



Article Side

New Video Surveillance System for Bates County Sheriff's Office and Law Enforcement Center by [Oliver Walker](#)

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With local governments and law enforcement agencies around the country feeling squeezed between reduced revenues and increased expectations for services, it can be a challenge to maintain a high level of security in a jail environment. It is no different in Bates County, Missouri, where the Sheriff's Office and accompanying Law Enforcement Center are required to meet high level security needs with limited fiscal resources. The Bates County Law Enforcement Center was constructed in 2004 and holds inmates for Bates County, The United States Marshall Service, surrounding city municipalities and for all surrounding counties. The facility will hold up to 100 inmates most of which are pre-trial or pre-sentence inmates. When the Sheriff's Office found their mix of analog cameras and multiple recording platforms too cumbersome to work with, they requested bids on the redesign and installation of new cameras, recording equipment, support and training with the request that budget considerations be key for all bidders.

Midwest Digital Systems - whose competitive bid, detailed installation plan, expertise, and resources - was selected to complete this important job. What made this installation unique and such a challenge, was the need to maintain the same high level of inmate detention as in normal operations, yet make secure areas available for the wiring and placement of cameras. A schedule was worked out allowing inmates to be moved according to what areas were under construction. Additionally, all tools used by the installers had to be inventoried at the beginning and end of their shift. Midwest Digital Systems dealt expertly with the unique challenges of installing in this jail environment. Major Jason Lawrence the Jail Administrator said, "It went smoother and quicker than we anticipated and they were very respectful of the job we have to do on a daily basis as well as doing a great job not to interfere."

Midwest Digital Systems' solution was a hybrid design, using the County's existing analog cameras wherever possible to maximize the previous investment, but when higher resolution was required, Arecont megapixel digital cameras were installed. To facilitate this design Midwest Digital utilized hybrid servers from Exacq Technologies to provide seamless integration and recording of both analog and IP video surveillance cameras on enterprise class systems. This hybrid design allowed the video from all cameras to be stored on exacqVision recorders providing one, easy to use interface for the entire system and all of the cameras.

Midwest Digital also increased the amount of storage and the video retention from the previous system and allowed for using time lapse recording with motion based recording for all cameras to ensure critical video was always available. The new Exacq analog hybrid recorders also improved the overall recording quality of their existing analog images as well by increasing the recorded resolution.

Utilizing 5MP ArecontVision cameras providing image resolutions of 2560 x 1920 allowed for fewer cameras in key areas with more forensic zoom detail. Using wider angle lenses allowed for cameras to be positioned to provide key overviews in cell pods using just one camera instead of multiple analog cameras.

According to Major Lawrence, the Sheriff's Office has seen a significant improvement in their ability to zoom into specific areas with the digital cameras and with far more clarity than before. It is also easier to use the new exacqVision recording platform to go back, search, and find specific incidents.

By utilizing multiple servers and providing RAID redundancy and dual power supplies, Midwest

Digital Systems provided for maximum uptime of the system. If one server goes offline, critical views can quickly be transferred to another server to maintain visibility in key areas of the facility. Likewise the IP camera network is on a dedicated IP infrastructure keeping it segregated from general network traffic.

By tweaking, cleaning and adjusting the previously installed analog cameras and adding multi-megapixel ArecontVision cameras, Midwest Digital Systems provided a comprehensive boost to the video surveillance coverage of the facility without the need for a complete gutting of the original system saving the county significant cost.

It wasn't just the video surveillance that was improved. Because the proposal for the video cameras was within the County's budget, they were also able to look at improving the audio recording that takes place in the interview and booking rooms. With new, higher-tech audio microphones, they now have better quality recordings for these locations as well. They are able to record drivers taking breath analysis tests to determine their behavior and if needed, burn that to a disc for the courts.

The Bates County Sheriff's Office and Law Enforcement Center experienced a professional installation and is now able to provide improved security all within budget, and the installation was completed ahead of schedule. Chad Anderson, Bates County Sheriff has been so pleased with the results of the installation and the improved security within the jail that he has happily referred others to Midwest Digital Systems.

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Midwest Digital Systems has served Missouri, Kansas, Iowa and Nebraska with design, installation and maintenance of a [business security camera systems](#), a [key card access systems](#) and a [door intercom video](#) systems.

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