

Network cameras capture classroom lessons. Pass Christian School District uses Axis network cameras to promote security and academic excellence.



Organization:
Pass Christian School
District

Location:
Pass Christian,
Mississippi, USA

Industry segment:
Education

Application:
Security and
educational mentoring

Axis partners:
CameraWATCH
Technologies; Genetec

Mission

When Hurricane Katrina nearly obliterated the city of Pass Christian in 2005, the Mississippi Gulf School District faced a rebuilding project of enormous proportion. Two of its four schools had been reduced to rubble, one required extensive restoration and a fourth was significantly damaged and is being subsequently demolished and rebuilt. With new construction underway, school district administrators decided to take a proactive stance on school security by incorporating state-of-art surveillance in all of its buildings.

Solution

Axis partner CameraWATCH Technologies, a Jackson, Mississippi-based system integrator with extensive experience in network-based surveillance systems for schools, helped Pass Christian School District deploy an array of Axis network cameras at its newly-erected elementary and middle schools, administrative building

and daycare center. CameraWATCH is also working with the district to implement Genetec's Omnicast network video surveillance security solution as well as its Synergis IP access control solution as part of its comprehensive protective strategy.

Result

School officials can now track visitors entering and exiting any campus building as well as identify the license plates of vehicles in the vicinity of its schools and district office. Administrators feel the network cameras are serving as effective deterrents to disruptive behavior on school grounds. The district is also planning to use the network cameras to help outstanding teachers mentor their peers through live recordings of actual classroom activities that have led to high academic achievement.

"Though we've never experienced a serious incident in our schools, we feel our Axis network cameras will help us be proactive in maintaining a safe and secure learning environment for our students and teachers."

Dr. Teresa Burton, Technology Director for the Pass Christian School District.

Devastation leads to innovation

With only one elementary school left partially standing in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and a high school with the entire first level in ruins, classrooms were relegated to temporary trailers until new schools could be erected. Despite the less-than-ideal learning environment, standardized test scores show Pass Christian leading Mississippi in academic achievement, ranking in the top one percent of 152 school districts in the Magnolia State.

"One of the reasons we feel our student achievement is so high," says Dr. Teresa Burton, technology director for the school district, "is that we've been very proactive with our curriculum. Since we had to rebuild our schools anyway, we wanted to be equally proactive with security."

With no history of violence in the school district, administrators felt that the presence of state-of-the-art video cameras on campus would serve to remind students to continue conducting themselves appropriately. The cameras would also provide officials with a more efficient way to identify visitors and their vehicles.

Covering the hot spots

According to Burton, Axis network cameras give the district more control over surveillance because the IP-based technology can be easily managed and maintained by the technology staff already responsible for the school system's network infrastructure. It also allows administrators to access cameras from their PCs and retrieve video of an incident to see how it started and who was involved.

About 150 Axis network cameras will be deployed inside and outside of the four schools, the central administrative office and a daycare center being built through a grant from the Chevron Corporation. These include fixed dome and fixed outdoor cameras, both in VGA, megapixel resolution and the new HDTV cameras, as well as outdoor pan/tilt/zoom cameras to monitor the tempo-

rary classroom trailers. Almost 100 network cameras are being installed in the middle school and one of the elementary schools that shares the campus to cover every classroom and, hallway, the cafeterias, gymnasium, parking lots, athletic fields and the common courtyard.

Burton says that the cameras have shown administrators which students were carelessly leaving their lunch trays on the benches outside the high school and identified the likely culprits who scribbled messages on the bathroom mirror. "The Axis network cameras have led our students to think they can't do anything without us seeing them," she smiles. "So the surveillance system is keeping them on their best behavior."

Beefing up daycare center security

To provide extra security at the daycare center located on Center for Excellence campus that also houses Pass Christian's middle school and one of its elementary schools, CameraWATCH installed a Synergis IP access control solution from Genetec. This system complements the Axis cameras deployed throughout the building that are managed by the Omnicast system. Staff using a card to access the daycare center are captured on video and matched with their photo in the database. If a cancelled card is used or the face doesn't match the valid card, an alert with a video image of the individual is sent to the administrative office for immediate attention.

Best practices in the classroom

Pass Christian administrators plan to use the cameras in the classroom to enable the district's best teachers to help other teachers. "We have teachers at our high school whose students consistently score at the top of standardized testing in mandated subject area testing" shares Burton. "So we would like to share their lectures and classroom activities with other teachers as examples of best practices in the classroom." Burton feels the Axis cameras will help with curriculum development and boost achievement across the district and perhaps even the state.



Devastation in the wake of Hurricane Katrina

