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Ever wanted to know the ins and outs of all the decisions behind a \$10 million security installation at a major casino resort complex? Take a rare peek inside the process of bringing together client, installer and manufacturer via a month-by-month account of the systems upgrade at Minnesota's Mystic Lake Casino Hotel.

By Robert D. Grossman

President

R. Grossman and Associates Inc.
 rdgrossman@tech-answers.com

CASE STUDY IN BRIEF

Subject: Video security system and access control upgrade at Mystic Lake Casino Hotel and Little Six Casino in Prior Lake, Minn.

System: Consolidation of three control rooms into two; matrix-switch replacement; addition of digital recording for 1,800 cameras; and integration of legacy equipment budgeted at \$10 million

Installing Company: Southwest Surveillance Systems

Location: Las Vegas

Years in Business: 15

Editor's Note: When writing an installation profile, the author's best hope is to give the reader the impression he or she is a passive participant in the project. The story is told as a description of events based on interviews with the various participants. It's an effective way to tell a story and one used on many occasions.

With this story, we had the unique opportunity to involve the reader in the project — not just as an observer, but also as a participant. The author was truly an "insider," with more than 14 years of experience working with Mystic Lake Casino Hotel and the adjacent Little Six Casino, in Prior Lake, Minn., as a trusted

advisor, team member, and friend. He is describing events that he helped shape, and the only way to effectively do that is by telling the story in the first person.

When it became a federally recognized tribe, the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community (SMSC) gained the right of self-determination and self-sufficiency. Most importantly, it gained the right to the dignity that comes with sovereignty.

For that reason, SMSC bears a burden of responsibility when it comes to protecting the patrons at its casinos and the assets those gaming facilities bring to the tribe. That was the thinking behind SMSC's recent renovation of the

