



Case study



Evolv Helps Improve Security at Bridgestone Arena and Ensures Fans Never Miss a Puck Drop

Bridgestone Arena

LOCATION: Nashville, TN

HOME to the NHL's Nashville Predators

OPENED: 1996

MULTIPURPOSE: Sporting Events, Concerts, Special Events

CAPACITY: Up to 20,000

WEBSITE: www.bridgestonearena.com

Solution Snapshot

Goals

- Minimize ingress security wait times
- Reduce secondary security screening checks without compromising security
- Deliver unparalleled fan and guest ingress experience
- Create smooth security screening for both primary and secondary checks
- Deploy highly durable technology able to withstand environmental mishaps

Solution

People

- Worked with Bridgestone Arena team to test out Evolv Express® while awaiting NHL approval
- Delivered onsite training to existing staff for deployment and helped onboard new security and operations team members
- Checked Express systems following facility flooding and verified they were operational
- Provides ongoing technical support and captures product input for future system enhancements

Process

- Sales, Technical Solutions, and Customer Success teams collaborated with Bridgestone Arena to achieve rapid deployment during a compressed timeframe
- Evolv Engineering team configured and deployed 8 dual-lane Evolv Express systems in accordance with Bridgestone Arena's desired ConOps

Technology

- 8 Evolv Express Dual-Lane Systems
- Evolv Cortex AI®
- Evolv Insights®
- Evolv Integrations with:
 - Genetec Security Cameras
 - Genetec Security Operations Center

Outcomes



Slashed ingress times from 10 minutes to 1 minute



Reduced security alarms for secondary screening by 40%



Screened thousands of fans and patrons in the 15-minute "rush" before start times



Minimized fans and guests getting stuck in security screening and missing game or event start time



Elicited positive responses from vocal critics of legacy metal detectors



Achieved a highly successful accelerated deployment for the first game of the season



Expedited secondary security screening



Increased the amount of time fans and guests spend in pre-game festivities and concessions



Iconic Arena in Heart of Nashville Entertainment District

Locally dubbed as “the biggest honky-tonk on Broadway”, the Bridgestone Arena is at the very heart of the entertainment district in downtown Nashville.

It is one of the busiest entertainment venues in the world, hosting home games for the NHL's Nashville Predators, Broadway shows, virtually every form of musical performance, the CMA and CMT Awards, among others.

Nashville itself, now internationally renowned as the heart of country music, and home to some of the largest entertainment and sports experiences in the United States, would not be what it is today if it weren't for Bridgestone Arena. “Before the Bridgestone Arena opened, people never came down to this area,” says Sean Henry, the CEO and President of Bridgestone Arena and the Nashville Predators.

“But this completely changed when the arena debuted. The recent addition of the billion-dollar convention center across the street from the arena creates even further opportunities. The corner of Broadway and Main is now a vibrant location where literally millions of people come, and the Bridgestone Arena makes it a special place.”

Bridgestone does a variety of different events, family shows, concerts, and NHL hockey games, catering to all of Nashville and its numerous tourists. “We have a variety of fans and patrons who come into the arena,” relates David Chadwell, VP of Event Operations for Bridgestone Arena and the Nashville Predators. When they come to the arena, they expect to have fun and do not want to wait in lines to get into the building, whether it's families or season ticket holders for the Predators. At the same time, they also expect the environment to be safe.”

On **January 21st, 2023**, the **Nashville Predators** scored **2 goals** within the **first 40 seconds of their game** against the L.A. Kings. Previously, **a large number of fans** would have been stuck outside Bridgestone Arena in **long security lines** and would have missed that extraordinary moment. However, **because of Evolv**, those same **fans were able to witness an incredible first minute of a game**, which the **Predators went on to win 3-2**.

Evolv Approved by NHL as Security Screening Provider

The National Hockey League (NHL) has set standards for security screening, which must be met by all NHL event hosts. Evolv is the only solution that meets these standards since receiving the SAFETY Act Designation by the US Department of Homeland Security in 2022.

Since approved by the NHL, Evolv can now be used to screen fans attending NHL games across the country. In October 2022, the Bridgestone Arena became the first NHL-specific venue to deploy Evolv for all its Nashville Predators games, ensuring fans never miss another puck drop.

