

LXE Keeps Port Security in Ship Shape.

CASE STUDY

JAXPORT. The Jacksonville Port Authority (also called Jaxport) is a full-service international trade seaport in Northeast Florida offering three public marine terminals and one terminal for cruise passenger service. With security growing increasingly important to U.S. safety, Jaxport has implemented tighter security standards at its marine terminals over the last several years and is currently deploying programs to comply with recent Federal and Florida state security regulations.



Knowing who is entering Jaxport, why, where and how long they're authorized to visit within the Port is an essential part of meeting the tougher new standards. In the past, collecting, maintaining, accessing and verifying such data has been very paper intensive and time consuming.

The Evolution of a Secure Port

"It was a manual process, in which guards validated badges and printed out passes. There was nothing electronic," says Rebecca Larson, supervisor, Access Control Center, for Jaxport. So in recent years, the Port's IT and security departments, working with value added reseller Baywood Technologies, began collaborating on an automated solution named the Port Access Control System (PACS), custom-written by Baywood and now available to other Florida ports.

"Once it was determined what Port Access Control System we'd use, we had to determine what type of electronic device to use," Larson says. "It had to be capable of monitoring our entry points and reading badges with bar codes."

There are two types of identification accepted for Port entry: a permanent badge and a temporary pass. Permanent badges, renewable every year, require a 7-year background check, fingerprinting, photo and a screening process, which result in a bar coded photo ID that lists essential data such as where the ID holder is permitted within the Port. Temporary passes are obtained based on driver's license credentials and screening with the Universal Denial List. They allow visitors up to five visits in any 90-day period.

A Need for Wireless Speed

Jaxport needed a fast, reliable way for guards to validate visitor's credentials without the time-consuming

process of entering the guard booth to look up a user's authorization. The solution needed to be wireless, so the guard could carry the device to the car to scan ID badges and validate them against the Port Access Control database.

Jaxport chose LXE's ultra-rugged MX5 handheld, equipped with an integrated 2-D scanner and 802.11b-compliant radio, together with a Cisco wireless LAN. The first gate rolled-out in 2004, with two additional marine terminal entryways brought online in 2005. Three more are scheduled for implementation.



Data Whizzes in Wicked Conditions

The MX5's "are constantly exposed to outdoor weather, and it's a 24/7 operation," Larson says. "Operators need to scan and process IDs quickly." The challenging conditions not only include strong sun and rain, but the salt water spray from the ocean. Batteries must be able to last an entire 12-hour shift. "Of all the products we went through, this one offered the most versatility," she adds.

As a vehicle enters the gate area, the guard obtains IDs from the driver and any passenger and scans each card's linear bar code using the MX5's PACS software client and integrated scanner. In addition to interrogating the badge to determine eligibility for entrance, the guard records the vehicle identification, visit purpose, and destination for each visitor and assigned personnel. This information is then used to produce security management reports as well as facilitate in-depth access pattern analysis for persons of high interest. Most importantly, the handheld is used to ensure only authorized personnel are allowed entry onto the Port's terminal areas.

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Once the record is retrieved, the MX5's color touch screen displays key data to the guard, including visitor identification, what parts of the Port they are authorized to access, their employer, whether the card is about to expire, or instructions to confiscate if that's required. To create temporary passes, the guard can swipe the guest's driver's license through a mag stripe reader wedge device in the guard booth or read a 2-D symbol on the license, enter key data and send a vehicle ID and visitor pass print order to the Zebra P310 desktop ID printer in the guard booth. "The accuracy has been phenomenal," Larson says.

Guards also employ the MX5s to scan personnel badges as they leave the Port, and are notified via the screen if that person has exceeded the maximum authorized visit limit on any one trip to the Port.

The Next Level of Security

Jaxport plans to expand the solution within the next year by registering and bar coding the vehicles themselves. "We'll track all the vehicles that come onto and off the Port," Larson explains. "Cars have permanent assigned parking areas, but sometimes for construction they may have to park outside of an assigned area. By incorporating vehicle information, the bar code will tell security personnel whether the car is allowed in that area."

"LXE has been absolutely wonderful in helping us meet Federal and State mandates," says Larson. "It's been a highly successful implementation, and the IT department and Baywood Technologies have been phenomenal. The handhelds are a welcome addition, and we're ecstatic about the product."



About LXE Inc. LXE Inc. improves supply chain performance by applying over 36 years' experience developing wireless products and solutions. From wireless computers, advanced auto-ID technologies, and wireless network infrastructure, to our award-winning customer support - LXE's easy-to-use products are as reliable as the people who install and support them.

Based in Norcross, Georgia, LXE also offers a full range of turnkey services, including radio integration, project and installation management, network design, technical support, and repair services. LXE is a wholly-owned subsidiary of EMS Technologies, Inc. (NASDAQ: ELMG), and has offices worldwide. For more information, visit www.lxe.com.