Integrity Waters of Mystic Lake

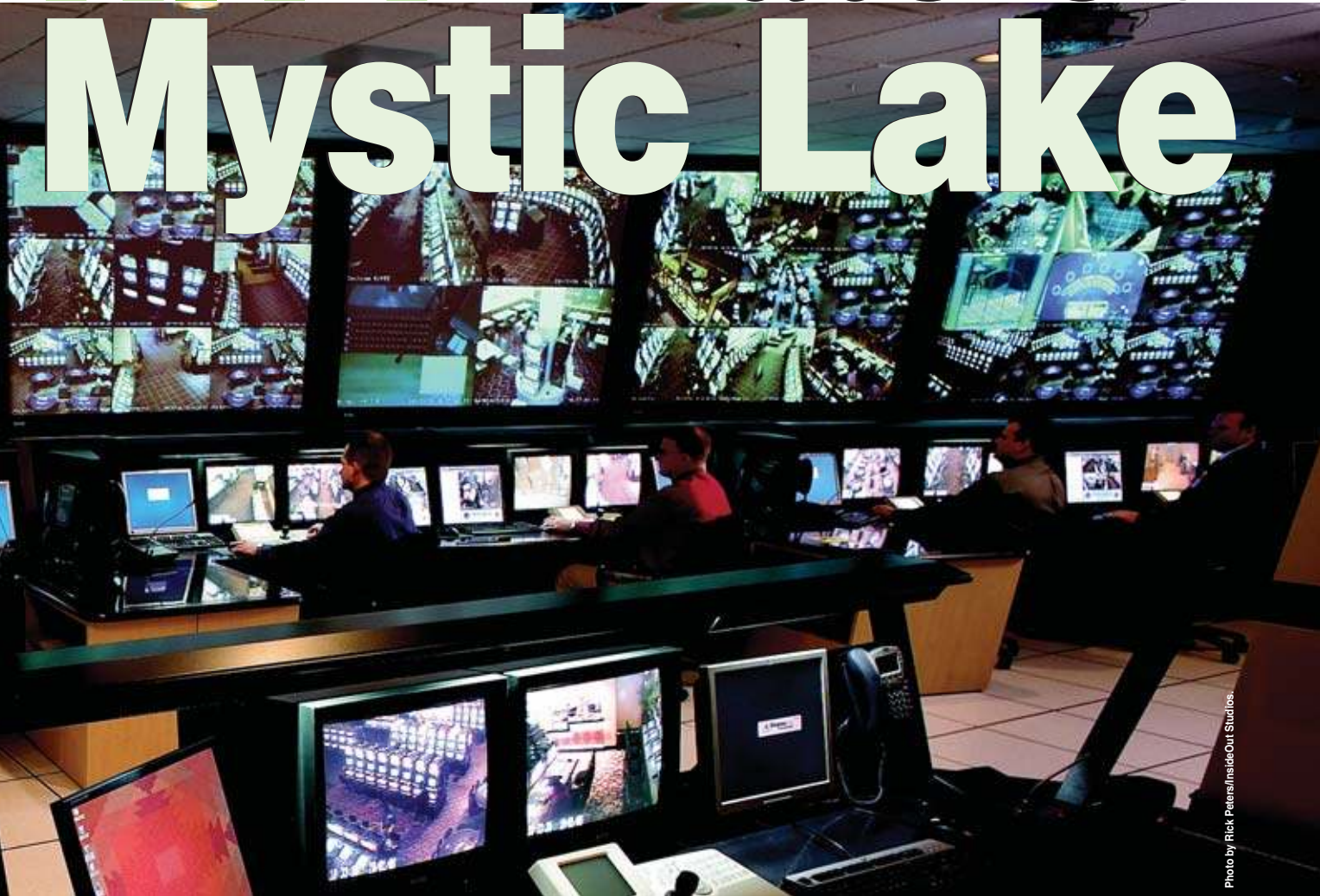


Photo by Rick Peters/InsideOut Studios

video surveillance and access control system serving its Mystic Lake Casino Hotel and Little Six Casino facilities in Prior Lake, Minn.

"Integrity is the lifeblood of a gaming facility such as ours," says Scott Scepaniak, corporate compliance officer for the SMSC Gaming Enterprise, which oversees gaming operations at the two facilities. "If we expect our patrons to maintain confidence in our games, we need to maintain the highest possible standards. By protecting our customers and our owners — the tribal community — we protect our reputation and our future."

On the side of security was community management that was recep-

tive to do whatever it took to get the job done, regardless of cost. While the scope of the project ahead seemed daunting, advance planning proved to be a huge advantage when it came to challenges that arose during the installation. The end result marks a new era in how Mystic Lake protects its patrons and the reputation of SMSC.

Sovereignty Puts More Responsibility on Security

When the federal government formally recognized SMSC as an Indian tribe under federal reservation status in 1969, it marked the beginning of a new era. The Minnesota and Mississippi River Valleys had been home to

the Dakota Indians for centuries, but it had been a history filled with conflicts and broken treaties.

In 1982, Tribal Chairman Norman Crooks brought Indian gaming to Minnesota with the opening of the Little Six High Stakes bingo parlor. After the passage of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA), Little Six expanded in 1988 with slot machines and blackjack, becoming Little Six Casino.

Four years later, a second casino complex was opened roughly a mile down the road named Mystic Lake. The "Mdewakanton" portion of the tribal name translates to "Dwellers of Spirit Lake" or "Mystic Lake." The facility has grown to include 4,250 slot machines,

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Surveillance Director Richard Thake surveys the control room plans before the arrival of the console and video screens. The gray fabric components on the lower portion of the video wall are acoustical panels that dramatically reduced sound reflection, making the room quieter and more comfortable for long shifts.

100 blackjack tables, 600 hotel rooms, five restaurants, a star-caliber show-room and the high-stakes bingo that gave the place its start.

Self-sufficiency was not easy and the tribe takes its sovereignty, and its security, seriously.

What had started out as a state-of-the-art video security system when the facility was built was starting to show its age.

Richard Thake, director of surveillance, and James Arsenault, surveillance technical supervisor, had long been tasked with running the day-to-day video surveillance operations. The two had been evaluating digital video systems since 1999 and saw first-hand the tremendous increases in video quality, reliability and operational features.

At the same time, they were well aware of the downward trend in pricing — as hard drives and computer equipment became less costly — and the penalties sometimes paid by companies that adopted technologies too early. While they were anxious to incorporate the features that a digital recording system could bring, timing was everything.

"We found ourselves in the midst of a 'perfect storm.' Construction projects and the pace of expansion were

adding cameras and we had already exceeded the capacity of our American Dynamics matrix switch, forcing us to use satellite switches to accommodate the added inputs," Thake explains.

"Our surveillance control room needed to be relocated to make room for expansion of the employee dining area. With the added features that a digital system would provide, we felt

we had a compelling story to take to the board of directors."

Tribal Community Weighs Cost of Digital CCTV System

While the upper management team and the SMSC Board of Directors had always been very proactive when it came to surveillance and security, the dollar amount gave cause for concern for Scepianiak, who is responsible for surveillance, security and internal audits of SMSC's gaming facilities.

"We were looking at a \$10 million budget, including the system and associated costs such as room construction, power, HVAC, and all the other incidentals," Scepianiak says.

