

Security Products

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Highlight

CORRECTIONAL FACILITY SECURITY

Modern Lockdown

Constructed in 1962, the Warren County jail, located in Lake George, N.Y., was designed to operate—in feature and function—like all correctional facilities of that day and age, manually. True to form, the operational standard encompassed every aspect of the 70-inmate capacity jail, right down to its cell door locks, which were constructed based on the mechanical key-to-lock configuration.

The manual nature of the locking system posed numerous logistical and safety challenges for corrections staff when transporting the inmate population to destination centers within the facility. Regardless of whether the inmates required medical attention, bathing or grooming services, educational program attendance, use of the law library or needed to meet with legal counsel, every movement had to be facilitated in a manual context, with staff physically locking and unlocking the cell door of each inmate daily and usually on multiple occurrences per day.

As the jail aged and became overcrowded, Warren County decided it was time to build a new facility. Sheriff Larry Cleveland was thoroughly involved in the process to create a new correctional facility with advanced, state-of-the-art technology and control systems.

As a result, the county opened bidding on the systems integration component of its new jail construction project and entertained bids from three integrators. Cleveland insisted on evaluating past projects specifically completed by Stanley Integrator, a business division of Stanley Security Solutions and a provider of integrated access control and security solutions. After touring its existing customer sites and evaluating its capabilities, Warren County officials were most impressed with Stanley Integrator. The county awarded the company a contract to provide a comprehensive electronic correctional security system.

UPGRADING TECHNOLOGY

With construction underway in 2003, Stanley quickly developed and began testing the facility's integrated electronic security system, which included five touchscreen control stations, three graphic panels, 260 controlled and monitored doors, 165 intercom stations, 165 proximity readers and more than 110 cameras. The Warren County correctional facility transition team was able to visit the manufac-

turing location in order to review the fully-operational system weeks prior to the actual onsite installation.

"The ability to visit the manufacturing plant and view the operation of the system before it was finally installed was very helpful to our planning and transition team and enabled us to get a good picture and sense for how the system would function in a real-world environment," Cleveland said. "We were able to select additional available enhancements to the system that were not from any other integrator, including a mobile touchscreen feature accessed via handheld PDAs and intercom audio recording to the data logging system."

The new, 186-bed facility was completed September 2004 with its inmate population moving in soon after. The Warren County correctional facility has subsequently ordered an additional touchscreen, which will be located in the facility's central control. In addition, the facility also has added 66 proximity readers to the original system. The system can now interface with the facility maintenance area and the newly-established emergency operations center, located in the basement of the old facility, via fiber for the integrated access system.

With the installation of security electronics system, the facility is able to significantly increase its inmate monitoring capacity. The intuitive and scalable nature of the touchscreens, as well as its ease of configuration enables a single officer to view the activity of 42 inmates at a time, compared to the original capacity of 24.

"Staffing is always an issue in the correctional environment, and by having Stanley Integrator's integrated security electronic system, we are now able to use our staff more efficiently," Cleveland said. "In addition, with the new design of the facility and with the use of cameras, everything can now be done within the housing units instead of the continuous movement required in the old facility."

SEEING BENEFITS

From a safety and communications standpoint, staff in the old jail only had two-way radios that were not able to locate an officer in distress. With the incorporation of the inte-



Officials at correctional facility use system to improve efficiency

grated duress system feature, combined with a camera component, the staff is now able to locate an officer in danger via the touchscreen, view the area with the cameras and respond accordingly. The previous system and procedure required every available staff member to respond to a duress situation, resulting in a poor use of resources and creating potential security vulnerabilities.

The new system also contributes to cost and time saving benefits.

"As the old facility was based on a mechanical lock and key structured architecture, in the event of a lost key, the staff would lock down the entire facility in order to locate that key, which, if not found, would force us to change out the locks in the entire building," Cleveland said. "Now with the new, electronic access system that uses proximity readers, if someone loses their fob/badge, we can easily delete the key from the system without ever having to change out the locks and without the threat of having that key fall into the wrong hands. This saves the facility time and money while enhancing security."

Another feature of the system is the staff man-

agement benefits the system offers, including the data-logging system which provides an audit trail and record of every action performed by each system operator.

While the old facility used an outmoded time-clock system, the new data-logging feature is able to automatically log and track the movement of each officer within the facility, identify which staff member is at which touchscreen and monitor all events occurring within each officer's area of control.

From an additional staffing use perspective, the system places the power of wireless PDAs directly into the hands of the corrections staff, enabling officers to roam the dayrooms and control inmate cell doors and utilities instead of having to be confined to a desk. The maintenance staff also uses PDAs to maintain the system, allowing the staff to be more efficient with everyday operations.

"An electronic security system was new to our facility, but using this system has removed any prior doubt I may have had," Cleveland said.

Trish Werner is a solutions systems representative at Stanley Integrator.

By Trish Werner