NATIONAL INDIAN PROGRAMS TRAINING CENTER

Audio/Visual Integration

There probably isn't any tougher assignment for audio/visual equipment than in centers of education and training. Classes, meetings and events every day – throughout the day (and evenings). The A/V equipment is in continual use.

The Department of Interior's National Indian Programs Training Center (NIPTC) in Albuquerque is no exception. The Center sees more than 6,000 students every year, providing federal employees with training programs ranging from cultural awareness to govemment policy.

Shortly after opening its doors in 2006, an effort was launched to enhance the teaching and learning experience through state-of-the-art audio/visual technologies.

"Initially, staff used portable equipment," said Morris E. Gaiter, NIPTC Distance Learning Coordinator. "It was older equipment that was moved from room to room and had to be brought out of storage, setup, tested, and then dismantled and re-stored every time it was used."

Which is a lot of moving about when you consider the NIPTC has 11 classrooms, 5 computer labs, 5 breakout rooms and 2 conference rooms within its 50,000 square feet.

But the NIPTC knew technology was just a part of the equation. So they turned to ExhibitOne to design, integrate and install a system that addressed the Center's unique requirements.

How unique? Well let's see. At the high level it was important for every room to have the same audio/visual capabilities and that the equipment could be easily controlled within each room or controlled centrally for the entire facility. "That has been the biggest benefit of all," said Gaiter.

Simple and easy. Check. Got it. Done.

However, it's only after peeking "under the hood" does one begin to appreciate the experience and expertise needed to transform "simple and easy" into a fully integrated, facility-wide system incorporating DVD/VCRs, document cameras, computers, monitors, touchscreen room control panels, speakers, access to cable TV, two satellite systems, digital signage, a media production center, including a satellite broadcast studio.

And did we mention FWAT – Facility Wide Audio Translation system? It sends the audio and video signals from any classroom to interpreters located in a central location. Their translation is then sent back to the classroom to be transmitted through infrared transmitters. How cool is that?

A key to it all was ExhibitOne's use of CobraNet – an advanced technology primarily used in convention centers, stadiums, airports, theme parks and concert halls. With it came sophisticated system management capabilities, much lower cabling costs, reliability and high-quality digital sound.

Noted ExhibitOne Project/Design Engineer Krystofer von Hybschmann, "Our ability to offer the CobraNet solution also provided the NIPTC with a capability that could not be matched by competing designs – tremendous flexibility. The NIPTC's audio system can change and grow with zero additional cabling," he said. Similar flexibility and expandability has also been designed into the NIPTC's video capabilities.

The NIPTC had ExhibitOne install what it designed. "With our design, a local installation firm could have accomplished the installation portion of the project," von Hybschmann said. "But having ExhibitOne install it ensured the design information was completely understood and the installation process was virtually seamless to the client – something that cannot be guaranteed when information is handed off to a third-party installation firm."

From the NIPTC's perspective Gaiter said, "I really liked the one-on-one relationship with key ExhibitOne personnel and the flexibility of plans for our system."

Simple and easy.