



SALTO Access Control at Friendship Village: First-class accommodation for the access-control needs of a senior living community

By Rick Meyer, Executive Director
Friendship Village, Bloomington, MN

In my sixth year as Executive Director of Friendship Village of Bloomington, it became very clear to me and my staff how time-consuming and unwieldy our old access control system had become. The community opened in 1979, thirty-two years ago, and the existing access control system had been in place for fifteen years. We realized it was at the end of the road; it was clearly time for us to find a more modern and user-friendly system.

Floyd Total Security recommended SALTO

After evaluating our limited options with the existing service provider, we referred our problem to Floyd Total Security, a SALTO Inspired Business Partner and system integrator, also located in Bloomington, MN. Continuing Care Facilities are of critical interest for Floyd, and Bill Wood, who heads up the company's electronic locking systems team.

His team was charged with helping find the best solution for the needs of our project and brought SALTO to our attention.

We liked the SALTO system from the start and Ray Satterfield, Director of Facility Management, suggested we ask other Lifespace Community facilities to assist in our evaluation. After several group presentations and a couple of site visits, they unanimously recommended SALTO over the other options, as did Gary Conkin, Lifespace Development and Construction Manager, who oversees and approves all construction projects from the corporate office in Des Moines, IA.

Outfitting the facilities

Floyd met with the management team to understand how they needed various parts of the system to work to best suit our operation. They made sure we could take advantage

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SALTO
inspired access

of everything that the SALTO System could provide. The Village has just opened a new fitness center which was, of course, also protected with the SALTO locks. Various workers at the facility, like nurses and housekeepers have a range of scheduled time needs, and their access cards have been programmed accordingly.

Advantages of the SALTO System

The Village was previously equipped with three separate systems; a traditional proximity card system on the perimeter and two generations of offline locks on administrative and resident doors. While these were easy for staff and seniors to use, they proved very costly to operate and maintain. Talk about time-consuming! Our facility has 415 doors with electronic locks for over 1200 cardholders. In order to program the old system to provide access cards for new occupants or to supply replacements for lost cards, a staffer had to carry a laptop with cable to every door lock covered by the new or lost card in order to reprogram for access. Many man- and woman-hours were lost in resolving these problems.

Furthermore, we were having trouble getting parts and support for our old system. That was a growing problem, to the point where we actually had to ask some of our residents to go back to using metal keys. Not something we desired for a facility that prides itself on being up-to-date in everything!

With SALTO it was easy. We no longer have to program at the door and we didn't have to build an infrastructure with wiring through walls; we used the SALTO Virtual Network. When the locks were installed, of course they required initial programming. But unlike the other options, they don't require ongoing lock reprogramming at the door as we make access changes. The SALTO Virtual Network (SVN) pushes and pulls data from our "hot-spot" openings to all the offline locks.

We like the ability to set up the computer and program all the cards, rather than walking around to each location. The fact that Floyd and SALTO can reference many large installations in similar applications helped satisfy us that we're using a proven product.

Employee cards

The Village has about 285 employees including part-time, on-call, high school, etc. Our eight-person maintenance staff functions as security during the morning and early afternoon, followed by two trained security officers for the afternoon, evening, night and weekends. Cards issued to employees are automatically refreshed and updated when used at any of our seven "Hot-spot" doors, which makes it very easy to meet everyone's access needs on the fly.

If a card is lost

When a card is reported lost, there's no big crisis. The cards are blank, with no telltale room number or ID, so someone finding it would have no way of knowing what unit the card gave access to. We simply delete it and assign a new one. Once the original card is deleted, it will no longer provide access to the exterior doors either: access is denied and facilities is notified. The lost card is also added to the blacklist of deleted cards which eliminates its value at the interior doors via SVN.



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Cueing the population

A retirement facility like Friendship Village has a unique population. Apart from residents in healthcare, skilled nursing and long-term care, where the doors do not lock, there is assisted living, general residency, independent living and twelve free-standing townhomes. There are also administrative offices and a variety of special facilities. All of their needs must be carefully addressed to avoid creating unnecessary problems.

With the new system in the works, administrators set up meetings to alert employees and the resident body to what was coming, so they could appreciate the benefits and improvements. A permanent informational kiosk about the new SALTO system was supplied and staffed by Floyd to provide residents with any information they required.

Expectations were exceeded

The installation went well and timelines were met: a week for preparation, loading the software and training, then about four weeks for actual change out of the residence units, with perimeter doors switched over to the new system last. The entire implementation took about five weeks in the summer of 2011. Floyd technicians trained our maintenance personnel on the installation and maintenance of the battery powered door locks. This allows us to remove and install the devices ourselves when we remodel and refresh areas of the facility, a common occurrence with 425 units.

This SALTO changeover is probably the easiest such install we've ever done. Residents feel safer in their units than they did before. Floyd couldn't have provided a better or more accommodating crew. Our administrators had ample time to get familiar with the new system and feel comfortable with it. Michelle Hasbrouck and Chris Chromey from Floyd backed us up with responses to residents' concerns and where available when we needed them.

We would recommend this system absolutely! As a result of our experience, Floyd Total Security has implemented the SALTO Inspired Access Control System at two other Lifespace Communities: Grand Lodge at the Preserve in Lincoln, NE and Abbey Delray South in Abby Delray, FL.

Two additional facilities in Florida and Pennsylvania are scheduled to begin installation later this year, with the balance coming online over the next two years. We think all our communities will be moving in this direction.

About Lifespace Communities:

Lifespace is the owner of 12 retirement communities in seven states. Lifespace has grown to be the sixth largest independent living provider and seventh largest senior living provider of not-for-profit retirement communities in the country. Through our history, we have gained the financial strength that allows us to bring financial security and quality of service to all the communities that we own. Lifespace Communities is governed by a Board of Directors that meets regularly throughout the year. Our corporate headquarters is located in Des Moines, Iowa.

About Floyd Total Security:

Floyd Total Security is a privately owned company that was founded in 1945 and provides services throughout the United States. Custom design and expert installation of technologically advanced integrated solutions is their specialty. Services include intrusion and fire protection; digital video surveillance; access control; full locksmith; high-security locks; and full service alarm monitoring.

About SALTO Systems:

Based in Atlanta, GA, with HQ and factory in Europe and offices in Canada, Mexico, UK, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Australia, the Netherlands, the UAE, Denmark and Singapore, SALTO Systems was established in 2001 with the objective of creating a new advanced state-of-the-art access control concept. Products such as their SALTO Virtual Network have accelerated the company's growth and this has now become the access option of choice on more than 1,000,000 doors in over 70 countries. Customers include airports, hospitals, government, military, universities, corporate and hotels.



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