

The Secret to Our Success is in Our People

SPRING, 2018

At Texas State Business Conference

Blackstone Recognized by Texas Workforce Commission for Hiring Veterans

El Paso, Texas – Blackstone Security Services, Inc.® has been recognized by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) for its successful participation in the TWC's "We Hire Vets" initiative.

The recognition came during the Texas Business Conference hosted by the TWC at the Wyndham El Paso Airport Hotel. The conference is a series of seminars that teach employers about state and federal employment laws and the unemployment claim and appeal processes. About 200 employers attended this year's conference.

The Employer Recognition



Blackstone's David Garcia (center) is joined on stage by (I-r) Veterans Resource & Referral Specialist John Gomez, Texas Veterans Leadership Program District Mgr. Norman Bearden, Commissioner Ruth Hughes, Veterans Resource & Referral Specialist Don Parrott and Veterans Employer Liaison Kevin Bowes. Program honors employers for their commitment to hiring veterans. Companies whose workforce comprises a minimum 10 percent of military veterans are eligible for recognition. Kevin Bowes, a veterans employer liaison for the TVC, said Blackstone came in at 27 percent.

"It's imperative that we recognize employers that go above and beyond in hiring veterans," Bowes said. "Blackstone has been very receptive to hiring veterans and we appreciate that. Some employers just talk about hiring veterans, but Blackstone is the exception to the rule and See VETERANS Page 3

Officer of the Year

Gisma Dabura is Blackstone's 2017 Officer of the Year



Gisma Dabura

Phoenix – Gisma Dabura has been voted the winner of, "The 33 Award", as the 2017 Officer of the Year for Blackstone Security Services, Inc.®

Gisma, who works in Blackstone's Division 32 in Phoenix, has been with the company 10 of the 16 years she's been in the security industry. She worked an incredible eight years for the same client.

The 33 Award is named to honor the 33 security officers who died going up the stairs in the Twin Towers on 9-11 trying to save civilians along with firefighters and police officers.

Blackstone Director of Operations Ken Vandiver said in his nomination narrative that the things that set Gisma apart include responsibility, dedication, loyalty and longevity. "I could go on and on, but it would

still bring one person to the front of my mind; Gisma Dabura," Vandiver wrote. "Gisma has taken responsibility for every site that she has worked, and you can count them on one hand over the 10 years that she has been a steadfast employee of Blackstone.

"Gisma worked one account for eight years where she controlled the entry and exit of vehicles



Post Orders Warning: Beware of Scams using Veterans to Draw You In – Page 2

Boots on the Ground Beating the Summer Heat – Page 2

Meet Rhonda Gaudette - Page 3

Schools Beefing Up Security & The Private Sector is Part of It—Page 5

US Schools Eye Facial Recognition to Boost Security – Page 6

Employee Anniversaries - Page 8

See DABURA Page 5



POST ORDERS

Dan Swindall, President & CEO

Warning: Beware of Scams Using Veterans to Draw You In

As a military veteran and company owner, I take particular pride in helping my fellow veterans through employment and charitable giving.

I'll get straight to the point: There's a group of scam artists masquerading as a nonprofit organization committed to helping military veterans in need by selling advertising to veteran-owned companies they say will run continuously in VFW and American Legion posts and on their website.

The only problem is, they are not authorized to place ads in any of those locations and their website is now non-existent.

They have victimized at least four companies in Arizona, California and Colorado as far as we know. All are veteran-owned.

The organization calls itself the Veterans Resource Project. The representatives hit hard on the benefits to veterans during their pitch. They even produced a low budget ad for us which included a video that we provided.

This came to light a few weeks ago when we were contacted by a company in Stockton, California called Valley Home Loans & Realty, Inc. asking if we had dealt with a group calling itself Veterans Resource Project. We confirmed that we had, at which time we were told that VRP had defrauded the company out of more than \$2,000. The company filed a complaint with the Arizona Attorney General's office and a lawsuit in the Kyrene Justice Court. We are weighing our options.

