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MILES AWAY, BUT STILL ON GUARD

New style of security

By AMANDA JAMES

Even though hip Back Bay clothing store Bodega is already tricky to find, the retailer still uses a Lowell-based security company's high-tech muscle to protect its high-end goods.

Bodega, a Spanish word for small grocery store, in this case describes the disguised clothing store that has been operating inconspicuously in the Back Bay since 2006.

Since its start, the hidden-away fashion hub has featured an innovative style of clothing and innovative surveillance technology.

Bodega looks to Lowell-based Viewpoint to protect its collection of stylish sneakers and hip-hop hoodies.

Viewpoint is the only system on the market to provide interactive monitoring for businesses, hos-

pitals, municipalities and retail stores like Bodega, using patented audio technology, which makes security guards a thing of the past.

"Viewpoint gives a physical presence to the security system, rather than just using cameras that people ignore as they go about doing their had deeds," said company president Brad Gordon.

Oliver Mak, one of the owners of Bodega said,

"We have high-value products, from collector-edition sneakers to Japanese fashion, that have a large resale value," and he trusts Viewpoint's security technology because it's "super effective and proven to work perfectly."

In recent months, Viewpoint expanded its headquarters in Lowell. This doubled Viewpoint's capacity, providing the company with an infrastructure sufficient to support 100



STAFF PHOTO BY JOHN WILCOX. LEFT: COURTESY PHOTO. ABOVE

'We can see that the ... shelves are stocked,' says Viewpoint president Brad Gordon.

million in revenue, the company said.

Despite the recession, the company has grown dramatically over the last few years and expects to grow by 50 percent and keep hiring new personnel this year.

"This economy has been fantastic for us," said Gordon. "We are saving peo-

ple money."

The newest feature of Viewpoint's security systems is remote management.

"We can see that the employees are wearing their uniforms and that the shelves are stocked," said

Gordon of the monitoring system. "If we see something that's out of place, we will

contact the manager."

So while strangers wander past the nondescript storefront of Bodega in Boston, specially trained agents keep an eye out at the Viewpoint Command Center located 30 miles to the north in Lowell.

With tools such as closed-circuit television, analytics and alarm systems, the re-

more agents provide 24-hour surveillance without a live patrolman.

But this remote, centralized security model doesn't mean fewer jobs.

The center in Lowell is planning to hire 35 to 50 more certified agents in the next nine months to act as off-the-premises guards, said Gordon.