

Case Study

North Slope Borough and the Community of Barrow

Alaskan community standardizes on Genetec™ Omnicast™ video surveillance to secure all public facilities and surrounding villages



Public organizations in the Community of Barrow ban together to keep citizens safe and spread benefits of Genetec™ Omnicast™ to nearby villages

Business challenge

Located above the Arctic Circle, the Community of Barrow is the northernmost city in the United States. About 1,300 miles (2,100 km) south of the North Pole on the Chukchi Sea Coast, the city is home to just over 4000 people. Barrow is also the hub for the North Slope Borough's seven arctic coastal villages, where another 5000 people reside.

Even as a small city, the community is still susceptible to random acts of violence and crime. In an effort to better secure its public facilities, the Community of Barrow decided to upgrade its city-wide surveillance, and standardize on a more robust IP-based video surveillance system.

After considering many solutions, the North Slope Borough selected Genetec™ Omnicast™ IP video surveillance and eventually enlisted the expertise of Arctic Fire & Security, a highly-knowledgeable and certified Alaskan-based integrator for installation and maintenance. Omnicast™ is part of the Genetec™ unified security platform, Security Center, which offers advanced functionality like an intuitive mobile client, a map-based interface and more capabilities.

Police department improves remote village operations

Currently, Omnicast™ is managing just over 110 cameras throughout numerous public facilities in Barrow, including the fire and police departments, the Children's Youth Services (CYS) facility, Arctic Women In Crisis (AWIC) facility and senior citizen facility. Each organization monitors and manages its own Omnicast™ system, reviewing and exporting video archives when necessary.

With all the systems up and running, the North Slope Borough Police Department (NSBPD) has expanded its surveillance to nearby village precincts, improving its remote operations. The NSBPD installed the Genetec™ SV-PRO, a network security appliance which comes pre-loaded with Omnicast™, at its police precincts in the villages of Point Hope, Nuiqsut and Kaktovik, adding 10 to 12 cameras to each facility.

Summary

Client name: North Slope Borough

Organization size: Over 1,000 employees

Products: Security Center, Omnicast™, SV-PRO, Mobile

Industry: City-wide Surveillance

Location: Barrow, Alaska, USA

Partners: Arctic Fire & Security, Axis Communications, Bosch and Sony

While monitoring and video playback is available at each precinct from the SV-PRO, the video is also linked to the main police precinct in the Community of Barrow, about 300 miles away through the Federation™ feature. This enables all police systems to be monitored as one virtual system, making it easier for police officers in Barrow to assist local village officers who work alone.

Fire department watches over equipment and narcotics

The North Slope Borough Fire Department (NSBFD) has been able to leverage the video surveillance system to safeguard its high-value equipment and adhere to federally-mandated laws concerning controlled substances.

According to Shannon Esparza, Deputy Director, NSBFD, "We house controlled substances in our fire station and they have to be refrigerated, so we have two cameras set up to monitor the fridge. Each paramedic swipes an access control badge, inputs their code, and takes an allotted amount of narcotics for their mission. They do a count before leaving and upon returning, all in front of the cameras."

The surveillance system has helped to deter delinquent behaviour, significantly reducing property vandalism and theft. Esparza has used the video surveillance system to monitor the response efficiency of her team when called out to handle a fire. One time,

she noticed a hose dragging on the back of a truck. “I was able to radio into them and let them know, avoiding any damage or loss of equipment,” she explained.

Omnicast™ keeps barrow students safe even from afar

When the community of Barrow began standardizing on Genetec™ Omnicast™ for all of its public facilities, the North Slope Borough School District (NSBSD) soon followed the Borough’s lead by installing the IP video surveillance system at its high school.

According to Sherry McKenzie, Barrow High School Principal, NSBSD, “I don’t always have time to get to the other side of property when someone calls to report an incident. Omnicast™ has been a huge time-saver, because I can just log into the system and see what happened.”

McKenzie monitors the system when time allows, but mainly relies on it for reference when students or staff report events. Already, the system has been helpful in identifying a prankster who tampered with hallway lighting, and video has also been exported as evidence in a more serious assault charge. The Security Center mobile app has also been very helpful to McKenzie, who can log into the system from anywhere in the school, or even when travelling, by using her mobile phone or laptop.

Evolving the borough-wide platform one facility and village at a time

The next phase of deployment includes bringing all police precincts in the five remaining villages online, and eventually expanding the system to encompass more schools and all other public facilities. Each organization is also adding more cameras, covering blind spots that may have been missed in the initial implementation.

“Our community and villages are safer and more vibrant than ever before, and we have realized numerous cost-saving efficiencies across our public organizations with the help of Arctic Fire & Security and Genetec™ Omnicast™. We look forward to growing our borough-wide surveillance system and uncovering even greater community benefits,” Mayor Charlotte E. Brower at the North Slope Borough.



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Infrastructure at a Glance

Omnicast™ is managing over 110 cameras installed in various public facilities in the Community of Barrow, where each facility chose its preferred brand of cameras from vendors Axis Communications, Bosch and Sony. All video is stored locally in each facility with servers ranging from 4TB to 32TB of storage. More specifically at the NSBPD headquarters, there are two servers with 16TB of storage, which provides 30-day minimum retention. Two SV-PRO network security appliances have been installed at three remote locations and video is federated back to the central police headquarters in Barrow.