City of Birmingham, Alabama

The Challenge

Efficiently and cost-effectively increase safety and security with limited security personnel in sprawling downtown area of Birmingham, Alabama

The Solution

Use of VideoIQ intelligent video surveillance cameras throughout the downtown core, installed, managed and monitored by ION Interactive; Team of remote guards leveraged to cost-effectively extend reach of existing security staff

The Result

Instant detection and notification of suspicious behavior, enabling guards to evaluate the situation and dispatch police immediately to prevent crime and keep city streets safe and secure

Birmingham is the largest city in the State of Alabama, spanning 151 square miles and boasting a downtown population of nearly 230,000. Like any major city, Birmingham has its share of crime and vandalism. To help combat this and provide a safe environment for residents and visitors alike, the city has taken a number of measures including provisioning the installation of 40 video surveillance cameras throughout the metropolitan area.

In early 2008, The Office of the Mayor hired systems integrator ION Interactive Video Technologies to install surveillance cameras in various outdoor locations across the city. ION specializes in Internet Protocol- (IP-) based security solutions for businesses and organizations of all sizes, including municipalities.

The city also tapped ION for its trained professional agents who remotely monitor all of the installed cameras from the company's own control center. Agents instantly notify the Birmingham Police Department of any potential threat or suspicious behavior, and the police immediately step in to respond and handle the situation.

Ed Welden, CEO of ION, said, "ION provides state-of-the-art solutions to assist in keeping cities, public-access areas and government facilities safe, secure and protected…24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Our monitoring agents help to facilitate a quicker response to nearly any situation, providing a high degree of security and safety on city streets."

As part of the installation, ION chose to work with cutting-edge digital camera manufacturer VideoIQ. VideoIQ is the inventor of the iCVR, an intelligent surveillance camera with built-in video recording. ION initially chose the iCVR for its ability to monitor for and detect crowds, something the city wanted to keep a particular close eye on.

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"A large crowd can often accompany trouble and the iCVR's next-generation analytics can automatically detect when a certain number of people are congregating in a specific area. This gives us advance warning of a potential problem and enables the police to respond before an incident takes place. Additionally, with built-in audio over IP, our remote guards can use loudspeakers to inform intruders they've been detected — driving them off and preventing crime," said Welden.

> *"The City of Birmingham places the safety and security of its residents and tourists as its foremost priority. ION's proactive approach to security combined with the power and accuracy of the VideoIQ iCVR provides a level of security protection we are proud to deliver."*
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> - Ed Welden, CEO, ION

ION also chose the VideoIQ iCVR for its ability to capture images and store them at the edge network. The iCVR intelligently controls storage resolution based on what it sees; a potential threat such as a car in a restricted area or someone lurking near a store front is recorded at the highest possible resolution and quality, alerting guards and providing them with the ability to quickly ascertain the situation and respond appropriately. During times when nothing is taking place, the camera captures images at a lesser quality, allowing the built-in 80 GB hard drive to store one to two months worth of video and ultimately saving money.

"Because ION is actively using the VideoIQ cameras in addition to just installing them, we can be considered a customer of VideoIQ as much as the City of Birmingham. We are very pleased with the performance of the iCVR and consider it a cost-effective and very efficient solution," said Welden.

The cameras have been up and running in the city since August 2008. In early 2009 more cameras are scheduled to be installed in the downtown area, replacing the city's older cameras that have limited functionality. ION also has plans to layer some of the city's PTZ (Pan Tilt Zoom) cameras with the VideoIQ iCVR, giving ION's video technicians the dual ability to zoom in on an event or person of interest and view them with the iCVR's exceptional image resolution.

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