Project Profile

Montgomery's Civic Center Brings Expansion and a Focus On The Future

Widely known as the birthplace of both the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement, Montgomery, Alabama has preserved much of its history through a variety of museums, memorials and attractions. Included in these attractions are concerts, statewide events and local celebrations held at the Montgomery Civic Center, which all help showcase the historic civil rights history and southern heritage unique to this city.

When the City of Montgomery, the Montgomery Riverfront Foundation and the Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce formed a vibrant alliance with the Civic Center to realize the tremendous economic development potential of Alabama's Capital City Riverfront, the city realized the growing demand on the Civic Center would have to be met with expansions to the 1975 facility now – even before renovations officially begin next year.

The game plan for the Riverfront renaissance includes turning the existing Civic Center into a new convention center, while also adding an adjacent four-star hotel in the heart of the Riverfront District on the Civic Center's site. The present Civic Center will undergo a $29 million transformation into a state-of-the art Convention Center, with expanded meeting, exhibition and ballroom space, as well as a world-class performing arts center. Visitors and guests will be able to meander from the convention center throughout the Riverfront District, with shops, restaurants, entertainment venues and loft apartments only steps away. The new $53 million hotel, 16-story, 250-room hotel overlooking the river will be located directly in front of the Civic Center, making both facilities key anchor components within the Riverfront District.

These transformations meant that a world-class BAS system would now have to be put in place to support the planned expansions, as well as to establish cost-savings measures in the existing facility in preparation for the 2005 renovations. With nearly year-round occupation, the Civic Center accommodates both large and small convention needs, many of which happen

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simultaneously in cases where the entire center is not leased for one single event. The new system would have to meet the constant need for schedule changes, better control over zone temperatures and cost-effective energy management measures, as well as the need for future flexibility and expansion. Teletrol Systems Integrator, Alabama Industrial Services, knew that the Teletrol eBuilding Internet-powered automation system would be the perfect fit and contacted the Civic Center to discuss the project.

According to Bobby Mills, president of Alabama Industrial, the city accepted the Teletrol system for several reasons. "Our relationship with the City of Montgomery over the past twenty years gave us a good idea of how the new system should run and deliver for them. During discussions, it became apparent that the Civic Center required the ability to monitor the facility through many city locations because, as with any city governments, various city buildings or properties often share maintenance personnel. The eBuilding system was well suited to work with the existing Ethernet network covering the 60,000 s.f. facility and gave personnel the ease of access to needed information whether on or off-site."

In addition, the lack of facility control and comprehensive monitoring with the existing system resulted with high energy costs, and with only one workstation in the operations manager's office, corrections and site visits became costly. The new eBuilding system

allows any computer within any city department on their network or via Internet connection to access the system and make adjustments or changes. Email alarms give city personnel the ability to contact the proper maintenance staff to correct problems that may be developing, thereby avoiding down time and providing better overall system performance. "So," says Mills, "the system was able to provide cost-effectiveness by meeting project requirements and by coming in within city budgets."

With the near year-round occupancy, any down time the Civic Center would experience was very significant. The facility has the ability to partition over twenty-five conference areas when full capacity (as with concerts or national events or shows) is not needed. Because of this high-volume use and the ability to have up twenty-five separate meetings scheduled in the same day, updating the building's BAS mandated that each area be controlled for each specified time and event. Schedule demand became the second absolute system requirement because of the high costs associated with the time it took to schedule and manage the existing system.

The strategy was to schedule only those areas occupied during any given day and time, based on occupancy. Since the Civic Center can be departmentalized while maintaining full operation, special programming could be put into place to adopt over twenty-five different schedules in order to provide complete

flexibility throughout the facility. With these schedules, the new system now controls fifty-five various eBuilding TSC unitary controllers, ten iVAV controllers and one eBuilding Network Controller with site server software, all interfaced with a Trane IntelliPak rooftop unit. Thirty-five split systems in operation, ranging from ten to one hundred tons, are all controlled by the new eBuilding system with time of day schedules that monitor zone temperature, fan status, compressor status, filter status and fire alarm.

eBuilding's Envoy software gives facility personnel an instant look at current conditions, while also giving them the ability to shut down unneeded equipment for additional cost savings. By automatically communicating with network controllers to collect data, manage alarms and provide Internet access for remote system development, the Civic Center was able to integrate the entire facility and access it remotely, allowing for lower costs and increased efficiency in energy and staff management.

According to Leonard Hall, operations manager for the Civic Center, with the new system in place, city personnel have been very pleased with the positive energy management results, as well as with its ease of use and the flexible features that the system offers for future expansion. "We have been nothing short of thrilled with the new Teletrol system. All employees have easy access to the system from any PC on our network or through the web. And they like the ability to change, monitor or remotely adjust any area that requires attention. From a maintenance point of view, it has been an easy and most beneficial upgrade to the Civic Center facility."

With the future renovations to the Civic Center, as well as the addition of the hotel to the site, Hall said he "feels confident" that the eBuilding system will be able to meet the expansion and

beyond and the proposed convention center and nearby facility become key components to the revitalized Riverfront District. The City of Montgomery and Mayor Bobby Bright couldn't agree more – and look forward to the expanded Montgomery Civic Center to becoming a cornerstone for the new pro-business climate and well as a focus on the future.

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