



Best Western PLUS Clocktower Inn

Montana hotel chooses exacqVision and Illustra video surveillance solutions from Johnson Controls for location near Yellowstone National Park

With more than 70 years in the hospitality industry, Best Western Hotels & Resorts® is an award-winning family of hotels with more than 4,000 locations in over 100 countries and territories around the world. Best Western International, the parent company of Best Western

CASE SUMMARY

Location: Billings, Mont.

Systems Installed:

- exacqVision A-Series Network Video Recorders from Exacq
- Illustra Pro 3MP Mini-Dome cameras
- Illustra Pro 1MP Dome cameras
- Vigitron MaxiiNet Gigabit Ethernet L2 Plus Managed PoE Surveillance Switch

Hotels & Resorts, has recently won several prestigious awards including Business Travel News' number one business hotel two years in a row, seven consecutive AAA/CAA Hotel Partner of the Year awards and top honors from U.S. News & World Report.

Each Best Western hotel is independently owned and operated and gives member hotel owners the option to use the company's prototype designs for new construction or to modify building design based on market demands.

Introduction

[Best Western PLUS Clocktower Inn](#) is located in downtown Billings, Mont., the state's largest city. Billings is situated along the Yellowstone River and is approximately 100 miles from the north entrance to Yellowstone National Park, the United States' first national park and one of its most visited. Due to its close proximity to Yellowstone National Park, Billings has been nicknamed "The Gateway to Yellowstone" and is known as a stopping point for tourists traveling to and from the park.

With its downtown location and covered parking area, the Best Western PLUS Clocktower Inn in Billings is also a popular destination for business travelers and prospective college students visiting nearby Rocky Mountain College and MSU-Billings. The Clocktower Inn was built in 1966 and has undergone several expansions and renovations over the years, including the addition of 60 guest rooms in the "Big Sky" building adjacent to the hotel's original location. Parking for the Big Sky building is located on the ground floor, while guest and conference rooms sit above the parking level on the second and third floors.

"Though we experience very few break-ins or problems, we wanted to secure the Big Sky parking lot as much as

we could and in a way that was unobtrusive and discrete," said Steve Wahrlich, owner of the Best Western PLUS Clocktower Inn. "Video surveillance seemed like the natural fit for securing the parking lot in a subtle way and for deterring theft in the general area."

Wahrlich wanted to add video surveillance coverage across the property to include areas such as the Big Sky pool deck fence, the lobby/office area and facing the street outside the inn. He also was interested in using video surveillance to help ensure the safety of the Clocktower Inn's security staff who patrol both buildings at night to handle any emergencies and other events that may arise, in addition to improving the inn's overall security.

Challenges

The Best Western PLUS Clocktower Inn turned to system integration specialists [TCT](#), a long-time telecommunications presence in the Billings area, for assistance in deploying its first video surveillance system. Together, Wahrlich and TCT came up with a long-term plan for deploying up to 40 or more surveillance cameras around the inn's premises over an 18-month period.



Wahrlich hoped the video surveillance cameras would leverage the brightness of recently installed LED lights in the parking garage and capture images more clearly and easily. He also wanted the ability to record

and then review video surveillance footage as needed, so network video recorders became part of the project as well.

“As the systems integrator on the project, TCT wanted to provide the best technology available for a project this size without going overboard and to give the Clocktower Inn and its ownership top-notch security technology with great value and scalability,” said Mike Julin, Security Department Manager for TCT.

With its facilities split between two adjacent buildings and an alley-way in between, the landscape of the inn required additional electrical work prior to the video surveillance system’s deployment. Before the TCT team could get started on the deployment, Wahrlich needed new conduit installed to provide power for the video cameras.

Solution

With TCT’s help, Wahrlich chose Illustra Pro 3MP Mini-Dome Compact Dome cameras from the Tyco Security Products brand portfolio, which is now part of Johnson Controls, to protect the Best Western PLUS Clocktower Inn and its parking areas. In the initial phase of deployment that followed the new conduit installation, TCT installed 13 [Illustra Pro 3MP Mini-Dome](#) cameras in the ground floor Big Sky parking garage.