Further discussion revealed that the same parties were involved, and the same scenario was followed. They were promised the ad would run in multiple sites on the west coast. This never happened. We were promised the ad would run in 11 sites in Arizona and Texas. This never happened. A gentleman in Colorado was promised 72 sites nationwide.

Coincidentally, we had been attempting to contact VRP in recent weeks after we found their website was down and no one was returning phone calls. We also learned that the two East Valley addresses they gave were UPS stores.

In all likelihood, these guys are in the wind and long gone. The AG's office has not been able to locate them. But just in case they switch to a different scam, the names we dealt with are John Reed, Ty Newman and Mathew Fleming. The Arizona Corporation Commission lists James R. Doran as the statutory agent for the business. We've notified the Southwest Veterans Chamber of Commerce to warn its members of the scam.

So, if you're a veteran and you own a business, beware phone calls from strangers seeking to assist veterans. If you do get one, watch your six.





By Ken Vandiver Director of Operations, Division 32, Phoenix

Beating the Summer Heat

With summer upon us, I wanted to pass along some information that we may already know, but reminders about the dangers of excessive heat are always welcome. Heaven forbid you get to your post and find yourself without water and no shade. Even though some of you work nights or have access to a building to get out of the heat during the day, it's best to be prepared.

At most sites, you will find yourself using your vehicle as a portable office to complete paperwork or to watch the site out of the sun. Think about this: If the outside temperature is 80 degrees and you're sitting in your vehicle in the direct sun, in one hour the temperature inside that vehicle will reach 123 degrees. This is compounded by the radiation heat reflected off the dashboard and

interior objects, which can reach 180 to 200 degrees. If sitting in your car in 80-degree heat for eight to 12 hours can create a safety risk, imagine what it would be like at 110 degrees. There are documented cases of people dying while sitting in vehicles in extreme heat. Other heat-related illnesses include cramps, exhaustion and stroke. These are serious conditions that can come over us before we know it, and without medical attention they could lead to some very serious consequences.

It all boils down to the hard fact that we need to be prepared to work in the heat. Here are some tips that will help you stay cool in extreme heat.

See **BOOTS** Page 6



Blackstone Post Editorial Staff

EXECUTIVE EDITOR: Dan Swindall
EDITOR: Art Gissendaner
ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Bill "Hutch" Hutchison
GRAPHIC DESIGN: Bruce Vander Jagt

This newsletter is produced at Blackstone Corporate Headquarters for the use and enjoyment of our employees and clients.

Team Blackstone

EL PASO, Texas Division 52 Vanessa Polanco – Division Mar

HOUSTON
Division 54
Tony Browe – Division Mgr.

DALLAS
Division 53
Dallas Division Mgr. Open

www.blackstonesecurity.com

ALBUQUERQUE, NM Division 42 Dustin Shorter – Division Mgr

GALLUP, NM Satellite Scott Clark – Area Manager

TUCSON, Ariz.

Division 34

Jose Pino – Division Mgr.

Corporate - Division 32

Dan Swindall - President & CEO

Jeanne Croft – Executive Vice Pres.

Mitzi Hagan – Human Resources Mgr

Bobby Holley - Quality Assurance Mgr.

Ken Vandiver - Dir. of Operations

PHOENIX, Ariz.

the recognition

for Blackstone

in front of an

audience of El

Paso business

owners. "I feel

skills and qual-

ities that ben-

efit any type

said Garcia, a

sergeant. "It is a

great honor to

recognized

company,"

Army

veterans

many

that

have

retired

Veterans Continued from Page 1

we at the TVC really appreciate all that Blackstone does to help get our veterans back to work. Certainly, we look forward to continuing to partner with Blackstone for veterans who are seeking employment."

