

Turning protection into insight for critical utility operations



From challenge to opportunity

At Clayton County Water Authority (CCWA), the mission is clear and consequential: to provide safe, reliable water and wastewater services to the people of Clayton County every hour of every day.

Behind that mission is a vast network of treatment plants, pump stations, vaults, and remote facilities, many of which are unseen and unmanned, yet essential to everyday life.

For years, protecting those assets remained a constant challenge. When CCWA set out to strengthen physical security, the effort became more than a solution to an immediate problem. It revealed an opportunity. What started as a traditional security initiative evolved into a powerful, organization-wide strategy that improves safety, streamlines operations, and enables leadership to make better, faster decisions.

The reality on the ground

CCWA's infrastructure spans hundreds of geographically dispersed sites, many of them unmanned and exposed to **harsh conditions**, including water, chemicals, heat, and weather. Connectivity is often limited, with remote locations relying on cellular networks. **Theft** and **vandalism** became an increasing concern as equipment disappeared and damaged, adding cost, consuming time, and increasing risk for the teams responsible for maintaining these sites.

At the same time, many operational processes remained manual, requiring staff to enter confined or hazardous spaces to inspect and monitor conditions. Leadership recognized the need to reduce risk and improve efficiency, but also understood that security investments justified only by incident response would fall short. A smarter approach was needed.

CCWA: at a glance

- **Founded:** 1955, established by the Georgia General Assembly with more than 65 years of utility operations experience
- **Headquarters:** Morrow, Georgia, United States
- **Customers served:** More than 260,000 residents through approximately 76,000 accounts
- **Communities served:** Water, wastewater, and stormwater services throughout Clayton County, part of the greater metropolitan Atlanta region



One of the number one benefits of having microphones on cameras is that we can deter incidents from happening.

- Walter Barber, Resiliency Manager, Clayton County Water Authority



A different kind of conversation

Rather than treating security as a standalone function, CCWA leadership made a deliberate decision to think bigger. From the outset, the security team brought department leaders from across the organization, including operations, IT, HR, and safety, into the conversation.

The question wasn't, **"How do we lock things down?"**
It was, **"Where are we struggling, and how can technology help?"**

That shift changed everything.

Security systems were no longer viewed as cameras and alarms. They became shared tools—flexible assets that could serve multiple departments and solve real operational challenges.

When technology does more than watch

As CCWA began to rethink what security technology could do, new ideas surfaced quickly. What started as protection evolved into enablement.

Smarter customer interactions: Cameras with integrated microphones helped identify escalating situations and revealed teachable moments that improved customer service training.

Centralized awareness: Plans for a Security Operations Center expanded the role of security beyond video monitoring to support after-hours response for critical infrastructure and SCADA events

Eyes on remote sites: Edge-based analytics delivered real-time alerts at locations with limited connectivity, reducing reliance on constant bandwidth or manual oversight.

Safer fieldwork: Drones opened the door to inspections and sample collection without placing employees in hazardous environments.

Each use case reinforced a powerful realization.

One technology investment could protect people, strengthen operations, and create value across the organization.

Scale and impact

- Hundreds of critical assets monitored across a geographically dispersed utility footprint
- Remote and low-bandwidth sites supported through edge-based analytics
- Manual site visits reduced through centralized monitoring and intelligent alerts



Shifting from reaction to prevention

One of the most impactful changes came at the perimeter.

Recurring theft, particularly stolen ATVs, had been draining time and resources. Instead of responding only after damage occurred, CCWA implemented proactive perimeter security with clearly defined detection zones and integrated audio warnings.

Now, when someone enters a restricted area, the system does more than record activity.

- It responds in real time
- Intrusions are detected early
- Live or automated audio warnings are issued

Unauthorized activity is stopped before assets are touched.

The result was transformative. Incidents dropped. Damage decreased. Recovery costs followed. And for the first time, security felt proactive—not reactive.



Delivering measurable operational impact

CCWA brought its security and operational capabilities together through an integrated platform that delivers centralized visibility for monitoring, response, and decision-making across its utility infrastructure, regardless of location or connectivity.

With strategic design, deployment, and ongoing support from Convergent, the solution was built to address immediate challenges while remaining flexible enough to scale over time.

While leadership acknowledges that safety and risk reduction are not always easy to quantify, **the results are clear.** CCWA has reduced theft and vandalism, improved asset recovery, accelerated response times, and decreased labor tied to manual site visits. Employees are exposed to fewer hazardous environments, inspections are increasingly automated, and visibility into operations has improved.

As a result, security investments are now framed around liability reduction, injury prevention, manpower savings, and operational continuity, supported by measurable reductions in incidents and risk.

A bigger lesson

CCWA's journey offers a powerful reminder:

Security technology delivers its highest value when it serves the entire organization—not just the security team.

By collaborating early, embracing edge intelligence, and focusing on prevention rather than reaction,

CCWA transformed protection into purpose and made technology a true operational advantage.

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