

# River Cree Resort and Casino

Winning big with unified casino security



## Name

River Cree Resort and Casino

## Industries

Gaming

## Location

Enoch, Alberta, Canada

## Products

Security Center, Omnicast, Synergis, Plan Manager, Clearance, AutoVu Cloudrunner, ClearID



## River Cree Resort and Casino enhances surveillance and compliance using Genetec Security Center and Clearance

The River Cree Resort and Casino is a bustling casino and entertainment venue near Edmonton, Alberta in Canada. Over 45,000 guests flock to the resort every week to play slots, poker, and other card games. They also enjoy featured shows and events, dining, nightlife, and ice skating. River Cree offers a full-service hotel on site, making it an ideal venue for an exciting getaway or private event. Since the Enoch Cree Nation owns and operates the business, all profits are directly invested back into a charity that supports social programs in the First Nation community.

### Making a move to modern casino security technology

At River Cree Casino, both the surveillance and security teams work around the clock to keep visitors and staff safe. While the surveillance team focuses its efforts on the casino floor and business, the security team ensures all other venues and outdoor areas are protected and secured.

Over a decade ago, the surveillance team began experiencing issues with an analog video system. The security team was also having trouble with an aging access control system. Dealing with these recurring device failures and performance issues was not only time-consuming it also heightened business risks.

For Bob McDonald, Director of Surveillance and Compliance at River Cree Resort and Casino, finding a solution that could evolve alongside new business objectives over time was critical.

“During the request for proposal and discovery process, we were initially considering a hybrid analog-IP approach. But we quickly realized that that wasn’t going to be the most effective long-term solution. Whether it was in five or ten years, we knew we’d inevitably migrate to a fully IP-based system. That’s when we committed to the Genetec™ solution. The flexibility and openness of the platform helped us reduce initial upgrade costs and transition to IP over time,” explained McDonald.

At first, River Cree converted all analog investments to IP using encoders. But only a few years later, they had fully transitioned to IP devices. Along the way, they also migrated their access control system to Security Center. This gave them a fully unified security system, helping their teams gain better situational awareness across the 49-acre property.

“We were looking at another big investment to swap out our large access control system. In our initial discovery we did not think, ‘Hey, we need a unified platform.’ It was more like, ‘How do we get out of this aging access control system?’ And so, we just started adding one door at a time onto the new security

platform. Then slowly but surely, we had our most important doors within Security Center and were working from a completely unified security solution,” said McDonald.

## Unifying casino surveillance with Security Center

Today, River Cree Casino is using Security Center to manage over 1150 cameras and about 150 doors. They’ve also connected their fire alarm system and 25 DMP panic buttons within the unified platform. Now, both surveillance and security operators work from a unified view of the casino and resort. Not only does this help them see what’s happening across the property, but they can also quickly respond to alarms with all information at hand.

“Within Security Center, we’ve been able to set up many different event-to-actions. Essentially, our operators will receive alarms as soon as someone tries to access certain doors. They’re also notified if a panic button is pressed in our cages during a big cash-out or if there’s a problem in the pit. When those alarms go off, our operators immediately know that there’s something they need to pay attention to. And any associated video is tied to the alarm, making it easy for them to see what’s happening and act quickly,” said McDonald.

Building this unified security platform has also led to other efficiencies. While surveillance and security teams normally have separate monitoring rooms, River Cree Casino is changing that up. They’re bringing both teams together under one central control room, encouraging stronger communication and collaboration between their teams.

“We’re thinking more broadly about unification and its benefits. Our surveillance and security teams are already working from a shared and unified view. And sometimes, they need to work together to quickly respond to incidents. So instead of somebody being a kilometer away, why not have them within 10 feet? They’ll still have their own responsibilities and system privileges, but there’s just a lot more efficiency and cooperation that comes from bringing our people together in one room,” explained McDonald.

## Enhancing operator efficiency with maps and analytics

Managing gaming compliance and security across a massive venue requires around-the-clock monitoring and quick response. That’s why River Cree Casino is simplifying operator tasks using Plan Manager, the map-based interface of Security Center. All cameras, doors, and other sensors are plotted on a map of the property, so operators can quickly find devices and see where alarm notifications are coming from.

“Our staff likes using Plan Manager because it makes their job a little easier. Before, we would have asked a new operator to learn the locations of all 1100+ camera locations, all the 1300+ slot machines, and other sensors. But Plan Manager has eliminated all that. Today, they can click camera or door icons on the map to pull up video and information,” said McDonald.

