

Local firm's mobile surveillance system could be border solution

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A Houston company's surveillance system could mean the thousands of miles of fencing proposed as a border security measure won't be required.

ASAP Security is proposing something a little less obtrusive and a lot more mobile.

And a company hired by the Department of Homeland Security's Secure Border Initiative Net to look at border-security solutions is showing interest.

The system ASAP Security has come up with basically consists of three cameras on top of a 23-foot adjustable pole connected to a battery that can last up to 30 days -- ideal conditions for desolate stretches of the U.S./Mexico border.

The Cam-V Mobile Security System includes a built-in, one-cylinder engine to charge the battery, and is set on a two-wheel trailer, making it easy to transport.

Since its startup five years ago, ASAP Security has done quite well leasing out rapidly deployable portable surveillance systems to clients such as Academy Sports & Outdoors, Spec's Liquor and William Scotsman, as well as general contractors battling theft at job sites.

But it wasn't until a couple of weeks ago that Frontline Systems Inc., a San Antonio company hired by the DHS to flesh out border-security solutions, contacted Mike Monsive, owner of ASAP Security.

"As far as mobile surveillance and portable systems, we're pretty much the candidate for that," Monsive says.

Frontline declined to comment on technologies for border security, and Monsive admits there are several other ways DHS could go. But he sees his Cam-V Mobile Security System, which can include cellular, WiFi and satellite link-up capabilities, as a perfect fit.

"They may not want to cover the entire area," Monsive says. "The Border Patrol pretty much knows where the major paths are. They may want to cover one of those areas for a week or two, then move it down to explore another area."



The Cam-V Mobile Security System: Cost-effective border monitoring.

The Cam-V also includes video analytics -- the ability to detect and track a human -- and warning and alarm systems, giving security teams more lead time because of early detection. For example, if the camera senses a person approaching a restricted area, it can trigger an alarm to Border Patrol and issue an audible warning to the interloper. If the person enters the restricted area, the full alarm is tripped. Border Patrol, though, will have been on its way since the initial detection, with an exact location pinpointed.

"It's a proactive edition," Monsive says, adding that animals do not trigger the system.

Monsive and Frontline sat down on May 23 in San Antonio for a meeting that he says went "extremely well." Other government and private installations also have been in contact about the system.

"There's a big response for ports, special events, municipal police departments, universities and utilities departments," he says. ASAP has also been asked about protecting military bases overseas.

All this has Monsive convinced that, regardless of whether the system is implemented by Border Control, the business will grow. He expects his 10-person firm to at least double in size in the coming months.

"The big cost is in detection," he says of various security systems. "We're a lot more cost-effective."

The base model, which includes one camera and cellular and WiFi capability, costs about \$39,000. The top-of-the-line model can cost \$65,000 or \$70,000. Though Monsive doesn't yet know how many would be needed per mile along the border, he believes they are cheaper than comprehensive, static systems that charge by the foot.

And it's not just the U.S./Mexico border the system can be used for.

"It's also the Canadian border," says Monsive. "There's quite a bit of interest in getting some security up there. Some of the terrorists from 9/11 crossed over the Canadian border."

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