



Case study



Emerald Queen Casino Doubled Down on Evolv Express[®] and Hit the Jackpot

Organization Overview

LOCATION: Fife and Tacoma, Washington

FOUNDED: 1996

OWNERSHIP: Puyallup Tribe of Indians

EMPLOYEES: 3,000+

SECURITY STAFF: 400+

WEBSITE: emeraldqueen.com

New EQC Hotel & Casino

LOCATION: Tacoma, Washington

OPENED: 2020

GAMING: 110,000 Square-Foot Floor

EVENT CENTER: 21,000 Square Feet with 2,000 Seats

HOTEL: 200 Rooms with Spa and Conference Rooms

RESTAURANTS: 5

Solution Overview

Goals

- **Maintain** rigorous weapons detection while delivering an optimal guest experience
- **Deliver** an aesthetically appealing security screening system and process
- **Reallocate** security staff from screening to other security areas
- **Optimize** staffing for security screening
- **Minimize** footprint impact of security screening systems

Solution

People

- Solutions Engineering Team: Deployment, Configuration, and Training
- Channel Partner: Velasea

Process

- Implemented Evolv Express Dual-Lane and Single-Lane Systems
- ConOps Playbook
- Guard and Operations Training

Technology

FIFE, WASHINGTON

- 4 Evolv Express® Systems: 2 Dual-Lane and 2 Single-Lane
- Evolv Cortex AI® and Evolv Insights®

TACOMA, WASHINGTON

- 7 Evolv Express Systems: 2 Dual-Lane and 5 Single-Lane
- Evolv Cortex AI and Evolv Insights

Outcomes

- **Maximizes** security effectiveness and accuracy without impacting guest experience
- **Manages** security screening with approximately half the security staff required for a magnetometers-based solution
- **Reduced** need for secondary security screening across all guests and employees
- **Scales** to accommodate spikes in screening volumes without creating a security queue



Expanding the Tribe's Hospitality and Entertainment Footprint

The Puyallup Tribe of Indians launched its first casino on a riverboat near the Port of Tacoma, Washington in 1996. The Tribe moved inland in 2002, building what originally was intended to be a temporary tent casino in nearby Fife, Washington that evolved into a permanent facility—the Emerald Casino & Hotel (or Emerald Queen Casino [EQC])—which includes a 25,000 square foot multi-purpose event space and ballroom, a 103-room hotel, and three restaurants.

Seeking to increase the economic benefits to the Tribe and serve and entertain more guests, the Tribe embarked on an undertaking in 2017 to vastly expand its operations by launching a \$400-million project to construct a state-of-the-art casino and hotel in Tacoma, Washington—just a few miles south of the Fife location. In addition to a 110,000 square-foot gaming floor, the new facility included a 21,000 square-foot event center with 2,000 seats, a 200-room hotel with spa and conference rooms, and five restaurants.

At the time, the Tribe targeted mid-2020 for the inaugural opening of the casino and hotel. “Little did we know that this would occur during the middle of a global pandemic,” says David Yerbury, Director of Security at EQC. “It wasn’t an ideal scenario, but we proceeded to plan and successfully opened the casino and hotel in June 2020.”



Ensuring the Security of Guests and Employees

A key objective for EQC's executive leadership team was the safety of its guests.

"Guests come to enjoy themselves and entrust us with their safety," Yerbury says. "We're also responsible for the safety of our employees."

For its Fife location, EQC used metal detection wands for all guests entering its nightclub. "They created long queues and gave us a lot of false positives," remembers Anthony Hayward, a Sr. Security Shift Manager at EQC. "Security screening could become a very lengthy process as they detected almost everything that was metal—belt buckles, zippers, keys. It was a very time-consuming process. Guests would become frustrated with the long waits—and it impacted their experience."

In a nutshell, EQC wanted a comprehensive security screening solution that addressed both guests and employee entrances. "We sought a security screening approach that would uphold high security standards without sacrificing guest experience," sums up Yerbury. "For those guests without any weapons on them, we wanted to let them pass through without intrusive wand scans and bag checks. We looked at traditional magnetometer-based solutions, but they all delivered terrible guest experiences. The aesthetics of a metal-detection system in our new state-of-the-art casino and hotel made us cringe. Plus, EQC guests visit our casino, events centers, hotels, and restaurants to enjoy themselves. When they see a metal-detection system, they wonder to themselves, 'Is this a place where I really want to go?'"

▶ **"When we have a big event, we can see a surge in guests going through screening. With metal-detection systems, guests could get stuck in screening queues for 5 or 10 minutes. But with the throughput capabilities of the Express systems, this isn't an issue."**

— **David Yerbury, Director of Security,
Emerald Queen Casino**

Finding a Better Security Screening Solution

With the inaugural opening of EQC approaching, Yerbury embarked on a search for a better security screening solution.

When conducting his research, Yerbury met with Evolv Channel Partner Velasea. “They introduced us to the Evolv Express system and provided us with several other casinos and hotels that were using it for security screening,” Yerbury notes. “In comparison to metal-detection systems, the difference in footprint for the Evolv Express system was dramatically smaller. Aesthetically, it was the difference of night and day.”

Velasea understood that EQC needed a solution that ensured guest and employee safety while creating a more frictionless experience. “Most guests want a security screening experience that is fast, convenient, and unintrusive,” says Brian Collins, the Sr. Account Executive at Velasea. “Imagine going to a sporting event or concert and needing to go through metal detectors and be hand searched versus walking through the Evolv Express that accurately detects if you are carrying weapons and security personnel are immediately notified of the threat and where it is located on the body of the guest. That is precisely what you get with the Evolv Express.”

