San Luis Obispo (SLO), the gem of California's central coast, is renowned for its picturesque vineyards, historic architecture, and vibrant community life.

Quiet but lively, it is also home to the California Polytechnic State University, located halfway between San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Ensuring safety and security

Because of its distance from major metropolitan areas, SLO has retained its rural, small-town character, along with a bustling downtown and beautifully preserved Spanish Mission.

The San Luis Obispo Police Department (SLOPD) is focused on ensuring safety and security across expansive terrains, reducing crime, and enhancing the quality of life while upholding the principles of service and integrity.

The challenge

The secluded Reservoir Canyon is just one area that has been a hotspot for vehicle break-ins

For San Luis Obispo, two priorities were crime prevention and the protection of sprawling outdoor spaces popular for hiking and biking. Hidden from public view, the secluded Reservoir Canyon is just one area that has been a hotspot for vehicle break-ins.

However, its remote nature made installing a traditional security system nearly impossible. The initial cost to secure three city parking structures was also cost-prohibitive, with quotes of over $1 million for network connectivity alone.

Need for a robust and reliable solution

"*We've dealt with products that were essentially consumer-grade equipment repackaged as professional security solutions*," said Chad Pfarr, Administrative Lieutenant.

"*We needed a more robust and reliable solution. Creating our own was time-consuming and beyond our expertise, highlighting the need for a specialised, cost-effective solution.*"

Why Verkada

A system that could operate in remote locations, areas typically beyond the reach of standard CCTV

"*We were drawn to the hardware and software quality. But what truly set Verkada apart was the willingness to innovate in ways that traditional security solutions did not. We can now bring Verkada devices into the wild, in the middle of nowhere, without traditional city network*

infrastructure." A system that could operate in remote locations, areas typically beyond the reach of standard CCTV technology was a leap forward for community safety. Use cases include:

- Protecting remote locations with the GC31 Cellular Gateway.
- Licence Plate Recognition (LPR) monitoring to streamline vehicle investigations.
- Protecting evidence in cold storage with Air Quality Sensors.
- Improving check-in and registrant compliance with Workplace solutions.

"*Verkada's willingness to venture into uncharted territory with us to ensure security systems could be deployed where they were most needed, regardless of existing connectivity, was what got us so excited. Beyond just adapting to what's available, it's continuously improving to meet our needs*."

Protecting remote locations with the cellular gateway

In San Luis Obispo, the GC31 Cellular Gateway bridges the gap between the need for remote security and limited infrastructure.

The police department protects areas previously deemed inaccessible without the high costs of traditional network installations, leading to savings of over $1 million for connectivity alone.

Bridging the connectivity gap

"*Before Verkada, the idea of installing a security system in remote locations was a logistical nightmare. The cost of establishing connectivity alone was prohibitive, not to mention the technical hurdles of operating without power or a network*."

"*But with the Cellular Gateway, we've been able to overcome these barriers, bringing security and peace of mind to once vulnerable areas*."

Licence Plate Recognition (LPR) capabilities

SLOPD can install Verkada products in locations that are hard to wire or lack connectivity

SLOPD can install Verkada products in locations that are hard to wire or lack connectivity, such as parking lots, construction sites, trailheads, and natural terrain.

Within the city, the GC31 also protects busy intersections by supporting cameras with Licence Plate Recognition (LPR) capabilities.

Streamline vehicle investigations

Paired with the cellular gateway, CB62 outdoor bullet cameras are deployed on streetlight poles to monitor moving traffic, covering up to three lanes with a single camera.

Using Verkada’s edge-based processing and computer vision technology, the LPR solution captures licence plates at speeds of up to 80 mph (128 kph).

Flexibility and versatility

The cameras' versatility in both covert and overt operations allows SLOPD to adapt its security tactics

The cameras' versatility in both covert and overt operations allows SLOPD to adapt its security tactics to each location. This includes monitoring busy intersections, remote trailheads, or railroad crossings. This flexibility is crucial in a community that values its open spaces and balances accessibility with safety.

"*We've not only deterred potential criminal activities but also enhanced the overall safety for residents and visitors alike. The ability to monitor these areas remotely has been a game-changer, allowing us to extend our reach without stretching our resources too thin*."

Protecting evidence in cold storage with air quality sensors

The introduction of Verkada's air quality sensors into the SLPD’s evidence management protocol has marked a significant improvement in securing critical evidence that requires refrigeration. “*Sensors protect the evidence entrusted to us*."

"*They monitor the conditions within our cold storage facilities in real-time, ensuring that any deviation from the norm is immediately flagged. This allows us to act swiftly to address any issues before they impact the evidence*.” Sensors mitigate the risk of loss and help maintain the overall integrity of the evidence, which is crucial for the judicial process. Ensuring that evidence is stored under optimal conditions preserves its validity and reliability, which can be decisive in court cases.

Guest and Workplace Solutions

Verkada Guest supports security and compliance as well as administrative processes

At the police department, Verkada Guest supports security and compliance as well as administrative processes and community interactions.

"*We're not just looking at improving how we manage security systems; we're also opening up opportunities to better serve our community in every interaction they have with us. This is about making our department more accessible, efficient, and responsive to the needs of San Luis Obispo*.”

- Automated notification

"*Registrants can sign in digitally, similar to the check-in process at a doctor's office. This system automatically notifies the assigned detective, who can then prepare before meeting the registrant*."

"*It's a welcome shift from our current, more manual process, and we're excited about the potential to make our operations more efficient while improving the experience for everyone involved*."

- Digitisation of visitor check-in

The registration of certain types of visitors is a legal requirement that, until now, has placed a burden

The registration of certain types of visitors is a legal requirement that, until now, has placed a burden on the department's space and resources.

By digitising the initial check-in and form completion process, the department can handle sensitive registrations with greater discretion and efficiency. "*We can integrate specific forms and requirements into the Guest system*."

- Minimising congestion

"*This customisation ensures that we can maintain legal compliance while respecting the needs of our community and the constraints we operate under*."

"*Guest reduces wait times, frees up essential space in the lobby, and minimises the congestion that can occur during peak registration periods.*"

Solar and Battery

SLOPD is also exploring alternate power options to enable more deployments across San Luis Obispo, further ensuring the safety and security of their community.

"*Our partnership with Verkada has already improved our operations. The next step involves incorporating solar and battery backup systems for our cameras and bridge devices. This will not only expand our public safety reach but also ensure that our security measures are sustainable and resilient against power outages*."