Project Profile Deerhurst Resort



SMARTER, UNIFIED FIRE PROTECTION FOR ONTARIO RESORT

Deerhurst Resort, located on 760 waterfront acres in rural Ontario, is famed as a “year-round retreat,” offering golf, spa services and other activities. The resort’s modern facilities include 33 buildings protected by a fire alarm system installed by OFS Fire Prevention, a unit of the Ontario-based OFS Group of Companies.

This landmark destination was chosen to be the host venue of the G8 Summit. Government leaders representing eight of the world’s largest economies, including US President Barack Obama and Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, were to stay at the resort.

This high-security event spurred Deerhurst to perform a high-tech renovation of its fire protection systems. To accomplish this, Deerhurst enlisted OFS Fire Prevention to upgrade its existing NOTIFIER system which had served the resort well for 15 years.

Technology had progressed and Deerhurst was looking for an easier method for monitoring all of its facilities’ fire alarms. One of its most notable requirements centered on a system capable of automatically notifying security personnel of an alarm or other event via email or SMS text messaging. Taking a proactive approach to emergency response, Deerhurst also employed a one-of-a-kind scene assessment tool to aid first responders.

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One older, addressable fire alarm had covered the main building with thirty-three conventional fire alarm control panels from various vendors protecting the outbuildings and which were tied to the main facility's panel through copper wire. Staff were able to view detailed information on the main facility's individual sensors and devices, but only basic information on each out-building's conventional system.

"The out-buildings reported only alarm and trouble to the main building," explained Jeff Ough, vice president of OFS Fire Prevention.

In the event of an alarm or trouble condition at one of the out-buildings, resort staff would need to physically investigate the issue and search for the specific device that generated the signal in that building.

"It would give them a zone that might isolate the signal to a specific floor, but then they had to go room to room to find the cause," Ough said.

Considering this resort's typical out-buildings have as many as 50 sensors installed in 20 to 25 guest units spread over three floors, locating an alarm could be a time-consuming task and a huge disruption to guests.

Creating an Addressable Network
After reviewing several options, Deerhurst Resort chose to upgrade its main building's system with an NFS-3030 addressable fire alarm control panel from NOTIFIER – a larger-capacity system with networking capabilities.

To make the Resort's fire alarm network fully addressable, allowing the system to pinpoint the exact "address" or location of alarms, OFS replaced the conventional systems in many out buildings with NFS-320 addressable fire alarm control panels.

The OFS technicians were able to save Deerhurst Resort a substantial amount of money in labor and materials by utilizing the existing copper wire from many of the previous fire alarm systems. In some instances, OFS was able to keep the traditional fire alarm systems in place, and convert the existing sensors to work with the addressable system through the use of transponder modules to monitor existing conventional circuits.

Addressable upgrades were also made to older devices, including heat detectors, smoke detectors, pull stations and strobes. Although horn/strobes are the primary notification device, OFS made sure to install only strobes in the horse barn as a more animal-friendly solution.

The detailed status information provided by the addressable system is useful in scheduling system maintenance, said Brian Staples, chief engineer for Deerhurst Resort. "We have a large number of smoke detectors and the system monitors the obscurity level on a regular basis," he said. "We can plan maintenance and prevent false alarms based on the information we're getting back."

Detailed Monitoring
Every building's fire alarm is now connected to a data network, enabling data from all buildings to be sent to the NFS-3030 system for easy monitoring. While the control panels operate independently, each feeds all of its fire alarm data into this network, allowing monitoring of all systems from a single point. Such a network is also very survivable, meaning if one or more systems go offline, the others continue to operate properly.

To further simplify systems monitoring, the resort opted for an ONYXWorks graphic workstation, designed to provide both a text and detailed, floor-by-floor graphical view of all buildings and fire alarm components.

"We have the entire property plotted into the computer screen," said Staples. "Security personnel can see the entire [fire alarm] system and any problems or operating conditions at a glance. Getting exact detail about the location of a problem is very important."

The resort's main switchboard monitors the NOTIFIER fire alarm system 24 hours a day. Authorized resort personnel can access the ONYXWorks system through a password-protected Internet site. And to fulfill one of the resort's primary requests, the ONYXWorks system has been programmed to automatically send text and email alerts to security personnel when an alarm or trouble signal is registered.

High-Tech Responder Solution
Considering the critical security measures necessary to secure the G8 Summit and the property's expansive layout, the resort took a progressive approach to emergency response. A NOTIFIER ONYX FirstVision interactive touchscreen display was mounted in the resort's main lobby to provide security and first responders easy access to this state-of-the-art incident command tool.

Constantly receiving data from the fire alarm network, the FirstVision unit sits idle until an emergency event takes place. Utilizing data from the entire fire alarm network, FirstVision can indicate:

- Timing and origin of a fire
- Direction and speed of a fire
- Detailed layouts of multiple buildings with access and egress routes
- Potential hazards, such as chemical storage
- Standpipes, emergency shut-off valves

The FirstVision system can even tie into new or existing CCTV cameras to show users realtime camera feeds from throughout the facility, and most importantly, in the areas affected by a fire.

Deerhurst Resort felt the addition of this device would help equip first responders with better information to prompt a better, more effectual response to protecting lives and property.

Future Fire Alarm Plans
Staples emphasizes the new fire alarm system at Deerhurst Resort has performed well since it was installed. The G8 Summit went on as scheduled, with not one fire alarm issue to report.

The OFS technicians continue to slowly upgrade the remaining out buildings' conventional systems with NOTIFIER NFS-320 addressable panels and compatible sensors. This phased-in approach makes it easier to budget and work around visitors and room occupancies.

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