



By Skip Sampson

Video Captures Bad Guys

Intruders are known to go to great lengths to get into the protected premises. Security dealers have reported entry through roofs and ceilings as well as perpetrators driving cars through the building walls or entrances.

Citizens in a New Hampshire bank were surprised to find they were being robbed—by a moving tree. The enterprising thief decided the best method of disguise would be to become one with nature and taped small tree branches to his face and body. The stunt did not succeed and police, who identified him from images taken from the bank's video surveillance system, soon apprehended him.



Amusing as this may seem, statistics from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) have shown robberies increased six percent last year, the highest increase in any violent or property crime category. Over the last two years the FBI has reported an

increase of 3.6 percent in violent crimes. Robbers are also attempting to take big sums of money. About \$72 million was stolen in 7,200 incidents with an average of about \$10,000 per incident.

log to digital systems. The more advanced digital technology can take pictures that are equally as precise, but also have the advantage of being more convenient to use. An integrated digital video recorder (DVR) system allows bank officials to locate an event easily and send the suspect's picture to law enforcement officials. It may increase the likelihood of a quick apprehension and return of stolen money. This type of search using an analog system would be laborious and time consuming. The images would have to be printed out and then digitized through scanning.

High quality, high resolution cameras may also reduce future theft from banks because authorities are more likely to be successful prosecuting the suspect. Pictures that clearly show a suspect's face, characteristics and clothing details can be effective in erasing any "reasonable doubt" that a defense attorney can instill in a jury.

Access control is also an important part of bank security. Advise your customers on "sally ports," a low tech but effective way of securing an entrance/exit. Based on designs found in old castles and forts, the portal locks the last exit door but lets the suspect go through the first exit door, then locks that door also. The suspect is then trapped between two bulletproof doors, sealing him in until law enforcement arrives. Another way to separate a potential robber from the money is to install "bandit barriers," bulletproof glass that divides the tellers from customers. Some bankers may complain about the barrier's aesthetics, but they provide an effective means of deterrence.

Although a client may be concerned about cost, it is always beneficial to remind them about the safety of customers and employees and how effective practices can minimize threats. The peace of mind the customers will have and the continued employee retention at the branch is worth every penny the institution puts out.

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Banking customers are certainly at risk and robbers are bolder than ever. It's up to the systems integrator to make sure their customers know what they can do to protect their facilities.

BACK TO BASICS

Start by talking about the basics of an effective alarm system. The FBI statistics point out that nearly all affected institutions were reported to have security cameras and alarm systems. But not all the security systems were maintained or up to date and some were not activated. Scheduled maintenance and testing is a must for these systems to perform properly when needed.

The next priority is the camera system. There has been a shift in camera technology from ana-

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