

## Hofstra University's 2012 Presidential Debate Monitored with Milestone Video

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In the weeks leading up to the town hall-style debate between President Barack Obama and Governor Mitt Romney, a security team consisting of Secret Service, NY state and Nassau County police were busy installing systems to ensure the safety of the candidates and attendees. For technical matters involving a temporary security surveillance monitoring solution, EIA Inc. was contracted by Nassau County Police Department to integrate 46 surveillance cameras networked through Milestone XProtect® Corporate video management software (VMS) to monitor surrounding roadways, buildings, crowds and staging areas to ensure the safety of the President and others in attendance.

“Working with the electronic surveillance squad and university security in the weeks leading up to the debate, we were able to deploy cameras on numerous buildings throughout the campus and feed them into the comprehensive surveillance network. The cameras were networked through Milestone XProtect Corporate video software which provided the surveillance team with visibility to vantage points of the debate and surrounding areas.” - Glenn Taylor, Senior VP Sales, EIA

**The challenge:** Secret Service, Nassau County Police Department and Hofstra University security personnel had less than one month to complete a rapid deployment throughout the campus and surrounding areas of Hofstra University to prepare for the second of three presidential debates in the 2012 election. With just a few weeks until the event, hardware and network issues troubled the installation, and a system design and correction was needed to ensure that President Barack Obama, Governor Mitt Romney and attendees were protected during their live debate.

**The solution:** The Nassau County Police Department undertook a month-long operation to deploy numerous Sony dome and bullet cameras to cover all angles surrounding the presidential debate stage, the roads leading up to Hofstra, the buildings on campus and the crowds outside the event location. With Milestone XProtect Corporate VMS, multiple mobile viewing stations could be connected to 46 camera feeds before, during and after the Presidential Debate. This provided authorized security and law enforcement personnel clear and detailed views of the crowds and areas surrounding Hofstra University.

**The advantages:** With Milestone XProtect Corporate, the incident commander was able to monitor the entire area including campus roadways, buildings, faces in the crowd and the presidential candidates themselves, from numerous strategically placed remote control centers and onsite. The Milestone solution connected the cameras through Wi-Fi over one network, so each command center and mobile user was able to view any or all cameras as needed.

### Security of the Highest Importance

Number two of the three presidential debates, held in a town-hall meeting format at Hofstra University in Nassau County, New York, was less than two hours in length, but the time spent to ensure the safety of President Barack Obama and Governor Mitt Romney, as well as the students, volunteers and surrounding areas added up to thousands of man hours. Hofstra was informed of its nomination to host the presidential debate in 2010 and by mid-2012, preparations had begun.

The university's 600-acre campus with numerous buildings is accessible from a major highway. Secret Service, in cooperation with Nassau County Police Department, New York State Troopers and school security, were required to proactively address any possible threat opportunities for such a large campus. An intricate security surveillance system was determined to provide the President's dignitary protection detail the best tools to monitor crowds, buildings, the President and candidate.

As the security system requirements evolved over several months, the need for a complex rapid deployment of the security systems became evident, so New York-based EIA was contacted to consult in the high profile project. EIA, a Platinum Partner with Milestone Systems, would bring a core competency in networks and security integration for a seamless and easily accessible security feed for the presidential debate.

EIA helped connect the entire system through a combination of wireless systems and the existing fiber networks throughout the university and broadband services from Verizon.

### **Going Mobile – Ground and Air Surveillance**

Each building on the Hofstra campus has its own IT network, but is controlled by the university's parent network. To build the elaborate security network, the 46 cameras of the event's temporary security system were fed through the already installed parent IT network points. Through a Firetide wireless mesh system and failover network, all of the buildings and associated cameras were available to the police through secure firewall access.

The entire operation was headquartered in a security operations center, with multiple mobile command centers strategically placed outside the Nassau Coliseum and in a fallback zone off campus.

The deployed system included 29 Sony SNC-ER550 Full HD Rapid Dome cameras with 1080p HD, 19 Sony SNC-CH280 Network HD 1080p Bullet cameras with infrared illuminators, an Arecont AV20185DN 20-megapixel Panoramic IP camera and a Direct Insight Node camera.

