

Providing Security Via Mobile Guard Booths *A Case History*

by Dave King



The 2002 terrorist attack on the famous Nord Ost Theatre in Moscow, which led to the deaths of more than 130 of the audience and nearly 50 Chechen terrorists, marked the beginning of a new wave of terrorism at major events in metropolitan areas.

Now, more than ever, security at public, cultural and sporting events is chiefly on the minds of promoters and facility managers whose job it is to secure the venues.

Reliant Park, Texas

One large facility in Texas is Reliant Park, which includes Reliant Astrodome, Reliant Arena, Reliant Center, and Reliant Stadium, home of The Houston Texans NFL team. Cheyne Day, Security Manager for Reliant Park, says that mobile guard booths are a critical component of his security detail, which during events like the Super Bowl can comprise up to 2,000 people from the familiar “Event Staff” in their bright yellow windbreakers to uniformed, off-duty city police, county sheriffs and constables who are engaged to monitor crowds and control traffic.

“With mobile booths, you can create multiple layers of security in concentric circles emanating from the facility you’re securing. These rings of layered security are a much bigger deterrent to would-be criminals in persuading them that there is a greater chance of them being stopped. Even if they do manage to set off their bomb at the first or second layer, they are still away from the building and the critical mass of people they are aiming for.”

Reliant Park’s Stadium is the world’s first retractable-roof 68,500-seat venue. It hosts more than 700 events per year with an average attendance of 15,000 and shares 8,000 of its overflow parking spaces with a neighboring amusement park.

A second application of mobile booths at Reliant Park corresponds to the need to customize the parking space for a varied roster of events. “Officers were out in the weather and couldn’t take all the gear they needed to do their jobs. They had to use their cars as pseudo-booths,



which invariably blocked traffic and were dangerous as the officers had to constantly go back and forth to fetch equipment or check computer files. It was just awkward.” Day continued, “It wasn’t the image we wanted to project.”

After they invested and built stationary booths on site, another problem surfaced—the structures kept getting hit by large trucks off-loading for tradeshow and other big events. Finally, they came upon the mobile booth concept and their problems were over.

“Mobile booths offer us the flexibility to customize our parking and crowd control to each event, and this equals better security because of that customization. Event conveners have been very pleased with our ability to be anywhere they need us to be in terms of security, and when you are talking about a complex as big as this one, you had better be able to protect the facility and the patrons inside.”

In closing, Security Manager Day gave another good reason for the use of mobile security booths. “After a Texan’s game, one driver—let’s just say he and his buddies had had a really good time—plowed into a mobile booth with an officer inside. The police figured the driver was traveling at 15 MPH when he struck the booth. Because the structure was mobile, it moved the booth 2ft. and the crush zones took the impact instead of the officer inside who remained protected. If the officer had not been inside of a mobile booth, it could have been a lot worse.”

Pre-fab booth manufacturers have come up with a variety of mobile solutions: some have wheels, some sit on a trailer with a hitch that can be towed by a truck or small tractor, while still others are moved around with a forklift.

Whatever sort of facility you handle security for, you are going to want to have as many varied security enforcement and traffic/crowd control options open to you as you have events. A mobile booth system is one easy and relatively inexpensive way to insure that you do.

About the author:

As Vice President of B.I.G. Enterprises (www.bigbooth.com), Dave King has worked extensively with architects, contractors, government officials, ballistics engineers and suppliers to produce leading technology that has achieved high levels of blast resistance.

He has 25 years of experience in the pre-fab booth industry and is a recognized authority on parking, toll, info kiosk, and perimeter control/security/surveillance.



B.I.G. Enterprises, Inc.™
Toll Free: 800.669.1449
Email: inquiries@bigbooth.com
www.bigbooth.com

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