Now joined by multiple hockey teams across the league, the Predators led the charge in creating amazing fan experiences without sacrificing safety.



“We’ve had the Evolv Express for four months, and we’re still in disbelief at how well the system works.”

– Sean Henry, CEO and President,
Nashville Predators, and
Bridgestone Arena

Legacy Metal Detectors Degraded Guest Experience

The Bridgestone Arena experience is a pivotal factor that sets it apart from other venues.

“We have a very dedicated event and operational team that loves to support the acts and events held inside the arena,” says Henry. “We want safety to be the last thing on the minds of fans and visitors when they come to a game, concert, or event, knowing that the security staff here has the right technologies and processes in place to keep them safe.”

But the legacy walkthrough metal detectors the Bridgestone Arena used were hindering the guest experience. “Every time we added another layer of physical security, our environment became a little more inconvenient to our visitors,” Henry notes.

With the walkthrough metal detectors, lines would often form and patrons would miss the first part of a game or show. “With metal detectors, we could have one person walk through ingress every 15 seconds, and if they have nothing in their pockets or bag or on their body—which was fewer than half—they could pass into the arena,” explains Chad Ludkey, the Director of Public Safety for Bridgestone Arena and Nashville Predators. “For just one person, once they went through the secondary screening check, you were looking at 90 seconds.”

This was a big deal for virtually everyone coming into the arena, and a number expressed their frustration to the Bridgestone Arena team. Perhaps the loudest contingent was the Predators fans. “For hockey, missing the puck drop is a big thing, and fans who got stuck in security lines and did so were quite frustrated,” notes Ludkey. “We heard about it from them. It’s not simply getting them into the arena in time for the start of the game, but in time for some of the pre-game festivities and with time to visit concessions.”





Upon Hearing About Evolv, There Was Immediate Interest

Back in 2020, a friend of Chadwell's who worked at an amusement park told him how they were using Evolv and he was immediately sold.

"I reached out to Evolv the next day," he quips. "And while we weren't able to implement the Express in our environment until the NHL approved the technology last year, we laid the groundwork to ensure we were first out of the gate when that took place."

But a few members of the team were skeptics, and Chadwell had to do some persuading. "The first time that I saw the Express system in action I thought there is no way in the world it could detect anything and that visitors could simply walk through," Henry remembers. "In response, David [Chadwell] made our entire executive team and directors all run a Flow Control tablet."

He did this for two reasons: to foster our confidence in the solution and to promote it to all of our staff and guests. Once we understood how to operate the Express, we were truly blown away."

According to Ludkey, there were two key reasons why the Bridgestone Arena team selected Evolv. "Simply put, we required higher throughput," he says. "We could get huge groups of fans and visitors into the arena in a very short period of time—in time for the start of the game or event they are attending. Second, the very precise nature of the identification of potential threats on the Express tablets makes alarm resolution immensely easier and faster."

“

When I go home at night, I know that everyone who attended a game, concert, or event had an enjoyable experience and that everyone was safe during it. They sat and enjoyed the performance or game without worrying about security. That meant we did our job. That's the job satisfaction I take home with me every night."

- Chad Ludkey, Director of Public Safety, Nashville Predators
and Bridgestone Arena

NHL Approval Leads to Successful, Accelerated Implementation

Once the NHL approved Evolv in late, 2022, the Bridgestone Arena and Evolv teams were off to the races with the deployment.

But with the start of the season right around the corner, turning around delivery of the Express systems, configuring and testing them, and training the Bridgestone Arena security team before the season kicked off was an extremely tight timeframe.

“Our implementation was very accelerated,” Chadwell notes. “We wanted to get the Express systems in before the start of the NHL season. The Evolv team worked with us to get the contract and the systems in place, and we succeeded in meeting our deadline. The implementation was exactly what I expected.”

Chadwell concurs: “Everything with the Evolv implementation was seamless. It went exactly as promised. There were no issues. Several members of the Evolv team, including our Customer Success Manager, were onsite for the first several events and helped us further optimize the systems.”

“We are in the technology age and must rely on technology rather than just humans, for our security—that is exactly what Evolv does for us.”

