

PUTTING A NEW SPIN ON PRESENTATIONS

Integrator brings California city council chambers into 21st Century

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IS A BUZZ PHRASE

that everyone has heard. But when Jeff Irvin, CEO of A/V integrator SPINITAR, decided to become involved with his local community, he took involvement to the next step.

“Why not be involved in the community?” asks Irvin, “Our firm has been in the city for quite some time and is very active in the business community” And now the City of Santa Fe Springs, CA, or at least those visiting the Santa Fe Springs City Council Chambers, are actively involved in the use of presentation technology.

Like many communities, Santa Fe Springs is in the process of commercial and residential real estate development, as well as a city beautification project. With all this development and construction going on, the city council members and members of the community wanted to be able to simultaneously view development proposals as the development presentations were being made in the city council office.

Out with the old

“Presentations before the overhaul used to be done with an overhead projector sitting on a wheeled cart,” says Alex Tong, director of technology services for the City of Santa Fe Springs. “The cart and all its attachments had to be moved in and out between presentations, and the council members had to move out of the way of the screen. It was difficult for everyone in the room to comfortably see the presentation.”

In short, the presentation environment needed a serious improvement. But no one was quite sure what direction to take or what presentation technology offered.

“We met with the council and discussed their needs,” says Jeff Newon, account manager, SPINITAR. “It was a process to work with them to uncover the true need.”

This was accomplished by educating the city administrators on what they could do to improve the presentation area.

“One of the things we wanted was to take the city from the 20th century to the 21st century,” says Tong. “Our goal was to provide information to the public in an easier way.” This turned the project into a complete multimedia experience that allows users to present with both computer and video.

Preserving history

After showing the city what could be done with presentation technology, SPINITAR faced the challenge of designing at the physical location. The city council office building, constructed in 1967, contained classic walnut furnishings that needed to be coordinated as a historical part of the council building, as well as a part of the beautification efforts.

TOOLBOX

- Custom-built walnut Van San Audiovisual Desk
- Proxima 9320L XCA LCD projector
- Da-Lite Cosmopolitan 120-inch diagonal tab-tensioned screen
- Monovision 34-inch multimedia monitor
- Boland 10-inch XGA multimedia monitors, model 10.4 HR (8)
- Extron System 7SC7x dual switcher
- Samsung SVP-6000 digital computer signal document camera
- Computer interfaces at the lectern and in the A/V desk (RGB- 109xi)
- Extron ADA 4 300 MXHV, 1x4 distribution amplifiers, (3)
- Stewart PA50B amplifiers (2)
- JBL Control 25 white wall speakers



AIV integrator SPINITAR, brought the Santa Fe Springs, CA, City Council Chambers into the 21st century with an entire A/V system overhaul, but preserved the buildings historic value to the community To achieve these dual goals, SPINITAR harmonized the existing walnut furniture with a custom walnut Van San Audiovisual Desk complete with a built-in 12-rack unit, pullout drawer for a document camera, storage for CPU, cutout panel for a viewing monitor and a keyboard drawer. The integrator also installed a Proxima 9320L LCD projector with long throw lens suspended from a pole in the ceiling, making for an unobstructed projection area aimed directly to a diagonally placed tab-tensioned Cosmopolitan screen from Da-Lite above the council seating area.

In addition, the actual council chambers were redesigned in the late 90s, making the council seating area circular in shape, another install challenge.

“The city council office is the hub of the city and we needed to keep the aesthetics of the area,” says Irvin. “The beautification goals of the city were important factors.”

Keeping with the aesthetics of the actual room required some attention to detail. Harmonizing the existing walnut furniture and dealing with the limiting dimensions of the council member desks made for an aesthetically challenging locale, not to mention the fact that the 45- by 50-foot room was often filled to standing room only, limiting the space for large projection units.

To remedy this, a custom walnut Van San Audiovisual Desk was created to correspond with the other furnishings. Constructed as an A/V control center, it's complete with a built-in 12-rack unit, pullout drawer for a document camera, storage for CPU, cutout panel for a viewing monitor and a keyboard drawer.

Installing a Proxima 9320L LCD projector with long throw lens solved the projection issue. The projector is suspended from a pole in the ceiling making for an unobstructed projection area aimed directly to a diagonally placed tab-tensioned Cosmopolitan screen from Da-Lite above the council seating area.

Creature comforts

The remaining challenge was to supply the council members' desks with monitors so they could easily view the presentations while remaining comfortably in their seats. “The monitors are a real feature,” says Newon. “Before this installation, the council members sometimes had to move to the audience to see the presentation. The idea of having monitors was something the council really liked.”

But the size of the monitors was the challenge. “We called Boland and had the company create 10-inch custom monitors for us,” says Newon, adding that waiting for the custom-built monitors was the most time consuming factor. “The timing of the actual construction was 3-4 days, but we had to wait for the custom monitors to be shipped from Japan, making the final completion time about 12-15 weeks.”

But the wait was worth it. “We needed to come to the 21st century,” says Susan Bergeron-Vance, director of finance and administrative services for the City of Santa Fe Springs. “We wanted to take advantage of features to enhance the council's ability to see

and to enhance the ability of the public to see presentations.”

Like most government projects, funding the project was a concern. “There were a variety of considerations for us,” Bergeron-Vance says, referring to the \$75,000 price tag and space issues. “We couldn't scrap the room, but we wanted to take it to the next level within our budget. We did that and it looks great.”

Alex Tong, director of technology services for the city, wholeheartedly agrees. “The last council meeting had area kids getting awards,” he says, “It was packed, but everyone in the council room could see. It was really great.”

”Sherrie Morreall is a technology research journalist who spends time between San Diego, CA and Sydney, Australia. She may be contacted via email at smorreall@hotmail.com”