

# Pelco System Helps Protect Central California Mall

By Gena Pratt Johnson

**W**elcoming more than the combined populations of Colorado, Louisiana, Hawaii, Alaska, Delaware, Montana, and New Hampshire through its doors each year, the Fashion Fair Mall in California's Central Valley caters to the diverse needs of more than 800,000 shoppers.

After a recently completed \$20 million, 90,000-square-foot outdoor expansion, the mall now boasts more than 140 stores covering over 900,000 square feet. So popular is Fashion Fair that its major retailers lead sales in their district and the nation.

With such a high volume of traffic, on-the-ground security professionals need help. From the parking lots to the food court and everywhere in between, a Pelco video security system was on the shopping list.

## The System

In 2003 Fashion Fair Mall installed two DX8000 digital video recorders and 32 Spectra III positioning systems as part of a \$10-million remodeling effort. A DX8000 and another five Spectra III units have been installed for the most recent expansion.

According to Vicente Garcia, who oversees Fashion Fair's security department, Pelco was the choice over competitors due to its high-quality systems, excellent reputation, customer service and training, and the property management's previous experiences with the company.

"The equipment made it easy. The advanced technology, the Pelco Spectra IIIs combining with the digital interface of the DX8000s, made installation labor costs manageable," said Kelly Yost of Turner Security, project manager for the 2003 installation.

Cameras are installed both inside and outside of the building, viewing common areas within the mall and the over 4,600 parking stalls. The additional cameras in the expansion are installed on light posts and roofs, inconspicuously helping keep those areas secure as well.

"The system has met all of our expectations and is doing exactly what we want it to do," Garcia said.

Before acquiring the DVRs, footage was recorded on videotapes, which required extensive time and financial resources to maintain, store, and search for specific incidents. Thanks to the powerful features and capabilities of the DX8000,

security personnel can quickly and accurately pull the necessary video in a fraction of the time, saving money, man-hours, and speeding the investigation process.

## Immediate Returns

Lost children are an all-too-frequent occurrence at a mall this size. At the Security Command Center, children can help security personnel search for their parents using the Pelco system. The easy-to-use joystick enables even children to move the cameras, zooming and panning as they search. This not only allows the children to help point out their parents, but it also helps to calm their fears because they can see what is being done to help them.

The video system has also enabled security to help the police. A family who had hired a caregiver for their aging grandmother began finding receipts from credit card purchases the grandmother said she had not made. Using the store names, times, and dates on the receipts, security personnel were able to recall video and see who left the stores with those purchases. That footage provided evidence

to prosecute the caregiver.

The cameras not only help protect what's inside the mall, but what's outside as well. During the dangerously hot Fresno summer months, security personnel used the Pelco cameras to zoom into a car in the parking lot where a child had been left unattended. The child was rescued from the car. Recorded video proved that the mother had not been gone for five minutes as she said, but for 45 minutes.

Since the new system has been active, vehicle theft has significantly decreased at the mall. The quality of the updated system allows security to be more proactive in preventing the thefts.

"I want all of the Pelco employees to feel proud of the product they put out and the difference they make in people's lives," Garcia said. "The family whose grandmother was a victim of fraud, the father of the child left in the car, and countless other parents whose children have been safely found—Pelco has made a positive difference in all of their lives through the work [the company does]. It doesn't go unappreciated." ■

