

Broome County trusts Axis for modernized surveillance.

Broome County, NY deploys IP video surveillance to secure emergency radio towers, nursing homes, other essential services.



Organization:

Broome County

Location:

Binghamton, NY, USA

Industry segment:

Government

Application:

Safety and security

Axis partners:

Integrated Systems,
Qognify

Mission

Following a multi-million-dollar upgrade to the county's emergency radio towers, officials from Broome County, NY, located in the state's Southern Tier, quickly realized that additional protections would be necessary to keep these sites secured. Given the resources that were invested in the project, which included tower site expansions, radio equipment upgrades, and additional communications assets in support of the Emergency Management Services and Public Safety Departments, the county determined that stronger, more streamlined surveillance capabilities would be needed.

Solution

Integrated Systems, an Axis systems integrator partner, recommended that the county explore a number of surveillance products that would help secure both the tower sites and the equipment contained therein. Each tower site was armed with equipment capable of detecting motion at the perimeter, recording any activity, and saving the footage to a central data store rather than on-site storage.

PTZ cameras capable of zeroing in on and recording detected movement are an essential part of this solution, with cameras providing alerts to appropriate personnel in the event that unauthorized activity is detected. All camera feeds are managed through the Qognify Ocularis VMS Platform, which enables convenient remote management of both active feeds and archived video.

Result

The Axis products deployed at the Broome County radio tower sites have not only helped keep these towers safe from would-be trespassers but have saved countless manhours and other county resources due to a major reduction in false alarms. The ability to look in on live footage from these locations has helped to identify false alarms before unnecessarily deploying personnel to remote tower locations. Today, Broome County has expanded its use of Axis cameras beyond these radio tower sites, deploying them to help secure a local nursing home as well as the county sheriff's interview rooms.



Better equipment calls for better security

Broome County spans a particularly beautiful region of New York's Southern Tier region, with roughly 200,000 residents spread across more than 700 square miles. Maintaining efficient and effective emergency services across such a relatively rural area can be a challenge which is what prompted a massive upgrade to its emergency communications systems throughout the region. Nine radio towers received site expansions, equipment upgrades, and additional communications assets. Although these sites had not traditionally been a target for vandals, a number of recent incidents in public parks prompted Broome County officials to consider whether greater security was now warranted.

The county brought in Department of Homeland Security (DHS) officials to conduct an audit of the tower sites, and they identified a number of areas in need of improvement. One recommendation that came out of the audit was the need to upgrade the aging, analog cameras currently being used for on-site surveillance. DHS recommended upgrading to a more streamlined, easy-to-use IP camera system, and the county began exploring potential options. Integrated Systems, an Axis-authorized systems integrator often used by Broome and other neighboring counties, recommended exploring Axis Communications solutions, and county officials quickly found a number of products and solutions that fit their specific needs.

A highly tailored surveillance solution

The county's primary goal was to improve surveillance to protect against potential vandals or trespassers, but any solution would require both an "eye in the sky," capable of seeing everything on the long driveways leading up to the towers, and technology capable of detecting movement on the ground. To this end, the solution devised included not only network cameras, but a number of complementary devices as well. To protect the perimeter of each property, security radars were deployed, capable of detecting movement and alerting emergency services. These security radars were customized specifically for the county's needs, designed only to raise an alert if movement was detected within five feet of the property perimeter.

"In the past, a false alarm at a remote tower could result in a lot of wasted resources and manhours because we would have to send someone out to investigate," says Karen Andrews, the county's assistant director of information services. "Now false alarms are much rarer, and the ones that slip through the cracks can be remotely verified, or dismissed if it turns out to be a deer or a technician who forgot to call ahead."

PTZ cameras were also installed at each location and programmed to automatically pan, tilt, and zoom in on any movement flagged by the security radars. Once alerted to a potential trespasser, the system begins to record the activity and an emergency technician can view the live feed to determine whether it is necessary to deploy law enforcement or other personnel. Because officials knew that casting too wide a detection net would result in countless false alarms due to the rural locations of the tower sites, Axis was able to provide a more tailored approach to meet the specific needs and peculiarities of the tower sites.

Expanding beyond radio towers

Although Broome County originally sought to secure its emergency radio towers, it quickly became apparent that the solution could have potential benefits in other areas. Today, additional Axis products are deployed in the county's nursing home to help ensure the protection of its residents.





