

Tunica-Biloxi Tribe

Rolls the Dice On Video Solution and Comes Out a Big Winner!



Louisiana's first land-based casino, the Paragon Casino Resort, is owned and operated by the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe who have lived on their reservation near Marksville, La., for over two centuries. The tribe operates a major museum, an anthropological conservation laboratory and the casino resort, with the goal to improve the quality of life for local residents and members of their tribe and to build a successful future for all concerned.

The Paragon Casino Resort, which provides work for over 1,780 area residents and training and educational opportunities to all of its employees, is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The casino offers a unique blend of entertainment, fine dining and gaming, with over 2,000 slot machines, 46 table games and a nine-table poker room. With this year's substantial expansion project, the casino has become one of Louisiana's premier gaming and resort destinations.

An effective video surveillance system plays an essential role in the technology infrastructure of a gaming establishment such as this because it can be used as a security tool, a business management tool, and it helps keep costs down by providing reliable evidence for preventing and prosecuting gaming disputes and potential liability claims. For this reason, the casino decided to upgrade its existing analogue CCTV system as part of the facility expansion, for improved surveillance and security integration to protect their assets, employees and customers.

CASE STUDY

PARAGON CASINO RESORT

By Emily M. Harwood



Selecting the right video system for a casino is no easy task. Gaming surveillance requires exceptional picture quality to distinguish face cards, “pips” (suits) and monetary denominations from distant ceiling cameras. The system must support hundreds, if not thousands, of cameras, reliably run 24/7 for 365 days a year, and integrate with business networks, POS, access control, slots and matrix switches.

Terryl Pierite, surveillance director, led the Paragon team charged with researching, selecting and overseeing the installation of a comprehensive digital video system upgrade. To begin the project, an extensive investigation into digital systems was conducted, including acquiring information from trade shows, industry articles, referrals from other casinos, and conducting multiple hands-on system evaluations and “live” site visits. For two years the team evaluated several leading DVR systems before choosing California-based Synectics’ Synergy video surveillance solution to record over 1,500 cameras, control a newly expanded Pelco matrix, and integrate with their Infogenesis point-of-sale system.

For a casino operating with large amounts of cash on hand at all times, video quality, recording and network reliability are major concerns. Unlike many security organizations that market to government, industrial, education, healthcare, etc., Synectics specializes specifically in integrated digital surveillance solutions for casinos. With this focused background, Synectics engineered a solution with the level of scalability, flexibility and reliability that the Paragon team wanted.

For example, with Synergy, casino security personnel select cameras by literally “touching” areas of interest on their monitors

that display custom maps of Paragon’s facility. They control each camera, live and recorded, with a single joystick, and vary resolution as well as frame, data and retention rates on a per-camera or situational basis. Intrusion detection alarms from access control and/or suspicious cash register activity from POS alarms are presented on the same “map-based” Synergy user interface, which enables operators to react quickly and accurately. In a casino environment, these sophisticated surveillance tools help curb profit-draining “advantage” activities such as card counting, identify “high-roller” guests, deters employee theft, and enables operators to focus on and respond to the most important events more efficiently.

Once Synectics was selected to provide the digital video surveillance solution for the newly expanded resort and gaming facility, Advanced Digital Solutions of Bardstown, Ky., and Dallmann Systems of Jeffersonville, Ind., partnered together to design and install the new system.

Advanced Digital Solutions’ CEO, Tim Lyvers, explained some of the special challenges involved with the Paragon installation. “The very first step with the implementation of the new system was to coordinate the room requirements with all other contractors,” he said. “Although digital systems have a much smaller footprint, they necessitate greater cooling and power requirements than older analog systems. Therefore, this foundation had to be in place to avoid potentially severe complications. The second, but no less important, challenge when converting or upgrading a surveillance system is devising an installation plan that ensures video recording is never interrupted and remains fully accessible to all authorized operators during the transition.

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locations on three separate mediums. This was a 'dynamic' list, as Paragon was adding new cameras on a daily basis and moving or removing other cameras during the entire expansion and remodeling process."

Once the basics were established and a plan was in place, the installation began in earnest. Advanced Digital Solutions Project Manager and COO Todd Pulver and his team were responsible for the installation and integration of a seamless system that made use of as much available data as possible. For example, the integration of POS data with video data in a live and database-searchable form was key to a successful installation.

"By integrating the Synergy surveillance system with a Pelco 9780 Matrix, we were able to provide Paragon with automated and prioritized recording fail-over to prevent video loss due to recorder or encoder component failure," Lyvers said. "The final product includes a map-driven GUI, endless report features, fail-over, and integration to POS and GPS systems."

According to Pierite, they chose the Synectics surveillance solution because it significantly improves their monitoring capabilities, "which translates into an extended return on investment. The new solution enables our security and operational personnel to anticipate, detect and respond to every incident with enhanced efficiency. Synectics' capabilities for multiple site monitoring; automatic alarm management; and advanced digital video transmission will greatly contribute to Paragon's safe and successful gaming operations."

John Katnic, chief operating officer of Synectics in the U.S., said, "Synectics has filled an important niche in the gaming industry by offering our clients reliable, customized surveillance solutions that interface with their legacy CCTV equipment and have a non-proprietary design to accommodate future third-party technology. In Paragon's case, Synergy was able to seamlessly integrate a state-of-the-art digital recording system with an existing analogue matrix switch, point-of-sale system, and a new access control system without costly upgrades or downtime. We are delighted that Paragon has chosen Synectics, and we look forward to exceeding their expectations."

The ease of use and superior functionality of the system will improve operator productivity and overall casino security and responsiveness by allowing staff to find events quickly and providing crisp, clear video for problem resolution. When needed, security personnel can copy images to CD, DVD or other media and tightly control the chain of custody.

The gaming industry faces a major challenge in that each hour a casino or part of a casino is closed, large amounts of revenue is lost. This fact has played a major role in the satisfaction of surveillance product choice by Paragon. After an extended period of due diligence, Paragon rolled the dice on Synectics' enterprise-class Synergy Solution and came out a big winner! **NAC**

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"Paragon added to the installation complexity by requiring that both the new digital and existing analog systems work in tandem for an extended period of time as part of the approval process. Fortunately, Paragon was very accommodating with space, as we had to build a second equipment and monitor room to accomplish this feat. The installation also required documentation of all cameras, which were transmitting from five different

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