AVIGILON AI-ENHANCED VIDEO SECURITY HELPS MOUNT VERNON POLICE DEPARTMENT INCREASE SITUATIONAL AWARENESS TO FOCUS ON WHAT MATTERS MOST

The county seat of Jefferson County, Mount Vernon, IL is located in the state's south-central region, just 80 miles east of St. Louis, MO. Home to approximately 15,000 residents, Mount Vernon is known as the "Festival Arts City" for its numerous performing arts programs, outdoor markets, and craft fairs. The city also features museums, municipal parks, and easy access to a 19,000-acre state recreation area nearby. Mount Vernon is in many ways an idyllic, small Midwestern town. Yet like other small and mid-sized municipalities across the U.S., the city found itself faced with a significant challenge: managing high crime with limited resources.

With just over 40 officers, detectives, and crime scene technicians on staff, the Mount Vernon Police Department (MVPD) sought to scale and expand its operations with updated video technology and analytics. Focused on a critical region situated between Interstates 57 and 64 that possessed a high rate of violent crime, the MVPD required a next generation video security solution to increase safety while optimizing resources. The MVPD partnered with Motorola Solutions and its long-time Avigilon partner PASS Security, which services the Illinois and Missouri areas, to build and deploy their new platform.

SOLUTIONS

- **Avigilon Cameras**
- **Avigilon Video Analytics**
- **Avigilon Control Center™ Software**
- **License Plate Recognition**

BENEFITS

- ✔ Real-time video aggregation and threat detection allows deputies to receive the latest insights before they arrive on scene.

- ✔ Advanced search and query functions help analysts provide actionable intelligence to detectives and deputies, freeing them up to spend less time at the desk and more time in the community.

- ✔ Unified voice and data collaboration produces faster results with integrated technology, allowing analysts to support multiple units simultaneously and form larger teams to tackle emergencies.

- ✔ User-centric workflow and automation empowers team members to cut down response time and create personalized workspaces with the right tools at their fingertips.

MOTOROLA SOLUTIONS

CUSTOMER CHALLENGES

MANAGING HIGH CRIME WITH LIMITED RESOURCES

The MVPD found itself facing an all too familiar challenge — managing pockets of high crime with limited resources. The city had very little video security in place in the region of greatest concern, which was primarily residential. "We had a few analog cameras," recalled Assistant Chief of Police Robert Brands, "But they were out of date and not integrated with one another."
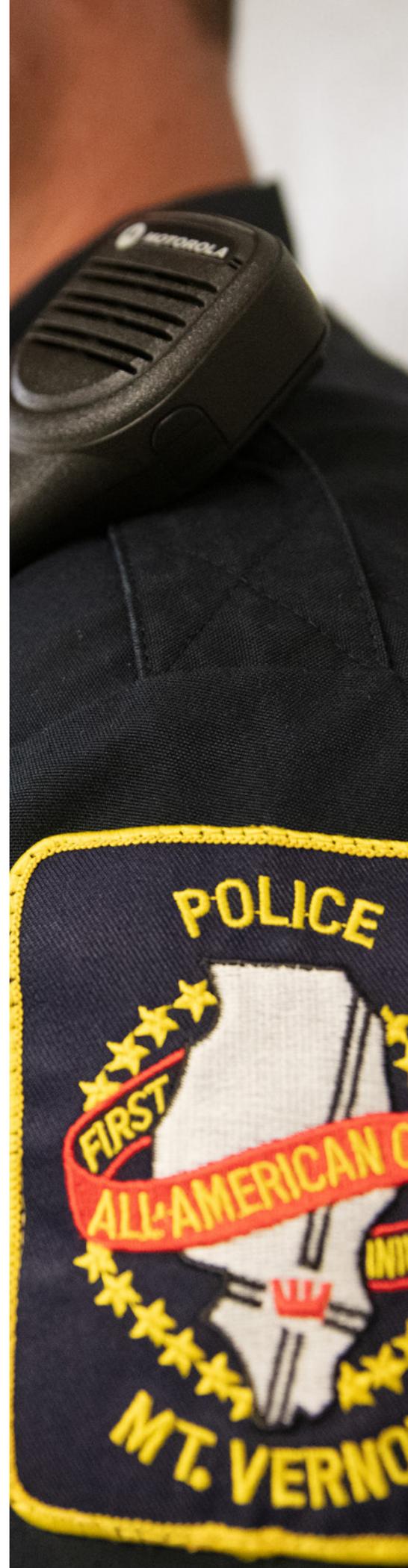
The MVPD believed that video security could help expand its crime-fighting reach, but only if implemented strategically. As the department explored available vendors and systems, its most critical selection criteria became clear: the implementation of cameras would have to increase efficiency, rather than simply create new or additional work streams that impacted staff resources.