- David Chadwell, VP of Event Operations,
Nashville Predators and Bridgestone Arena



Response from the Safety and Operations Teams

When Bridgestone Arena implemented the Evolv systems, the team did a series of trainings for all the security staff, and they were surprised at how easy it was to use.

“The safety and operations teams especially liked the identification of potential threats—the red box highlighting the exact location of the potential threat on the person’s body or bag,” Ludkey recalls. “For onboarding new security staff, we have one training and they are all set.”

The reception of the Evolv systems by the teams was very positive. “Everyone embraced the Express right away,” Chadwell says. “We are in the technology age and must rely on technology rather than just humans for our security—that is exactly what Evolv does for us.” Ludkey adds: “Human fatigue was a problem with the metal detectors. This is no longer a major concern with the Express systems.”

Value Added by Evolv Cortex AI® and Evolv Insights®

There are a lot of aspects about Evolv that excites the Bridgestone Arena team.

“We are using virtually every piece of the Evolv Express,” Chadwell says. “The one thing we really like about the Evolv system is that it’s constantly learning through its artificial technology Cortex AI. It logs each nuisance alert, for example, and becomes smarter about identifying potential threats.”

Evolv Insights analytics is another area. “Evolv Insights provides us with valuable analytics such as flow at each entrance down to the level of five-minute increments, alarm rates at each, and items found,” Chadwell explains. “This enables us to understand which entrances get the most flow and at what times down to the level of each event. We can allocate staff accordingly as well as target instances where additional training might be needed to improve efficiency and effectiveness.”

*The data used is fictitious and only used to illustrate some of Evolv Insights® analytical views and reporting elements offered in the Evolv Express® system. No conclusions should be drawn from this data.

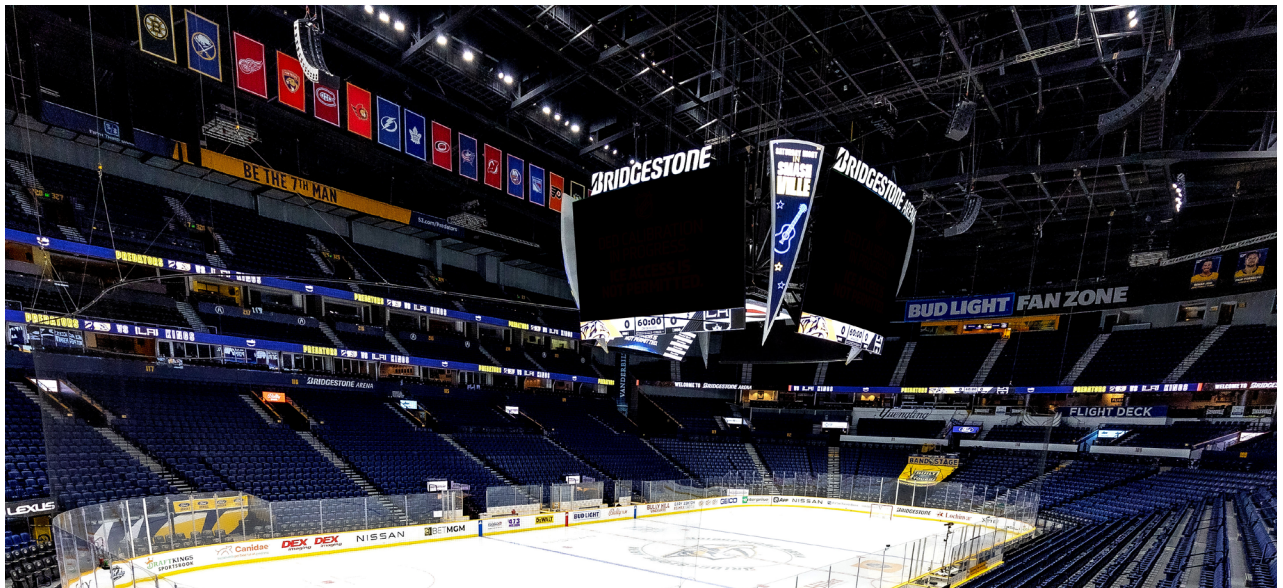


API Integration with Genetec Security Cameras and Operations Center

Ludkey sees the integration of the Express system with the arena's Genetec security cameras as a big plus.

