

## Trendy Fire Protection for Beverly Hills

Beverly Hills, California, has been glamorized in countless film and television depictions as the home of the wealthy and the famous. Beyond the glamour, though, it has municipal management issues that are much like those faced by any city.

In particular, Roy Johnson, the city's Chief Engineer, has experienced a long-term frustration with the fact that the municipal buildings in his purview often had different, mutually incompatible and sometimes antiquated fire alarm and building energy management systems (EMS). This made maintenance more complex and costly and potentially limited response capabilities in emergencies.

Johnson was determined to reduce the legacy clutter of multiple vendors and systems operating in the city hall, library, police headquarters, fire department and other facilities. He also wanted to enhance functionality in areas such as emergency communications. With those goals in mind, Johnson took steps to upgrade and standardize around a single vendor family that could reduce costs, simplify monitoring and facilitate future expansion and reconfiguration.

### Phased-In Solution

Johnson teamed up with JAM Fire Protection Inc., a Los Angeles-area fire alarm/life safety systems integrator. Together, they determined the most cost-effective choice, compliant with the requirements of The National Fire Alarm & Signaling Code, NFPA 72, and the CSFM (California State Fire Marshal), was the E3 Series® fire alarm and emergency communications system produced by Gamewell-FCI.

Once the City's equipment procurement decisions were made, Johnson began updating each building for which he had responsibility whenever a major renovation was scheduled.

"We started out about ten years ago when we were remodeling the library," he says. But Johnson didn't just want to simplify – he wanted to improve safety capabilities along the way. "The library project was an opportunity to embrace Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, using alarms that incorporate strobe lights, as specified by NFPA 72," he notes.

More recently, Johnson noted several historic city structures that needed updating. That presented an opportunity to network the fire alarm systems within and between buildings to simplify system monitoring and speed response to alarms and maintenance alerts.

The Gamewell-FCI FocalPoint® graphic workstation, located in Johnson's Central Plant office, provides facility managers and first responders an integrated view of the entire network of systems. An event history and floor-by-floor layouts of every building, depicting fire alarm components and special notations such as hazardous materials storage or occupants needing assistance, are all part of this monitoring system's customized graphics. The City's FocalPoint system is also programmed to deliver alerts to standard mobile devices, providing a full description of any emergency events in real-time.



"For Beverly Hills, FocalPoint was the key," explains Mongillo. "They had a LAN so it was natural for them to tie communications for all buildings together from one location. That makes it less labor intensive and easier to run with just one person," he explains.

According to JAM Fire Protection, the City did not originally specify an emergency communications (a.k.a. mass notification) system as part of these updates. However, when Beverly Hills officials saw this capability demonstrated by the system installed in the library, they favored its value for this and other municipal buildings. The E3 Series can be enhanced with programming and the necessary Local Operator Consoles (LOCs) to offer a supervised means of delivering immediate notifications to some or all areas of the network in the midst of disaster or public safety situations.

### Installation Efficiencies

John Mongillo, President of JAM, says that modern alarm systems can now be supplemented and upgraded affordably with many new capabilities. For instance, Gamewell-FCI's E3 Series systems require only a single, twisted-

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by Honeywell

pair of wires or two fiber optic cables. Furthermore, notes Mongillo, the affordability of scalable fire alarm and emergency communications systems (FA/ECS) such as the E3 Series allows it to be expanded incrementally, as budgets allow.

JAM's installation approach for Beverly Hills involved using existing conduit runs and equipment when possible while adding new Gamewell-FCI technology to provide additional voice communication and the ability to monitor the entire network through the FocalPoint workstation. Mongillo says his company has used the same cost-effective approach for other customers, such as the city of Carson, California.

Both Carson and Beverly Hills were able to take advantage of existing LAN systems, which reduced the need for new physical connections, and both municipalities needed alarm upgrades because their existing technology dated back 30 to 40 years.

### Project Elements

Over the course of the project, many of the city's major municipal buildings have been reequipped and modernized.

City Hall has been upgraded with a Gamewell-FCI E3 Series fire alarm with voice evacuation. This California Historical Building, built in 1932, offered special challenges to installers working around decorative facades and ceilings. The building's fire alarm system provides full area coverage utilizing approximately 250 sensors while providing smoke control through interfaces with elevators, HVAC and access control systems.

Equally challenging was the work in the police headquarters, which is now protected by an E3 Series network. The fire alarm system was installed as part of a major renovation, which included the addition of a new Emergency Operations Center. Further upgrades to the system were made during the renovation of three lower levels underground, which included a new state-of-the-art indoor firing range. The system is presently using 180 new addressable sensors and modules and approximately 60 hard wire zones with standard interfaces to HVAC, six banks of elevators and access control.

At the fire department headquarters, another E3 Series networked voice evacuation system with four nodes was installed. The retrofit of the fire alarm system was completed utilizing 180 sensors with full sprinkler coverage in three buildings.

Buildings recently constructed include the Third Street Parking facility and 331 Foothill Road office building. The garage is equipped with a Gamewell-FCI E3 Series voice evacuation network system with two nodes while the office building only required a small, standalone E3 Series system.

The transformation of an historic post office building into a theatre and construction of an adjacent underground parking garage are currently underway. Given the E3 Series' scalable capacity and ease of expandability, the fire protection systems for these buildings will also be tied to the network to simplify monitoring and maintenance.

Mongillo stresses that the networked system does not alter the basic alarm system. "All buildings' systems can still operate independently if the network is unavailable. It's meant to be fail-safe." In addition, if one or more system components are damaged, the E3 Series is designed to be "survivable". A distributed audio design helps ensure the continuity of clear, accurate communications.

Today, with the majority of planned retrofits complete, City Engineer Johnson has amazing capabilities available from his office -- an EMS monitor and the FocalPoint network graphic workstation, managing a sophisticated network of five fire alarm and emergency communications systems throughout the city's core. Work will soon begin to equip additional buildings.

"Our city has always tried to be on the cutting edge. Back in the 1930s, we installed a Gamewell fire alarm call box system around the city, which was state-of-the-art for the time, and that system stayed in service for decades," he says.

The fire department still retains and displays, in working condition, the original Gamewell Master Box system that was used to protect the City of Beverly Hills. "This new system follows in that tradition," exclaims Johnson.



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