"We only have so many officers and dispatchers and their focus is on patrolling and responding to calls - they can't be watching video 24/7," explained Chief of Police Trent Page. "We needed a solution that would do the watching for us, then alert us to anything out of the ordinary."

LACK OF CONCRETE EVIDENCE AND REAL-TIME INTELLIGENCE

Without access to video evidence, detectives were forced to rely on less concrete sources of information, like bystander and witness accounts. Often unreliable, witness accounts can lead to incomplete details or incorrect intelligence — and chasing down unqualified leads or misinformation meant significant detective hours wasted. Lack of evidence also made criminal prosecution more time consuming and challenging.

Even more critical, officers lacked real-time knowledge when responding to calls, which meant entering into potentially dangerous circumstances without clear situational intelligence. The inability to visually identify the presence of firearms, additional suspects, or other key elements of an unfolding crime before officers arrived hampered the MVPD's ability to launch more informed, strategic responses to crimes in progress. "If we knew a firearm was present, that would significantly impact the way we responded to a crime in progress," said Chief Page.

SOLUTION

Throughout 2019, the MVPD conducted a thorough exploration of video security vendors and offerings. In October 2019, the department chose to partner with Motorola Solutions and its partner PASS Security, implementing a suite of Avigilon cameras and video analytics software to enhance the safety and security of citizens and officers alike.
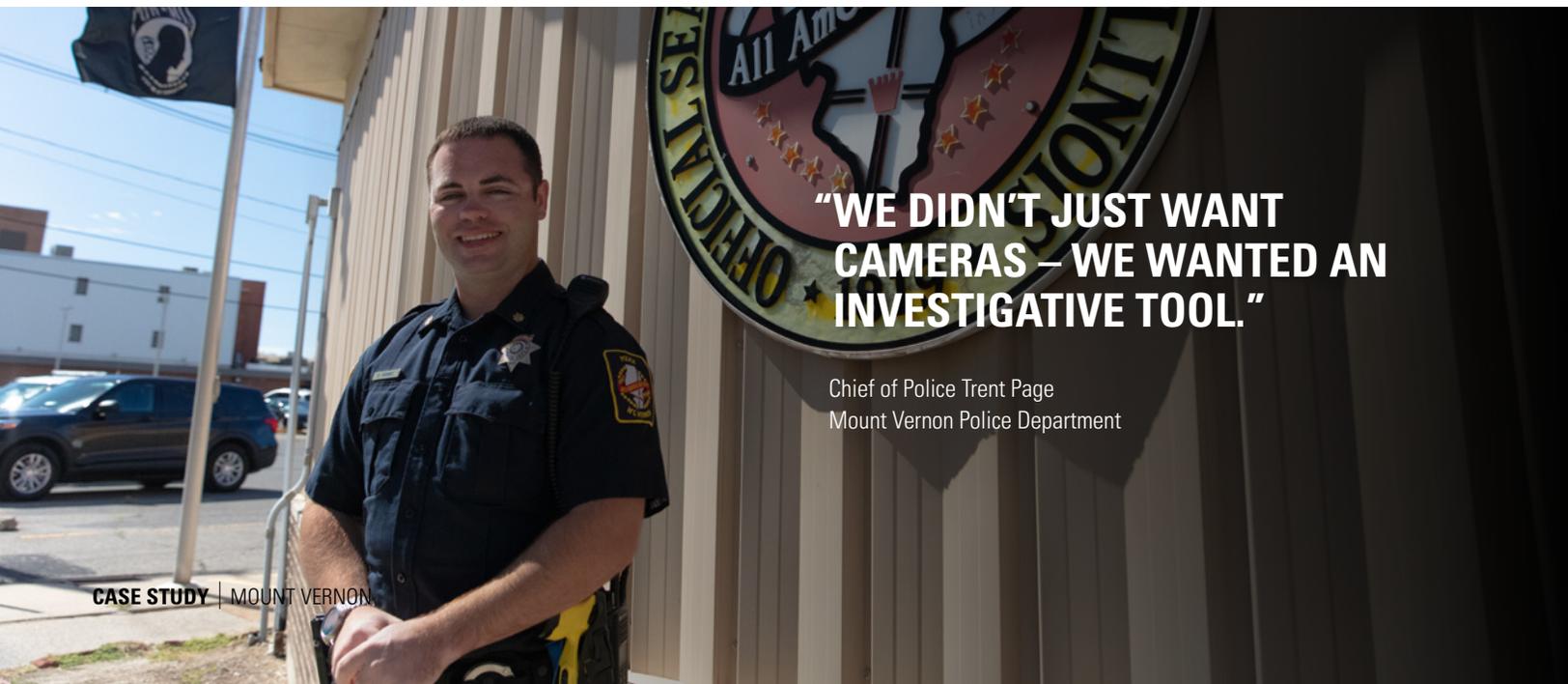
Avigilon video surveillance and access control solutions provide greater insight and visibility with less effort, utilizing innovative artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities that provide the right information to the right individuals at just the right time.