"Working with the Evolv team, we have deployed two integrations," he says. "For the first, we have Genetec cameras on the front and back of the Evolv systems. Second, we have a direct feed of those cameras into our Security Command Center, where we are able to view exactly what they're

seeing at the gates. Evolv's Open API makes it easy and fast to deploy these types of integrations with your legacy security investments. This is in stark contrast with our metal detectors, which had no integrations whatsoever with our other security technologies."



“ We are leading the charge in making Nashville safer. We look to be at the forefront of technology, in the advancement of new ideas, and are willing to take risks.”

- Chad Ludkey, Director of Public Safety, Nashville Predators and Bridgestone Arena



Branding the Express and Welcoming Fans to Smashville

Making security as transparent as possible is a goal of the Bridgestone Arena team.

The ability to brand the Express towers with Bridgestone Arena and Nashville Predators signage is something the team welcomes. “Being able to brand the panels on the Express towers with arena signage helps them blend into our environment,” Ludkey says. Today, fans and visitors are greeted

with the Predator’s famous “Welcome to Smashville” greeting on the Express systems, getting them ready to experience everything Bridgestone has to offer.



Initial Deployment Experience “Wowed!”

Evolv has certainly lived up to the expectations of the Bridgestone Arena team.

“We’ve had the Evolv Express for four months, and we’re still in disbelief at how well the system works,” Henry relates. “With Evolv, unlike delays that occurred with the metal detectors, Bridgestone Arena is able to get everyone into the arena and to their seats before games, performances, and events start”. And for the first few events and games when the Express systems were used, Ludkey indicates that many fans and patrons who walked through the Express lanes “didn’t even realize they had passed through security screening.”

Henry recalls the response of guests when the Express systems were first rolled out. “We had one season ticket holder who constantly complained to me about the long lines that would form in front of the metal detectors,” he says. “For four consecutive events last year, he hammered away at me about the long lines. I repeatedly told him that we were going to do something about them. When we rolled out the Express systems, he came up to me and said, ‘Wow! You said that you were going to do something, and you definitely did.’”

Security Footprint and Nuisance Alarms Reduced

Before rolling out the Express systems, Bridgestone Arena operated 20 walkthrough metal detectors at its different entrances.

The team reduced this number to eight dual-lane Express systems with the Evolv deployment. “This equates to a smaller security footprint and will ultimately translate into us reallocating some of our security staff at our ingress points to other areas in the building,” Ludkey says.

And because the Express does not look alert on personal items like cellphones, keys, and wallets, the vast majority of fans and patrons do not set off security alarms. “Before, with our walkthrough metal detectors, all of them had to divest themselves of everything in their pockets—and they still set off alarms and had to go through a secondary security check,” Chadwell observes. “We’ve slashed our nuisance alarm rate by 40% or more, which we believe will go down further as the Cortex AI technology learns what is and isn’t a nuisance threat in our environment.

“ We want visitors to get in and out of the arena quickly and easily. We don’t want them to wonder if there is going to be a wait at the entrances and if they will be safe.”

- Sean Henry, CEO and President, Nashville Predators, and Bridgestone Arena



No More Lines, Last-Minute “Rush” Is No Problem

The lengthy lines that plagued security ingress with the metal detectors evaporated with the Express systems.

“We want visitors to get in and out of the arena quickly and easily,” Henry observes. “We don’t want them to wonder if there is going to be a wait at the entrances and if they will be safe.” With the metal detectors, fans and patrons spent 10 minutes or more going through security screening. This was slashed to around one minute with the Express deployment.

One of the biggest challenges with the metal detectors was a last-minute “rush” that occurred before the start of games, events, and performances. “Due to a last-minute rush about 15 minutes before start time, we had to hold the start time for performances until we got everyone through the metal detectors and into their seats,” Henry comments. “We have not needed to do so since implementing the Express systems.”



“

Evolv understands that Bridgestone Arena wants to be a forerunner in security systems and processes, to deliver fan-friendly experiences. We love to welcome fans and patrons into our facility in a seamless fashion but a safe manner as well.”

