Executive Summary

Stats

- 164,000 Square Feet
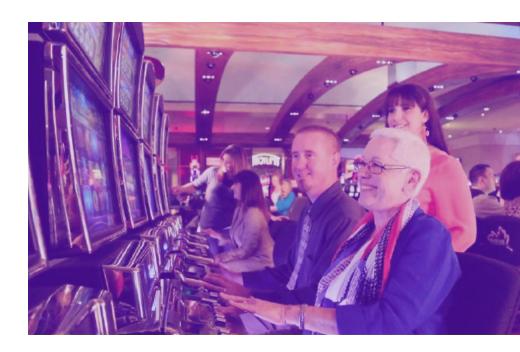- 700 Surveillance Cameras

Industry

- Hospitality

Challenges

- Create Stable Backbone for Video Surveillance System
- Protect Tribal Assets
- Ensure Compliance with State and Federal Regulations

Benefits

- Doubled Surveillance Viewing Capability
- Dramatically Increased Uptime
- Ability to Upgrade to Handle All Property Surveillance
- Peace of Mind

Black Oak Casino Resort Hits the Jackpot with Video Surveillance

California Gaming Organization Expands Viewing Capabilities, Eliminates Network Stability Problems

Introduction

Protecting casino assets isn't just good business for the Black Oak Casino Resort; it's also mandated by law. The casino, located on tribal land owned by the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians in Tuolumne, CA, spans 164,000 square feet of just gaming and entertainment operations. Black Oak Casino has over 700 surveillance cameras on the gaming area, not only to ensure guest safety and casino security, but also to comply with state and Federal regulations. The sheer number of cameras means that the casino requires a reliable network in order to keep the cameras online.

"Policies, procedures, and regulations state that we have to monitor cash drops and financial transfers via video, as well as have 24/7 surveillance on the tables, and record possible liabilities like slip and falls," said Edewaa Foster, Gaming Commissioner.

The initial solution that Black Oak Casino Resort chose proved to be a bad bet right out of the box. The only thing consistent about the network was that it failed, like clockwork, about every seven days.

"In between," stated Dave Menendez, IS Coordinator at Black Oak, "we had a lot of video loss, recording loss, and slow camera response — and everything cycled down from there... We had to constantly reboot switches because of crashes."

The solution was failing and not allowing Black Oak Casino Resort to protect tribal assets. "We even had to have our surveillance agents go down on the floor to monitor tables, and it really risked us being in noncompliance with regulatory standards," Foster recalled. "It put me on the edge of my seat."

Because video surveillance is a critical piece of the casino's regulatory compliance program, the team was desperate for a solution. Black Oak Casino Resort's system integrator was just as frustrated with the current switches and asked if the organization would consider another manufacturer. That led to the installation of two Virtual Services Platforms (VSPs) 7024s and 28 Ethernet Routing Switches (ERS) 4850s. In addition, a slightly different network architecture was configured, one that was more of a "spider web" concept to optimize the flow of video surveillance network traffic.

Results

With a new network structure mapped and new switches installed, Black Oak Casino Resort braced itself for the cutover. However, switching to the new infrastructure proved to be remarkably pain-free. "Cutover was a lot more smooth than we thought it would be," Foster said. After a few small tweaks, the system was running smoothly on the Extreme switches. Out of the gate, the Black Oak Casino Resort team was very pleased with the new equipment and network.

> "We went from a system that sent us in the zone to fear the worst to something that is not only stable but surpassed my expectations."
>
> **Edewaa Foster, Gaming Commissioner, Black Oak Casino Resort**

"The reliability and performance difference between the two networks was like night and day," Foster recalls. "We went from a system that sent us in the zone to fear the worst to something that is not only stable but surpassed my expectations. The way the network performs is amazing."

"The responsiveness of our cameras is remarkable," states Menendez. "When you move a joystick, it actually moves the camera — instantly."

> "I felt a big weight lifted off my shoulders. I no longer went to bed at night worried about a possible violation or phone calls at 2 AM."
>
> **Edewaa Foster, Gaming Commissioner, Black Oak Casino Resort**

Essentially, the 700-plus cameras feed data via the switches through a core. That allows for recording and surveillance of casino activities.

Troubleshooting video surveillance problems has become much easier. Black Oak Casino Resort's team can quickly pinpoint whether any problem is related to a switch or a camera, and even remotely access the camera for maintenance purposes.

Foster pegged the stability of the new system to be near 100 percent — a substantial improvement over the generously-estimated 50 percent stability of the old switches. It's also much more responsive, allowing the surveillance team to move cameras and pan quickly to areas of note using joysticks in the control room. "I felt a big weight lifted off my shoulders," Foster said. "I no longer went to bed at night worried about a possible violation or a phone call at 2 AM."

Expansion Plans

The Extreme Networks solutions have served Black Oak Casino Resort so well that the team plans to add more cameras to the video surveillance mix. The hotel's 88 cameras have already gone online on the system, with the gas station on the property being added as Phase II of the upgrade. And plans are in motion now to centralize all the cameras at Black Oak Casino Resort.

Additionally, the tribal commission has plans to add an RV park to the resort. That area will also be secured with video surveillance. Foster is confident that the Extreme switches can handle anything else added to the video surveillance network. That's why they're also considering adding the property's west side surveillance to the hub.

"As we add more cameras to the system, I'm confident that the infrastructure is solid and is going to work."

Edewaa Foster, Gaming Commissioner, Black Oak Casino Resort

"Going into it, we let Extreme and our partner know that we needed a robust system, as we would potentially be adding cameras," Foster said. "As we add more cameras to the system, I'm confident that the infrastructure is solid and is going to work."

A Showcase System for Other Casinos

The Pelco Endura system running over Extreme switches has worked so well that Foster and his team host other casino commissioners who wish to witness their video surveillance and backbone in action. Any time another casino expresses interest in upgrading their network, Black Oak Casino Resort happily provides tours to show off how well its system works now that it uses Extreme.

"We're happy to showcase it and share with other casinos the experience that we've had, and demonstrate where we're at today," Foster said.

For Black Oak Casino Resort, choosing Extreme meant more than being able to meet compliance standards and secure tribal assets. It meant peace of mind — a winning hand that will keep paying out for years to come.

Solutions

- Virtual Services Platform 7024
- Ethernet Routing Switches 4000 Series

Learn More

For more information, contact your Extreme Networks Account Manager or a member of the Extreme Partner Network program, or access other materials by clicking on Resource Library at www.extremenetworks.com.

About Black Oak Casino Resort

Black Oak Casino Resort, owned and operated by the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians, is located in Tuolumne, California in the Sierra Foothills eight miles east of Sonora. The Casino encompasses over 164,000 square feet of gaming and entertainment options, including reel and video slot machines, table games, poker, bars, restaurants, bowling, players club, gift shop, and arcade. The casino offers gaming action, tournaments, and promotions, and its knowledgeable, courteous dealers and floor staff ensure the gaming continues 24 hours a day, year-round. Black Oak Casino Resort also offers live entertainment three nights a week in its Willow Creek Lounge, including comedy acts. The hotel features 148 rooms and luxury suites and a full conference center.

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