

IP Video Surveillance Success

Municipal Airport



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- Joe Sousa, Public Services Director for Los Banos.



The Los Banos Airport in Northern California is operational on a 24-hour basis with automated fuel service available to customers around the clock. Security fencing surrounds the airport and access is provided to users by an automated gate.

The Public Services Department of the city of Los Banos performs the airport maintenance and operation. Financial support for the airport is primarily from income generated by hangar rentals, land leases, tie-down fees, and aviation gas sales. The airport also receives an annual grant from the state that is used for maintenance and operations, with safety items having first priority in the allocation of funds.

In 2003 Ojo Technology installed an IP video surveillance system using Milestone XProtect software with Sony SNC-RZ30N network cameras at the Los Banos Airport.

Ensuring safety, supplies and payment for facilities

Joe Sousa, Public Services Director for Los Banos, says “We monitor for general safety and security – it makes the customers feel safe knowing there’s video surveillance. We have a helicopter school that’s active every day and they like knowing it’s there. We can keep track of whatever is going on at the airport and make sure there are no unauthorized people using the facilities. I can also use it to recover costs if people ‘forget to pay’ at the fueling station.”

The main impetus for getting the surveillance initially was the non-payment from people using the airport. The lounge is open 24 hours a day for those flying in, using the runways or hangars. They are supposed to pay their fees each time they use the airport, but there is no full-time person on site to do this collection and the voluntary setup was not working well enough.

“We have set up the Milestone software to run surveillance 24x7, recording with speed-up on motion. We can see the registration numbers on the planes and send the users a bill if they don’t pay,” explains Joe.

Remote access advantages

The city officials have also discovered that the surveillance setup is useful for keeping an eye on the fuel gage via remote access to see when they need to call for re-fueling service, instead of having to send someone out to check it. This saves time and money for management while providing better customer service, ensuring that gas supplies are always available.

Tony Aguirre, IT Director for the city of Los Banos, remembers another positive application for the IP surveillance: “We used the system to make sure the contractor who was re-paving had his people coming in on time to do the work properly – it was a big project. He could see the benefits for better management of his employees during the job, including the option for remote log on to the system to keep track of the progress without having to come out to the site every day.

Surveillance that can take the heat

The Los Banos Airport is using Sony network SNC-RZ30N cameras mounted on special ‘cool domes’ for handling the extreme California heat: these cameras are customized with thermo electric heat exchangers to maintain a maximum internal dome temperature of approximately 95 degrees for optimal performance.

“Otherwise, the internal domes could zoom to 140-150 degrees in the dead heat of the California summer,” says Mike Maddox, Vice President at Ojo Technology.

The cameras are set up on a patrol schedule to cover the areas of the facility that include the hangars, the fueling station, the landing zone, and the gate. Tony says they also want to set up a stationery camera on top of the main building for pilots to be able to log on and see the location’s weather there before they come in to land.

“The city electrical contractors installed the conduit and pulled the electrical wires, then we went in to set up the cameras, install the software and the rest of the system,” recalls Mike Maddox. “We gave Tony a tutorial on everyday management of the Milestone XProtect software then he was up and running with it right away.”

Secure, easy to use, reliable and stable

“The PC-based network video recorder provides more than 600 GigaBytes of usable storage (4x200 GB hard disk drives), with 4 drives configured for RAID level 5. This means that the airport can handle nearly a month’s worth of recordings and that if any one hard drive fails, he’ll be able to recover his data,” explains Mike. “The airport is accessed remotely through a firewall-protected DSL connection, so they have secure remote access to their surveillance images.”

Joe Sousa likes to look around the airport grounds for maintenance, using the surveillance daily to check the facilities via remote access. If there’s an issue, he calls Tony, like one time when the DSL connection went down.

Tony reports that he likes the Milestone software usability and navigation, that it’s simple and easy to use from the administration standpoint, the playback functionality, and the remote access: “I love being able to look at it from the web. Best of all, the software is

really stable – it’s only been down once when we had a power outage that brought down the system. Joe Sousa called me right away and I ran over to get it up in operation again.”

IP setup is future-proof

The Los Banos Airport is a general aviation municipal airport with a 3,000’ X 75’ runway and a full return taxiway. There are currently 24 aircraft based at the airport, and plans include expanding the number of hangars by another eight T-hangars, and one 120 foot x 85 foot corporate hangar.

The latest Airport Master Plan was completed in 1995 and covers the planned expansion and projected use of the airport for a period of 20 years, like extending the runway with another return taxiway, automating the weather station, and acquiring property adjacent to the airport for further expansion.

“We’re also talking about the possibility of moving to another location for the airport, but the beauty of the IP setup is that we can easily re-use the equipment and scale it for the new site. We’ll get Ojo Technology to help us again with those expansions,” concludes Tony.

IP for emergency services, too

The city of Los Banos can see many more uses for IP video surveillance, like managing public safety. They would like to expand for more coverage throughout the whole city, with a totally wireless system to help law enforcement by using the surveillance from police cars, setting up cameras in the parks.

“We could catch vandals with the remote cameras and monitor the water meter centers, too. The city is going to be building a new water tower and we’d like to put surveillance in for that,” concludes Tony.

About Ojo Technology

Ojo Technology specializes in installation of IPVS systems for local government agencies and educational institutions. Ojo IPVS experts provide consultation, a detailed site survey and design, timely installation, comprehensive training of administrators and key users of the equipment, and full maintenance and support services.

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