David Garcia, Blackstone Division 52 Recruiter & Human Resources Manager, said he was honored to be on hand to accept



Blackstone's David Garcia addresses the audience at the Texas Business Conference while Commissioner Ruth Hughes, Workforce Solutions COO Leila Melendez, Veterans Resource & Referral Specialists John Gomez and Don Parrott, Texas Veterans Leadership Program District Mgr. Norman Bearden and Veterans Employer Liaison Kevin Bowes look on.

by the state for supporting veterans."

Blackstone received a certificate of appreciation and a "We Hire Vets" decal to place in the window. "This is for all that Blackstone has done to hire veterans," said TWC's Don Parrott, a veteran's resource and referral specialist. In the grand scheme of things, it is beneficial for us to recognize companies such as Blackstone, but it is also important to earn that recognition. You want veterans to know there are companies out there that appreciate their skills and

leadership abilities."

El Paso Division Manager Vanessa Polanco said she was "over the moon" at the recognition. Polanco said she keeps the certificate in her office because seeing it makes her feel good when she comes to work. "I'm always excited about anything to do with veterans and it's an honor to have them on my team," said Polanco,

whose father is a U.S. Air Force veteran. "Sometimes people don't appreciate the military, but they risk their lives for our freedoms. Of course we thank them for their service, we owe them that."



Veterans Employer Liaison Kevin Bowles (I) joined Blackstone Executive Director Jeanne Croft and Blackstone President & CEO Dan Swindall as their guest at an ASIS Law Enforcement Appreciation Luncheon in El Paso.

Blackstone is a fed-

erally certified veteran-owned company and has its own veterans hiring initiative in Arizona and New Mexico in addition to Texas.

"We're happy to do our part in helping veterans re-enter the workforce," said Blackstone President & CEO Dan Swindall, himself a U.S. Air Force veteran. "Most veterans are instinctive security officers because they have had to stand guard at some point in their military careers. We have found the veterans we hire through the "We Hire Vets" initiative are dependable, disciplined and know what it's like to see an assignment through to the end."

The Face Behind the Curtain

Rhonda Gaudette Pays the Bills and You



Phoenix – Remember the scene from "The Wizard of Oz" where Frank Morgan tells Dorothy and her troupe to not pay attention to the man behind the curtain who was really pulling the strings for the mythical Wizard?

Well, since last December, Blackstone Staff Accountant Rhonda Gaudette has been the person behind the curtain pulling the purse

strings of Blackstone to make sure that employees and the bills are paid in a timely fashion. Many of you do not see her, but she's the one who keeps the paychecks coming and creditors happy. She handles all the general ledger entries, payroll and accounts payable.

Rhonda is an Arizona native with no previous experience in security, but she has co-owned two businesses. When she saw the

job announcement on the Internet, she was intrigued.

The Arizona native applied for the job and during the interview process, learned she had several things in common with Blackstone President & CEO Dan Swindall.

"I liked the location of the office and I really clicked with Dan," she said. "Our birthdays are a day apart and I was born close to where he grew up."

Rhonda said she is enjoying the whole experience of learning a new industry and getting to know her coworkers.

"I like the challenge of everything, and I like what I do," she said. "I like that this is more about people than a product. I get along really well with everybody. I think of myself as a team player who will do whatever it takes to get the job done."

This is true because Rhonda is often among the first to arrive at the office and the last to leave, qualities that her boss appreciates. "Rhonda hit the ground running from day one," Dan said. "Her willingness to go the extra mile to flatten her learning curve is an admirable trait. She's doing a great job that we all appreciate."





OIC Steven Mendoza

Officer of the Quarter Division 32 - Phoenix

Phoenix – Steven Mendoza doesn't take long to familiarize himself with his assignment and excel in his job performance. That's why Steven is Blackstone's Division 32 Officer of the Quarter.

Although Steven has been with Blackstone less than a year and has less than four years in the security industry, he impresses clients wherever he is assigned. That explains his promotion to Officer in Charge at his current assignment.