- Chad Ludkey, Director of Public Safety,
Nashville Predators and Bridgestone Arena

Nashville is an Evolv City

The Bridgestone Arena joins a plethora of venues in Nashville bringing safety to their patrons. Aligned in their mission to make Nashville venues safer while delivering a top-of-the-line experience, security leaders across the city are turning to Evolv to secure their arenas, stadiums, auditoriums, hospitals, schools, bars, and more.

If you're in Nashville, stop by any of these iconic venues to experience Evolv for yourself.

NISSAN
STADIUM



GRAND OLE
OPRY

RYMAN
AUDITORIUM



Durability Was Tested When Disaster Struck

In November 2022, the Bridgestone Arena experienced a flood in the arena.

"A large pipeline burst on the outside of the facility, bringing water everywhere inside," Ludkey describes. "We had to delay some events as a result. Some of the Evolv systems were standing in water. We called the Evolv team, and they sent out a couple of members to take a look at them. They tested them and found they were fully functional. Other systems failed. But not the Express systems. They are highly durable and able to withstand adverse environmental events like this one."

"Fantastic" Partner, Best Vendor Relationship

The entire Evolv team has been "fantastic to work with," according to Ludkey.

"They are focused on the guest experience while providing a thorough security screening of our guests. And we know the technology is working because of the threats we're seeing. Evolv understands that Bridgestone Arena wants to be a forerunner in security systems and processes, to deliver fan-friendly experiences. We love to welcome fans and patrons into our facility in a seamless fashion but a safe manner as well."

Chadwell, who has worked with countless vendors over the years, indicates the Evolv relationship is the very best that he's had with a vendor: "The Evolv staff has been great. It's been a very easy process—from implementation to execution, to ongoing support. The Evolv team has made our transition from metal detectors to the Express seamless. We love the relationship we have with them and appreciate the fact that they are constantly innovating and introducing new capabilities that add value to our deployment."



Taking Home the “Evolv Experience” Every Night

Nashville is a destination city for entertainment. Millions of people across the country and from around the world come there to be entertained.

The last thing they should be thinking about when they attend a game, event, or performance is if they are safe. Henry explains: “There are certain places where you go and you think, ‘Am I safe?’ As soon as this enters a person’s mind, they may elect not to work there, perform there, or go there. You don’t want people to think about how safe they are. It should be a given.”

Chadwell adds, “I do believe Evolv has changed our fan experience. Many don’t even realize we have security screening in place because it is such a smooth process.”

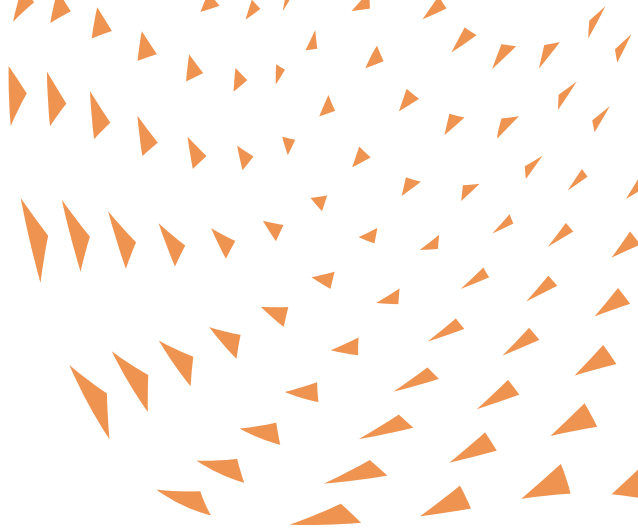


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- David Chadwell, VP of Event Operations, Nashville Predators and Bridgestone Arena

This requires forward-thinking and innovation. “We are leading the charge in making Nashville safer. We look to be at the forefront of technology, in the advancement of new ideas, and are willing to take risks,” Ludkey contends. “Evolv was one of those, and it turned out to be a huge success. We were ahead of the NHL and set to pounce on the ‘Evolv opportunity’ as soon as league approval took place.”

He sums up the Evolv experience with this analogy: “When I go home at night, I know that everyone who attended a game, concert, or event had an enjoyable experience and that everyone was safe during it. They sat and enjoyed the performance or game without worrying about security. That meant we did our job. That’s the job satisfaction I take home with me every night.”



Contact us to learn more about helping to create
safe zones where you live, learn, work or play.

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