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Port Everglades to install 'smart' cameras to monitor area

FORT LAUDERDALE (AP) — Port Everglades plans to install smart video cameras that can detect unauthorized people or vessels moving next to a ship or unattended baggage in a cruise terminal, and then automatically notify security personnel.

Port officials said Tuesday they hired ObjectVideo of Reston, Va., for the system of more than 100 cameras to be installed by August. Each camera with software costs about \$4,000, so the total price will be about \$400,000, company officials said.

The port can create virtual perimeters on land and water by drawing a video tripwire on a computer snapshot of the camera's view, the company said. Changes can be made instantaneously to respond to specific threats.

For example, if a small boat is spotted loitering next to a cruise ship, the software can notify port security by phone, pager, e-mail or on an alert console.

Security has been a focus of seaports since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks because many saw them as less protected than airports. Port Everglades is a large cruise and container port as well as the largest refined-petroleum storage facility on the East Coast, so it could be a terrorism target.

"The war on terrorism is going to be won with the use of technology," said Raul J. Fernandez, ObjectVideo's chief executive.

"It really is something that adds a lot to our security system, an additional level that's hard to replicate with a human being looking at a video camera," said Mel Becena, Port Everglade's security administrator.

Other ports have the system, including Houston, TX and Jacksonville, FL.

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