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Contact: gechols@commeng.com
8500 Cinder Bed Road
Suite 100
Newington, VA 22122
marketing@commeng.com
Phone: 703-550-5800
Fax: [703] 550 5180

CEI Putting Finishing Touches On Newseum HD Production and A/V Systems

Newington, VA – Feb. 25, 2008 – Communications Engineering, Inc. (CEI) announced today it is wrapping up work on the integration and installation of broadcasting and audio-visual equipment in numerous control rooms, theaters and studios at the soon-to-open Newseum, the 250,000-square-foot museum of news near the White House in Washington, D.C.

The Newseum, one of the most technologically advanced museums in the world, features hands-on exhibits, theaters and studios that cover 500 years of news history and news-gathering capabilities. It is expected to open April 11. CEI's role included designing and building several production control rooms, installing audio and video equipment in the Newseum theaters and studios, installing network equipment connected to interactive areas throughout the museum, and building the sophisticated master control room. CEI is currently completing equipment installation and conducting tests on the systems.

The master control room acts as the control center for managing all aspects of the Newseum systems, and also is a primary attraction for visitors. A large glass wall in the room faces the huge atrium area of the facility, allowing visitors to watch the operators in action. The master control room also handles broadcasts coming into the building and will be the center for the facility's IT systems. Four robotic cameras placed inside and outside the Newseum are operated from the master control room as well.

"The master control room was especially challenging because it is not only the main control center for the Newseum, it is also seen by the visitors, so it had to be very functional and also aesthetically suitable for the museum," said Raef Alkayat, project manager and director of Engineering for CEI. "We think we've been able to meet that requirement, and also provide the Newseum with a dynamic, state-of-the-art, high-definition production and audio-visual system."

CEI also built two identical high-definition production control rooms with adjoining audio control rooms for two broadcast studios. One of those, the Newseum TV Studio, is expected to be used for public affairs and news programs by major television networks. CEI also built four Avid HD edit rooms plus a multi-purpose room that serves as an HD Avid suite, screening room and audio post-production room. A central equipment room contains servers for the 12 SD & 36 HD channels of content being played back throughout the Newseum, and an ingest room enables the intake of content in a variety of formats.

The second studio, the Pennsylvania Avenue Studio, features a backdrop of the U.S. Capitol. CEI provided eight Grass Valley HD cameras that can be used in any combination in the studios. SMPTE fiber was installed in the studios to provide flexibility for a variety of productions and cameras. ABC plans to broadcast "This Week With George Stephanopoulos" from the studio beginning this spring.

"These cutting-edge systems give the Newseum the true capabilities of an HD broadcast and production center, while also serving the museum's purpose of offering visitors the newsgathering and broadcasting experience," said Bud O'Connor, the Newseum's director of engineering. "The rooms designed and built by CEI will serve as the nerve center of this amazing facility and will allow us to make a lasting impact on our guests."

A primary feature of the Newseum is a 22x40-foot Barco high-resolution modular LED display, which dominates the atrium of the facility. It is mounted on a lift that allows it to be raised or lowered 30 feet depending on the type of event taking place. Images displayed on the screen are played out from the master control room.

The Newseum's Annenberg Theater, with seating for 535 visitors, is designed for public programs, film screenings, debates, artistic performances and town hall gatherings. It can also serve as a broadcast studio. Another of the facility's 14 theaters is the Big Screen Theater, which features a 10x90-foot screen displaying images provided by five blended Christie XGA projectors.

Background:

CEI, located in Newington, VA, is a leading, award-winning broadcast and multi-media systems integrator. The company also offers complete equipment service, support and training, and supplies products and services to federal agencies and organizations through GSA. CEI has helped to define the leading edge of systems engineering and implementation for the communications industry since the mid1980's.

For more information: <http://www.commeng.com> or Email: marketing@commeng.com.

