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MTS has seen a 27% reduction in crime between July 2016 and June 2017. Major factors in this include a new “beat” patrolling strategy and a great team of officers on the ground keeping our system safe. Another component to the crime reduction is our video surveillance program. The word is getting out that MTS has eyes all over the system. If a crime is committed on our property, most likely it will be caught on video. Dedicating the resources to install a robust video surveillance infrastructure is a commitment, but it’s how we use the technology that makes it so effective. As our video surveillance program has matured over the last decade, it has become a significant resource for many elements of our work including:

1. Video helps gain knowledge about officer-involved incidents and verify testimony of those involved.
2. Video helps Rail Central Control aid security teams responding to an unmanned station by giving a situational analysis to responding officers – how many people, exact location, type of clothing, etc.
3. When someone files an injury claim against MTS, video surveillance can provide proof and potential level of liability – if any.
4. MTS can assist other agencies seeking intelligence for investigations. Federal, state and local law enforcement agencies all contact MTS for footage.

Assisting other agencies by sharing our video surveillance has made us a great resource for solving high-profile crimes in San Diego. MTS Security Systems Administrator Jeremiah Johnson has made a name for himself as the go-to asset that finds incidents on video that may otherwise be unnoticed.

Johnson recently helped SDPD solve a case about a couple of suspects who mugged a person with special needs. “I was contacted early in the morning by the police department, who gave me incident information,” said Johnson. “I found a group that matched the description on tape and told the police. Later in the afternoon, I ended up finding them on the live video feed near 12th & Imperial.”

Once Johnson found the suspects on the live video feed, detectives sent marked police vehicles to the location and arrested the suspects.

Earlier this year, Johnson also assisted the Chula Vista Police Department (CVPD) with the investigation of a homicide that had taken place off our property adjacent to MTS Trolley tracks. By providing CVPD with video and still images of the suspect’s vehicle captured at a nearby Trolley station, law enforcement obtained the necessary information that resulted in the suspects being taken into custody.

In another case, during a string of violent attacks against downtown's homeless in 2016, Johnson assisted San Diego Police by utilizing Trolley station and bus stop cameras to find and follow the suspect, and identify precisely where the suspect discarded the knife used in a murder while walking past a Trolley station.

So what's the method Johnson uses when reviewing video? "When I'm reviewing tape, I try to think like a criminal and think like a cop," said Johnson. "Often times, I'll look at what other people are doing and look for mannerisms and movement that's out of the ordinary. Then I'll look at different camera angles and I usually end up finding it."

Our surveillance program extends past our track and vehicles. It's become a crime-fighting tool for communities across our service territory. Between May 2017 and May 2018, MTS provided video analysis for local law enforcement on 458 crimes.

Unfortunately, crimes get committed against good people. But fortunately, the MTS video surveillance program has made a tangible difference to reduce crime on our system and in the community.

MTS Video Surveillance Hardware

- 10,000 Surveillance Cameras on the entire system
- 200+ Officer body cameras
- 1,200 Cameras at 53 Stations
- 1,500 Cameras on 128 trolleys
- 5,000 Cameras on 800 buses

Photo: Jeremiah Johnson analyzes surveillance video in the Rail Central Control Room with Security Lieutenant Jessica Burris (left) and Security Dispatcher Theola Tucker (right).

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Trolley

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