

Curtailing trespassing, trashing and gate-crashing with Axis. Texas gated-community improves security with Axis network cameras and live monitoring.



Organization:
The Vineyard
Homeowners
Association

Location:
San Antonio, Texas, USA

Application:
Gated-community
security

Axis partner:
Pro-Vigil

Mission

The Vineyard Homeowners Association (HOA) wanted to deter loitering and vandalism in its San Antonio gated community. Using an expensive guard service to patrol the area had proved ineffectual in stopping unlawful after-hours gathering, littering and vandalism at the three community pools. Nor did the guard service prevent residents and guests from damaging entrance gates when illegally tailgating other vehicles into the neighborhood.

Solution

Pro-Vigil, a San Antonio-based video surveillance company and Axis partner, installed an array of Axis HDTV network cameras around the Vineyard recreation center and at gated entrances. The cameras are connected to the company's proprietary I-Vigil monitoring software, allowing Pro-Vigil to remotely monitor live video over a secure web connection. They also installed a PA system to air warning messages pertaining to the activity being monitored by the Pro-Vigil security team.

Result

In the first week alone, Pro-Vigil used the Axis network cameras three times to help police identify and question teenagers trespassing in the pool area after hours. With the addition of PA-transmitted warnings to after-hour loiterers that the pool was closed and they were being monitored, the HOA has noticed a significant drop in late-hour partying and trashing of community property. Additionally, since installing Axis network cameras at the community's gated entrances, there hasn't been a single incident of gate ramming, saving on costly repairs normally passed onto community residents.

"Monitoring the Axis network cameras live and sending an appropriate warning message over the PA system typically helps us get mischief makers to leave the area before we have to call in local law enforcement."

Ben Molloy, vice president of business growth and development for Pro-Vigil.

Live surveillance delivers immediate ROI

"The Vineyard Homeowners Association hired us to keep live eyes on the pools and community entry points to prevent property damage," explains Ben Molloy, vice president of business growth and development for Pro-Vigil. "With Axis network cameras, we're able to verify activity to be more proactive in our response."

Pro-Vigil installed an array of AXIS Q1755 Network Cameras around the subdivision's recreation center, focusing them primarily on the three community swimming pools. The company also installed the Axis network cameras at each of the eight, two-lane gates into the community, using a Motorola wireless canopy to stream the video back to a server housed at the community center. Because the Axis cameras use H.264 compression, Pro-Vigil has been able to reduce bandwidth consumption while increasing the frame rate and continuously streaming live images with an enhanced clarity of more than two megapixels. The custom system uses a hybrid of AXIS Camera Station software for archiving and Pro-Vigil's I-Vigil software for live monitoring at night.

In the first week of site monitoring, Pro-Vigil called police three times to investigate teenagers trespassing in the pool area after-hours. "We use the cameras to verify whether the event is merely trespassing or a more serious crime," explains Molloy. If it's simply after-hours loitering, Pro-Vigil manually triggers a warning message to get trespassers to leave. The choice of messages can escalate to a siren, depending on the situation. If trespassers continue to ignore the warning, Pro-Vigil calls local police to apprehend the individuals.

"We try to get individuals out of the restricted area without involving the local police," shares Molloy. "The PA system warnings usually get them to leave and they typically don't come back."

HDTV network cameras easily identify culprits

"We chose the Axis high-definition day/night cameras because they work especially well in the evening hours when area lighting isn't exactly optimal," says Molloy.

According to Molloy, the HDTV quality of the images coupled with the camera's rapid auto focus capability made the Axis technology particularly appropriate for this environment.

"The AXIS Q1755 gives us excellent image detail," states Molloy. "We're able to get a clear image of a vehicle passing through a gate – detailed enough to see if the vehicle sports a resident decal on the rear window. Also, depending on the angle, we can often catch a partial or complete license plate number."

According to Molloy, the cameras have proved an outstanding deterrent for destructive behavior. There has been no gate damage since the Axis network cameras have been installed at the eight entrances. Given the frequency of repairs in prior years, this savings alone has justified the cost of the surveillance system. Should damage occur in the future, the archived video will help the HOA identify and charge the individual responsible rather than assess the repair costs to the entire subdivision.

Pro-Vigil keeps Vineyard safe, secure and vandalism-free

According to Jeffrey Kahl, board president of the Vineyard Homeowners Association, the previous guard service never seemed to be in the right place at the right time to deter incidents. "Live video surveillance costs us about one-quarter of what we paid roving patrols," states Kahl, "and it's been four times as effective in preventing criminal activity."

While some Vineyard residents initially expressed concern about the possible intrusiveness of live surveillance, Ben Molloy says the community has come to appreciate how Pro-Vigil and the Axis network cameras have helped keep their pools open. "In previous years, the facilities were forced to close periodically while maintenance staff drained and fished out beer bottles and broken furniture from the bottom of the pool," states Molloy. "I think residents of Vineyard are enjoying the fact that they have their pools open all season long."

