In addition to being the main student dining facility at the College of St. Benedict's, the Gorecki Center is also home to a 500-person-capacity conference room, several other smaller conference rooms, a large lobby that functions as a bus stop shelter, and a fireside lounge for casual group gatherings. Until recently, the Center's control system, which consisted in part of controllers on portable lecterns, was unreliable when it came to meeting the College's audio visual needs. Every time a lectern was moved from one room to another, the system would need to be restarted. Before each event, this meant the Event Coordinator's primary concern was making sure the A/V system was still operational and set up correctly. The College of St. Benedict made the decision to upgrade to a solution that provided a higher degree of control and ease of use.

Installed by Cybermation, a technology, entertainment, and security systems integrator, upgrading the Gorecki Center control system proved to be a unique and challenging project, as the College's A/V equipment included an audio DSP unit that needed to be reconfigured. This required that

all serial codes be custom made depending on the virtual devices, such as mixers, that were added using the DSP's software. The serial control library took approximately 160 hours of programming and 1200 individual serial codes.

All of the College's new control products were provided by RTI, which were specifically selected by Cybermation because their wide range of interface and control options integrated with existing equipment at the site. The Gorecki Center features a number of RTI's solutions, including the XP8 remote control processor, RK3 in-wall universal controller, T4 handheld controller, CB-4 touch panel connecting block, and RM-443 RF receiver.

"The flexibility of the XP8 and the abundance of connection options allowed us to easily hook up a variety of equipment using serial, IR, and contact closure," says James Heckendorf, vice president of sales and marketing for Cybermation. "We used a very simple interface for all of the end user locations and a very robust interface for the T4 master controller."

"The College no longer has to supervise every user on the A/V system, as the simple interface and extensive macro programming do all the work."

James Heckendorf - Vice President of Sales & Marketing, Cybermation

In addition to its variety of basic control ports, the XP8 provides advanced control interface options such as two-way communication and a built-in clock for time-based events. The processor's ability to communicate through two-way RS-232 or IP over Ethernet allows it to control virtually any device in the system and receive feedback via pre-built drivers.

Each room of the Gorecki Center utilizes a RK3 compact color LCD touchpanel. At 3.5 inches, the LCD is small enough to blend into each of the Center's rooms, yet provides the necessary resolution to display graphics such as digital photos and Web pages. Instead of multiple controllers on portable lecterns, RTI's T4 gives the College everything it needs on one handheld device. Featuring a compact 6.4-inch full-VGA-resolution LCD, the T4 offers direct IR control for stand-alone operation, RF output for control processor operation, and WiFi for IP control and Internet access.

"The system has been installed and working successfully for over six months now, and the client couldn't be happier with it," adds Heckendorf. "The College no longer has to supervise every user on the A/V system, as the simple interface and extensive macro programming do all the work. With the RTI equipment, the Events Coordinator has complete control over every room and its control options. Instead of dedicating extensive time to making sure the A/V system is still working, it just takes a few button presses and the entire room is ready for the next event."

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