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Acentech designs sound system for Mullins Center

July 19, 2013 - Construction Design & Engineering

Acentech Inc. has completed work for the University of Mass. Amherst (UMass Amherst) William D. Mullins Memorial Center. Working with architect Miller Dyer Spears, Acentech provided sound system design for the 10,500 seat venue, which is home to UMass' basketball and ice hockey teams.

Designed 20 years ago by Acentech, the original sound system still worked well, but changes in how the sound system and the facility were being used today required a sound system replacement. In addition to basketball and hockey games, the arena hosts concerts, events and productions by a variety of UMass departments and visiting groups. Through computer modeling, Acentech designed a sound system that improves speech intelligibility, coverage, frequency response, and overall output, to provide a system that better suits the arena's usage.

North American Theatrix, working with McPhee Electric, installed the system.

The main concern with the prior sound system was that it was physically in the way of visiting productions, obstructing set design and other elements.

For sporting events, it was critical to have a sound system capable of higher levels for music playback and announcements. To resolve these issues, Acentech designed a distributed sound system, which used more but smaller loudspeakers to replace the original, large center cluster. The new discreet sound system provides consistent coverage throughout the facility, without acting as an obstacle. Since the system is distributed, the loudspeakers can be turned on or off to tailor coverage of the system to the event in the facility.

Acentech designed an easily operable control system that could be used by both amateur and skilled operators alike. Additionally, the firm worked with the fire alarm contractor to supplement the existing fire alarm system with the new sound system in case of an emergency evacuation. The audio processor is also capable of expansion to deal with upgrades to the ancillary systems.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540