



Install of the Month - February 2003

SCHARFF WEISBERG INSTALLS CUSTOM AV SYSTEM FOR THE BP ALASKA ENERGY CENTER



In fall 2002, BP Exploration (Alaska) held an open house to mark the opening of the BP Energy Center, a \$7.1 million facility in Anchorage. The 13,500-square-foot building includes six conference rooms for groups from 6 to 125 and interactive displays about the people and culture of Alaska and the energy industry in public spaces.

"The BP Energy Center is a distinctive facility that will allow BP and its employees to connect with Alaskans in new and different ways," says Steve Marshall, president of BP Alaska.

Featured in the new facility is a multimedia A/V system designed and installed by Scharff Weisberg Systems Integration of Long Island City, New York. The program was created by Batwin and Robin Productions, a full-service production company from New York City.

For BP's community center, Batwin and Robin worked with sound-designer Ben Rubin from EAR Studios to create a media installation entitled *The BP Story Pipeline*. The first component visitors see is a 150-foot LED text sign "ribbon" that winds throughout the woods in front of the BP Energy Center. The ribbon enters the building by seemingly piercing the glass wall of the entrance tube and terminates in a large-scale plasma video display of Alaska stories, where the pipeline's text is transformed into the spoken words of the onscreen storyteller. The installation displays a series of originally recorded and filmed oral histories about the people of Alaska.

The video system is fed by three **Adtec Soloist 2 MPEG-2 players**. One feeds a 50-inch NEC 50PD2 plasma display oriented in Portrait mode primarily to display the many storytellers who narrate each story line. The other two Soloists provide content to two NEC GT-1150 video projectors providing rear-projected images that display supporting imagery to the content that is presented on the plasma display.

The LED sign text content is stored in a text file on a computer. As one of the MPEG-2 players plays back time-code information in the SMPTE-LTC form, the computer, which is equipped with a SMPTE reader interface, streams the text in time with the video.

Custom software designed and programmed by Scharff Weisberg allows scheduling and system setting adjustments. An Elo 15-inch LCD touch screen is also used by the system administrator to navigate through the system interface.

The sound system primarily consists of six Turbosound TCS-30 speakers, three QSC Audio CX Series amplifiers, a Crown USM-810 mixer, and a single Tannoy B475 subwoofer. The multichannel soundtrack is fed to the system from CD by an Adtec Soloist.

"It is one of the most technologically advanced A/V systems in the state," says Scharff Weisberg project manager David Girgenti. "The custom control software that our engineer Serguei Kozlovski designed and programmed allowed us to maintain the cost-effectiveness of this system while still providing the features of a more expensive, off-the-shelf control system."