Progress Residential Stops Trespassers in Their Tracks with VacantView™

Case Study at a Glance

When Progress Residential began experiencing increased incidents of trespassing across its portfolio, the need for a flexible and scalable security solution became urgent. Swidget stepped in to develop VacantView™, a modular, portable smart monitoring system designed specifically for vacant property protection. Within the first week of deployment of their pilot program, Progress was already seeing results – catching intruders in real time, providing actionable evidence to law enforcement, and providing peace of mind to staff and law enforcement entering trespassed properties. The success of the pilot reshaped Progress's broader security strategy, and they have now rolled out the solution in over 230 properties spanning 7 different markets across the country.

The Challenge

Progress Residential is one of the largest providers of single-family rental homes in the U.S., managing tens of thousands of properties across multiple states. Many of these homes sit vacant between renovations or leases, making them frequent targets for break-ins, trespassing, and theft.

In high-risk markets like Dallas, Atlanta, and Memphis, the problem was growing. Trespassers were occupying dozens of properties while Progress Residential dealt with lost rental revenue and lengthy, costly eviction battles. At the same time, staff were entering properties without knowing if someone was hiding inside – putting their safety at risk.

Traditional security systems weren't designed for this type of situation. Hardwired cameras and alarms were too costly and inflexible, and mobile patrols weren't catching incidents in time.

Progress needed a smart solution that could be deployed quickly, detect activity instantly, and provide the kind of evidence that law enforcement would take seriously.

The Partnership

Progress and Swidget first connected at an industry event, where Swidget presented its plug-and-play smart sensor technology. Progress saw potential – not just in the hardware, but in Swidget's flexible, modular approach.

After gaining a deep understanding of the issues faced by Progress and other single-family rental (SFR) operators, Swidget leveraged its existing modular smart solutions – adapting and repackaging them alongside newly developed components – to create VacantView: a portable, cost-effective smart monitoring kit purpose-built for the unique demands of SFR vacant property monitoring.
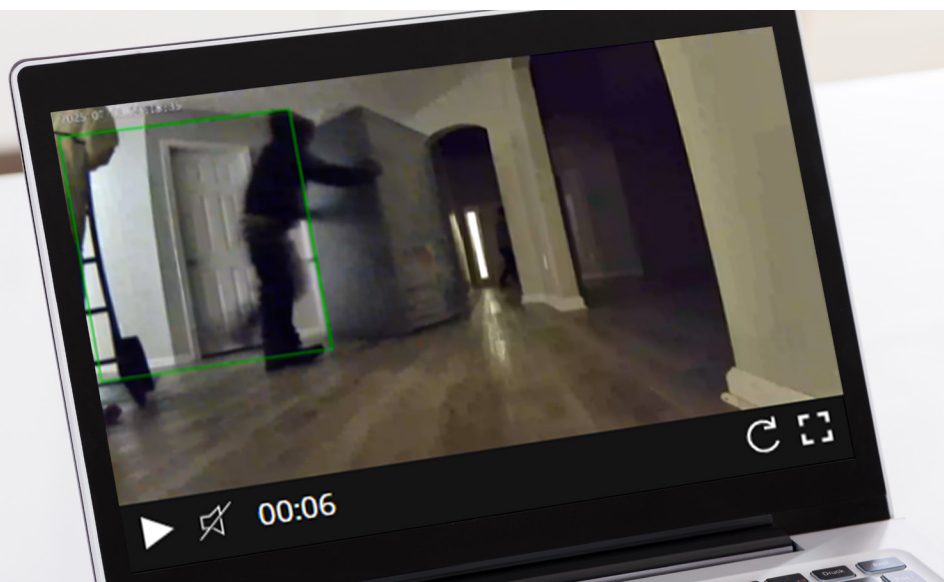
The Solution: VacantView

The VacantView system is a lightweight, modular kit containing smart cameras, proximity sensors, and a secure LTE hotspot. Designed to be deployed in minutes and moved easily from property to property, the system delivers real-time alerts and cloud-based video footage to Progress's central monitoring team.

Each property is outfitted with a few Swidget outlets or switches – an easy, low-cost upgrade that preps the home for indefinite monitoring. Once installed, these devices remain in place and allow the portable VacantView kits to be plugged in and activated whenever needed. This flexible setup ensures long-term readiness without requiring expensive infrastructure or permanent installations at each location.

The upfront investment to prep a property is minimal, and ongoing costs are kept low with a modest monthly monitoring subscription. Because the VacantView kits can be relocated between homes, Progress isn't locked into individual monitoring contracts for every property – maximizing efficiency and minimizing cost as homes transition in and out of vacancy.

VacantView in Action

Progress Residential launched their pilot program in April 2024 by deploying 50 kits between the Dallas, Atlanta, and Memphis markets. VacantView's results were immediate.

In Dallas, the system detected a break-in just days after installation. A trespasser entered a vacant home at night – but this time, their presence didn't go unnoticed. Progress's staff were able to confirm the incident remotely and coordinate a safe, effective response, evicting the trespasser immediately and without need for intervention from law enforcement.

In Atlanta, the VacantView kits helped identify how repeat trespassers were accessing a particularly problematic property. By understanding the trespassers' behavior and entry points, Progress was able to re-secure the home proactively and more effectively. This incident highlighted a powerful, often intangible benefit of the system: real-time insight into patterns of criminal behavior, which in turn informed smarter, more strategic security responses.

The results of the pilot program weren't just anecdotal – during the three month pilot, Progress saw an **86% reduction in trespassed homes, with savings of approximately $250,000**.

The portable design of VacantView made it easy for Progress to rotate the kits to other vulnerable properties and markets, using data to prioritize which homes needed coverage most urgently.

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The Results

Swidget's VacantView solution delivered real, measurable impact:

- **Immediate Evictions:** Real-time, reliable alerts enabled Progress to detect trespassing issues immediately and resolve them without escalation – typically within a matter of hours.

- **Reduced Costs:** By preventing lengthy legal battles, minimizing property damage and theft, and avoiding expensive, long-term monitoring contracts, Progress saved significantly on security expenses – approximately $50,000 within the first three months.

- **Improved Safety:** Staff could review activity logs to confirm a home was clear, or use live video to assess trespasser risks - making field visits safer and more prepared.

- **Faster & Safer Law Enforcement Response:** Visual evidence allowed Progress to clearly communicate urgency, prompting quicker police response and providing responding officers with critical situational awareness before entering trespassed homes.

- **Recovered Assets:** VacantView enabled the identification of suspects and supported the recovery of thousands of dollars' worth of stolen appliances.

- **Operational Flexibility:** Kits were redeployed across the portfolio, allowing Progress to protect dozens of homes with a limited number of kits.

- **Better Evidence for Prosecution:** Swidget's system didn't just detect problems – it documented them, giving Progress the ability to pursue charges and strengthen legal cases.

What started as a security solution quickly became a strategic asset – supporting Progress's broader efforts to reduce operational risk, improve field safety, and protect property value.

"Swidget's VacantView system gave us real-time visibility and peace of mind. It helped us protect our properties, our people, and our bottom line."

— Mark Welsh, Regional Director Corporate Security, Progress Residential

What's Next

Encouraged by the pilot's success, Progress has expanded its rollout of VacantView across the country. The system's ability to fill the missing gaps between other tools like GPS trackers and incident response protocols makes it a valuable part of a layered security approach.

Meanwhile, Swidget continues to evolve the VacantView platform, adding new capabilities like AI-powered analytics to give operators even more insight into their vacant homes.