Brown County achieves wide-scale municipal safety with Milestone XProtect IP video surveillance

When Brown County decided to install a centralized surveillance solution throughout its government facilities, Milestone XProtect® Corporate video management software was deployed over the existing private communications fiber network to increase safety for its departments.

"We were able to develop a solution that combined multiple aspects, including the Milestone Federated Architecture™ and Agent Vi analytics to fit the broad needs of Brown County. The reliable, cost-effective and scalable nature of the Milestone XProtect platform allows the county's IT department, along with each department administration, to easily monitor government buildings for the safety of the community." – Tom Reminga, CTO, Technology Resource Advisors, Inc.

The challenge: Brown County, Wisconsin, was searching for a centralized video surveillance solution that could be administered by the county's IT department, while also allowing access to individual departments by respective managers. The local government's previous system was made up of disparate digital video recorder (DVR) systems, which were time and space consuming and could not be 100 percent relied upon during or after an event.

The solution: An improved IP video management system was designed to keep workers and the publicly owned property safe, with streamlined efficiency. The county installed a fiber communications network connecting government buildings, with a complete digital surveillance system in a significant number of government buildings, incorporating digital cameras from Axis Communications. Interconnected through Milestone XProtect Corporate video management software (VMS) with Milestone Federated Architecture, Brown County can now efficiently monitor public buildings - including the airport, museum, courthouse, library, community treatment center, jail and more. The Milestone open platform allows the value-adding integration of Agent Vi analytics software.

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The advantages: From the airport and courthouse to the museum, community treatment center or library - even to the solid waste facilities, Brown County personnel can keep these public government areas safe. The Milestone solution fosters more efficient staffing, decreasing the need and costs of physical security presence, while keeping a reliable eye on assets.

Comprehensive coverage needs
Brown County, Wisconsin covers 530 square miles and is home to the American football team - the Green Bay Packers, 13 townships, nine villages and two cities. Recently, the county fitted its buildings with a top-tier fiber communications network to ensure uninterrupted contact for day-to-day business. When looking to upgrade its video surveillance system, Brown County Information Services searched for a solution that would not only integrate seamlessly with the existing fiber network, but one that would also provide efficient, high-resolution digital surveillance to manage the varied safety needs of the publicly owned facilities.

With departments scattered throughout the area, the ideal solution would allow administration controlled, restricted access to video from specific areas, enabling all departments to share video, providing fast and efficient views of security related events. A video management system that offered easy integration with value-adding, third-party systems and multi-phase scalability for a future-proof investment was required to meet these demands.

Technology Resource Advisors, Inc. (TRA) of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, carried out the county-wide installation, deploying Milestone XProtect Corporate, designed for large-scale, multi-site installations, with support for an unlimited number of cameras and users.

"When the information came through our department from TRA about Milestone's IP open platform allowing analytics integrations and other security systems for access control, we were very impressed," states Kevin Raye, Network Support Manager, Brown County. "Everything - including the pricing and the fact that Milestone's technology is compatible with a large variety of cameras - helped us in our final decision to choose this surveillance solution."

Full scale system
"From a user standpoint, the Milestone XProtect system is especially great for Brown County," stated Carrie Borofka, programmer/analyst for Brown County. "As an administrator of the software, I turn it on and quickly open up to the Milestone XProtect® Smart Client and see the entire system, log in, and we're good to go."

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For users logging in from multiple sites, the central administrators securely and rapidly allow or deny access to views as needed. For example, the community treatment center is a state-licensed psychiatric facility, where surveillance may be used for medical instances – more than just security. Patient privacy concerns are considered, so the assigned roles set up in the system mean that unauthorized users are blocked.

When it came time to roll out the system, Raye, as the head engineer, worked to ensure the cameras were properly installed and calibrated. TRA provided and deployed the Milestone solution, as the 'brains' of the operation, according to Tom Reminga, CTO, Technology Resource Advisors, Inc.