"Steven was highly recommended by the client where he worked and now has taken a leadership role," said Division 32 Operations Manager Ken Vandiver. "From day one he has taken charge of this account, making sure all guards under his supervision were conducting their duties effectively and according to plan."

Vandiver continued saying Mendoza "efficiently conducted extra training at the start-up to make sure all requirements were met. His communication with the client and the Blackstone office has made this site run smoothly."

Mendoza said he likes Blackstone because it is "really down to earth." He commended his coworkers' efforts and said he knows what it's like to be where they are. "I enjoy my crew of security officers and the respect they give me," Mendoza said. "It wasn't too long ago I was in their shoes, so I know how it is starting from the bottom and working my way up."

Mechanically inclined, Mendoza is a recent graduate of the Refrigeration School with a universal certification in HVAC/R. His hobbies include playing the guitar, watching sports of all kinds and he's been known to dabble in video games.

Mendoza's philosophy on security is one of caution and thoroughness. "You can never be too safe," he said. "You never know when something or someone is going to go off, so it will never hurt to take more precaution to make sure everyone is safe, and everything is going right. Staying on your toes and being well aware of your surroundings can be crucial."

Mendoza lives in Goodyear Village in the Gila River Indian Community with his wife, Delores Flores-Mendoza and their daughter Kelani.

Congratulations, Steven, and thanks for being a Blackstone ambassador.

DABURA Continued from Page 1

"Gisma worked one account for eight years where she controlled the entry and exit of vehicles for a state account," Vandiver continued. "Her calm demeanor and watchful eye over this site was shown as she would smile as she commanded respect and compliance from any person she confronted. Currently, she has been assigned to a large state contract where she seamlessly transferred to her new job duties and took ownership."





Alexander Beristain

Officer of the Quarter Tucson Division 34

Tucson – Alex Beristain is an amiable guy who gets along well with the employees he supervises and with clients. He is also a quick thinker who has mastered the art of de-escalating difficult situations.

That's why Alex is the Officer of the Quarter for Blackstone Security Services Inc. Division 34. He is now eligible for Officer of the Year.

"His best qualities are that he is punctual, he's nice to the guards and to the customers," said Tucson Division Manager Jose Velez Pino. "He goes above and beyond the call of duty. He is quick to act and resolves difficult situations."

Alex has been with Blackstone a year-and-a-half. He says what he enjoys most about Blackstone is, "The team I work with and my boss, Jose Velez Pino."

Besides his co-workers and clients, Alex says what he enjoys most about his job is right out of the 1980's television action series "The A-Team", "I enjoy helping to make plans come together."

Alex is a Tucson native who is studying criminal justice at a local college. His philosophy on security is that it should be part of the scenery. "I believe good security happens without anyone noticing," he says. "I think that's how it needs to be."

When Alex is not protecting client property and patrons, he enjoys writing music and traveling with his girlfriend, Ashley.

Congratulations, Alex, and thanks for being a Blackstone ambassador.

Officers of the Year are given a trophy, a certificate and \$100.

Gisma immigrated to the United States in 1999 from her home in Khartoum, in The Sudan in northeastern Africa. She and her husband, Edward Zowe, have seven children, 11 to 24 years of age. Besides being a security officer, wife and mother, Gisma is also a student, taking college classes to earn a GED along with classes to earn a degree in engineering. Her hobbies are watching television and cooking.

"Being a wife and mother of seven children could attest for her being able to deal with individuals with little or no conflict," Vandiver said. "And with all that she still welcomes everyone with a smile. Not only would Gisma represent the Blackstone Officer of the Year with class, she would represent what every person should model themselves after: responsibility, dedication, loyalty and longevity which is what "The 33 Award" is all about; honoring the 33 security officers who made the ultimate sacrifice."

"The price of anything is the amount of life you exchange for it."

