



**Synopsis:** Jacksonville, Fla., Transportation Authority (JTA) installs wireless camera system that's monitored by a centralized command center.

**Agency:** JTA

**Technologies:** Hard drive, server, DVRs and cameras.

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# Tram Cam



To increase the safety and security of Skyway train passengers, the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) installed a new video surveillance system in its trains and stations that wirelessly connects in real time to a centralized command center.

The Skyway train operation is an automated monorail located in downtown Jacksonville, Fla., that consists of eight stations and 10 trains that each have two cars.

According to Kenneth Williams, manager of Skyway operations, the previous surveillance system in the trains had one camera in each car, but passengers could sit behind it and avoid being recorded. The system was also recorded by VCR technology, and the tapes usually had lines blurring the recordings that made it difficult to identify people.

Now two cameras are deployed in each train car — one on each end — so all passengers are viewable. Each station has four to eight cameras to provide full coverage. The recordings are saved to a digital video recorder (DVR); each train and station has its own DVR.

So far, the video surveillance system is up and running in the train stations and was fully deployed in the trains in February, Williams said.

The system was funded by a federal grant and costs approximately \$430,000, which includes a video wall for the JTA command center, server, DVRs and cameras.

According to Williams, two workers operate the command center at a time. One person watches the video surveillance, while the other controls the power and speaks with passengers via an intercom.

Apollo Video Technology provided the system, and Williams said the company's soft-

ware was easy to use. He also said deploying the technology was a twofold effort. "Apollo came in and assessed what we needed to do," he said, "and immediately they installed the DVRs into the stations and loaded software onto the control operators' stations; that took about one week."

The next part involved adding the video wall to the command center, and the cameras and DVRs to the trains, which took about 90 days.

The video is wirelessly transmitted to the command center and retained on the hard drive for 30 days.

## Safety First

The surveillance system has already helped keep the train stations safe. Williams said the operators viewed people who were shooting at each other with what turned out to be BB

guns — however, to the operators they looked like regular guns. They called the police, and the people were arrested.

The system has also helped the JTA review complaints placed by passengers. Williams said a woman complained that she fell on the train, but officials reviewed video footage and saw that she was seated the whole time.

In the future, the technology will be added to other transportation supported by the JTA, like buses. Williams said the organization receives many claims from bus passengers, and it would like a way to review the issues.

Williams said the JTA is conducting a demo on one bus, and so far, the results have been positive. The widespread bus deployment will begin by April 2009 and will use cellular card technology to transmit the surveillance to a command center. 

