Genetec™

South Grand Community Improvement District

Industry
Cities

Location
St. Louis, Missouri, United States

Products
Stratocast™

Partners
Secure View

How a bustling downtown district increases visitor safety with cloud surveillance

The South Grand Community Improvement District (CID) is a political subdivision in St. Louis, Missouri, United States. The South Grand CID was organized under state legislation in 2001 to enhance public safety, maintenance, building improvements, and economic development beyond the services supplied by the city. The district boundaries are on both sides of South Grand Boulevard extending from Utah Place North to Arsenal Street. The CID is managed by a board of directors comprised of unpaid volunteers—all of whom are assessment-paying property owners and/or business owners within the district.

Challenge – Enhancing parking lot security

One of the services offered by the South Grand CID is free parking. At any time of the day, drivers can park in a central 90-vehicle lot to visit businesses or residents. While this lot has always been convenient and safe, license plate theft was troubling nearby areas. To deter license plate theft in their own community, the South Grand CID board decided to add video surveillance to the lot. They also wanted to provide video access to the local police department to help reinforce security. One challenge persisted—the lot's location made it difficult to extend reliable network connectivity to cameras.

Solution – Boosting district safety with cloud surveillance

Today, the South Grand CID secures their parking lot using Genetec Stratocast™. With this cloud-based video monitoring system, the Executive Director at South Grand CID can easily view video from anywhere, at any time. To ensure a reliable connection to the surveillance cameras, the security advisor, Secure View, set up a secondary wireless network which loops back to the district's main office network. Everything from installation to software and hardware are bundled into a low quarterly subscription fee, which fits into the CID's annual budget. The South Grand CID has also given video access to local police. This means that when a crime is reported in the district, officers can begin conducting investigations without leaving their desks.

South Grand Community enhances district safety with Stratocast cloud-based video system

When residents and visitors feel safe, communities can thrive. South Grand CID knows this well. Only two weeks after installing the Stratocast video monitoring system to secure the parking lot, a visitor reported that their license plates had been stolen. This person was visiting a local business when the incident occurred. Rachel Witt, Executive Director at South Grand CID, acted quickly.

"The visitor provided a description of the car, and a timeframe in which the incident likely happened. Using the Stratocast system, I was able to find and view the video in seconds. I could clearly see the suspect enter the lot, remove the plates and leave in his own car. Since the police are very busy here, I was able to bookmark the video recording and then notify them that the video was ready," said Witt.

While the South Grand CID manages and owns the Stratocast solution, officers can log into the system and view video recordings when required. This is enabled by the Federation™ feature, which gives an organization access to manage multiple independent Genetec systems as one. A memorandum of understanding was signed so each parties' responsibilities are clear.

"Instead of driving over and picking up a DVD, officers can directly access video from our cameras to see what happened. Not only does it help speed up investigations, it saves officers' valuable time," continued Witt.

The simple and reliable video system

Currently, three cameras monitor the entire 90-space parking lot. Video recordings are sent over a wireless network which connects to the primary network at the South Grand CID main office, just a few blocks away from the lot.

"Secure View did an excellent job of extending internet connectivity to the parking lot. Our Stratocast system has been running flawlessly and we couldn't be happier with the results," explained Witt.

The simplicity and ease-of-use of Stratocast has also been a big plus for Witt. After a quick training from Secure View, the director felt confident managing the system on her own. Now, whether she's at home or at the office, she can find the exact video she needs.

"On the rare occasion that an incident is reported when I am not at the office, I can do the investigation from home on my laptop. I use my email to log in to the system. I can then narrow down my search based on dates and time and watch the event unfold with all camera feeds up on the monitor. It's really that simple," said Witt.

A bundled subscription that makes sense

South Grand CID chose Secure View for the affordable bundle that the company offered. Installation, configuration, software, cameras, and additional support are all included in a quarterly subscription fee with a five-year term.

"Technology evolves so quickly and can become obsolete in a matter of years. Paying one subscription fee for everything, including the Stratocast cloud solution, made sense for us. After the contract, we have the freedom to change things up or upgrade our cameras," said Witt.

Expanding security community-wide

With success in the parking lot, the South Grand CID is hoping to develop a program to incentivize other businesses to subscribe to the video service. While that's a long-term objective, Witt and board members know that additional security will help keep their community vibrant and safe.

"Business owners, residents, and visitors have a better sense of safety when they know cameras are up. But they also need to know that we're equipped to respond quickly to any disturbance. And that's what Stratocast helps us achieve. With the addition of Stratocast, we're able to show everyone that we have strengthened the security in our community," concluded Witt.

> "Business owners, residents, and visitors have a better sense of safety when they know cameras are up. But they also need to know that we're equipped to respond quickly to any disturbance. And that's what Stratocast helps us achieve. With the addition of Stratocast, we're able to show everyone that we have strengthened the security in our community."

SGCID_CSfEN