The Illustra Pro cameras offer the image quality and detail needed to see faces, license plates and other objects, making them ideal for areas with varying light levels like the Big Sky parking area. The Illustra Pro 3MP Mini-Dome’s face detection enhancement feature automatically increases video quality around detected faces, which is especially helpful during post-forensic review. The cameras’ durable design can stand up against high and low temperatures, water, vandalism and dust, helping to combat typical wear and tear and extend the inn’s investment in the cameras.

In addition to Illustra Pro IP video cameras, Best Western PLUS Clocktower Inn chose a single [ExacqVision A-Series Network Video Recorder](#) (NVR) for its new video surveillance system. With a capacity of up to 64 cameras, the A-Series NVR offers the scalability and recording capacity that the inn was seeking from the beginning of the project. The NVR is compatible not only with the entire Illustra video camera product line, but also with thousands of IP camera models from other manufacturers.

The NVR can also store up to 48 TB of video and, if more storage is required, storage can be expanded to over 1.6 PB with S-Series networked storage. The Clocktower Inn’s exacqVision A-Series Network Video Recorder is compatible with all exacqVision video recorders and video management software as well, offering the Best Western PLUS Clocktower Inn a variety of options for expansion of the system.



“With the exacqVision A-Series Network Video Recorder, the Clocktower Inn can add cameras as needed and the NVR’s compatibility with cameras from multiple manufacturers also provides freedom of choice for the future,” said Mike Julin of TCT.

“Because the NVR includes the pre-configured [exacqVision Professional](#) video management system software, the owner of the Best Western PLUS Clocktower Inn can view recorded video from his smart phone, computer or using any web browser, which makes it very easy to use. The A-Series NVR provides the perfect blend of options and features for this particular location.”

With the [exacqVision Professional](#) VMS software, investigations can be conducted on recorded video, audio and data using thumbnail or timeline searches and important recordings can be bookmarked for long-term storage. The VMS also uses video multi-streaming to optimize storage utilization and network traffic, and new IP camera licenses can be easily added at any time. The VMS software uses EasyConnect to automatically configure IP cameras to the network, which ensures ease of installation.

In addition to realizing a higher level of security in Big Sky's parking garage, at the front desk/reception area and in the alley-way, the Best Western PLUS Clocktower Inn has gained operational and business intelligence from its new Illustra/Exacq video surveillance system.



"The level of security provided by the new video surveillance system is phenomenal and helps us to deliver the great experience our guests expect when they stay with us, but it has also offered benefits that I hadn't even considered previously," said Wahrlich. "We've been able to use video footage for training and quality control purposes and have also helped the local police with some of their investigations. The results have been terrific for us."

The Future

TCT and the Best Western PLUS Clocktower Inn are already planning the next phase of the project, which includes securing the perimeter of the Big Sky pool deck and adding video surveillance to the parking lot adjacent to the original property. They plan to add several new cameras to these and other locations around the inn. In the interim, Wahrlich is also considering the Illustra/Exacq solution for use with his other business properties in Wyoming.

The Customer – Best Western PLUS Clocktower Inn

Built in 1966, The Best Western Plus Clocktower Inn is a 131-room hotel near the Yellowstone River and 100 miles from the north entrance to Yellowstone National Park. The hotel is located in Billings, Mont., the largest city in Montana with area attractions including [Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument](#), and [Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area](#).

The Integrator – TCT

TCT is a full-service telecommunications company that has been serving customers in the Big Horn Basin of Wyoming since 1953. TCT provides the latest Internet, telephone, and television services to business and residential customers throughout northwestern Wyoming and southwestern Montana. Business solutions range from managed care to BluePrint system solutions, which include day-to-day operational business technology. Residential services are TCT's bedrock, with state-of-the-art phone, Internet, television, and more for customers in Wyoming and Montana.

The Solutions Provider – Johnson Controls

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