The system's storage capabilities give the flexibility to determine video backup on a camera-by-camera basis. For example, the county can use license plate video captured in conjunction with the data from the application to verify a customer's bill at the solid waste transfer station. A minimum of 30 days of full video backup is kept for the entire county, and can be adjusted if archived images are required for longer periods. Video can be pruned to use a much lower frame rate – similar to a series of digital photographs.

A centralized setup
With a system so dispersed throughout the fourth-largest county in Wisconsin, it was imperative for Brown County to have its surveillance needs centralized, but also available for each department to monitor and export video.

The first phase of the networked camera installation implemented the Milestone VMS system in nine of the departments. Austin Straubel International Airport (the third largest in the state), the community treatment center, courthouse, jail, public libraries, Neville Public Museum, the Northern Building, sheriff's department and the Sophie Beaumont Building all are equipped with Milestone XProtect Corporate and connected through the Milestone Federated Architecture.

"We were able to develop a solution that combined multiple aspects including Milestone Federated Architecture and Agent Vi analytics to fit the large-scale needs of Brown County," states Reminga. "The reliable, cost-effective and scalable nature of Milestone allows the county's IT department, along with other department administration, to easily monitor government buildings for the safety of the community."

Analytics aid the airport
Throughout Austin Straubel International Airport, the county has implemented an analytics system from Milestone Solutions Partner, Agent Vi, integrated with the Milestone system. A previous brand of analytics had multiple issues caused by failing hardware and inefficient software.

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Rather than stationing transportation security administration (TSA) agents or security guards at additional checkpoints in the airport, Vi-System, Agent Vi's real-time detection and alert software, monitors the video footage for predefined security and safety events and scenarios. When an event is detected an alert is sent to the Milestone system, which triggers various actions including live video pop up of the relevant camera.

Agent Vi's analytics are used in various applications at Austin Straubel airport, including sterile zone monitoring whereby Vi-System detects movement by people in restricted areas and alerts security personnel of such events. With polygons being drawn in certain regions in the video images, the security operator is immediately notified if anyone passes through a restricted area. This enables an immediate response in line with the level of threat associated with the event.

The runways also use Axis thermal IP cameras to monitor the movement of airplanes, service vehicles and personnel. Vi-System analyzes the images provided by the thermal cameras to differentiate between people, vehicles and static objects. In this case, Vi-System has been predefined to detect and alert when there are people present in a vehicle-only lane, while disregarding the movement of vehicles in that area. This eliminates the need for a physical presence by the security team in the area of interest. The corresponding notifications are sent in real time to the Milestone system, allowing an appropriate response as the event unfolds.

Improved operations
Having a centralized IP video surveillance solution provides Brown County new levels of security that improve operational processes and protects the investments of the hard-working community.

Training the personnel at Brown County for their new surveillance technology was performed by TRA over numerous one or two hour sessions. "The Milestone platform is very user friendly, so each session went quite smoothly," stated Reminga. "Instructing the team on multiple situations, changing views and differences between administrative duties were easily explained and absorbed quickly by all involved."

To both TRA and Brown County, it was very important to know the system could scale up protection and service, whether adding more cameras or additional software with Milestone's future-proof system. They continuously weigh the options of expanding the county's monitoring system, researching which departments can use Milestone.

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Technical components
A vast range of 177 digital IP cameras, which are run through VMWare's virtual desktop software, are installed throughout the county, including network cameras manufactured by Axis Communications.

About Technology Resource Advisors, Inc.
Technology Resource Advisors, Inc. (TRA) combines real world law enforcement, access control, video surveillance, and information technology experience to deliver best-in-class IP-based physical security solutions to protect the environment and assets of our clients. Our full service IP physical security offering includes all of the key components required to build and implement the proper solution: site survey, system design including bill of materials, procurement of components, physical installation, configuration, training, and ongoing system management. Technology Resource Advisors, Inc. delivers a first class experience for our clients as a result of our commitment to excellence, attention to detail, and passion for success. For more information or to contact us, visit: www.technologyresourceadvisors.com

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