Instead of shooting the idea down, however, he found an audience that was very receptive and not afraid to make the investment. "They had been encouraging us all along to investigate digital and other technologies," Scepianiak remarks. "Their position has always been to use the best tools possible to ensure a proactive approach to regulatory monitoring, compliance and enforcement."

In fact, SMSC management tasked Scepianiak and his team to expand the design to include future growth, as well as video monitoring of other community operations. →



Since digital video servers and RAID storage vents from front to back, vertical racks in the new rack room were left open to improve air flow and avoid heat pockets, which can reduce the lifespan of hard drives.

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The determination to invest the resources for a state-of-the-art digital system is consistent with the commitment and emphasis on regulatory compliance by the community and Gaming Enterprise. This is illustrated by the dedicated staffing of nearly 300 team members within the departments of surveillance, security and internal audit that are responsible for the operations that provide for the security of assets, game protection and the safety and welfare of patrons and team members.

In addition to the internal regulatory efforts, the community maintains an independent gaming commission with a staff of 30 regulators that oversees compliance with the regulations and minimum internal control standards that govern the operation of the two gaming properties.

Scope of Project Included Consolidation, Expansion

The expanded scope of the work began to take shape.

There would be two command centers — one for security and one for surveillance — but these would now function more like operation centers, tying in cameras from around the community. These included cameras from the



Photo by Rick Peters/InsideOut Studios

Richard Thake, director of surveillance for the Mystic Lake complex, sits inside Mystic Lake Casino Hotel's new security command center. Thake was satisfied that most, if not all, of the items on his "wish list" were fulfilled.

three parking garages, the Little Six Casino, a new water treatment facility and various other buildings.

A third "muster room" would serve as an emergency gathering point in the event of a natural or manmade disaster. An unprecedented level of integration would be required, interconnecting video surveillance and recording into a host of other systems

that included fire, intercom, building controls, access control, and various proprietary gaming systems.

All of this would be manned continuously by a staff of more than 40 security dispatchers, surveillance specialists, managers and supervisors — even a full-time departmental trainer to keep the team up to speed on the new technologies they would be using.

The natural assumption would have been for Mystic Lake staff to begin the process of planning and designing their system, issuing the request for proposal (RFP), selecting a vendor, and moving the project along. With very few exceptions, this was how projects were handled at Mystic Lake. After all, they had a five-person technical crew led by Arsenault.

Thake and the surveillance team knew exactly what they wanted to accomplish and they had the full support of upper management. What was holding them back?

For the first time since the property was built, Mystic Lake wanted to use the services of an electronic security consultant. "We wanted someone who had been there, and done that," explains Arsenault. "We were confident in our ability to technically evaluate the various products, but we wanted someone to bring an outside perspective." →

From Vision to Reality



Image courtesy Winsted

This graphic conception was produced by Winsted to give casino management, consultant and installers a look at how the main Mystic Lake control room would look.



Photo by Rick Peters/InsideOut Studios

The finished product shows that while there may have been some tweaking along the way — including a change in trim colors and a switch from rear to front projection screens — advance planning paid off toward realizing the vision of what Mystic Lake management expected in a revamped system center.

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Another factor was the time involved. To plan and manage a project of this size would have taken their focus away from their primary operational responsibilities, and they were not willing to cut corners in either area.

"There would not have been enough hours in the day to attend to the level of detail required," says Thake. "And," he adds with a smile, "I wanted someone on my team if things went wrong — and who had enough invested to make sure things *didn't* go wrong, no matter what."

So, a full two years before the project was substantially completed, I spoke with Thake about the project. I had recently started an independent design, project management and consulting company, and was already working on a project similar to Mystic Lake for the

Foxwoods Casino Resort in Connecticut (profiled in the September 2004 issue of *Security Sales & Integration*).

I had a history with Mystic Lake as well, having designed and project-managed its initial system and first major expansion in the early 1990s. With a new business that needed to build a solid, positive reputation, I was properly motivated to ensure that nothing went wrong.

In March 2004, five years after Mystic Lake started looking at digital systems and more than a year before construction could begin, R. Grossman & Associates began working with Mystic Lake on the most complicated project any of us could have imagined.

We were going to consolidate three control rooms into two and move them to another part of the building, replace



Photo by Ron Woods/Southwest Surveillance Systems

Matrix switch input wiring is carefully labeled and dressed by Southwest Surveillance Systems technician Jayhu Bryant. Since the amount of wiring in this rack will make removal of individual connectors difficult, each line is triple-checked and fed from a distribution amplifier that can be used as a troubleshooting patch point.

