Deterring misconduct in the city with Axis

City of Haverhill deploys Axis network cameras across sites and on an MRAP vehicle to discourage criminal activity

Organization:
City of Haverhill

Location:
Haverhill, Massachusetts, USA

Industry segment:
City Surveillance

Application:
Remote monitoring

Axis partner:
SideBand Systems
Milestone Systems

Mission

The City of Haverhill had an outdated camera system made up of products from various manufacturers, none of which were providing the Police Department with usable images or consistent coverage without issue. When an incident occurred in a local park during which video from a short distance away could not show any useful information to investigators, city officials deemed it necessary to procure a new solution.

Solution

Staff with the city called on Axis partner SideBand Systems, Inc. to come in and overhaul not only the camera system but also the networks that go with it. SideBand brought a high efficiency wireless network to the city to go with a fiber backbone, and cameras were and continue to be replaced on an ongoing basis with Axis network cameras streamed through Milestone XProtect® video management solution. The City of Haverhill needed a multitude of cameras for varying sites, like roadways, intersections, department facilities, the main police building, and parks among others.

Result

Police in Haverhill continue to be impressed not only with the clarity of the video that they are receiving but also with the consistency and reliability of the network overall. While before officers may have overlooked potential video evidence with fear that it did not exist or would not be clear enough, they now jump first to the video system to seek footage for reports and to solve any issues.

Keeping an eye on the roads

The City of Haverhill in northern Massachusetts has a population of roughly 63,000 and a downtown situated on the Merrimack River. With a popular historic district, the city had a mish mash of security camera systems operating for years that provided subpar and inconsistent video footage at times when evidence related to crimes and other happenings was of utmost importance. Countless street level cameras were not even usable.

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"The MRAP is just another vehicle in our arsenal. Overall, the Chief has been very happy with the clarity and reliability of these cameras, which were very questionable before we switched the old system out for these Axis cameras."

Ron Tuell, Network Administrator, Haverhill Police Department

The local police department called on Axis partner SideBand Systems to come aboard and do a major overhaul of both the camera system and the backend network for the city. The goal was to have a stable network and cameras that captured relevant and high quality footage to be used for investigative purposes. Among the first actions that SideBand took as part of this plan were to replace cameras citywide with a unified solution of Axis network cameras on Milestone XProtect™ Corporate video management software. This entailed over 120 cameras at intersections, parks, the main police building and further city facilities.

"An incident arose at one of the city parks and a camera, no more than 50 feet away, couldn't provide a usable image," described Jack Davis, CEO of SideBand Systems, Inc. "The next day, a selection of Axis cameras went up and police were immediately impressed with the quality of footage they could now capture to keep people safe.

Overhauling the network

The SideBand team implemented a 100mb wireless backbone throughout the city using half duplex radios on street poles to go with the 500mb capacity VLAN over the city's fiber network. With that, cameras were able to streamline back to the police building without issue from points across the city.

"Since stabilizing the wireless network, they are more reliant on the system," explained Rob O'Donnell, Manager of Engineering at SideBand Systems, Inc. "Before, if an accident happened and somebody wanted to pull video for a report, they couldn't count on video. Now, as soon as an accident occurs, they are asking for video. Officers have come to expect it since it's been reliable at all times."

All entrances by roadway in and out of Haverhill are covered in case of incident so that police can track traffic and identify any vehicle that comes or goes through the city. A prisoner transport van is wired with an AXIS F41 Main Unit and AXIS F1035-E Sensor Units that record all action when the vehicle is in use both inside and out. A separate mobile command unity uses an AXIS P1357 Network Camera on its 40-foot boom for additional security.

The city relies on the Milestone system as they monitor building cameras internally but primarily depend on the city cameras for reactive use. Administrators have access to Milestone Mobile to easily check in on cameras from phones and tablets remotely. An additional piece to the security puzzle for Haverhill police were spaces in their main building. Jail cells and the evidence room utilize AXIS M1124 while hallways, the sally port and fingerprint areas deploy AXIS P3367-VE for high resolution views with opportunity to grow down the line.

Cameras on the move

Taking advantage of the newer technologies available to them, city officials have begun deploying a Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle around the city at troubling spots as a strong deterrent to crime. The goal of the vehicle is to drive it to disconcerting locations around the city to let it sit, act as a warning and preventative measure and record its surroundings for 72 hours. Police envision using the MRAP at sites that tend to have more criminal action, potentially with gangs.

The MRAP utilizes a collection of technologies. Of the cameras on the outer body of the vehicle, an AXIS P3225-LVE is housed on the front for situational awareness, AXIS Q3505-VE are arranged on the passenger side to be focused on the main target area with Lightfinder capabilities and an AXIS F44 with two AXIS F1035-E can be found on that same side for further views. IR illuminators are also in place that can be operated remotely utilizing an AXIS P8221 Network I/O Audio Module to keep video high quality in the dark.

"The MRAP is just another tool in our arsenal," concluded Ron Tuell, Network Administrator with the Haverhill Police Department. "The idea came from other departments and is used as more of a deterrent. Overall, the Chief has been very happy with the clarity and reliability of these cameras, which were very questionable before we switched the old system out for these Axis cameras."

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