



NTS Security Upgrades in Full Swing

NTS takes 21st century technology lead

From 1992 to 2004 the Nevada Test Site (NTS) sat underutilized. A moratorium had eliminated the primary mission of the NTS – underground nuclear testing. The stringent security requirements needed to safeguard operations would go a decade without upgrades or improvements.

But in 2004, the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) tasked the Nevada Site Office with a new nuclear materials mission. “Our security infrastructure had not been addressed in 10 years. We had 120 guards, a new mission with expansion on the horizon, and 18 months to prepare,” recalls Stephen Scott, NNSA technical security engineer. “When the mission started earlier than planned, we knew we were beginning at a deficit.”

NNSA worked with Wackenhut Services Inc. (WSI-NV) to train a significant number of new security force specialists. But Scott recognized this was a unique opportunity to examine the use of new technologies to enhance security at perhaps a lower cost, but more importantly, to ensure the survivability and success of protective forces.

“We saw it as a chance to look ‘outside the box’ and embrace security technology to achieve our goals through integration with security forces and programs,” Scott says.

The result was a five-year plan to introduce a host of new technologies at the Device Assembly Facility (DAF). While Scott and WSI-NV engineers found quite a number of available technologies, only a select group of 22 was chosen to upgrade the security infrastructure. Work began in earnest in 2005 and continues today.

“There was an incredible array of technologies available through our National Laboratories, but it was selective shopping. We had to identify systems that could be integrated with our overall defensive strategy,” Scott says.

State-of-the-art surveillance, detection and weapons equipment upgrades were selected:

- ACAV IIs – Armored vehicles equipped with specialized weapons and capabilities
- ROWS Towers – Remote operated automatic weapons
- Boomerang Sniper Detection System
- Defensive and vulnerability software systems
- Long-range detection radar system
- MDARS remote controlled surveillance vehicles (automated patrol robots)

- Wireless computer network command and control system
- Explosives trace detection systems
- A new radio system for security forces
- Multi-mode Unattended Ground Sensors
- An augmented reality training simulator
- Chemical attack sensors.

Scott says some of the new technologies are in use while others are part of future site security upgrades scheduled for completion by 2010. WSI-NV personnel are constantly training on the new devices as they are ready for deployment. Having WSI-NV engineers and technicians installing the new equipment facilitates the seamless transition, Scott says.

“This creates an excellent cooperative relationship,” he explains. “WSI-NV has intimate knowledge of defensive strategies, effective joint operations and responsibility of our security.”

Additionally, NNSA and WSI-NV created the Technology Deployment Integration Center (TDIC) at Building 114 in Mercury. The facility is accessible to both vendors and laboratories for field testing and new system debugging before deployment. It provides an ideal environment for technical and operator training while enabling display and functionality to users.

“With all of these improvements, we’re actually providing our protective force the tools they need to guarantee their success against any adversary. It’s the survivability factor,” Scott says. “Knowing they have what it takes to support their efforts, they’ll work that much harder to keep our site and sensitive facilities secure.”

