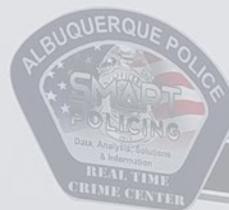


Albuquerque Police Department: Mobile Surveillance Units



POLICE
City of ALBUQUERQUE
SMART POLICING DIVISION



Mobile Surveillance Units in Urban Police Use

ECAMSECURE is excellent!

Ozzie Flores and his team are phenomenal! I have the pleasure of working with Mr. Flores on multiple instances and he's always been more than efficient, timely and knowledgeable on his products and the best practice to address my concerns. My agency has purchased several products and have been very pleased with the products and support. Mr. Flores has shown such professional dedication at all times, regardless on the time of day or concern I'm presenting him.

Don Lewis III
Albuquerque Police Department

Summary

Albuquerque suffers from one of the highest violent crime rates in the nation, largely stemming from gang rivalries. At the same time, the Albuquerque Police Department (APD) experiences a consistent shortage of police officers. Although the department operates an award-winning surveillance center to monitor a network of cameras around Albuquerque, crime was still an issue as the cameras could not cover 100% of the city. Deploying new cameras was cost-prohibitive, and could not address hotspots, areas where crime would temporarily spike.

Leveraging ECAMSECURE's Mobile Surveillance Unit (MSU) technology, the APD is now able to implement data-driven, intelligence-led policing techniques to reduce crime and increase the effectiveness of officers on the ground. Mobile cameras are relocated strategically to respond to citizen concerns or surges in criminal activity. Officers are intelligently deployed where needed, often able to use heat maps and other predictive modeling to determine where crime will occur before it happens.

By utilizing the MSUs as their eyes and ears, the APD can exert a positive influence across the city. The program has been a great success, and plans are underway for the APD to expand MSU usage by purchasing additional units.

Challenges and Needs

The primary challenge faced by the Albuquerque Police Department in securing their city is insufficient manpower. Simply put, there are not enough APD officers to be everywhere at once. Taking a philosophy to “work smarter, not harder”, APD determined that a strategy based on Intelligence-led Policing would be best suited to reduce crime in the area.

Intelligence-led Policing (ILP) is a law enforcement model based on the principles of risk management. The technique relies on collecting and analyzing data on criminal activity, then proactively deploying enforcement measures to address the root causes of crime. This could mean identifying and targeting repeat offenders, or reinforcing protection in specific locations susceptible to crime.

To that end, the APD established a state of the art surveillance center, the Real-Time Crime Center (RTCC). At the RTCC, trained operators monitor and manage a network of static mounted surveillance cameras placed around the city, using advanced facial recognition algorithms to identify suspects and persons of interest. The center also monitors activity at pawn shops for stolen goods, and releases a daily newscast for APD officers.

At this time, the RTCC monitors over 1,000 static cameras, but there are necessarily blind spots. These areas could be centers of criminal activity, especially as lawbreakers learned to spot the cameras and determine where they could and could not see. An expansion of the system was needed, but deploying enough cameras for complete coverage of the entire city was economically unfeasible.

The investment into the RTCC and the degree to which officers rely on it is such that any expansion of law enforcement technology in the area would need to seamlessly integrate with RTCC operations. One challenge faced by the APD in expanding video surveillance of the city was finding a solution that would not require drastic changes in operation, either on the part of the operators or officers on the streets.



Why ECAMSECURE was Chosen



ECAMSECURE, founded in 2000, is a leader in the development and deployment of cutting-edge security technologies. The firm specializes in outdoor video surveillance, and has found great success in construction site security and use by municipal and county police departments.

One of ECAMSECURE's flagship products is the Mobile Surveillance Unit (MSU). The MSU is a complete free-standing security solution, integrating best in class cameras with cellular or Wi-Fi network connectivity and solar or diesel power. A single MSU provides 360' coverage of a location, with both real-time alerts and recorded footage of activity and events. When the immediate need has passed, the MSU can be easily towed to a new location without the need for rewiring or reinstallation.

ECAMSECURE was selected for the Albuquerque contract for two primary reasons. ECAMSECURE products and packages are highly customizable, and individual attention is given to every client's individual needs. We were able to integrate our Mobile Surveillance Unit cameras into the existing software and hardware solutions already employed by the APD, ensuring that personnel at the RTCC would be able to seamlessly utilize both the MSUs and other existing surveillance hardware.

Secondly, our dedication to support and service is second to none. ECAMSECURE technicians are available for remote support at any time, 24/7. Problems and urgent situations necessarily arise in any law enforcement scenario where issues can be life or death, and our commitment to resolving any issue through whatever means necessary has meant the difference between success and failure.

We also sent technicians to the RTCC to train operators in the use of our hardware and software. This was a key differentiator between ECAMSECURE and our competitors, and our continued contact and support with APD officers and RTCC operators has made the endeavor a great success.

Solution

In order to expand the Albuquerque video surveillance network while still staying within budget, the APD purchased multiple custom-built Mobile Surveillance Units (MSUs). ECAMSECURE designers evaluated the servers and software already in use at the RTCC and assembled the MSUs with maximum compatibility in mind.

Each MSU incorporates various Pan/Tilt/Zoom cameras with a pre-set patrol route programmed in, as well as fixed HD cameras. The MSU can therefore maintain complete awareness of its surroundings at all times. ECAMSECURE technicians flew to Albuquerque to train the RTCC staff in the proper use of the MSU cameras.

Utilizing the MSUs intelligently has resulted in a number of improvements to how the APD responds to crime. By leveraging the advanced features offered by the camera stations, the APD has developed new techniques and procedures.

- Reported activity is now video verified before officers respond. In the APD, the officers themselves are the limited resource. By using a live video feed to confirm the situation, dispatchers can prioritize incidents for officer attention, and eliminate calls that do not require police attention.
- In some cases, the MSUs themselves are useful in dealing with unwanted elements. Each camera station incorporates a loudspeaker through which personnel at the RTCC can inform trespassers they are being watched, or instruct crowds to disperse.
- In areas suffering from a high incidence of crime, recorded footage from the MSUs are used to document activity and individuals. In this way, repeat offenders and likely targets can be identified and dealt with in a more efficient manner.
- This data is also used in the creation of heat maps and other intelligence-led policing tools. These allow data analysts in the APD to determine where crime is likely to occur so that officers can be optimally distributed around the city.
- As fully mobile, moveable camera stations, a relatively small number of MSUs can be used to protect a very large area. By strategically moving the MSUs from location to location, the APD can create an impression that there are more cameras in deployment than there actually are. This creates an element of uncertainty for potential criminals, who cannot know if they are under surveillance or not from day to day.

Results

Since their deployment in 2014, the Mobile Surveillance Units have proven to be a crucial piece of the APD's intelligence-led policing strategy. The camera stations allow the police to place eyes and ears wherever needed in Albuquerque, without taking officers away from other crucial duties. Although the city's high crime rate is an ongoing battle for the APD, the camera stations have helped prevent or lessen the impact of countless criminals.

Perhaps most importantly, the citizens of Albuquerque feel safer and more protected with the MSUs in action. Time and again, citizens have praised the police for deploying the new camera systems, and have actually complained when the MSUs were moved out of their neighborhoods.

Due to the positive public response as well as the cameras' effectiveness in fighting crime, the APD plans to expand the program by purchasing additional units. The MSUs will also be upgraded with license plate capture technology, allowing RTCC personnel to quickly and easily identify vehicles spotted by the cameras.