



Case Study

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Luxury Condo Meets Its Match with Silent Knight's High-End Fire Protection System

Despite its stunning location on the cool, clear waters of picturesque Clear Lake, Endeavour is an extremely hot property.

How hot is it? Robin Parsley, president of Endeavour Holdings, which developed the property, reported in May 2006 that 60 percent of the 80 units in Endeavour Clear Lake - ranging from two-bedroom condominiums to five-bedroom townhouses - had already been sold, just one month after groundbreaking. What's more, as of this writing, only two units remain available in the upscale 30-story structure.

Little wonder. The first waterfront high-rise condominium in the Houston, Texas Bay Area, Endeavour Clear Lake offers a life of luxury and convenience with a concierge, valet, controlled access, fitness room, screening room, infinity edge lakeside pool, cabanas, courtesy boat dock, fitness center and indoor resistance pool. So hot is this new property that the developers actually launched a luxury magazine, *Endeavour Lifestyles*, with the intention of capitalizing on the new building's brand name.

The heat generated by Endeavour Clear Lake is, of course, figurative. But the heat that might be created by a fire event in this lavish condominium is quite literal. Consequently, the building developers demanded a fire protection system with a level of quality that would match the quality of the property itself.

An invitation to join the bid process was sent out to a number of local fire alarm companies, many of them large firms with long histories in the fire alarm business. The winning bid, however, came from Smith Datacom, LLC, a Houston-based IT service provider and relative newcomer to the fire protection industry.

“We feel the award of the Endeavour Clear Lake luxury condominium project is strategic to our goal of becoming an end-to-end fire protection and life safety provider in the industry,” remarked Shane Corrallo, Executive Director of Operations for Smith Datacom, “Our company consistently strives to break out of the traditional IT Services and Consulting box by offering superior service in less time with a focus on reducing cost. The addition of a Fire Protection Practice (FPP) to our growing portfolio of solutions was a natural evolution of our deep experience in IP based network systems and telephony, software engineering and development, and mass notification system design.”

The company’s range of services on the project was very comprehensive: specifying the fire alarm system, putting in all the wiring, and completing the installation of the equipment - soup to nuts.

“It is a competitive advantage for our Fire Protection Practice to offer a complete solution for commercial and residential builders, where all the resources for the project will come from a single labor pool instead of multiple sources. Smith Datacom can do it cheaper, better, faster! That’s our governing modus operandi and we make it a reality by keeping expertise in-house,” Corrallo said. “We couldn’t think of a better company to partner with than Honeywell and the Silent Knight product line because reputation, integrity, and affordability are concepts we live by.”

Steven Dinh, Managing Director of Smith Datacom, recalled that the building developers were very clear about the kind of system they needed.

“Endeavour was looking for an IP addressable fire alarm panel,” said Dinh.

“They were also interested in a system that was capable of initiating the floor above and the floor below in a fire event. What’s more, it also had to be audio enabled.

“Ultimately, based on the quality of the condominium project, they wanted a very high-quality system,” he added. “They hadn’t skimped on any aspect of the property, and they weren’t about to start with the fire alarm system.”

Dinh’s solution was a system from Silent Knight, part of the Honeywell Life Safety Group and a leading provider of industry-wide compatible fire alarm solutions for small and mid-size institutions as well as commercial sites. Of course, the system’s superior functionality was a primary reason, but there were other considerations.

“We exclusively specify Silent Knight systems because they are not proprietary,” he said. “Basically, the non-proprietary aspect of their systems means that the customer isn’t locked into any one provider for service. That’s a huge plus for customers in terms of convenience as well as accessibility of parts.

The system incorporated equipment from Silent Knight’s Farenhyt IFP series of addressable fire panels. The centerpiece of the system is the IFP-1000, an intelligent analog/addressable fire alarm control panel (FACP). The basic IFP-1000 system has one signal line circuit (SLC) loop that supports up to seven 5815XL signal line circuit expanders. The system offers built-in capacity for 198 addressable devices with expansion to 1584 addressable devices using the IDP protocol. Features like individual point identification, drift compensation, and maintenance alert help the system reduce the number of frustrating and costly false alarms and service calls. The IFP-1000 also supports a full range of detectors, modules and power supplies.

