



Case Study: Benicia Police Department

Police department in California benefits from simple control of AV equipment in training/briefing room.

The city of Benicia, California (Solano County) is a picturesque waterfront community, located about 35 miles northeast of San Francisco. It is home to 28,000 residents and boasts Northern California's largest port-oriented industrial park. The Benicia police department, located near the city's historical center, includes 36 sworn officers as well as a number of non-sworn employees and citizen volunteers.

In mid 2008, the Police Department added a new training and meeting room to its facilities. One specific requirement for the room was the ability to function as a backup to the City's Emergency Operations Center. Other uses for the room include staff training and officer briefings. Display of real-time data and aerial maps, monitoring of radio and television stations, and situational training media were all part of the master plan for the room. In order to provide all of these functions effectively, the city commissioned system integrator Oliver Worldclass Labs to install a variety of AV equipment along with a control system for operation. The installation included a Smart Board interactive whiteboard, ceiling-mounted projector, retractable projection screen, two plasma displays with data and cable television inputs, a full sound system and interfaces to sources such as computers and DVD players.

Control of the system is provided through SP Controls' PixiePro control panel. The PixiePro is a modular, infrared-learning audiovisual control system that can control up to eight source devices. Supplied modular inserts allow customization of the PixiePro to support IR-controllable devices including DVD players, lifts, screens, projectors, etc. In the Benicia PD installation, three PixiePro panels are located on the room's front wall; the panels on the outer edges provide control of the plasma displays while the center unit gives the officer at the desk control of the projection screen and selection of AV sources to the projector (DVD, computer, etc.). The PixiePro panels also provide on/off controls for the Smart Board's Projector, police radio and other equipment, and offer selection of audio sources to the room's 6.1 channel sound system. Dur-

ing an emergency situation, the room could be used for not only monitoring local events but also watching developments being covered by the media; the Benicia PD captain requested the ability to easily select a particular source (such as a TV channel) to the loudspeakers to make it easy for everyone in the room to hear the source.

For day to day operations, such as briefings, critical information such as police car location status will be displayed on the room's screens. No matter where an officer is sitting in the room, the information is clearly visible. The Smart Board is used primarily for training and operational exercises. Aerial photography based maps of Solano County are accessible via computer; the instructor or sergeant can put the highly detailed maps on all screens and use the Smart Board to sketch out details of a pursuit or an operational plan of where officers need to be located for a particular event or situation. The screen can then be printed on a color printer for use in operations plans.



The Benicia, California Police Department training and briefing room includes multiple screens and access to a variety of data sources including aerial maps of the county. Trainers or officers conducting briefings can access projectors, data sources and audio via the PixiePro panels on the wall.



The wall-mounted PixiePro panels provide simple control of video, audio and data sources as well as channel selection and volume.

Sandra Ayala, IT Analyst for the City of Benicia, manages all of the computers in the training room and acts as liaison between the PD and the system integrator. "I think the SP PixiePro controllers are great," she says. "They've made non-techie users able to use the equipment effectively. Officers can easily select the TV channels they need; the sergeants can use the Smart Board for their briefings or to build an operations plan, and they can all do it with minimal training." Ayala notes that with 52 users in the room, "I don't want people trying to locate buttons in the AV cart; there's a fairly complicated system inside the cart that could have the settings changed by pressing the wrong buttons. It's much easier for everyone to be able to go to the wall and look at a label that says "DVD" or "Cable TV" and just push that button to bring up the desired source."

Oliver Worldclass Labs owner Randy Oliver says the project was brought to OWL after Ms. Ayala and her team researched interactive whiteboards. "Sandy told us they wanted an interactive whiteboard in their new briefing room for presentations," Oliver says. "After a couple meetings and presentations with police department staff and seeing the breadth of their project and system components needed, we saw the PixiePro as a solution to tie all AV components in the room together into a central location for controlling all components. As the project evolved, it was determined that individual control located under each plasma display was also desired, this eliminating multiple remote controls. Using the same PixiePro at each location helped to keep uniformity for the end users. As a systems integrator working throughout the state, it was pleasure to work with our local police department's team to design and supply a complex system with a simple to use solution."

About SP Controls:

SP Controls, Inc., founded in 1995, is a manufacturer of innovative audio-visual control products. The company is based on the belief that simple, intuitive control of complex audio-visual equipment is both possible and necessary. SP Controls' AV control, video/audio distribution, audio, networking, and mounting products are widely used in educational and corporate environments, making AV systems easier to use for everyone.

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