Henry David Thoreau





Lt. Edwin Ingles

Officer of the Quarter Division 52 - El Paso

El Paso, Texas – Edwin Ingles is the Officer of the Quarter for Blackstone's Division 52 because he has repeatedly shown himself to be "a very focused, challenge-oriented security officer...willing to take on any task thrown his way," according to Account Manager Anthony Collins, Ingles' supervisor. Collins continued saying Ingles strives "to be a cut above his peers, receiving and carrying out responsibilities charged to him."

To call that a "ringing endorsement" would be an understatement.

Ingles joined Blackstone as a security officer and has spent three of his six and a half years in the security industry with Blackstone. Collins said when Ingles was given the opportunity to become a shift supervisor, the El Paso native charged forward, never looking back.

"(He) is always looking to hone his skills and knowledge in the security field," Collins said. "Then as greater challenges and more responsibilities were presented, he accepted them without hesitation and overcame any and all obstacles that came his way."

Ingles said he is firmly committed to the security industry which is his livelihood and his hobby. He owns an Associates Degree in Criminal Justice and is trained in bomb detection.

Ingles says he most enjoys the people, opportunities and teamwork he's experienced with Blackstone. He also enjoys his role as an OIC in security. "I enjoy taking care of the guards, mentoring them and I have an overall enjoyment of working security," he said.

Ingles' philosophy on security is "a person has the right to feel safe along with their properties." His philosophy on security operations: "Teamwork. Work and function as a team with everyone taking responsibility for their area and actions."

Congratulations, Lt. Ingles, and thanks for being a Blackstone ambassador.

Private Security Supplementing SRO's

Schools Beefing Up Security and the Private Sector is Part of It

Students around the country returning to school this fall are finding a long blue line that stretches from one campus to another, coast to coast.

That's because in the wake of a series of mass shootings on school campuses during the past two years, school officials, law enforcement, city councilmen, state lawmakers and members of Congress have come to realize that such tragedies don't always happen someplace else.

The St. Valentine's Day Massacre took on a more contemporary identity on Feb. 14, 2018, when 17 students and teachers were killed, and 17 others were injured by a shooter at Marjory





Cama Coates

Officer of the Quarter Division 54 - Houston

Houston, Texas – Cama Coates gives her boss and clients one less thing to worry about. That's why Cama is the Officer of the Quarter for Blackstone's Division 54 in Houston.

"I like to make sure our clients have one less thing to worry about when they hire us," said Division Manager Tony Browe. Cama is like that for me. When she is on duty I automatically have one less thing to worry about."

Browe continued by saying that Cama is "brilliant in so many ways."

"She's dependable, conscientious, hardworking, competent and she cares about the clients. I have had above average reports about her from every client I have sent her to. She is definitely on my radar for bigger and better things."

Cama, who has been with Blackstone for one of her three years in the security industry, said her boss is one of the best things she likes about the company. "No matter what situation I'm going through, whether it's work-related or personal, he's guaranteed to be an understanding guy," she said.

She said security is important and guards should be on time and alert at every assignment. "Granted, every situation isn't fixable without higher authority, (but) I try my best to have an understanding of any situation, so the contract holder is always satisfied with my work ethic."

Cama said she is looking forward to continuing in security. "Security is a great career and it helps to have all the experience you can get," she said.

Cama and her life partner have a baby girl.

Congratulations, Cama, and thanks for being a Blackstone ambassador.

Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL. Before the country could catch its breath from that tragedy, on May 18, 2018, eight students and two teachers were killed and another 13 were wounded by a shooter at Santa Fe High School in Santa Fe, Texas in the Houston Metropolitan Area.

Each incident rekindled memories of Columbine and Sandy Hook, names that have become so familiar, we know what is being referenced without going into detail.