Another tool that has been extremely helpful for the surveillance team is Quick Search. Before, if there was an issue at a table,



operators would fast forward through video, sometimes at six to eight times the normal speed, trying to find the incident underway. But since it’s such an intensive process, the system would often lag, making it difficult to see what happened.

“Genetec does a great job at rolling out new features with each upgrade. And we’re always asking ourselves how we make our tasks easier or how we can work faster. Quick Search was one of those tools that made a big impact on our team’s efficiency. We can quickly select an area of interest and then scroll through thumbnails to see exactly when something might have changed in the frame. In a few clicks, we can further expand the selection between the thumbnails and quickly find the exact moment an incident occurred. Quick Search saves our operators a lot of time,” explained McDonald.

During the pandemic, the team also deployed KiwiVision™ People Counter analytics within Security Center. Though they already had a head-count system, having the people-counting solution allowed them to double-check that numbers were accurate to avoid any compliance issues.

“The KiwiVision People Counter has helped us with public health compliance. We used it as a backup system to vet the numbers from an existing people-counting solution. Sometimes, there were marked discrepancies between the systems, and the KiwiVision People Counter numbers were always more accurate. Today, our security team also still relies on the Genetec people counting analytics for fire and safety codes. They’ll get notified when we’re bordering occupancy limits, so we can take appropriate action,” said McDonald.

## Strengthening collaboration and compliance using Genetec Clearance

Weighing the benefits of new Genetec features and solutions is something that River Cree Casino does often. They’re always looking for ways to advance their capabilities and make the most of their investments. So, when McDonald and his team heard about Genetec Clearance™ digital evidence management they recognized the potential benefits to their operations.

In the past, the surveillance and security teams would burn evidence onto USB keys and give them to relevant partners. Law enforcement would also come by to investigate incidents, often bringing their own storage devices with them to collect video evidence. Using USBs was not only costly but there also wasn't a way to ensure data protection and privacy or an evidentiary chain of custody.

"Now, when we have to send footage to law enforcement, insurance partners, or even our C-suite executives, it's a simple and secure process through Clearance. We can easily redact video and better protect privacy, which we couldn't do before with USBs. For instance, when a lawsuit ensued between two patrons, we were able to provide redacted video to their legal counsel without any issue using Clearance," said McDonald.

Like all other casinos, River Cree Casino must ensure compliance with gaming laws. That means getting yearly audits and working closely with the Alberta Gaming Liquor Cannabis (AGLC). Since deploying Genetec Security Center and Clearance, they've also been able to streamline the auditing process by quickly sharing information and reports with the gaming commission as needed.

"We have a yearly audit with the AGLC. They come into our surveillance room, and we show them how we've configured our alarms and how we're using Genetec to comply with all regulations. Beyond that, whenever we have a slot dispute, the AGLC must review the footage. But their team works from offices in the Edmonton area. Using Clearance, we can securely send a report and any related footage to a recipient at AGLC via email. They can then click a link, log into Clearance from their office, and access all files within 20 minutes. They love it because they don't have to wait days to resolve the issue. They just call the patron and get it all settled. That's a powerful time-saver for everyone involved," explained McDonald.

## Expanding casino security with new Genetec solutions

Looking ahead, River Cree Casino has slated a few key projects on its roadmap. The plan is to continue expanding the access control system, adding as many staff-access doors from the hotel onto the Genetec platform as possible. They're also looking at deploying Genetec ClearID™ to enhance their access control management.

"We have over 22 departments, 1200 cardholders, and 160 job roles. Keeping track of all the privileges, even the temporary or special access requests, can be problematic. Spreadsheets only work when people use them. ClearID gives us the ability to simplify and streamline access requests while keeping track of who has access



to what. We're also able to give some accountability to line-level managers, who can take ownership of their people and areas. And everything is tracked in ClearID, making it easier to audit and share reports with revenue managers who want to better understand activity across our business," said McDonald.

River Cree Casino is also adding AutoVu Cloudrunner™, the vehicle-centric investigation system. The goal is to gain more vehicle-related data and video to support investigations. They're also looking at adding video surveillance onboard their staff shuttle buses using Streamvault™ appliances. This will give the security team immediate access to video from the unified platform, without having to leave their desk.

According to McDonald, having the flexibility to keep expanding the system in new ways continues to benefit River Cree Casino and his team: "An open platform has been key for us. With Security Center, we know that no matter what we're looking to do, we'll have options for new features, built-in modules, cloud solutions, and third-party integrations that will serve our needs," concluded McDonald.

**"Genetec does a great job at rolling out new features with each upgrade. And we're always asking ourselves how we make our tasks easier or how we can work faster. Quick Search was one of those tools that made a big impact on our team's efficiency."**