



AVIGILON SOLUTIONS ARE FUELING ALABAMA POWER'S INNOVATIVE SECURITY

BIRMINGHAM, AL USA





As one of four utilities operated by Southern Company, a leading electricity provider in the US, Alabama Power has gone above and beyond in earning the trust and respect of its customers. To start, Southern Company and its affiliates are consistently recognized as top employers for veterans and diverse communities. They're also industry innovators with an ever-expanding portfolio of clean and renewable solutions — it's no surprise that the conglomerate consistently features in Fortune's annual rankings of the World's Most Admired Electric and Gas Utility. Alabama Power is headquartered in Birmingham and is the primary electricity provider for the southern two-thirds of the state, with 6,500 employees serving 1.4 million customers across more than 300 locations.

With so many substations distributed across such a vast area, threats such as trespassing, vandalism and sabotage were always top of mind for Alabama Power's security team. Thieves would target valuable tools and equipment at crew headquarters as well as copper from substations and transmission lines. Stopping crimes in progress and preventing future attempts became a priority. So did recording these events so as to mitigate liability and maintain regulatory compliance. Alabama Power's team knew they had to be proactive. Not doing so could compromise their service to hundreds — or even thousands — of customers. It could also jeopardize the safety of workers and the fundamental security of the electrical grid.

Fortunately, one of the generating plants was already equipped with Avigilon technology that was providing powerful, scalable enterprise security. Moving forward, the team used this as their model. Their goal was to implement high-quality camera installations at all their worksites, unifying the entire system so that even the most remote locations could be monitored from a centralized, analytics-enabled platform. To achieve this, they looked to the Motorola Solutions' Video Security & Analytics suite of products.





SECURITY THAT'S FULLY-CHARGED

The first step for Alabama Power's Corporate Security was to set up high-definition video surveillance across their substations, generating plants and company headquarters. To that end, approximately 4,000 Avigilon cameras were installed throughout their various facilities with the help of [Convergent Technologies](#). These installations included multiple models from the H4 line, including the [H4 IR PTZ camera](#), which includes a pan-tilt-zoom lens with infrared functionality for visibility in all conditions, and the versatile [H4A Bullet](#), which also has built-in infrared viewing. All of this was integrated with over 200 servers and centrally operated by [Avigilon Control Center \(ACC\)](#) video management, allowing operators to remotely monitor Alabama Power's various sites.

Some of the most immediate improvements came from the self-learning video analytics embedded in the Avigilon cameras and ACC™ software. Since the security solution leverages AI to understand what "normal" activity looks like, there are far fewer false flags — and [Unusual Motion Detection \(UMD\)](#) technology alerts security personnel when there is an anomaly. Not only has this allowed Alabama Power to replace its costly legacy motion and beam intrusion sensors, it has also led to the identification and apprehension of several suspects while they were still trespassing on site. As an added benefit, the Avigilon system was seamlessly configured with Alabama Power's pre-existing access control system to further secure the company's premises.

"Avigilon's seamless integration with access control and intrusion detection systems has significantly lowered the time needed to assess events and take appropriate action," says Roy Sexton, Security Director of Alabama Power and Chief Security Officer of Southern Company. "Prior to system integration, event analysis was delayed by as much as 15 to 20 minutes while the monitoring officers tracked down the needed information from various systems. Now the Avigilon camera associated with the security event comes to the screen automatically, allowing assessment and determinative action within thirty seconds to a minute."

"It's a unique privilege to partner with Alabama Power and Southern Company as the security systems integrator of choice. Steve and his team are true thought leaders within the utility space with respect to comprehensive enterprise security systems innovation. This is evidenced by their choice to leverage Avigilon technology, a long-standing technology partner for us." Jeff Holland, Vice President, Gulf Coast Region, Convergent Technologies



NO BLACKOUTS FOR THIS SOLUTION

TECHNOLOGIES THAT CAN TALK

The complete Motorola Solutions Video Security & Analytics solution solved a security issue that had plagued the team at Alabama Power for years: integration. With previous systems, security officers were constantly rolling their chairs between computer monitors because the various video, access control and digital components could not be coordinated in a streamlined way. The perimeter and intrusion detection technology was another high-value feature of the new installation. With self-learning video analytics and UMD technology, security personnel could define certain areas that should never have people in them and take immediate action when these critical lines were crossed, preventing damage and ensuring safety.

FAST-TRACKED CRIME FIGHTING

Because a single security operator has access to video from all station locations, the assessment time for potential break-ins has dropped significantly from 30-90 seconds. While the complete Avigilon solution serves as a deterrent for criminals and allows Alabama Power to identify suspects, would-be thieves that have made an attempt to compromise the facilities have been identified and addressed so quickly that law enforcement was able to apprehend the individuals well before any serious damage was done.

In one instance, one of the new analytic cameras triggered an alarm when it captured a man jumping over a fence at the maintenance crew headquarters. An officer at the Security Operations Center was able to identify that the intruder was going through utility trucks, call Birmingham Police and monitor the cameras while another company officer responded to the scene. The suspect was arrested by Birmingham Police and charged with breaking and entering a motor vehicle and first-degree theft.



“These new analytic cameras are making a real difference in our ability to protect company assets. The analytic systems have been around for a few years but the newer HD cameras with smart analytic software are not prone to frequent false alarms and have incredible low-light capabilities that allow our officers to quickly assess a situation and take appropriate action.”

STEVE LUCIANO, SECURITY MANAGER OF ALABAMA POWER

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

With Avigilon technologies driving their innovative new Motorola Solutions security system, Alabama Power can deliver electricity — and exceptional service — to their customers with greater assurance that the grid is protected. But a major advantage of their integrated solution is that it can continue to grow and scale as technologies are upgraded. The security team at Alabama Power is already in the process of adding the H5 line of Avigilon cameras to their network and implementing the latest version of ACC software. Moreover, the success of their system has inspired Southern Company to roll out Motorola Solutions technologies to its other utilities, such as Mississippi Power. To date, providers under Southern Company’s umbrella have installed 8,000 cameras and counting.



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