

Guatemala Electric Company reduces material theft by over 90%.

A reliable solution with innovative Axis technologies is the key transformer to simplifying operations while ensuring safety and reducing costs.



Organization:
Guatemala Electric
Company INC. (GECINC)

Location:
Guatemala City, Guatemala

Industry segment:
Critical infrastructure

Application:
Loss prevention, remote
monitoring

Axis partners:
ASIS Corp., Milestone

Mission

Guatemala Electric Company Inc. (GECINC) distributes power to 845,000 customers in the City of Guatemala as well as the neighboring cities of Sacatepéquez and Escuintla. This requires 64 electrical substations and many customer service offices throughout the area, which creates numerous security challenges.

The current analog camera system was not sufficient for GECINC to monitor individuals entering and leaving the electric substations. The company also wanted to cover more areas and protect the perimeter of these substations with less resources, while minimizing cable theft that would cause power outages.

Solution

The decision was made to migrate from their analog surveillance system to a scalable IP-based solution. The video surveillance project began in 2009 with an Axis pan-tilt-zoom (PTZ) dome network camera. Following great success, the company now has 182 cameras.

The substations installed AXIS Q60 PTZ Network Camera Series and AXIS P13 Series fixed cameras with Axis Lightfinder technology. The customer service locations have a network of AXIS M10 Series, AXIS M50 PTZ, and AXIS M30 Network Camera Series.

Result

GECINC saw a tremendous return on investment by improving safety operations by 90% with 24/7 monitoring. Over the course of three years, the company also saw a 98% reduction in incidents and thefts at the substations.

“The Axis video surveillance system has helped us in monitoring trespassers, controlling the entry of unauthorized people and preventing property damage in the vicinity of substations.”

Juan José Molina Cifuentes, Security Chief, GECINC.

Lighting up the capital

Guatemala Electric Company Inc. (GECINC) distributes power to 845,000 customers in Guatemala City as well as the neighboring cities of Sacatepéquez and Escuintla. It has 64 electrical substations throughout the country and many public offices in the capital city.

The security department of GECINC works around the clock – 24/7, 365 days. It is responsible for reviewing the company's access control policies and processes for visitors and employees, monitoring those entering and leaving the substations, and performing regular alarm testing. The entire operation is managed from the Monitoring Center to bring all information from the cameras, security guards and other systems into one place to simplify security processes.

With an analog system in place, GECINC could not achieve the level of remote monitoring capabilities needed to address the growing challenges. The image quality was also too poor to properly identify employees through the video feed. This jeopardized the safety and security of substations and required additional mobile field personnel that were tasked with opening the doors for employees to access each substation.

Finding the right partnerships

Seven years ago, Alarms and Security Systems, Inc. (ASIS Corp.), a systems integrator and Axis Channel Partner in Guatemala, was introduced to the company's challenges and proposed Axis solutions to improve safety and operational efficiencies as well as decrease costs.

They recommended GECINC migrate to a new IP-based surveillance system. GECINC began the video surveillance project with an Axis PTZ network camera. Following great success, the company now has 182 cameras including AXIS Q60 PTZ Series and AXIS P13 Fixed Series Network Cameras with Axis Lightfinder technology for enhanced image usability and color images, even at night.

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The customer service locations utilize AXIS M10, AXIS M50 PTZ, and AXIS M30 Network Cameras. Working together, these cameras provide detailed, high-resolution images covering most of the office areas to maintain safety and security. Tying it all together is Milestone System's XProtect® video management software. It is installed on 3 Dell servers that store video for up to 45 days from all of GECINC's public service centers and substations.

The power of technology

GECINC saw a tremendous return on investment with a 90% improvement in 24/7 monitoring and security operations. This solution automated the company's security approach for employees going in and out of the substations. This is a huge improvement from before, where security officers drove around on motorcycles throughout the day unlocking the gates for employees. Now, the security team can identify, validate and grant access to people automatically using the network cameras. This reduced the number of security officers from 12 to four.

Over the course of three years, the company also saw a 98% reduction in incidents and thefts at the substations. Theft of materials, especially copper in remote areas, had a major impact, not only for the company, but also for the 4 million inhabitants that experienced blackouts. With the new security solution in place, the organization minimized inventory shrink to almost zero!

Stepping up with Axis

The Axis and Milestone solution far exceeded the expectations of GECINC. The company plans to implement IP speakers that can connect to the Axis network cameras. This will create a communication channel with employees at substations. At the same time, GECINC plans to implement new systems for data analysis with thermal cameras for temperature control in sensitive areas of the substations.

