



DIGITAL SNAKE

creates sound sensation
at Forest Hills Fine Arts Center



A Digital Breakthrough with Minimal Costs – and LEED Points to Boot – Thanks to Central Interconnect

The developers of the Forest Hills Performing Arts Center wanted the facility to be first-class. So it should hardly come as a surprise that facility director Brian Hire wanted to be able to patch his sound system into a TV studio. It was not an unreasonable thing to want, but how complicated would it be to do?



At first, the task looked daunting. Such an application would typically require an enormous rack of

patch panels, accompanied by significant labor costs to pull the whole thing together. It would require a complicated jungle of microphone lines. It would require the operator to leave the mixing console and go up to the equipment booth to repatch. It would create a system at significant risk of distortion, sound loss and noise.

Of course, it would be susceptible to bootlegging, as there would be little to prevent signals from being fed to unauthorized places.

Oh, and it would require thousands of soldered connections and more than \$20,000 in splitter amplifier technology.



Not acceptable. Forest Hills is a public school district. The district wanted a first-class facility, but it is in no position to be extravagant with taxpayer dollars, let alone incur the labor costs necessary to make such a system work.

But rather than just give up on the idea, Hire posed an intriguing question to engineer Ray Lehmoine of Central Interconnect: "Is there a way you can do it digitally?"

Lehmoine didn't have a specific idea off the top of his head, but he's not the kind of guy who shies away from a challenge. So he started considering the various possibilities presented by the technology of Biamp Systems – a leading provider of digital audio technology.

Central Interconnect uses Biamp technology



extensively in the systems it designs for clients, and Lehmoine was confident he could figure out a way to use Biamp to meet Hire's needs. This is how he came to approach the engineering department at Biamp with the idea of the Digital Snake. Right away, the team at Biamp was impressed.

"It definitely was an innovative use of the technology," said Biamp's Frank West. "They simplified the wiring of the system by integrating CobraNet, which made the system a whole lot easier to navigate and made for a better sounding audio system. The beauty of it is that it's a pretty simple retrofit because you can use a simple piece of cat 5 cable to move up to 64 channels of audio. The guys at Central Interconnect are definitely ahead of the curve when it comes to audio and video integration."

The result is that Forest Hills Performing Arts Center is the first in the country to use a digital patch bay and microphone transmission system for the entire facility.

"It adds immediate versatility – and it's incredible versatility," Hire said. "What we were looking for was basically a three-way split of each microphone in the space. The need it filled was to send a simultaneous audio signal to a TV studio, the sound system and the theater. Also, because we are a LEED-certified building, we were looking for LEED points. Anything that's digital is going to use less cable and save on the use of natural resources."

Central Interconnect's innovation proved to be the perfect solution for the facility's needs, and should serve the same purpose for many other facilities. To consult with Central Interconnect, call 616.458.2999.

