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NEWSWIRE

Arizona courthouse security eyes weapon prevention

By Al Edwards - 05.14.2007

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz.--Security at the Superior Court of Arizona in Coconino County is faced with more challenges than keeping out unwanted people; it also needs to prevent weapons from entering the building.

The courthouse hasn't had any incidents in more than two years regarding weapons, but a newly installed video surveillance solution will go along way in assuring it stays that way, said Paul Sauerbray, security chief at the courthouse.

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"Our biggest threat is offensive and defensive weapons coming into the courthouse," Sauerbray said. "Once we don't have weapons in the courthouse, we've licked about half of our problems."

In order to meet that challenge, the courthouse placed a standalone digital camera solution with 27 cameras from IQeye at doors leading to judges' chambers, staff offices and public areas. The video, which IPVision installed, feeds back to monitors in a central control and command center, a security station and the security chief's office in the courthouse, allowing anyone in those areas to view the video in real time through OnSSI's video software. In addition, OnSSI's DVR records and stores the video so security can review an incident, which is crucial in preventing weapons from coming into the courthouse.

"It gives us the ability to view events that before hand we had no recording of," Sauerbray said. "Unless we had somebody right there, it would've been a case of he-said, she-said. But that's not the case anymore."

Security is finding the cameras useful, Sauerbray noted. His bailiffs use the surveillance system in conjunction with other tools such as access control systems, metal detectors and magnetometers.

The cameras, which enable security to see clear pictures of people and objects, was a logical choice for the courthouse, said Ben Green, vice president of operations for IPVision Inc.

"We were looking for excellent photographic resolution," he said. "We wanted them to be able to clearly identify objects and people in the photographs."

In addition, the multi-layered approach will only make security at the courthouse better, and having the ability to record images and call them up without needing to search through hours of tape, will save the courthouse time and money, said Jeff Knapp, OnSSI's vice president of marketing.

"It increases the effectiveness and actual security of the environment," Knapp said. "There's also a real return on investment when organizations implement these types of solutions."

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