How a Thorny Storage Issue Was Resolved

“When we met in Las Vegas at the project kickoff meeting, I could look around the room and see how important this project was to everyone,” says Scott Harkins, vice president of sales for North America at Honeywell Video Systems. “I was thrilled to be a part of this team and was there to make sure that Honeywell kept our end of the bargain.”

I stressed at that meeting that our relationship would not be adversarial and that we would all work as a team to solve all problems on behalf of our mutual client, Mystic Lake.

I had spent enough time on the other side of the table — as a manufacturer, integrator and end user — to understand how many consultants worked. There would be no long-winded disclaimers or finger-pointing contests. Our goal was to prevent and/or solve problems, and we all shook hands on that concept and set it into practice.

Harkins had a chance to prove himself less than four months after that meeting. As with many digital systems, there had been a miscalculation in the amount of storage required for the project.

The finger-pointing began: Mystic Lake had changed some of their storage requirements between the RFB (request for bid) stage and actual construction. Honeywell had not made the ramifications of such changes clear. R. Grossman & Associates and Southwest Surveillance Systems had doubtlessly contributed to the misunderstanding, and it looked like things were going to deteriorate rapidly.

What happened next was unusual in my career, but definitely the result I will be looking for on future projects.

Harkins and I sat down in my office in New Jersey and completely ignored the “how we got here” portion of the problem. We discussed alternatives and came up with a way that Mystic would get the additional storage it needed.

Honeywell would provide a portion of it to satisfy short-term requirements as part of the system package while Mystic Lake can purchase more at a future date when it is needed. We went back to our respective sides, confirmed the terms, and a deal was struck within a few days.

After our meeting, I reviewed the specification I had written for Mystic Lake. There was not one word in that specification that allowed the shifting of blame. No language that pushed anticipated costs onto an unsuspecting integrator to protect the consultant. I had hoped that with the right team in place, even in this day and age, that would not be necessary.

With a client like Mystic Lake, manufacturers like Honeywell and integrators like Southwest Surveillance Systems, I am happy to have been proven right.



Photo by Ron Woods/Southwest Surveillance Systems

Installing the new equipment in the existing rack room meant working in close quarters. Southwest Surveillance Systems technicians David Love, Joel Valdivia and Jose Sanchez were each assigned a rack section and could not leave without disturbing each other's work. Care had to be taken not to disturb existing wiring, as the system remained operational during construction.

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the matrix switch, add digital recording for 1,800 cameras, and seamlessly integrate all of the legacy equipment. All of this had to be done with zero downtime in one of the largest and busiest casino complexes in the world.

As the technicians were laying the groundwork (see sidebar "Planning as Important to the System as Installation" on page 104), we began a careful process of our own.

"We had a lot of ideas floating around," says Thake. "Our team had been creating a 'wish list' in anticipation of the new system and we wanted to write a specification that precisely captured our requirements."

Many of the items that were on the initial wish list never made it to the final system — the rear projection video wall, for example, exceeded our budget and space requirements — but all were carefully documented and considered.

(Check out my "Enterprising Solutions" column on page 24 for more on the process of narrowing down the manufacturers and installers needed on the project.)

Advance Work Made It Easy, and Hard, to Pick Integrator

With this project, we were fortunate to have the luxury of planning time. The room we would be occupying was built but was not available to us for at least another six months. It was located at the base of a newly constructed hotel tower and was being used as a staging area until the tower was completed.

We knew that once we were given the room, we would be on an accelerated construction schedule, so we spent the time needed to properly document all aspects of the system design. Altogether, there were more than 30 CAD drawings and 100 pages of schedules, as well as a 36-page indexed specification that was sent out in February 2005 to the four final bidders for the installation that we had settled upon.

One element of the system design that was not left to chance was the selection of the rack and console manufacturer: Minneapolis-based Winsted. The company was headquartered a

