

Lucky Eagle Casino Goes Megapixel

Cameras enhance gaming surveillance efforts at Washington facility

If ever there was a near-perfect application for the use of megapixel video surveillance cameras, Miguel Grijalva believes he has found it. Grijalva is director of surveillance for the Lucky Eagle Casino in Rochester, Wash., and according to him, the megapixel cameras supplied by North American Video have provided “sharper eagle eyes” when it comes to resolving or clarifying contentious issues at the gaming tables.

“The new megapixel cameras were installed in order to improve image resolution issues we were experiencing with conventional analog cameras,” Grijalva says. “It is important that our surveillance operators can clearly see the indexes of the cards. We need to unmistakably view suits and ranks and be able to distinguish between a heart and a diamond, and the analog cameras were not picking up enough of this detail.”

The megapixel cameras, with their improved quality and resolution, were recommended by security integrator North American Video (NAV) to solve the problem. “The cameras provide the resolution we need to track and verify what is actually happening at our gaming tables,” Grijalva says.

To meet the casino’s HD-level imaging requirements, NAV specified, and Lucky Eagle Casino’s surveillance technicians installed Arecont Vision’s AV2100M 2 megapixel IP cameras. The units have a frame rate of 24 fps (frames-per-second) with a resolution of 1600x1200 and a minimum illumination of only 0.1 lux @ F1.4. Arecont’s cameras did not replace any of the analog cameras already installed, but were added as a supplement. The design prepared by NAV only required one megapixel camera per table. “The frame shot is the same as the analog, but the clarity is better,” Grijalva says.

The cameras also feature built-in electronic PTZ (pan/tilt/zoom), and the digital zoom is beneficial in live monitoring or reviewing footage. These investigative digital capabilities help the casino spot unusual activity or instances of suspicious behavior or cheating as well as employee procedure compliance.

As mentioned, the analog camera systems are still an integral part of the video surveillance system because they allow a high frame rate (i.e. 30 frames/second) for recording purposes and for more fluid motion. In the enhanced system, the megapixel IP cameras are recorded at 5 frames-per-second — allowing for reduced file sizes and storage requirements.

NAV had previously installed the video surveillance and security system at the casino, including the network video recorders (NVRs). In preparation for the move to megapixel,



Megapixel cameras were installed at the Lucky Eagle Casino in order to improve image resolution issues for gaming surveillance.

the integrator set up a test installation in the casino and left the unit in place for several weeks. According to Grijalva, his team was particularly impressed with the quality of the images when viewing details on the roulette wheel and for identifying stacks of chips.

“It was a team effort with North American Video designing the system and commissioning the network and our crew installing the cameras,” Grijalva says. “It wasn’t a big ‘rip-and-replace’ because we have CAT 6 cable already installed. Nor did we have to replace any of our control room hardware such as the matrix switch or the NVRs. The Arecont megapixel IP cameras use PoE (Power over Ethernet), which also made installation very easy. Additionally, the installation process was completely transparent to everyone and there was no down time.”

Once the megapixel cameras were online, the difference was noticed by casino staff. Now when operators respond to a request to review a game play, they automatically review digital recordings from the megapixel cameras first. Grijalva says that the megapixel cameras have definitely helped determine if a customer’s claim is valid or, for instance, if someone claims they were short changed on chips and that game play can resume more quickly. The casino is also considering adding the megapixel cameras to the lobby entrances for facial recognition.

“As demonstrated at the Lucky Eagle Casino, even standard megapixel cameras offer significant imaging advantages and can be very cost effective when used judiciously on any video surveillance system platform,” says Cynthia Freschi, president of North American Video. “We were very pleased with the results, but more importantly, so was the entire surveillance team at the Lucky Eagle Casino.” ■