



Challenges

- Aging closed-circuit television system reaching end-of-life
- Inmate transport travel between jail and courthouse incurring fuel, manpower costs, plus some security risk
- Geographically dispersed judges obliged at times to travel long distances for arraignments, trials

Value Created

- Streamlined arraignments in order to maintain efficiency
- Resource containment through the use of video conferencing for arraignments and non-evidentiary hearings
- Third parties include: Idaho Education Network, the Bar Association, and the Idaho Supreme Court

Video Conferencing Streamlines Arraignments for Bonneville County Court System



County Court System Saves Time and Money and Increases Efficiencies Thanks to Video Solution from Avaya

Idaho Falls, Idaho - Bonneville County is part of the Upper Snake River Valley in Southeast Idaho. Idaho Falls is the county seat, and the county is home to six incorporated cities. Bonneville is the fourth largest county in the state, with a population of more than 104,000.

For a number of years, the Bonneville County Court System relied on closed circuit television (CCTV) and in-person arraignments. Inmate transportation proved to be costly and also posed potential security threats to deputies and to the public. While CCTV helped the County save on manpower, transport, and security costs, the system they used was dated, nearly to the point of obsolescence. The Court System

needed a new solution that would not only replace the existing CCTV network, but that would also enable county workers to collaborate across distances.

Lifelike Interactions Across Locations

When Dave Ellingson came to Bonneville County, the County's CCTV arraignment system was on its last leg.

“The simplicity of the system has resulted in a lot of enthusiasm for the Avaya solution, and we are near capacity due to its popularity.”

– Dave Ellingson

Ellingson, the County’s network administrator, was tasked with finding a replacement. He and the Court Administrator agreed that video conferencing would not only replace the existing arraignment infrastructure, but also serve as a replacement for travel and help streamline administrative meetings – both within the county system and with third parties such as the Idaho Education Network, the Bar Association, and the Idaho Supreme Court.

Ellingson and team implemented a multi-vendor video network with an Avaya Scopia Management Suite and Elite Series MCUs at the core. There are 10 courtrooms, five of which are equipped with video systems. In the courtrooms, the team installed pan-tilt-zoom (PTZ) cameras mounted in the ceilings with 55” monitors for courtroom viewing and 42” monitors for the judges. This setup facilitates direct eye contact between the judge and the inmate. There’s also a large

monitor on the courtroom wall so the audience sees the interactions between the two. Attorneys can also join via video and appear on executive video systems mounted on hydraulic arms.

Bonneville County is well equipped when it comes to video collaboration. There are two video systems installed in the jail, as well as having video at the Juvenile Detention Center, the Public Defender’s Office, the Behavioral Health Center, the Emergency Operation Center, and at least one system at each of the surrounding counties throughout Southeast Idaho.

Affordability and Simplicity Drive Adoption

Video conferencing was new to county employees at first, and there was a learning curve. The simplicity of the Scopia solution led to increased adoption and end-user enthusiasm. For bailiffs and marshals, the system is easy-to-use and requires little to no IT involvement. Ellingson merely schedules a call and the attendees enter the conference number and join the call. For judges in smaller surrounding counties, the need for travel has all but been eliminated. When necessary, witnesses, plaintiffs and defendants can remotely participate in trials without compromising network security.

“It takes me about three minutes to set up a video call. I ask for one day’s notice so I can prepare and accommodate a test call for new users. The simplicity of the system has resulted in a lot of enthusiasm for the solution, and we are near capacity due to its popularity,” said Ellingson. Also the end users can start their own call from the endpoints directory, which is generally used for point-to-point calls.

Nowadays, the County averages more than 800 multipoint calls a month and 100 point-to-point calls per month. Ellingson said that when the system was first installed, the County was conducting an average of one arraignment a day. Now they often see as many as six per day. The productivity increases are obvious, and there are also tangible savings on fuel, transport escorts, and time for jail staffers, not to mention the lowered safety risks for deputies.

Quality, Interoperability and Expertise

High quality interactions are a requirement for success with any video conferencing installation. The solution deployed within Bonneville County is mixed-vendor, and the surrounding counties use a variety of standards-based endpoints. The Scopia Elite 5000 Series MCU supports open standards and delivers a high quality video experience even when multiple vendor solutions are in

use. The Scopia Management Suite's ability to manage third-party endpoints decreased the administrative overhead and provides a single Web-based interface for managing their video deployment. Ellingson chose the Scopia Solution based on its wide support for interoperability as well as its rich features and functionality.

When the system was initially deployed, there were some sound quality issues. Ellingson called in experts from the AV vendor as well as his endpoint vendor, but the issues went unresolved. Eventually he called in experts from Avaya who were able to troubleshoot the problem in a matter of minutes even though it was not related to the Scopia MCU's performance. Ellingson was so impressed with the Scopia solution and the Avaya support team, he's hoping to eventually migrate to Scopia rooms systems. The system is operating flawlessly, and end users have no trouble navigating it.

"Bailiffs and marshals come into the room and fire up the system with no problem. As long as we're doing a standard setup, it doesn't matter if a hearing runs long or ends early - our users are comfortable with the remote and have no trouble initiating and ending calls. It's very intuitive," said Ellingson.

Video Arraignments Best Practices

The County's approach to video arraignments is innovative, and they've established some best practices to achieve the success they're experiencing today. In the jail, they've had to make modifications to reduce echo since the rooms are made of cinder block - for example installing carpet. They've also use external speakers and place a microphone mounted on a stick in order to minimize background noise (e.g. booking clerks entering data, document printing, opening/closing doors, etc.).

Other details that Ellingson's team implemented include bolting the chairs and table to the floor in the event an inmate becomes agitated. They also keep at least one spare system in the closet at the jail. Inmates occasionally take their aggression out on the technology in the room.

"We are always fine tuning," said Ellingson. *"We've had tremendous success, but we know there will always be room for improvement as well. We've gotten creative in terms of how we use the mics and how we split the output so that it's visible in court. I'm looking forward to leveraging even more features as we grow and expand our video usage."*

Looking Forward

Ellingson says the video system is heavily used, and he'd like to expand as budgets allow. In the meantime, he's working with judges and county commissioners to take advantage of personal video conferencing on their desktop and mobile devices. He said the judges have embraced this because it means less travel for them and enables them to take advantage of the bring-your-own-device (BYOD) trend.

"Judges can call in from their laptops or iPads, and they really appreciate that flexibility," said Ellingson. *"We don't have a lot of personal video users yet, but there's opportunity to expand when their Internet connections are video-capable."*

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To learn more about the Bonneville County, visit <http://www.co.bonneville.id.us/>

Learn More

For more information, contact your Avaya Account Manager or a member of the Avaya Connect channel partner program, or access other collaterals by clicking on Resource Library at www.avaya.com.

Solution

- Scopia Elite 5000 Series MCU
- Scopia Management
- Scopia Desktop Server with Scopia Desktop & Mobile Clients
- 31 third-party video cameras and desktop systems

ABOUT BONNEVILLE COUNTY

Bonneville County, in southeast Idaho, is part of the Upper Snake River Valley. Its eastern border is also the state border of Idaho and Wyoming. Idaho Falls, originally called Eagle Rock, is the county seat. Incorporated cities in Bonneville County include Ammon, Idaho Falls, Iona, Irwin, Swan Valley, and Ucon. Bonneville is the fourth largest county in the state with a population of more than 104,000.

About Avaya

Avaya is a global provider of business collaboration and communications solutions, providing unified communications, contact centers, networking and related services to companies of all sizes around the world. For more information please visit www.avaya.com.

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09/14 • UC7291-01