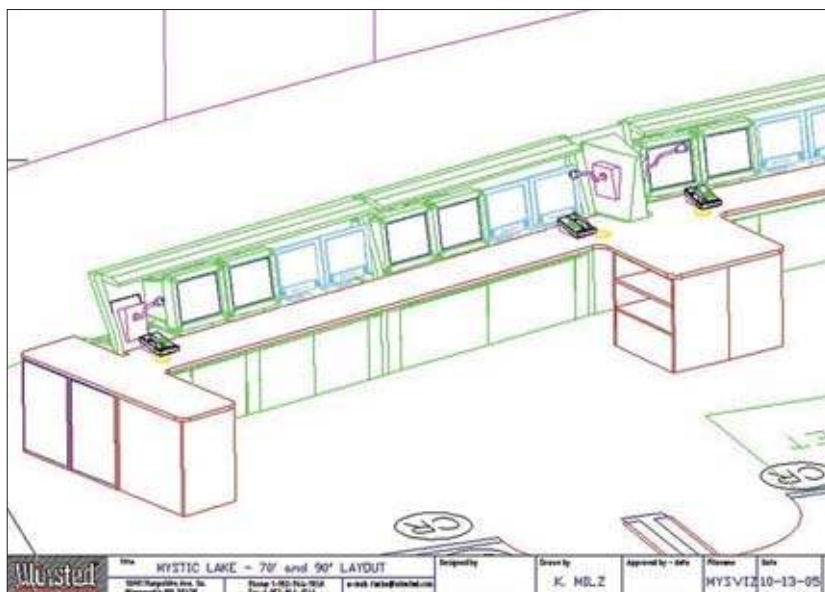
few miles away from Mystic Lake and had been working with the facility since the first system was installed.

Winsted had already worked with me to provide 3D renderings of the new control room, allowing Mystic Lake to see its control room before it was even built (see *comparison of Winsted's rendering and the final product on page 98*).

"Winsted has always been part of our family, willing to change or enhance their products for our application," explains Thake. "And with [Winsted Presi-

dent] Randy Smith being such a huge fan of our buffet, we figured we'd be able to offset part of the cost."

In mid-February 2005, we met with our prospective bidders, reviewed the specification and did a site walk-through. Before that, one of the four bidders dropped out because they were unfamiliar with the Honeywell system we planned to install. It was a remarkably pleasant experience, with the three competitors trading stories and ultimately having lunch together before parting. →



This CAD diagram produced by Winsted was an early look at the console structure for the main Mystic Lake control room. It was used by R. Grossman & Associates and the tribal management of the resort to help with the initial bid process and, later, the installation itself.

Mystic Lake Casino Hotel Equipment Overview

Brand

American Dynamics
Altronix
Avaya
Bosch Security
CPI Communications
Fiber Options (GE)
Hewlett Packard
Honeywell
JVC
Kalatel (GE Security)
Mitsubishi
Motorola
Nitek
Samsung
Software House
Winsted

Description

Ultra Dome series cameras
Power supplies
Telephones
CRT video monitors
Radio communications equipment
Fiber-optic transmitters, receivers and transceivers
Color inkjet photo printers
Matrix switch, enterprise DVR
Plasma screens
Video distribution amplifiers
DLP video projectors
Communication radios
UTP transceivers
LCD computer monitors
Access control
Custom consoles with Dupont Corian



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"We were confident that the bidding would be a level playing field," remarks Scott Bartlett, CEO of Las Vegas-based integrator Southwest Surveillance Systems. "All of the bidders felt we had an even shot, so we could all keep it very amicable and professional."

We saw the result of our work when we received the three bids back. "Any of the bidders would have worked for us," said Thake. There were points of differentiation — one had more experience in one area, another had a larger crew that could complete the project faster, while a third had worked with Mystic Lake on other projects and was a known quantity.

As a consultant, I felt it was my job to make the vendor selection as tough as possible for the client — three strong choices in my book are much better than only having one viable candidate.

Ultimately, the team selected Southwest Surveillance Systems, but it was a difficult choice for all the right reasons.

Mystic Lake Technicians Lay Groundwork for the Installation

Before we had officially signed a contract with the integrator, Mystic Lake's technicians began closing in on the work that would be required for the transition.

The system requirement had grown somewhat since we started planning it, and the open inputs we had left on the new switch were rapidly being spoken for. Cable pathways had been run between the existing rack room and the new room, and video tie lines were put in place that would support the transition.

We were going to use as little coaxial cable as possible, since we were all believers in unshielded twisted-pair



Photo by Rick Peters/InsideOut Studios

Data lines were fed to a central rack where they are terminated in RJ-45 patch panels. Interconnections are color-coded for signal types, with a different color for client computers, digital video encoders, servers and data interconnect lines.

Planning Is as Important to the System as Installation

James Arsenault, the surveillance technical supervisor for Mystic Lake, found out early that a security system installation is much more than hooking up cables, cameras and monitors.