Bobby Holley

"Obviously, this situation is not going to take care of itself and private security must be prepared to step in and give support

See SCHOOLS Page 6

Boots Continued from Page 2

Safety Tips

- Dress for summer. Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing to reflect heat and sunlight.
- Put less fuel on your inner fires. Foods, like meat and other proteins that increase metabolic heat production also increase water loss.
- Drink plenty of water, non-alcoholic and decaffeinated fluids. Your body needs water to keep cool. Drink plenty of fluids even if you don't feel thirsty. Persons who have epilepsy or heart, kidney or liver disease, are on fluid restrictive diets or have a problem with fluid retention should consult a physician before increasing their consumption of fluids. Do not drink alcoholic beverages and limit caffeinated beverages.
- During excessive heat periods, spend more time in air-conditioned places. Air conditioning in homes and other buildings markedly reduces danger from the heat. If you cannot afford an air conditioner, go to a library, store or other location with air conditioning for part of the day.
- Don't get too much sun. Sunburn reduces your body's ability to dissipate heat.
- Do not take salt tablets unless specified by a physician.

HEAT CRAMPS

- · Symptoms:
- * Painful muscle cramps and spasms usually in legs and abdomen
- Heavy sweating

HEAT EXHAUSTION

- Symptoms:
- Heavy sweating
- Weakness
- · Cool, pale, clammy skin
- Weak pulse
- Possible muscle cramps
- Dizziness
- Nausea and vomiting
- Fainting
- Normal temperature possible

HEAT STROKE (or sunstroke)

- Symptoms:
- Altered mental state
- Possible throbbing headache, confusion, nausea, dizziness, shallow breathing
- High body temperature (106°F or higher)
- Skin may be hot and dry, or patient may be sweating
- Rapid pulse
- Possible unconsciousness

• First Aid:

Heat stroke is a severe medical emergency. Summon emergency medical assistance or get the victim to a hospital immediately. Delay can be fatal.

US schools eye facial recognition technology to boost security

By Carolyn Thompson

The surveillance system that has kept watch on students entering Lockport schools for over a decade is getting a novel upgrade. Facial recognition technology soon will check each face against a database of expelled students, sex offenders and other possible troublemakers.

It could be the start of a trend as more schools fearful of shootings consider adopting the technology, which has been gaining ground on city streets and in some businesses and government agencies. Just last week, Seattle-based digital software company RealNetworks began offering a free version of its facial recognition system to schools nationwide.

Already, the Lockport City School District's plan has opened a debate in this western New York community and far beyond about the system's potential effectiveness, student privacy and civil rights. "We shake our heads that we're having to deal with and talk about these kinds of security issues," said Robert LiPuma, technology director for the Lockport district, east of Niagara Falls, "but here we are."

Administrators say it could thwart shootings like February's attack in which expelled student Nikolas Cruz is charged with killing 17 at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. "This would have identified (Cruz) as not being able to be in that building," said Tony Olivo, a security consultant who recommended the system for Lockport.

Cameras mounted throughout the building would have followed the banned student's every move until he left. Critics say the technology has been absent from schools for good reason. In light of Lockport's plans, the New York Civil Liberties Union

See US SCHOOLS Page 8

Schools Continued from Page 5

where it is needed," said Blackstone Quality Assurance Manager Bobby Holley. "There is a shortage of trained school resource officers (SRO's) and you can't just place anybody with a gun in these schools. Just because you are a good cop or a good soldier does not mean you will work well as an SRO. Specialized training is required to understand the complicated relationships between Administrators, Teachers, Officers and Students." CNN reports that in the first 21 weeks of 2018, there were 23

school shootings. The New York Times reported that since the 20 elementary students and six teachers were killed by a teenager wielding an assault rifle at Sandy Hook in 2012, "438 people were shot in 239 school shootings with 138 being killed." Campus Safety Magazine recently reported that an annual poll released by Phi Delta Kappa International, showed that 1 in 3 parents of school-aged children, or 34 percent, feared for their child's safety at school. This number was 12 percent five years ago.