Working with Velasea, the EQC team decided to test out the Evolv Express system to determine its effectiveness. “We set up a proof of concept [POC] and pushed nearly every weapon configuration through the Evolv Express system,” Yerbury recalls. “We placed weapons in all different locations on our bodies, and the Evolv Express system caught them every time.” The POC ran for a few days, and an order was placed soon thereafter.

One of the things Yerbury and Hayward like about the Evolv Express system is that it tells them exactly where on the body of a guest or employee a purported weapon is detected. “We are able to focus on just that area when we push guests into the secondary screening area,” Hayward explains. “This ensures we are more effective in our jobs while delivering a better experience to the guest who was flagged.”

Another area that impressed Yerbury and Hayward was Evolv Insights analytics. “It gives us one dashboard for insights and analytics across both of our locations and all 11 Evolv Express systems,” Hayward says. “We can drill down into data such as visitor arrival curves, the number of visitors at specific intervals, and detection settings and performance.”

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— **Anthony Hayward, Sr. Security Shift Manager, Emerald Queen Casino**



Getting Started with Evolv Express

In advance of the opening of the new EQC casino and hotel, Yerbury placed an order for 11 Evolv Express systems across both its Fife and Tacoma locations.

Location	Single Lane	Dual Lane
Fife	2	2
Tacoma	5	2

An engineer from the Evolv Solutions teams worked with the Velasea and EQC security teams to configure and set up the Evolv Express systems. “He was very knowledgeable and was able to advise us where to place each system for optimal results,” Yerbury says. For the configuration, the engineer tapped into the Evolv ConOps Playbook as part of the process.

Once the 11 systems were operational, the Evolv and Velasea teams worked endlessly to ensure the EQC security team was trained on how to operate the systems. “He worked through different scenarios and use cases,” Hayward comments. “The training was much greater than simply guiding us on how to run the Evolv Express systems. We learned how to leverage Evolv Insights to analyze past events. This helps us to proactively staff and manage security screening based on anticipated screening surges.”

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— Brian Collins, Sr. Account Executive, Velasea

Counting the Outcomes from the Evolv Express Systems

There are numerous reasons why the EQC team is excited about the deployment of the Evolv Express systems, including its scalability.

"When we have a big event, we can see a surge in guests going through screening," Yerbury says. "With metal-detection systems, guests could get stuck in screening queues for 5 or 10 minutes. But with the throughput capabilities of the Evolv Express systems, this isn't an issue."

The footprint and design of Evolv Express were also an improvement from metal-detection systems. "Not only is this immensely more aesthetically appealing, but this is space that we can allocate for better guest experiences," Yerbury says.

The number of security staff required to manage the Evolv Express systems is less than half of what Yerbury and Hayward estimate would have been required with a traditional magnetometer-based approach. "We are able to allocate this staff to other critical security functions in the casino and hotel."

Hayward really appreciates the accuracy and efficiency the Evolv Express system adds to the secondary screening area. "With a traditional metal-detection system, we have no idea where the purported weapon might be," Hayward explains. "The Evolv Express system uses Cortex AI capabilities to guide the screening to the exact area where the weapon is located on a guest or employee. If the red cube on the Evolv Express system screen shows that the weapon is in the hip area, we will ask the guest or employee to remove everything in their pockets. But if the Evolv Express system indicates the weapon is on the left ankle of the person, then we focus our search in that area. All of this guided intelligence speeds up our secondary security screening process. And in many cases, we do not need to do any pat-downs."

▶ **"EQC guests visit our casino, events centers, hotels, and restaurants to enjoy themselves. When they see a metal-detection system, they wonder to themselves, 'Is this a place where I really want to go?'"**

— **David Yerbury, Director of Security,
Emerald Queen Casino**



Changing the Game with Evolv Express

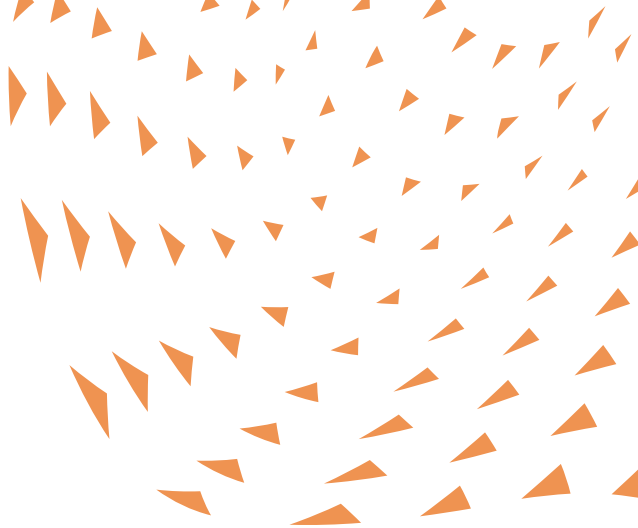
Since opening its doors, EQC's casinos and hotels in both Fife and Tacoma have received rave reviews—and the new security and health screening systems and processes are an important enabler.

Guest feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, and they appreciate that they no longer need to experience negative aspects of security screening while maintaining peace of mind knowing they are entering a safe location.

"I take the safety of our guests and employees very seriously," Yerbury concludes. "The Evolv Express system is a game-changer for us. Knowing that I have this technology in place at every entrance helps me sleep better at night."

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— David Yerbury, Director of Security,
Emerald Queen Casino



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

evolv

info@evolvtechnology.com +1 781.374.8100

 **VELASEA**

sales@velasea.com 833.599.4614



+1 833-673-8658 | info@evolvtechnology.com

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