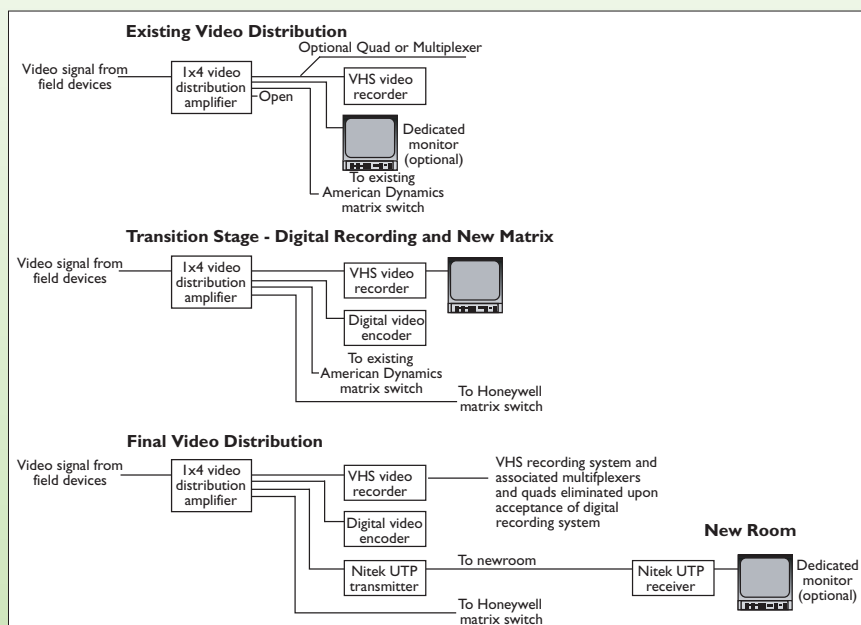
"Looking back, the part of the project that surprised me the most was the amount of work we had to do before the manufacturer or integrator was even selected," Arsenault says.

Before we even began writing the initial specification, Jim and his four technicians — Ryan Edgeton, Chris Jasnoch, Ryan Stack and Brandon Starr — thought ahead to the system cutover day. They knew that there would be a need for each camera to feed multiple systems and figured the best way to handle that was to feed every single video input through a video distribution amplifier (DA).

"We knew that the digital system would require more sophisticated signal routing than a 'loop out' on the matrix switch," says Edgeton, "We made sure that the DAs were in place well in advance, to make the transition seamless."

They began the task of moving each camera to a 1 X 4 DA and selected the GE Security/Kalatel KA-KTS-250 because of the high density it allowed. Along the way, they documented each camera's number and location; data address if it was a p/t/z dome camera and took whatever steps were necessary to clean up the video.

I had learned on other projects how unforgiving digital video systems were of substandard video signals and we didn't want to take any chances.



This diagram shows how installers planned out transitioning from an analog to a digital video system.

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(UTP) technology, so 25-pair trunk lines were pulled for the 1,200 feet between the two rack rooms.

"We had used UTP in the new hotel tower as well as for some new casino cameras and liked working with it," explains Mystic Lake technician Chris Jasnoch. "Every time we pull Cat-5 cable to a remote closet, we get spare video channels and that has already gotten us out of some jams caused by last-minute camera additions."

Nitek hubs and transmitters were used partly because of positive reports from other casinos such as Foxwoods, in addition to the stringent performance requirements that we had specified.

Nitek also allowed us to slightly customize its equipment without voiding the warranty. This permitted us to power an entire rack of 32-channel active hubs using a single Altronix rack-mounted power supply, instead of a pile of "wall-wart" type individual transformers.

"We enjoy working with Mystic Lake and have already rolled some of their changes and suggestions for improvements into our product line," said Chad Szekeres, national sales manager for Nitek in Rolling Meadows, Ill. "Their technicians are not shy and the firsthand information we get from them is priceless."

Our transition plan called for us to move some equipment — primarily analog VCRs and multiplexers — from the existing racks into a temporary rack room. We would use those emptied racks for a portion of the new matrix switch and the video encoders for the new digital recording system. This equipment would be linked to the new room via UTP for video and fiber-optic cable for control data and TCP/IP video streams.

The new room would house the main portion of the new matrix switch, which would handle any new cameras added to the system, as well as the servers and storage arrays for the digital video streams. Once the new matrix was fully operational and debugged, the existing matrix would be removed and that rack space would be used for the remainder of the digital video encoders that would be required.

In order for this to happen, Mystic Lake's technicians had to clear out the racks in the existing room to accommodate the new equipment. This wasn't the kind of work that the technicians wanted to leave to someone else. "We always worked neatly and were careful to make every change and addition to the system neat and professional," explains Mystic Lake technician Brandon Starr. "But there are always things that you feel you'll redo better later when you have more time, and we wanted to use this opportunity to make things right."

Advanced Planning Eased Ability to Deal With Changes

While the technicians were preparing for the installation, we headed out to Las Vegas in mid-September for a project review at Southwest Surveillance Systems' headquarters.

