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April 12, 2004

A Secure Port in a High-Risk Storm

By Julia Bailey

Since the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks, security has been a major concern at the United State's maritime ports. In November, 2003, Congress passed the [Maritime Transportation Security Act](#) (MTSA), which requires public and private ports to develop comprehensive security plans.

At the [Virginia Port Authority](#) (VPA), officials were beefing up security even before the terrorist attacks. The second largest port on the East Coast, the VPA comprises four ports—Norfolk International Terminal (adjacent to Norfolk Naval Base, the largest naval facility in the country), Newport News Marine Terminal, Portsmouth Marine Terminal and the Virginia Inland Port. "We are the most target-rich port in the U.S.," says Robert Merhige, deputy VPA executive director and general counsel. "We knew this [demand for enhanced security controls] was coming, and we wanted to lead, not follow."

After passage of the MTSA, the VPA instituted a campaign to recruit "best of breed" resources for an aggressive implementation of a series of security enhancements to the Norfolk, Newport News and Portsmouth terminals, including the addition of video surveillance equipment, electronic fencing, and high-tech lighting. [Industrial Video and Control](#) (IVC), a Boston-based developer of advanced video systems, was enlisted to provide its state-of-the-art automated video monitoring system.

"This was to be the largest and most advanced port security installation since 9/11. Yet, we had less than 100 days for the entire project—including design, installation, and commission," said Bill Richards, IVC vice president of engineering. "The only way to achieve the demanding functional requirements and to meet the aggressive and limited budget was to employ a wireless, IP-based system, thus eliminating the high cost of trenching or setting poles for long cable runs."

The IVC team recommended the Motorola Canopy™ wireless system because of its ease of installation, flexibility, and low cost. Even more important, given concerns about the congestion and radio interference sources at these busy ports, it provided a more secure solution than 802.11b radios.

A total of 91 cameras were positioned at strategic locations across three ports over a 15-mile area, all connected by the Canopy wireless network. The video monitoring system integrates with advanced software for automated intelligent monitoring that can detect unauthorized objects, land and water intrusions and suspicious movements.

Today, this IP-based video system enables fire control centers, police headquarters, terrorism response centers—as well as port operations staff—to use the system from their respective locations. Authorized viewers can see live and stored video, even point and zoom cameras from any network-connected PC. "The ability to view and control cameras from any point enables vastly accelerated and highly coordinated responses to fire, sabotage, terrorism, theft and other incidents on and around the port," Richards says.

"This was the largest-scale deployment of a wireless port security project in the country," said Norman Fast, IVC president. "The other ports around the country

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were watching. Thanks to Canopy wireless equipment, this port and others like it are able to rapidly deploy a new level of video security in months, rather than years."



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