Mesa Police Department

Reaching new levels of public safety efficiency

Name
Mesa Police Department

Industries
Law enforcement

Location
Mesa, Arizona, United States

Products
Security Center, Citigraf, Clearance, Omnicast, Streamvault

Mesa PD launches state-of-the-art RTCC using Genetec Security Center, Citigraf, and Clearance

Mesa is the third largest city in Arizona and the 36th largest city in the U.S. by population. Located in the East Valley near Phoenix, the city is a gateway into the region's canyon-carved waterways and endless outdoor trails. This unique location offers its 550,000 residents a perfect blend of modern-day urban culture and the ultimate desert playground. And it's not just locals who appreciate the city's vibrant culture, year-round attractions, fan-favorite sports scene, or iconic outdoor wonderland. Over 4.5 million visitors visit the city every year, wanting to experience all the beauty Mesa has to offer.

Paving a path for better city-wide collaboration

The Mesa Police Department (MPD) has always taken a proactive and innovative approach to policing. Over the years, the city invested in various technologies that improve the safety of people, businesses, and everyday life.

The challenge was that many of these technologies were set up and operating independently. Everyone from the Transportation team and Municipal Security personnel to 911 operators and dispatchers had access to their own systems. This kept data and departments siloed and limited the MPD's efficiency in responding to incidents and handling investigations.

During an emergency call, dispatchers could monitor the Computer-Assisted Dispatch (CAD) information and Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) data to coordinate response with nearby officers. But they didn't have access to live 911 calls, license plate recognition system data, or over 800 city-owned cameras that only certain teams monitored. Similarly, investigators would have to make individual requests to various municipal departments to have access to data and video following an incident. MPD also couldn't review any footage from over 350 traffic cameras. That independent video system was being used exclusively to monitor live traffic flow and no recordings were available.

According to Ryan Stokes, Mesa Police Department Lieutenant, "We just weren't using our technology effectively, so we started asking: "How can we leverage all these technologies and bring all this data together into one easy-to-use platform?" Our goal was to make it easier for our operators to gather and share real-time information with our responding officers. Because when we're talking about addressing critical incidents, having situational awareness 30 to 90 seconds before arriving on the scene is a huge advantage."

After touring other Real Time Crime Centers (RTCC) across the United States, both Lieutenant Stokes and other key stakeholders at MPD were ready to upgrade their emergency response capabilities. MPD made plans to launch their own state-of-the-art RTCC using Genetec Citigraf™ strategic decision support system and Genetec Clearance™ digital evidence management system.

"Mesa partnered with Genetec several years ago with our CCTV camera system using Security Center. We decided to expand our

partnership with Genetec because we saw how Citigraf helps RTCC operators bring all the pieces of the puzzle together during an emergency. And the Clearance Camera Registry feature was another great tool that would allow us to enhance community collaboration and expand our city-wide coverage with minimal investments," said Lieutenant Stokes.

Connecting all public safety technology within Citigraf

Today, the Mesa RTCC is a 3,000-square-foot public safety command center, equipped with massive video walls and all the latest technology. Within the first 12 months of the opening of the RTCC, the MPD solved over 930 felony and 640 misdemeanor cases and recovered over 268 stolen vehicles. More than that, they have expedited their emergency response and helped officers be better prepared when arriving on the scene.

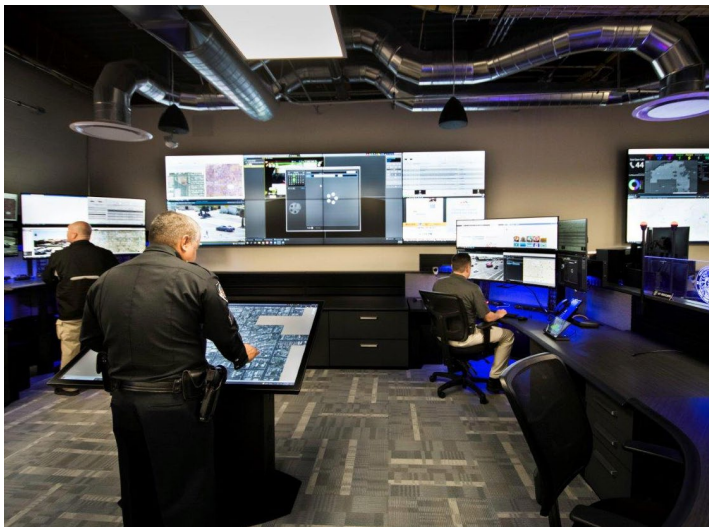
The backbone of the RTCC operations is Citigraf, which acts as the main visualization dashboard for emergency response and investigations. It currently gives operators access to 800 city cameras, 180 traffic cameras, eight mobile Police Observation Devices (PODs), real-time AVL data, live 911 calls, real-time drone video, and other key technologies. Soon, the system will include more transportation cameras, data from the PD's records management system (RMS) system, a downlink for helicopter video footage, and on-demand community cameras from participating businesses and schools. Operators can also access ALPR and video analytics systems within separate applications, though plans are underway to connect all that data within Citigraf.

