

# BUFFALO NIAGARA CONVENTION CENTER

CASE STUDY: recreation

BIAMP®

## RONCO BRINGS CONVENTION CENTER SOUND INTO THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

*"We are extremely happy with the results of the partnership between the convention center, Ronco and Biamp. We now have a consolidated, state-of-the-art sound system that handles our needs regardless of how the space is used. Plus, we now have an integrated critical paging system."*

—PAUL MURPHY, FACILITY DIRECTOR,  
BUFFALO NIAGARA CONVENTION CENTER

*"Flexibility and the latest technology were at the top of the client's wish list, so our main charge was to replace the antiquated sound and paging system with a modern system that would provide maximum flexibility and cutting-edge sound distribution."*

—AL COLUCCI,  
ACCOUNT MANAGER,  
RONCO SPECIALIZED SYSTEMS

INTEGRATOR



THE BUFFALO NIAGARA CONVENTION CENTER IN ERIE COUNTY, NEW YORK

### CHALLENGE

The Buffalo Niagara Convention Center—an economic and cultural hub of Erie County, New York—is launching an \$8 million renovation and needs a new audio system that can stack up to its other twenty-first-century upgrades.

### SOLUTION

Well-attuned to their customer's request for flexibility and the latest technology, Ronco Specialized Systems teams up with industry partners to give the convention center a scalable, reliable, networked audio system with critical paging that will span more than 186,000 square feet throughout multiple rooms and floors.

### CONCLUSIONS

These days, the team at Ronco hears a consistent message from their customers: they want systems that will give them the power and freedom to meet their varied business needs now and into the future. Given that flexibility and cutting-edge technology are at the top of many of their customers' wish lists lately, Ronco was prepared to meet these challenges while working as part of a team on the large-scale audio installation for the Buffalo Niagara Convention Center in Buffalo, New York.

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## CONCLUSIONS CONTINUED

The convention center is seen by many as an important cultural hub of the area—and one that brings a lot of business to town through its busy schedule of conventions, tradeshow, consumer shows, festivals, weddings, special events and meetings. Because the center serves as a catalyst for the economic and social vitality of the area, Erie County decided in 2009 to invest nearly \$8 million in the renovation of this thirty-year-old space. This included exterior upgrades such as video boards and a new marquee at the entrance. Interior upgrades included a complete renovation of the commercial kitchen, architectural upgrades such as wall treatments and new flooring, a complete lighting replacement, and of course, a new audio system that provided critical paging and spanned more than 186,000 square feet throughout multiple rooms and floors.

In October 2009, Ronco partnered with IBC Engineering and Ferguson Electric to provide the convention center with a flexible system that would offer the latest technology in sound distribution. They chose a solution that includes Biamp® Systems' networked critical paging system called Vocia®, as well as Biamp's Audia® products. Vocia, which the team installed in the nearly 65,000-square-foot exhibit hall on the second floor, is built on a decentralized network-based architecture for scalability, reliability and ease-of-use. "Because of these important features, we knew it was exactly what the convention center needed for this space," says Ronco Account Manager Al Colucci.



ONE OF 48 SOUND TUBE CEILING SPEAKERS INTEGRATED INTO THE VOCIA SYSTEM.

For the large main exhibit hall (zoned North Hall and South Hall), which can accommodate up to 7,000 people, Ronco provided paging and background music with paging microphones located in the north and south exhibit hall offices, administrative offices, loading dock office and main reception desk. They also provided auxiliary input jacks at six strategic locations around the exhibit hall, where a mixing board can be patched into the Vocia system for sound reinforcement. Also, installed were 48 Sound Tube ceiling speakers (see picture above) and two wall-mounted Vocia controllers (one for the North Hall and one for the South Hall) so that staff could easily select a wall jack or BGM source as well as inhibit paging during events. In addition, they made sure that Vocia would integrate with the new Crestron lighting system that was being installed, which allows source selection via the Crestron control panels.

Since flexibility and the latest technology were at the top of the convention center's wish list, Ronco's main charge was to replace the antiquated sound and paging system—which was three decades old and utilized multiple patch panels and switch panels. They replaced it with a modern system that allowed the flexibility to insert local sources (including modern ones like laptops and MP3 devices) into the system from various locations within the exhibit hall. The system also needed to provide flexible zone paging for occasions when the space was divided for multiple events.

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## CONCLUSIONS CONTINUED

The team at Ronco provided an amplifier channel for every two speakers (for a total of 24 amplifier channels) to allow maximum flexibility in re-zoning the exhibit hall for future exhibitions. There were two speakers dedicated to every 2,400-square-foot section of the exhibit hall, so this would allow staff to select each two-speaker zone for sound reinforcement of any particular exhibit on the floor. This means the convention center would be able to offer their exhibitors zone-specific, tailor-made audio, including pages and background music.

For the multiple meeting rooms and lobby on the first floor, they replaced the outdated system with a new Biamp Audia system. The spaces now have new volume controls and microphone inputs, and they were able to easily expand and integrate Vocia for paging and BGM distribution into these rooms while using the existing speakers that were already in place.



As it turned out, Ronco had been involved in the installation of the convention center's original audio system thirty years ago. As the team visited the site and mapped out how to install the new system, they utilized Ronco staff members who were involved in the original installation. "Having these staff members on-site really helped our team figure out how to tackle one of the biggest challenges: how to integrate the new system in the exhibit hall on the second floor and the outer rooms on the first floor with a portion of the old system in the first-floor ballroom, which the convention center was not replacing," says Colucci. "The original cabling system was hard to decipher in that space, and it was difficult at times to discern which systems were being fed by which cables, microphones and speakers. Having the historical knowledge on-site from Ronco employees who actually recalled details about the original installation helped us determine how to integrate the old system into the new one."

The installation was completed in the summer of 2010, and since then staff at the Buffalo Niagara Convention Center have truly appreciated an audio system that matches their other twenty-first-century upgrades. "Our consolidated, state-of-the-art sound system offers integrated critical paging and handles all of the convention center's needs, regardless of how the space is used," says Paul Murphy, Facility Director for the Buffalo Niagara Convention Center. At the heart of this new system, Vocia allows for maximum zone and paging flexibility along with future scalability, so the team at Ronco is confident this system will meet the convention center's needs well into the future. "Who knows?" says Colucci. "Maybe three decades from now when the convention center is ready for another upgrade, Ronco will visit them again."