There was no limit on camera location: they were installed on bridges, telephone poles, light poles, along the Hempstead Turnpike - everywhere. Even a helicopter flying over the event was equipped with a high definition camera to provide another view of the surroundings.

"There were so many things going on – the helicopter in the sky recording a super high definition broadcast-quality video, being pushed down through a very expensive camera, then recording it in Milestone, which presented a finished product seen in six, seven or eight viewing stations. We were able to serve it to anyone who was involved," states Glenn Taylor, Senior VP Sales, EIA. "When I look at what we went through from a technical point of view and to have the ability to get everything up and running without a hitch, Milestone performed as promised, doing exactly what it was supposed to do. It was, as always, very impressive."

Mobile carts were constructed and rolled into the event a day in advance. The police utilized Milestone's Mobile Client with Video Push for numerous officers to use from their smartphones. Plain-clothed officers monitored the crowds from within using access to the surveillance and to be seen in the command centers.

The officers in the field were able to create additional camera views by using the Milestone Screen Recorder and web service. The police fed high definition video back through their smartphones with the Milestone Screen Recorder, allowing the command center to retrieve it from a PC and run it through Milestone on the fly for live viewing during the debate.

### **Patrolling the Debate**

With the infrared, high-definition and thermal cameras deployed, the team manned their individual posts for the arrival of President Obama and Governor Romney. Nassau County Police Commissioner Thomas

V. Dale was stationed in one of the mobile command centers on a three-screen setup – one screen to watch the debate live, and the others with access to all 46 cameras.

The incident commander for the event was stationed in front of a touch screen monitor, able to access and control the camera feeds in an instant. At first there was a concern that the screen was not large enough to efficiently monitor the cameras, but after being briefed on the Milestone interface and its ability to quickly and flexibly rotate and switch camera views, the concern was addressed.

A few minor incidents were monitored during the event, which did not pose a direct physical threat to the President and governor, but resulted in actionable arrests. One protest group was streaming live feed to its website from campus. That group was linked to a watch list for the debate and the police monitored the live feed in the command center. Using Milestone XProtect, they could view multiple angles and find what they needed by comparing the feeds.

Another situation included the Green Party Candidate, who was removed for protesting at the debate and heading a group that blocked streets and sidewalks. The command center was able to monitor that protest and make the appropriate call when it became a disturbance.

### **Milestone Integration Benefits**

“We work with a large number of software applications and Milestone is the only VMS that allows us to seamlessly integrate them into our deployments without error. Milestone is always the strongest choice when it comes to our projects. We never have to worry about making changes to our software,” stated Taylor. “Many of the police officers monitoring the debate and surrounding areas were not IT guys by trade, so it was important that we had the user-friendly interface to ensure there were no user error issues: we were able to provide full access through Milestone.”

For EIA, Milestone XProtect goes beyond one-off events such as the Presidential Debate. When this event was finished, the cameras were taken down, but the Nassau County Police plan to redistribute them to problem areas throughout the county.

### **About EIA, Inc.**

Established in 1977, EIA, Inc. has over three decades of experience providing networked technologies. This experience has provided the company with an expert knowledge of video surveillance, door access, building controls, and energy efficiency as well as the networks required to support such technologies. EIA applies its expertise in the planning, design, and implementation stages of a project. By drawing from its extensive experiences, EIA is able to maximize a project's value and stability while eliminating the variables.

For more information, email EIA, Inc. [info@eia.us](mailto:info@eia.us) or visit our website [www.NetworkedTechnologies.com](http://www.NetworkedTechnologies.com)

### **About Milestone Systems**

Founded in 1998, Milestone Systems is the global industry leader in open platform IP video management software. The XProtect® platform delivers powerful surveillance that is easy to manage, reliable and proven in thousands of customer installations around the world. With support for the widest choice in network hardware and integration with other systems, XProtect provides best-in-class solutions to video enable organizations – managing risks, protecting people and assets, optimizing processes and reducing costs. Milestone software is sold through authorized and certified partners. For more information, visit [www.milestonesys.com](http://www.milestonesys.com)