



GTSI Video Surveillance Solution Helps Public Housing Residents Feel Safer at Home

U.S. public housing authorities face many conflicting budget and service demands in providing safe havens for at-risk communities. One major northeastern housing authority, supporting approximately 40,000 residents with more than 1,000 employees and an annual budget of more than \$200 million, recently faced an even more daunting challenge to this core mission—how to reduce drug-related criminal activity that was preventing low-income residents in four key developments from living in stable, secure communities.

Despite originally having a long waiting list of qualified residents and families, potential residents had become so wary of crime and violence plaguing the four developments that occupancy rates in the communities had fallen well below the city's mandates. Because funding for police presence at those facilities was based on the occupancy rate, fewer residents meant fewer program dollars for protection.

How did they break the circle? One option was a video surveillance solution, already at work for more than 10 years in the city's downtown area, and helping to reduce both the incidence of crime and the police patrol budgets traditionally required to protect the area.

Installing multiple remotely controlled pan/tilt/zoom (PTZ) surveillance cameras at each housing development, linked to a central command center, would address the problem. But how to deploy the solution affordably and quickly, without having to establish a long-term purchasing contract, was a real challenge.

Using wireless networks and cameras to build security

As the U.S. Communities contract's exclusive IT provider, GTSI was uniquely positioned to deliver the multi-point surveillance solution with contract terms that made sense for the authority's needs and budget.

First, the GTSI team worked closely with the police department to determine the number of cameras, camera placements, and angles of view around the four developments to insure coverage would be comprehensive. The team also pinpointed the need for a wireless data infrastructure that would replace the limitations of traditional cable-based analog surveillance with the rapid scalability and labor saving cost benefits of a totally wireless solution.

The installation included 92 PTZ cameras networked into a fully scaleable point to multipoint (PMP) wireless network. In order to wirelessly transport the huge volume of video data across the city, GTSI installed an FCC-licensed 23GHz microwave

backbone on the rooftops of high-rise buildings owned by the housing authority. The entire system was designed to limit potential conflicts with other wireless transmissions in the area; thereby improving the quality of the video transmissions. What's more, GTSI tied the solution into a single central headend, which allowed attending officers to adjust the signal quality on the fly to compensate for environmental changes or to maintain high-quality surveillance.

Expanding wireless network and video surveillance solutions into new areas raises levels of safety and security

GTSI provides the housing authority with three levels of maintenance and warranty support. Tier 1 support is available 24x7x365 and gives the customer a single point of contact. Under a tier 1 service level agreement, GTSI troubleshoots and logs issues and escalates trouble tickets to tier 2 support, as appropriate. With tier 2 support, GTSI's technical

experts attempt to resolve any issues remotely. If onsite support is necessary, the issue is escalated to tier 3, at which point a work crew will be dispatched to the customer location. GTSI also provides an enhanced service that includes proactively monitoring the housing authority's network to look for outages and then notifying GTSI's support services of the outage via e-mail to initiate an immediate response.

GTSI not only brought in the wireless solution well within the agency's limited budget, it also delivered the entire project to "go live" status in just seven months—far shorter than the two-year timeline projected for a traditional cable-based solution. Since the initial project, the housing authority has come back to GTSI to extend this success to other low-income housing developments throughout the city.

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