patrols the premises around-the-clock. Since video is monitored 24/7, if security receives an alert from a bus shelter, they can redirect the nearest camera to closely observe the situation while dispatching a patrol car. Embedded motion detection and auto-tracking features on the Axis cameras enable security to detect and follow trespassers and unauthorized motorists until a security officer arrives on the scene.

"There's such a vast difference in brightness and clarity between the Axis network cameras and the analog cameras we use elsewhere throughout the hospital. Even at night we can identify the driver and see if the car has an employee sticker."

Bill Fagan, director of security for Good Samaritan Hospital.

Diagnosing a security challenge

When Good Samaritan Hospital decided to construct a 750-space satellite employee parking lot several blocks from the main building, they wanted to install video surveillance to protect employees and their vehicles. Deploying analog technology at the new lot would require trenching cable to the main hospital or hardwiring the cameras to an intermediary building: An affiliated nursing home. The first option would have been expensive and disruptive, the second would negate the possibility of live monitoring.

A+ Technology Solution built a better alternative: AXIS 233D Network Dome Cameras mounted on existing light poles, connected by a wireless bridge. A relay atop the nursing home bounces the video stream to the main hospital, allowing security staff to view live images and remotely control the network cameras through a DynaView VMS. Also, the gated access control is connected through the Motorola wireless link so employees can communicate with security staff. To reduce bandwidth consumption, the system supports H.264, MJPEG and MPEG-4 compression.

Prescribing a new security protocol

Good Samaritan plans to migrate to a single unified IP-based surveillance system. "Right now we have 144 analog cameras on multiple DVR systems," explains Bill Fagan, director of security for Good Samaritan. "Sometimes with analog video you can barely make out a person in the car. With the quality of our new digital video system, we can now focus on a face, read a license plate or even an employee sticker on a car."

Fagan compares the difference to seeing an HDTV broadcast for the first time. The Axis network cameras perform well in daylight as well as under low-light conditions, and the ability to automatically track targets and manipulate PTZ controls remotely provides security staff with an edge they never had before.

By network-enabling its 144 existing analog cameras with AXIS Q7406 Video Encoders, the hospital manages all its streams through the VMS, eliminating the need for separate DVR units and minimizing equipment clutter in the security office. With H.264 and MPEG video compression, the hospital can afford to archive video for a month as opposed to the two-week storage policy of the analog system. "Our risk managers appreciate that," says Fagan, "because sometimes a claimant doesn't come forward until three weeks after an alleged incident. Now we have the video to validate or disprove the event took place."

By next year, the security office will relocate to a different wing of the hospital. "Instead of rerouting 144 analog cables, we'll encode the video and send it over the network," explains David Antar of A+ Technology Solutions. "That's going to be a huge cost savings for the hospital and give security a lot more functionality."

As legacy analog cameras begin to fail, Good Samaritan plans to replace them with network cameras. They also plan to install new network cameras throughout the hospital for better protection.

Boosting situational awareness

To improve situational awareness, A+ Technology Solutions programmed the DynaView system with a logistical overlay – either a Google Earth view or a parking lot blueprint – of each camera's location. Security can click on a camera icon and know exactly which video stream they're watching.

Once Good Samaritan moves to an all-IP system, the hospital can choose to give the Suffolk County Police Department temporary access to any camera feed in an emergency situation.

