



SECURITY RUNS THROUGH

By Wendy Revell, Contributing Writer

To mark the formal dedication of the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel (DWT) on November 1, 1930, President Herbert Hoover turned a “golden key” in Washington that simultaneously rang celebratory bells in Detroit, Michigan and Windsor, Ontario.

Today, the world’s only vehicular international subaqueous border crossing is still considered a great feat of engineering. The 5,160-foot tunnel serves both commercial and general public vehicles, with nearly 14,000 vehicles passing through it each day. And newly installed Pelco Spectra IV cameras are securing the safe transport and smooth operation of this

engineering wonder. Robert Howell is the Facility/Project Manager for the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel, LLC, charged with overseeing all construction-related projects. DWT’s goal was to conform to NFPA guidelines for 100% CCTV coverage in the tube section of the tunnel. The ideal solution was found in the

Pelco Spectra PTZ camera system. Ten of the cameras were installed, with individual cameras mounted approximately every 400 feet. During the installation, cameras were attached to encoders and network switches to feed images back to the head end via fiber. “We are very pleased with the Pelco camera products,” Howell said

Reliability a Real Plus in Challenging Environment

Though a tunnel may at first glance seem like a protected environment, in reality it presents an ever-changing atmosphere, subject to moisture, exhaust fumes, and fast-moving vehicular traffic that creates volatile wind patterns within the structure. “When you see tractor-trailer trucks flying by, just two feet from the cameras, you realize how well-made they have to be,” said Robert Bracci of Compsat Security, the firm awarded the installation project. “There is constant vibration in the tunnel.” Adding to the importance of the Spectra IV’s proven reliability is the complication of not shutting down the key route for any period of time. When the decision was made in 2007 to

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upgrade the existing tunnel cameras from fixed to the PTZs now in place, the ability to complete the "switch-out" without shutting down the tunnel was a key consideration that also impacted product selection. Crews worked Sundays through Thursdays from midnight to 5 a.m., while only closing down one lane of the tunnel. (The 22-foot wide roadway normally has two lanes of traffic operating in each direction.) During each night's five-hour shift, Compsat's team had to get in, replace one camera per night and re-wire an entire box. Rick Bernard, an estimator and engineer with Compsat Security, said the stringent time constraints made Pelco products an obvious choice.

"We chose Pelco for the job because of their superior products and support in the CCTV industry," Bernard said.

Compsat Team Adds Technical Expertise

Based in Southfield, Michigan, Compsat Security provides integrated, state-of-the-art security systems and low voltage systems. Since 1995, they've offered customers extensive expertise in the integration of both information technology and physical security disciplines. For the DWT installation, Compsat Security's parent company, Compsat Technology, provided invaluable help. Compsat Technology is a premier systems integrator of data storage, server and storage management solutions that help businesses manage, protect and leverage their critical information. Bracci said that the firm's high tech expertise

gives Compsat a competitive advantage, while allowing them to better serve their customers. "One of the reasons we were chosen for this project was that we are primarily a technology company that does security, and understands our clients overall needs in the IT arena," Bracci said. Working with the existing fiber already in place for this project proved to be a bit tricky because of needing to replace a few connectors and the constraints of available time and materials once they were in the tunnel. But the team got the job done, and successfully had the CCTV view back in full operation before rush hour each morning.

24/7 Support Wins Fans

Before Ken Tinkham became a System Specialist for Pelco Representative, Milsk Company, Inc., in Michigan, he was a sales manager for Compsat. In that capacity, he learned a lesson that he says he'll never forget about the incredible value of Pelco's 24/7 customer support. "After four hours on the phone with them (Pelco competitor) I was disconnected because it was 5 o'clock and they close at 5 p.m. No apology, just click. That would simply never happen with Pelco," Tinkham said. "When it comes to 24/7 tech support, Pelco walks away from everybody else." As on any project, Tinkham said there were numerous factors impacting the recommendation to go with Pelco. In addition to product reliability and customer support, Pelco's product warranty that guarantees repair or replacement within 24 hours was significant to the DWT. "If

a camera did go down, the ability to have it back in operation within 24 hours was critically important," he said.

Terrorist Threat a Daily Concern

In operating an international border crossing, daily safety concerns for the DWT include vehicular accidents, illegal smuggling and possible terrorist activity. Multiple security organizations are regularly involved with tunnel operations: US and Canada Customs, Homeland Security, and Detroit and Windsor local police.

As President and General Manager of the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel, LLC, Neal Belitsky is ultimately responsible for all tunnel operations. "We operate one of the busiest passenger crossings between the US and Canada with more than 12.5 million travelers passing through each year," he said. "The surveillance technology we now have in place is critically important to our success in keeping this key infrastructure safe and secure."

Now that the new cameras have been fully operational for several months, Bracci, of Compsat, is more than pleased with Pelco. "We needed a durable, reliable camera. Pelco... is an excellent product and everything's working great."