In attendance were key people from Southwest, Honeywell, Mystic Lake's Scepaniak and myself. "At that meeting, I knew we had chosen the right partner," says Scepaniak. "We had an extremely aggressive construction schedule, and we were expecting some pushback or resistance. →

Meet the Team

Any project requires teamwork to truly succeed. Here are the major players for the Mystic Lake system expansion, conversion to digital recording and new control room.

The Client: Mystic Lake

Scott Scepaniak (corporate compliance officer), Richard Thake (surveillance director) and James Arsenaault (surveillance technician supervisor)

“Above all, we have an operation to run. We needed someone to dedicate the time to make sure everything was done right, without impacting operations.”

— Scott Scepaniak

The Consultant: R. Grossman & Associates

Robert D. Grossman (president)

“Working with a consultant was a first for us, and we liked having an expert who could also act as a mediator. This helped keep our goals realistic, while making sure we got what we needed.”

— Richard Thake

The Integrator: Southwest Surveillance Systems of Las Vegas

Scott Bartlett (CEO), David Pettit (president), Rick Schoenfeld (project manager), Ron Woods (foreman)

“They were the only integrator that could commit to our accelerated timeline, and they exceeded our expectations throughout.”

— Scott Scepaniak

The Manufacturer: Honeywell

“We were comfortable selecting an established player like Honeywell. They are a recognized name brand that is based in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, well known in the industry, and they were very supportive throughout the project.”

— Richard Thake



Photo by Robert Grossman

Southwest Surveillance Systems project foreman Ron Woods had to trade the warmth of Las Vegas for the considerably cooler Minnesota climate, taking an apartment nearby for the duration of the project.

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There was none of that. They had done it before and were very comfortable with an accelerated schedule.”

Three weeks later, construction began under the capable watch of Ron Woods, the on-site foreman, and Rick Schoenfeld, Southwest’s project manager. Vertical racks went into the new rack room almost immediately, with the console following a few weeks later.

The extensive planning paid off — all of the difficult decisions had already been made and we now had the luxury of customizing and improving things where it made sense.

Schoenfeld wasn’t happy with the individual power supplies required by each of the encoders, so he designed and built custom power supply shelves to keep them neat and out of the way.

Woods didn’t like the way the network patching looked, so he recessed all of the patch panels into a rack and

installed a smoke-tinted door to, in his words, “make it look pretty.”

There was also the matter of Little Six Casino down the road.

The initial plan was for that facility to have its own matrix switch that would be a satellite system. It would be fully controlled from Mystic Lake, but would serve as a standalone system if the fiber-optic link between the two casinos were ever broken. There would also be encoders, servers and storage at Little Six, allowing independent operation in case of a problem.

As the project progressed, we realized that locating servers and storage at Little Six wasn’t necessary.

“We added additional fiber to another project that created a redundant fiber link between the two properties. We made sure it was in a separate trench some distance from the initial fiber link,” explains Arsenault. “While we still had to plan for the possibility that the link could be



Photo by Ron Woods/Southwest Surveillance Systems

Technicians Joel Valdivia and Steve Riopelle install RAID storage and servers in the new rack room (Rack Room N). Not all racks were completely filled — care was taken to allow the addition of more storage arrays in case additional storage time was required.

cut, it now became extremely unlikely.”

As soon as we realized this, we slipstreamed in a minor change: the servers and storage for Little Six would be moved to the new rack room at Mystic Lake. We would leave

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only encoders, the satellite matrix switch, a small control station for emergency use and some backup analog VCRs behind in case the link was ever cut.

"By doing this," Thake says, "we reduced the power and air conditioning requirements enough to allow us to cancel more than \$250,000 in improvements that were slated for Little Six to support the digital system."

Old Equipment Needed Adjusting to Digital System

By November, the flurry of installation activity had slowed down as we began the tedious process of debugging the system. Control of p/t/z cameras was cut over to the new systems, and there were minor adjustments that needed to be made by Honeywell engineers.