Because of their highly sensitive nature, all complaints registered within a nursing home must be investigated, and the installation of 360-degree cameras in hallway intersections and public areas have helped save countless manhours by quickly confirming or disproving many allegations. They have also helped with the investigation of incidents including slip/trip/fall cases, which are often extremely costly for healthcare facilities.

Most recently, network cameras have been deployed by the Broome County Sheriff's Department, which uses them to record video in its interview rooms. Because a certain threshold of video and sound quality must be met in order for footage to be used in court, the sheriff's department required cameras capable of meeting a high standard. Axis was able to provide the necessary high quality cameras, capable of quickly and easily being integrated into the county's existing system.

"We now have 200 cameras in 12 major locations throughout the county," says Andrews. "One of the greatest benefits is that we have been able to keep adding devices so easily."

Streamlining security through integration

Broome County chose the Ocularis VMS Platform by Qognify, an Axis Application Development Partner (ADP), to manage the feeds from the new cameras and enable the live look-ins that have proven so valuable. The platform provides video archiving, live viewing, activity notifications, and video analytics—a dramatic improvement over the on-site storage that most of the county's older, analog cameras employed.

Security had previously been routed through nearly a dozen different individual security teams and offices, and county officials often had to physically travel to retrieve recorded footage from the source. The elimination of this physical and financial burden has represented a major return on investment for the county.

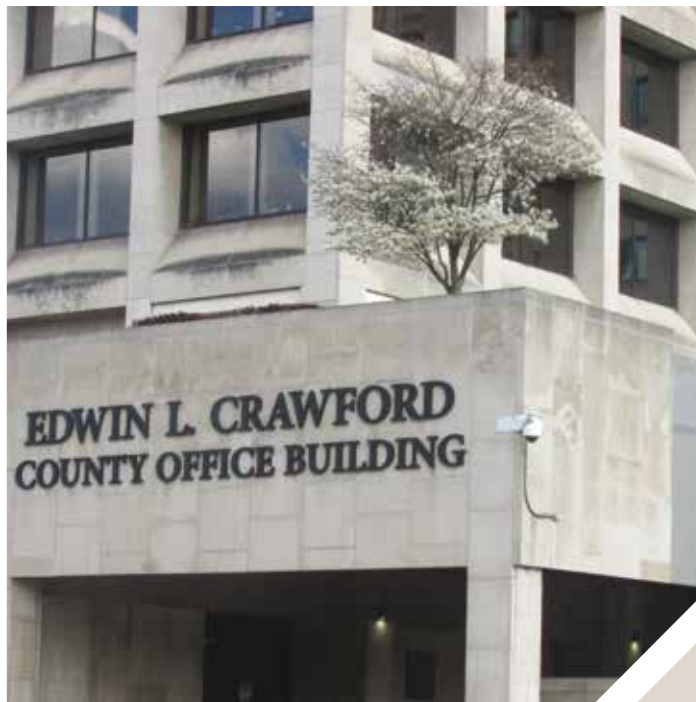
"To save money, the county decided to consolidate their needs and have one server in a county building," explains Dave O'Hare, director of business development, Integrated Systems. "Now the county exclusively uses Axis cameras."

"Previously, only the security department had access to the footage from the analog cameras," adds Andrews. "It would take a lot of time for staff to go to specific locations around the county, retrieve the footage, and sort through it for the requestor. Now we give authorized users access to the cameras they are responsible for, and they can find their own footage. The requestor gets access to it faster, and the security staff can do other meaningful work."

This centralization of security has had unexpected benefits, including the ability to integrate with individual towns. Because the city of Binghamton also uses Axis technology, the county's emergency dispatch center is able to view live streams from the city's surveillance cameras as well. As with the radio towers, this can often give emergency services personnel much-needed information about the situation on the ground.

"Previously, only the security department had access to the footage from the analog cameras, and it would take time for staff to go to specific locations around the county, retrieve the footage, and sort through it for the requestor. Now we give authorized users remote access to the cameras they are responsible for, and they can find their own footage. The requestor gets access to it faster, and security staff can do other meaningful work."

Karen Andrews, Assistant Director, Information Services, Broome County, NY.



About Axis Communications

Axis enables a smarter and safer world by creating network solutions that provide insights for improving security and new ways of doing business. As the industry leader in network video, Axis offers products and services for video surveillance and analytics, access control, and audio systems. Axis has more than 3,000 dedicated employees in over 50 countries and collaborates with partners worldwide to deliver customer solutions. Axis was founded in 1984 and has its headquarters in Lund, Sweden.

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