Fringe Benefits with Blackstone



Root, root for the home team... \square





Blackstone clients attend Arizona Diamondbacks baseball games, Arizona Cardinals' football games and the Arizona Rattlers' Indoor Football League games with family and friends as guests of Blackstone Security Services, Inc.® where treating clients to these topnotch sports venues has become a tradition.

Attending MLB, NFL and IFL games is a great way for family members to bond with each other and with BFFs. This is just one of the ways Blackstone demonstrates its appreciation to clients. Yell if you see anyone you know!











Employee Anniversaries

willer.	
Twelve Years	
Tyler Croft	
Eleven Years	
Gisma Dabura	
Ten Years	
James Nally	
Nine Years	
Terry Rachas	
Eight Years	
Rick Bach	Mike Quinn
Philip Castorena	
Seven Years	
Al Cushman	Phyllis Tomaszewski
Al Gregory	Miguel Torres
Donta Thomas	
Six Years	
Betty Morrow	Sandra Price

Richard Qualls John Watson Mitchell Williams
Mark Manlove Karen Rebel Frederick Thomas Benson White
Jorge Hernandez Cindy Madrid
Tamela Williams
Marchand Noel Pam Robinson Chance Sampson James Sims Wayne Witkiewicz

US Schools

Continued from Page 6

asked the state Education Department to block the technology from any New York school, saying it would "have a chilling effect on school climate."

Education officials say they are reviewing the request. "Lockport is sending the message that it views students as potential criminals who must have their faces scanned wherever they go," NYCLU Executive Director Donna Lieberman said.

Jennifer Lynch, senior staff attorney with the Electronic Frontier Foundation, a digital rights group, said any school considering facial recognition must consider who will have access to data, how such a system would be managed and whether students can opt out.

Others question the technology's cost and effectiveness, given reports like one released in February by MIT and Stanford University that found some facial recognition programs don't work as well on racial minorities and women. Lockport parent Belinda Cooper would have preferred metal detectors in her 15-year-old daughter's school. "It would have been cheaper for the school district, and you can guarantee no guns or knives will be brought in," she said.

District officials say the Aegis system they are installing, made by SN Technologies of Ontario, will not build or store a database of student and faculty face prints that could be shared with the government or marketers. Nor will the US\$1.4mil (RM5.6mil) cost, funded through a state technology bond, siphon funding from staffing or supplies. District officials acknowledge it won't stop a determined attacker from coming through the door, nor will it warn against someone who is not a known threat.

But "there's no system that's going to solve every problem," LiPuma said. "It's another tool that we feel will give us an advantage to help make our buildings and our communities a little safer." Individual schools and districts, as well as the governors of Wyoming and one other state, have already expressed interest in RealNetworks' customisable SAFR System, senior product director Michael Vance said.

At the University Child Development School in Seattle where it was piloted, rather than rely on office staff buzzing in late arrivals or visitors, the system gives parents who have registered their faces automatic access through a locked gate and tells the office who is coming. Schools can opt to register students' faces and customize how to respond to people who have been flagged for alert.

"All of that resides with the school," Vance said. "We don't see it. We don't have access to the pictures, the images, the video, anything like that. It's stored in the same way that school attendance databases, grades, records, everything is kept." Nevertheless, citing a patchwork of regulations, Vance said the company would welcome the kind of government guidelines for facial recognition technology that Microsoft President Brad Smith called for in a blog post July 13.

In Lockport, as crews worked on wiring the system inside, 16-year-old student Teliyah Sumler expressed some reservations. "I feel like it's too personal," she said. "Cameras all in my face. It's too much."

Khari Demos, 22, who has two siblings in Lockport High School, said he worries for their safety and views facial recognition as another piece of a security puzzle that includes locked doors and active shooter drills. "It'll actually identify who should and shouldn't be in the school," said Demos, who graduated from the school in 2013. "The system will never be 100% perfect but it's a step in the right direction."

Source: The Star Online

Blackstone Security is a Proud Member of