"We had many different generations of cameras in use at Mystic Lake, and none of them were made by Honeywell," says Arsenault. "We

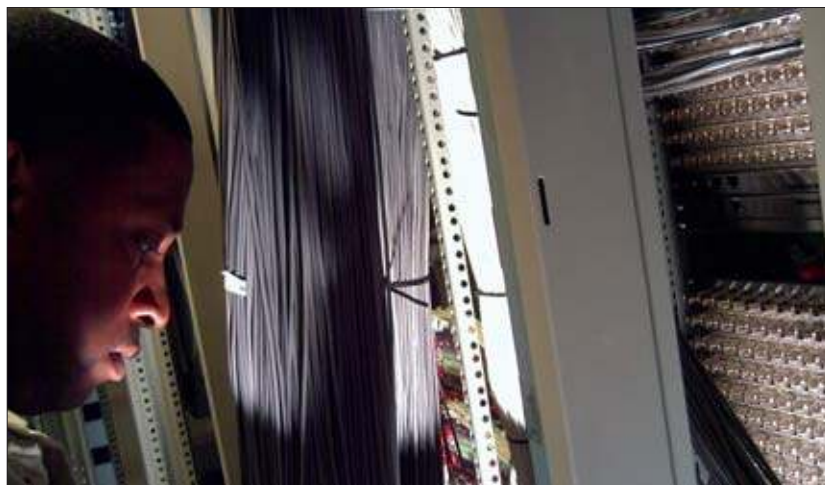


Photo by Ron Woods/Southwest Surveillance Systems

Southwest Surveillance Systems technician Jayhu Bryant surveys the thousands of connectors to be wired once the equipment had been placed in the rack.

needed to go back and figure out how many of each type of dome we had, for example, and understand what to expect from each one. How many presets, dome speeds, minor differences in the data protocols — it wasn't a uniform answer and it took a while to document it all."

While all of this was going on, the Mystic Lake staff was growing impatient for training. The technicians all saw it as a personal mission to learn more about the system than anyone on site from Honeywell and Southwest.

"I knew we were going to be getting the 3 a.m. calls once the project

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was done,” said technician Ryan Stack. “I figured that was the time to learn about it — when the experts were around, not after they had all gone home and the training instructor showed up.”

Stack was able to act as one of the informal “system experts” until the formal training could be completed.

Completed Control Room Had to Wait for Last Touches

Since December, the new control room had been largely completed, but could not yet be used.

Several tours had already been given and various executives had already sat in the operators’ chairs, but the system components were so in-

terdependent that monitoring duties could not be cut over to the new room until the digital system was fully functional.

The new control room incorporated a video wall into each one of the 10 operator positions. Each operator would have control of a 10-foot diagonal screen with up to 16 individually switched images.

While we had avoided the fully digital system — opting for an analog portion for critical monitoring and camera control — the 160 switched outputs that would have been required to drive these screens from the matrix switch would have been cost, and space, prohibitive. Instead, each operator would have two analog call-up monitors in front of them, with a digital workstation controlling a third monitor and the video wall.

Since these images were coming from the digital side of the system, all of the encoders had to be installed



Photo by Ron Woods/Southwest Surveillance Systems

A raised computer floor was used in the rack room and control room.

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for the video walls to work, and the room could not be used without them.

Removal of the Old Begins Start of New Security Era

In January, the final kinks were worked out of the new matrix switch. The old American Dynamics matrix that had served Mystic Lake so faithfully was removed, allowing the remaining encoders to be put into place.

This was the missing piece of the puzzle that would allow us to move the project to completion. The operators would now be moved into the new room and their existing control room would be disassembled and relocated to the new security command



Data cables are pulled from the digital video encoders to the patch panels.

center. That, in turn, would allow security to move from their old control room to the new room, completing the control room portion of the project.

In the meantime, retention testing would begin in early February. Thirty days of perfect operation are required of the digital recording system before the analog (VHS) system can be demolished. At that point — likely by the time you're reading this — the temporary rack room built to hold VCRs during the transition will be turned over to the construction department, as well as portions of the old rack room and the old control room.

Walls will be knocked down, floors tiled, and the new, expanded employee cafeteria will be born without a trace of the room's previous incarnation.

The new control room is exciting in the possibilities that it brings. The digital era will allow surveillance specialists to conduct investigative reviews in minutes that previously took days or even weeks.

Hundreds of possible "scams" will be automatically brought to the specialist's attention. Want to earn extra Players Club points by inserting "lost" cards into slot machines and waiting for an unsuspecting person to play them? No longer possible. Want to steal a pocketbook, or take a cup of coins that isn't being watched closely enough? It can't be done.

The most sophisticated surveillance system in the world is now the property of the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community and \$10 million says it will be doing its job until the next technological advance renders it obsolete. ■

Robert Grossman has more than 15 years' experience in the security industry and is president of R. Grossman & Associates (www.tech-answers.com), a consulting group specializing in electronic security products and projects. He can be reached at (609) 926-9264 or rdgrossman@tech-answers.com.



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5114 Spruce Avenue
Egg Harbor Township, NJ 08234-9794
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