"Previously, 99% of what we did before was after-the-fact investigations. Aside from the CAD and AVL systems, we didn't have access to more information. Now, when an emergency call comes in, our RTCC operators hear the live 911 call and can click a button to transfer the call to Citigraf. Our RTCC operators will hear the actual live conversation, see the caller location, and all CAD comments as they are entered from the 911 operator and police dispatcher. Citigraf will then automatically display up to 16 closest video feeds based on the caller's geocoordinates. Within seconds, our team can immediately start working the call, identify the closest police vehicles on the map, review video footage, and provide real-time assistance to our responding officers," explained Lieutenant Stokes.

Citigraf has provided benefits that were only realized after implementation. An RTCC operator monitored a call describing a car on fire at a busy intersection. Within moments, the operator trained a connected camera on the location and discovered this was just a vehicle overheating. The Fire Department was given a disregard, and a police unit responded to aid the stranded motorist.

Boosting operator efficiency with one intuitive visual dashboard

Using Citigraf, Mesa RTCC operators are taking real-time response to the next level. Beyond seeing all cameras, patrol cars, and emerging events on a city map, they can quickly address emergencies and extend critical information to patrol officers.



For instance, if an operator is working on a specific call, one mouse click on the caller's address will automatically pull up data from the CAD system. The operator can then view all prior calls received from that location and any notes associated with those past incidents.

Operators can also move from live view to an instant five-minute (or time delay of their choosing) replay to see what happened, all while synching that replay across all 16 cameras on display. If they notice a suspect is on the move, the operator can simply click one of four arrows within the camera's field of view to jump over to the next camera.

"Citigraf makes it super easy for our operators to find what they're looking for. When tracking suspects, they don't need to orient themselves and remember the name of the next intersection to locate the nearest camera. If they know someone is moving, getting that live video feed is as quick as clicking the arrow that points in that direction within the camera feed. Having all these quick access features in an easy-to-use visual dashboard like Citigraf is lifesaving," said Lieutenant Stokes.

In some emergency situations where drones are launched out on patrol, RTCC operators are alerted so they can access live footage to get an aerial view of the situation. This is useful during bigger city events where larger crowds gather.

During those large-scale events, the city can also deploy camera PODs to extend surveillance in specific areas. All video feeds connect back into Citigraf, so operators have more eyes on the ground. They've also extended access to Citigraf to the Police Chief and to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), which can remotely monitor any major situations or community gatherings, without disrupting RTCC operations.

Amplifying resources and community collaboration using Clearance

The RTCC is primarily responsible for assisting law enforcement during emergencies. But when the team is not responding to an emergency, they are still making the most of the technology to help MPD solve cases. They {assist in post-incident investigations, helping

the detectives} use data in Citigraf to retrieve evidence and use the Clearance Camera Registry feature to speed up evidence canvassing from businesses and residents within the city.

"In the past, if someone reported a serious event, an officer would respond, take pictures, record statements, and open an investigation. It could then take another two or three weeks of trying to locate witnesses and review video in the area. Now, with Citigraf and Clearance, we can close cases much faster," explained Lieutenant Stokes.

Deploying the Clearance camera registry feature was a critical step in enhancing community collaboration. Through Clearance, the RTCC built a custom form that businesses and residents can use to register their participation in the Mesa Community Connect program. From there, RTCC operators can locate cameras on the map and quickly request video recordings from participants via email. Camera owners respond by securely uploading video evidence via a web-based portal. Operators can then log into Clearance to view, download, or share recordings with MPD detectives who are working on a case.

"We currently have over 150 participants in our camera registry program and we're just getting started. We also offer a real-time sharing option which allows us to access live video in the event of an emergency. Right now, we are looking for a solution to bring additional cameras from private businesses into Citigraf. We are looking to use the Genetec Federation feature to build other partnerships with local shopping malls and other Genetec customers in the area. The schools alone would give our RTCC access to over 5,000+ cameras. So, if ever we had an emergency at any of those locations, we could easily tap into those cameras and help our officers safely respond," said Lieutenant Stokes.

Building a safer city alongside supportive partners

Moving forward, the MPD has big plans for the expansion of its RTCC. From adding the Citigraf mobile app in police vehicles to integrating more cameras and technologies within the platform, there's a lot still underway and slated on their roadmap.

The team is also exploring how to improve and streamline response protocols using Genetec Mission Control™. This decision management system can help guide their RTCC operators through actionable steps from response to resolution, all according to internal procedures.

Until then, they are working closely with Genetec to expand their capabilities and find new ways to better serve their community.

"Genetec has been a solid partner during this whole project. Any time we've needed assistance or wanted to integrate new technologies, they've always been willing to help and work with us. We're really excited about the future of our RTCC operations. We have the foundation and the support. Now we're going to build on that to make our city even safer," concluded Lieutenant Stokes.

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