"We investigated offerings from several video providers and ultimately what drew us to Avigilon was the advanced analytics," said Chief Page.

"We didn't just want cameras – we wanted an investigative tool."

The MVPD now employs 73 cameras dispersed throughout the city, with a concentration in locations deemed most in need of video surveillance based on police-response call volume. Connected to one another and to a dedicated Avigilon server via a point-to-point wireless network, the suite includes:

- Avigilon H5A Cameras, with embedded License Plate Recognition (LPR), advanced object detection of up to 50 objects, and next generation video analytics.
- Avigilon H4A Bullet Cameras, for 24/7 coverage with built-in infrared illumination and self-learning video analytics technology.
- Avigilon H4 Pan-Tilt-Zoom Cameras, with 360-degree rotation, self-learning video analytics, and self-learning intelligence that alerts officers when unusual activity or important events occur.
- Avigilon H4 Fisheye Cameras, providing 360 panoramic views with no blind spots in 6 and 12 MP resolutions.
- Avigilon Control Center™ Software, which allows for quick and easy review of live or recorded video with a simplified screen layout, intuitive controls, AI, and self-learning video analytics.

"WE DIDN'T JUST WANT CAMERAS – WE WANTED AN INVESTIGATIVE TOOL."

Chief of Police Trent Page
Mount Vernon Police Department

BENEFITS

VIDEO ANALYTICS EXPAND REACH AND OPTIMIZE USE OF RESOURCES

Being able to see and do more with the same number of resources was a top priority for the MVPD and one that was almost instantly achieved with the implementation of the Avigilon system.

"The cameras allow us to see things we wouldn't have otherwise and the AI capabilities are the key features that save us time," according to Assistant Chief Brands.

The MVPD relies on LPR, appearance search, and crowd recognition capabilities for enhanced situational awareness capabilities without dedicating precious staff hours to monitoring camera activity. Large crowds congregating, send an immediate alarm to officers, who can view video and determine whether to respond. Appearance search allows officers to enter the description of an individual or a vehicle, then produces all relevant video footage in minutes rather than the hours it would take to review by hand. And LPR compares license plate numbers to critical watchlists, alerting officers when a match is found.

"Our dispatch has regular duties that they need to focus on, so we need cameras that can alert them when something is wrong," said Chief Page. "When the alerts occur, we can see what's happening and then send an officer to the area if needed to address or even prevent an incident."

"Appearance search is important because it saves us time when we're searching for people or vehicles," he continued. "With other video systems you have to watch hours to find what you're looking for. Here you input a few details, the system pulls up vehicles and with a click you can save the image or track vehicles through additional footage and cameras."

BETTER EVIDENCE & INTELLIGENCE FOR MORE INFORMED POLICING & INCREASED SAFETY

Access to real-time video footage addresses another of the MVPD's key concerns: ensuring that first responders know as much about a potentially dangerous situation as possible before engaging. "Real time information is very important to officer safety," stated Chief Page. Video footage also produces clearer, more reliable evidence, and delivers a more holistic and detailed picture for detectives and prosecutors. "We've seen several cases already where the cameras have assisted prosecution," said Chief Page.

Video footage is also useful to corroborate statements and eye-witness accounts. "I'm still surprised at the number of cases where a camera disproves statements we've been given," said Assistant Chief Brands, recalling an incident in which the driver of a vehicle involved in an accident told officers the crash had been the result of a carjacking. "There was no carjacking and had the cameras not disproved the story, we would have wasted staff time tracking down a non-existent carjacking suspect."

CONCLUSION

Today, the MVPD has seen a clear, positive impact on safety across the city while envisioning opportunities to expand the system with local businesses and others. Feedback from the community has been encouraging as well. According to Chief Page, several residents have even requested camera placement near their homes or schools.

When it comes to empowering mission-critical operations, no one is more trusted than Motorola Solutions. That's because for over 90 years, we've partnered with law enforcement agencies across the US to build, deploy, and refine the most advanced mission-critical systems and software in the world.

"One resident who resides in an area where cameras were installed told me she's certain they've made a difference," he recounts. "Because of this program, she can sleep better at night."

To learn more and explore our entire ecosystem of law enforcement solutions, visit: motorolasolutions.com/en_us/video-security-analytics.html

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