The firmware features detector sensitivity, day/night thresholds, drift compensation, a pre-trouble maintenance alert, and a calibration trouble alert. Central

station reporting can be established by point or by zone, and a built-in annunciator with a backlit 80-character LCD display conveys critical information about the fire event.

A particularly attractive feature of the system is that it utilizes standard wire - no shielded or twisted pair is required. As a result, installation of the system was ultimately faster than it would have been with almost any competitive system.

The IFP-1000 was complemented by a range of ancillary devices, including five VIP-50's, five RPS 1000's, three SLC 5815XL's, and three VIP-CE4's, supporting almost 1000 addressable devices.

The VIP-50 is an intelligent 50-watt amplifier used from Silent Knight to amplify the audio message for distribution throughout the facility. Each VIP-50 is capable of producing 50 watts of audio power and is easily connected to the VIP-CE4 audio circuit expander, which adds four audio circuits to the VIP-50.

The RPS-1000 intelligent distributed power module adds 6.0 amps of power, six Flexput™ I/O circuits, and two Form C relay circuits to the IFP-1000. RPS-1000 connects to the panel via the RS-485 system bus allowing up to an additional 6,000 feet of wiring. The Model 5815XL SLC Expander is a signaling line circuit controller that enables the addition of 127 addressable devices to the IFP-1000.

The IFP-1000 is located on the main floor of Endeavour Clear Lake; each of the five RPS power distribution modules and VIP 50's are dispersed relatively evenly through the 30 floors. Complementing the system are smoke detectors and strobes, with seven detectors, two pull stations, and three strobes placed on each floor in common areas.

Appropriate emergency voice messages can be delivered over the three speaker strobes on each floor, in addition to the speakers within each unit. And the system will control all the expected shut offs, elevator recalls, etc.

Hard-wired, 110-volt smoke detectors have been placed in every unit, although they are stand-alone devices that are not connected directly to the system. This means that a fire or smoke event in any unit would alert the residents of that particular unit without bothering other residents. The reason behind this tactic is a logical one.

“Often, you get someone who overcooks a meal, which creates a smoke situation,” said Dinh. “We didn’t want smoke detectors wired to the system that would send out false alarms in these instances.”

Dinh also noted that there is a sprinkler system in each unit. So if there was an actual fire event in one of the units, the sprinkler systems would break the heat and cause the sprinkler to go into alarm. Once the water flow started going through the sprinkler system, it would trigger the water flow assisters that are connected to the main panel. In the end, the panel would quickly know whether there was a legitimate fire inside a residential unit.

The entire installation process began in January 2007 and took about a year – an impressive performance for a building the size and complexity of Endeavour. The system complied with all local codes and easily passed all fire marshal inspections, with client occupancy being awarded in January 2008. The fire marshal testing was very rigorous, with almost 90 percent of the devices being analyzed.

Most importantly, Endeavour management is satisfied with the results.

“They are very pleased with the system,” said Dinh. “It was very cost-effective, easy to install and configure, and because of its non-proprietary profile, will be simple to troubleshoot and maintain.”

Dinh’s own satisfaction with Silent Knight’s Farenhyt system has convinced him to turn to Silent Knight for future projects; in fact, the future is now.

“We are currently installing a Silent Knight 5820XL FACP at a 300-unit luxury apartment complex in Houston,” he said. “We also have five other apartment complexes that we will be working on, and Silent Knight will be heavily considered for those projects too.

“We’ve even considered becoming an ESD [Engineered Systems Distributor] for Silent Knight. It depends on how many we can actually sell. It’s hard to imagine recommending a different system for any of the work that is currently on our plate.”

There’s a lot of heat being generated at Endeavour Clear Lake. But it’s the kind that’s created when an exciting new property opens its doors in a beautiful location. Any heat generated inside the property doesn’t stand a chance.

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