

Milestone IP video surveillance protects a national historic treasure: Hotel Northampton.

“We have implemented the new solution for the security and safety of our guests and employees. The state of the art system is the key to the prevention and documentation of an event. The Milestone surveillance software, along with Viocen’s value-added contributions, delivers a system that is extensible to address emerging security needs.”

- Mansour Ghalibaf, General Manager at the Hotel Northampton in Massachusetts.



Challenges

The historical architecture and preservation requirements made it impossible to run coaxial cables for an analog surveillance system. In addition, esthetic demands required the use of inconspicuous video cameras that could blend in with the elegant interior décor.

Solution

Viocen Inc. has installed a wireless IP video surveillance system with Milestone XProtect Professional software managing cameras from Axis Communications and Toshiba, set up both indoors and outdoors. Viocen is also implementing wireless door sensors that are integrated with the surveillance system, triggered to record on activation.

Benefits

The Hotel Northampton is now well protected with an efficient, cost-effective and easy to use IP video surveillance system that suits the special environment requirements, and is scalable for handling any future needs.

Northampton, Massachusetts, lies in the foothills of the Berkshire Mountains, bordered by the Connecticut River, equidistant from Boston and New York City. Known as an intellectual and artistic community, it is a vibrant cultural center and the focal point of five colleges: Smith, Mount Holyoke, Amherst, Hampshire, and the University of Massachusetts.



In the heart of the town is the Hotel Northampton, established in 1927. As a member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, it is registered as one of the valuable Historic Hotels of America, representing the heritage and development of the nation. The carefully preserved architectural beauty, historic richness and charm of this gracious hotel reflect founder Lewis Wiggins’s love for the Colonial Revival style and antique furnishings. Wiggins Tavern, established in 1786, was moved from Hopkinton, New Hampshire, and reassembled on the hotel site in 1930.

Today the Hotel Northampton is an elegant, full service hospitality establishment with 106 guest rooms, multiple restaurants, bars, function rooms and ballrooms. 120 employees take care of 50,000 visitors yearly.

Securing the protection of all assets

The Hotel Northampton did not previously have any surveillance system. Since July 2005, their security has been managed with Milestone XProtect Professional and network video cameras from Axis Communications and Toshiba. As a satisfied customer of Viocen Internet Services for more than three years, the hotel fully trusted this partner's recommendations for the IP network approach.

The security and safety of the guests and employees is the primary objective of the new surveillance system, with the protection of historically preserved architecture and antiques an added benefit. After the new IP system was installed, an incident did occur for which the recorded material was used to identify the perpetrator and resolve the matter.

Unique installation needs

The historic qualities of the hotel that lend it special charm also brought a unique challenge for the installing Milestone partner and expert systems integrator, Viocen Inc.

"Due to the spread out layout of the hotel and the antique nature of the building, in some locations it was impossible to install any kind of wiring," explains Bill Mitchell, VP Sales and Marketing at Viocen Inc. "The IP network is therefore a combination of wired CAT5, fiber optic transmission and wireless."

"That's right: because of the hotel's antique architecture and preservation requirements, it was impossible to run coax lines. The wireless IP cameras were the only solution. Due to the esthetic requirements, we also had to use inconspicuous cameras that blended with the interior settings," adds Merhdad Sheik, VP of Engineering & Clients Services at Viocen. "The cameras are predominantly from Axis Communications but we added other manufacturers' models to meet the customer's specific requirements. Because we ended up with a mixed multi-vendor camera environment, Milestone was the best and the only choice."



Integration with wireless door sensors

The Milestone XProtect software was selected not only for its support of the widest choice in network hardware, full feature set, and robust, reliable operations, but also because its open platform allows savvy partners like Viocen to integrate with other devices.

In addition to cameras in the public areas of the hotel, the system will also monitor nine fire exit doors by using wireless sensors attached to those doors and the use of the ADAM 6060 I/O device for alarm generation and event handling of the images in the software.

"We are integrating wireless door sensors that are fed directly into the closest IP cameras, 200 meters away from the Milestone Network Video Recorder. This would have been totally non-feasible or very costly with analog cameras and DVRs," states Merhdad Sheik.

"We are very satisfied with the Axis cameras in terms of quality and performance. All the cameras are set up through the XProtect software to record on motion into the image database, and the Axis 231D Pan Tilt Zoom camera auto-patrols the parking area," says Bill Mitchell. "We also utilize the control mechanisms in the cameras to respond to an event such as a door open alarm or motion. This event triggers a visible notification on the Milestone screen to alert the operator of the event and to view the feed from the responding camera. Without the IP camera system, they would have to dispatch an employee into an unknown situation to respond to the event. Now they have instant visual assessment and recorded video of the situation prior to dispatching the individual. The operator can now make a sound judgment to respond or alert the proper authority. This allows the hotel to better protect its guests and employees."



User friendly and remote access

The hotel's front desk personnel, as well as the security staff, are using the Milestone XProtect software to manage the surveillance. Only the General Manager has been given the rights to the remote access capability so far, using the full XProtect Remote Client software. A training session was scheduled for all of these employees.

The system users can receive alerts or see overviews of alarms, view live or recorded images from all of the cameras simultaneously, search and quickly find any activity archived in the server's database. Images can be exported to share with local authorities, if necessary.

"The Milestone Software is a very powerful and easy to use video solution," confirms Bill Mitchell. "Viocen is extremely pleased to be working with Milestone. It is a great solution, but just as important, it comes from an organization that provides outstanding support for its partners."



About Historic Hotels of America

National Trust Historic Hotels of America (HHA) is a program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation based out of Washington D.C. HHA has identified 210 quality hotels that have faithfully maintained their historic architecture and ambience. To be selected for this program, a hotel must be at least 50 years old, listed in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, or recognized locally as having historic significance. Learn more at <http://www.historichotels.org/Page=About>.

See also www.hotelnorthampton.com, www.viocen.com, and www.milestonesys.com.

