
Dickinson Police Department

Texas Police Department Cracks Down on Crime with Mobile Video Surveillance - A Sierra Wireless® Video Surveillance Solution



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A Sierra Wireless® Video Surveillance Solution

Dickinson Police Department (DPD) is responsible for helping to prevent crime, patrolling neighborhoods, responding to calls for service, investigating crimes, arresting offenders and working closely with the community to identify and solve neighborhood problems. DPD also provides educational and outreach programs to assist the residents and youth of the community.

Business Challenge

For the Dickinson Police Department (DPD), escalating narcotics sales had become a particularly virulent problem, contributing to the overall crime rate and placing an inordinate burden on both patrol officers and investigators.

In order to limit direct contact with drug dealers, which placed officers in physical danger, manpower-intensive undercover operations were staged to aid in successful arrests and prosecutions. Unfortunately, traditional methods of relaying critical information lacked the timeliness and quality critical in high-threat, fast-paced operations. Suspect identity was relayed verbally, via radio, and confirmed by patrol officers face-to-face, with potential for miscommunication and operation compromise. The DPD relied on antiquated video equipment that, due to its short-range limitations, could not be used in certain investigations. The DPD wanted to supplement its voice communications and limit the need for eyes-on operations by enabling remote data access to allow officers to safely and efficiently monitor suspects at all times.

Sierra Wireless AirLink® Solution

Dickinson Police Department's Criminal Investigation Division selected a covert IP vide-surveillance system, solution allows the agency to gather intelligence for a variety of cases. The solution features pervasive mobile broadband communications provided by the Sierra Wireless AirLink Gateway.

The solution allows officers to leave surveillance equipment in a covert location, and watch the activity live over their laptops, desktop computers, or smart phones from a safe, remote site, while simultaneously recording high-quality evidence. The equipment can be programmed to generate photo alerts on motion, while officers engage in other tasks.

The video solution can be disguised and deployed in multiple ways and is engineered to withstand the high temperatures of southeast Texas. Mobile broadband enables the DPD to rapidly deploy the equipment anywhere it's needed - no wired internet connection required.

According to Dickinson Police Department detective Frank Price, the wireless surveillance solution enhances efficiency, as well as safety. Fewer officers are required to serve as 'eyes' in immediate proximity to drug buys. With the equipment disguised as an ordinary commercial product in an undercover vehicle, the investigators are able to zoom in and capture evidence.

"It's no longer just the investigators doing the surveillance," explained Detective Price. "The patrol officers can watch the camera from their laptops. With access to live video, they are receiving better quality information than getting it from me verbally. I program the system to send photos when there's motion, and that way we can mobilize a coordinated response instantly."

Results

The surveillance solution has helped Dickinson Police Department transform the landscape of the city's neighborhoods, increasing safety not only for law enforcement officers, but also for the community. In the two years since the system was purchased, street corner narcotics sales have virtually disappeared.

The surveillance system has also provided an unexpected side benefit: minimizing the impact of protracted criminal cases. Despite the high-quality evidence Detective Price and his team have gathered, Price has not yet had the opportunity to use it in court.

"As soon as the lawyers learn we have video, the suspects plead out," explained Detective Price. "With the wireless surveillance system's flexibility, there is no limit to what it can be used for. It is portable and concealable, with a wide range of capabilities. It has proven to be an extremely valuable tool for our agency."

CUSTOMER CRITICAL CHALLENGE

- Difficult to perform covert surveillance with unreliable connectivity
- Required high-speed data, but in a portable and covert form factor

SOLUTION

- IP video surveillance system with integrated AirLink® Gateway for monitoring drug deals and collecting evidence for prosecution

BENEFITS

- Improved safety for officers in undercover operations
- Portable surveillance solution for temporary use and mobility to other areas
- Quick and easy installation, while compact form avoids detection
- Reliable remote management, configuration, and control of devices