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Cameras drive ORC arrest rates



Security pros from Ferguson Enterprises, Safeway share success stories with Security Director News
 by: [Amy Canfield](#) - Monday, September 9, 2013



NEWPORT NEWS, Va.—Randy Johnson and Marsha Bowman deal with organized retail crime every day. Johnson has stores in the hottest ORC spots in the country. Bowman's stores are targeted for some of the most coveted ORC products.

[Johnson of Ferguson Enterprises](#) and [Bowman of Safeway stores](#) say there's more than one answer to combating ORC. It requires a combination of the right technology, help from allies in the public sector and employee training, they told *Security Director News*.

In charge of corporate security for plumbing and building supplier Ferguson Enterprises, Johnson oversees 1,300 locations in 50 states. And his company's wares are high on the list of targeted ORC products. Copper pipes? High-end

appliances? He needs to protect them all, both at his warehouse yards and at his retail stores.

For the past three years, Ferguson has used a Videofied security system in areas where ORC is the worst. Resulting arrests have gone up 50 percent, he said.

"When we have a perimeter breach in one of the yards, either with bolt cutters or wire cutters, we use a [moveable] video-verified alarm system from Videofied that runs off batteries to control ingress and egress points," Johnson said. "We can also look at a target product and can set [a sensor-driven camera] where we think the person will come in and go out, and also aim two at the product."

Videofied provides a wireless event-based video security system. "The cameras are on only during an alarm event when the system is activated. The motion viewers are infrared illuminators with motion detectors out to 40 feet, and at night to 20 feet. When an incident occurs within the field of view, a 10-second video clip is immediately sent to the monitoring station, which then calls and dispatches law enforcement," he said.

Arrest rates have gone up, probably more than 50 percent, as a result, Johnson said. "Police respond a lot quicker when the monitoring center calls them and can say, 'We see them in the yard.'"

Ferguson is looking to leverage the Videofied system and potentially use it more inside its facilities. In Dallas, Johnson said, there was an ORC gang in heavy operation. Police informed him that those thieves were well aware they had 20 minutes before police were called, so they'd break in and work fast.

The company is making the transition from a traditional security department to a "more asset-protection driven approach," Johnson said.

ORC costs U.S. retailers \$30 billion a year, [according to a recent study from the National Retail Federation](#). Those numbers are not surprising to Safeway's Bowman, a loss prevention integrator based in Colorado.

Safeway stores are targeted primarily for infant formula and Tide laundry detergent, she told SDN. "Stores closest to the highways get hit by ORC several times a week. The usual scenario is when one suspect enters the store, and the other stays behind in the getaway car. The suspect goes to the baby formula or laundry detergent aisle with a shopping cart, loads everything in" and leaves, Bowman said.

The average ORC loss to her stores per day is between \$600 and \$1,000, she said.

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Safeway works closely with local law enforcement, communicates with other retailers and submits reports and photos of suspects to anti-ORC websites, including the Colorado Organized Retail Crime Alliance. The alliance’s website provides real-time criminal intelligence, she said.

Ferguson also finds [anti-ORC partnerships important](#). His company reps are part of a large group in California that includes law enforcement from all levels.

“They go around to different jurisdictions and talk about copper theft. Everyone thinks it’s just the utilities that get hit because they have all these big spools of copper wire, but [the thieves] want copper tubes, because they can go right to the scrap yard. Rolls of wire are too much work,” Johnson said.

[Find a list of the Top 10 ORC hot spots here.](#)

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