

Legend-in-Making Vee Quiva features Gila River Casino's First 100% HD IP Video Surveillance System

By: Todd Flowers, President, Surveillance Systems Integration



Vee Quiva Hotel & Casino offers a Vegas-like resort and entertainment experience to the visitors and residents in the heart of the Phoenix region. The property, which cost roughly \$135 million to build, is located just southwest of Downtown Phoenix. Vee Quiva opened on July 2, 2013 and houses 950 slot machines, 36 table games, 90 boutique hotel rooms, a 550-seat bingo hall, a variety of dining options, a fitness center, pool, and a state-of-the-art video surveillance and security system.

Vee Quiva aims to bring in entertainment options for its local and visiting guests, including live, nationally known and recognized bands and acts, at its new, large 6,000 square foot entertainment and event center. The property features 70,000 total square feet and 2,800 total parking spaces, all operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week. With so many options and activities for fun, entertainment and dining, the casino management has created a lively and exciting atmosphere - but not at the expense of security and protection.

To help secure and protect the property and its guests, the Gila River Gaming Commission chose to install a new high definition (HD), internet protocol (IP) based surveillance system at the new Vee Quiva property. Tutor Perini Building Corp., the general building contractor for the project, awarded the security installation contract to Surveillance Systems Integration, Inc. (SSI), a comprehensive surveillance system integration company known for specializing in systems employing cutting-edge technologies like high definition (HD) and internet protocol (IP) based cameras and a leader in casino installations. For the Vee Quiva property, the biggest challenge was the vigorous construction schedule of just under five months. The installation was for a new property and not a retrofit of an existing system.

"Since this was new construction, we had a blank slate to start with as we worked to meet their rigorous construction schedule, which allowed greater flexibility in design and implementation," said Bill Young, Director of Operations at SSI.

The System

The property is Gila River Casinos' first 100% HD and IP-based camera installation. The casino wanted HD because the technology records high quality video that can be examined much more efficiently and provides definitive evidence on all performed investigations. This evidence includes better situational awareness and fine details that can be used in correctly identifying elements, such as faces, allowing operators to react more quickly and reducing overall investigation time.

IP-based surveillance has really caught on in recent years. This is because of advantages in the transmission of both audio and video data, as well as control signals. The data provided can then be synthesized into new, custom build-outs that allow the support of HD images, analytics for operational purposes, local or remote video storage and remote

control and monitoring. Because IP video, especially when using the H.264 standard video compression, can provide nearly twice the compression of more traditional digital codecs, the video and audio streams are high quality while using less bandwidth. A major advantage of IP-based systems for integrators is the ability to customize systems with different components from various manufacturers to maximize performance, especially for larger installations like the Vee Quiva property.

The system SSI provided was a full end-to-end hardware solution that allows for interoperability with 3rd party cameras through OnVIF 2.0 compliance standards. The system is also fully upgradeable and future-proofed as there are no limitations on expansion for future growth, including the addition of new cameras. The security system covers the casino, point-of-sale locations, the parking lot, and the event center.

In designing the system, SSI also worked with its manufacturer partners Dallmeier and Maxxess to provide video management system (VMS) and Access Control based on requests from the customer. Integrating the point-of-sale and access control systems with Dallmeier's video management system was smooth as Dallmeier directly provided the integration. Dallmeier's system allows for seamless monitoring of all systems from one graphic user interface. In addition, operators can easily handle and manage different video and audio streams, including live playback and recording from anywhere within the networked system.

The Maxxess Access Control application specified is an ideal choice for systems like the one installed at the Vee Quiva because the open architecture of the application allows considerable flexibility for security management implementations, including multitasking support. The application also provides a straightforward framework for a unified operational environment that supports a customer-specific system that is easily connected to any and all security systems and sub-systems to offer real-time data for quick and effective decision making. The system is particularly ideal for integrators like SSI that need the additional flexibility for unique tie-in application and scaling.

"The system was in place in time for Gila River Casinos to open this brand-new casino with confidence and without the stress of trying to learn how to operate a foreign video management system, allowing them to focus on the comfort and safety of their guests while maximizing operational efficiency," said Melissa Mount, Director of Inside Sales for SSI. "Making a property consist fully of HD, IP-based cameras allows operators a platform that will streamline operations, helping them spend more time on issues other than technology. It really helped the construction schedule that the customer knew what products they wanted and we were able to work closely with the customer to create a fully integrated solution that tied the Access Control and point-of-sale systems together with the video management system."

Installation and Maintenance

When timetables are short, projects are always more intense, with delivery times being the most important. For Vee Quiva, SSI was able to work closely with all manufacturer partners to obtain all original specified equipment on-time to maintain the construction schedule.

As President of SSI, I feel that although the schedule was tight, all manufacturers met stringent delivery timelines, which really helped us to keep the builder's timetable and allow the system to be fully operational prior to their Grand Opening.

SSI and Dallmeier have a current service contract with Gila River Casinos for other properties and the system installed at the new Vee Quiva property will be rolled into the existing contract. The contract includes proactive maintenance and health checks of all systems on all properties operated by Gila River.

"We need our systems to be reliable, and the service contract really adds to the value of an installation like this because we need the system to be continuously operating while

offering the highest quality video and audio streaming possible," said Tim Overstake, Director of Security for Gila River Casinos. "We are confident in the system because we know that it is being monitored for anything that might cause us issues, including availability of transmission paths and signal quality as well as detecting any video signal losses or tampering attempts."

SSI's installation and the quality of the finished product have exceeded both the customer and general contractor's expectations.

"Tutor Perini expressed to SSI's President, Todd Flowers, that they were very impressed with the speed and capabilities SSI brought to the project, which really helped keep them on schedule," said Al Croteau, Regional Sales Manager at SSI. "The engineers we worked with exceeded our expectations, including their vast knowledge of IP-based surveillance and open platforms."

The Casino CEO, John J. James, said in a recent interview with the *Phoenix Business Journal* that the Vee Quiva aims "to exceed the expectations of all our guests" with their training programs and "unparalleled experience that will create lifetime memories." One way the Vee Quiva Hotel & Casino will accomplish this is through offering a secure and efficient property, which security surveillance, when done in alignment with management philosophy and vision, can offer more value to both the resort and its guests.

"The Vee Quiva property is a great example of the innovations available in the security surveillance market today, and part of what makes our property a legend in the making," said James. "This new system exceeds the expectations of Gila River Casinos as it provided all elements required to successfully monitor the Enterprise. The system is user friendly and provides the latest in cutting edge technology. The Enterprise was pleased with SSI's quick and professional installation and the collaboration of the project resulted in a seamless partnership between the two organizations."

About the author:

Todd Flowers is president of systems integrator Surveillance Systems Integration (SSI), founded in 2002 and headquartered in Roseville, Calif. Flowers has more than 20 years of industry experience, including an emphasis on IP video. As the head of SSI, he has successfully completed some of the largest and most complex analog to IP migrations in the casino industry. SSI is a national security integrator with eight offices throughout the country and is known for providing an excellent customer experience by exceeding expectations on product knowledge, installation detail and on-time completion dates.