



## SEPTEMBER 2002 DEALER INSTALLATION CONTEST WINNER

### Provincial Legislative Annex Building Legislative Committee Rooms Government of Alberta, Canada

Issues addressed by the Legislative Assembly of Alberta are broad, covering topics such as financial budgets, education matters, bills, amendments and more. In an environment where highly sensitive discussions may be held behind closed doors and numerous others open to the media and public, AMX technology provides a significant amount of user flexibility — both in how members facilitate proceedings or votes and with what integrated electronic equipment they choose to incorporate. "This is a big step for them in terms of the technology involved," said Brent Bauman, Systems Consultant, CTS, of Genesis Communications, the Alberta-based commercial integrations company that handled the on-site installation. "They used to use analog equipment in these rooms. Now we are taking them into the next millennium."

#### **The Most Flexibility, The Perfect Fit**

This new chapter of government begins with two NetLinx Control Systems, which act as the control and automation catalysts for two Legislative Assembly Committee Rooms. The larger one seats 40 elected representatives. The smaller one, 25. The NetLinx master controllers automate lighting, projectors and projection screens, teleconferencing, videoconferencing, audio/video switching and an audio discussion system. They also tie together the chambers by integrating shared devices, including encrypted wireless microphones, DVD and VHS players, central switchers and multitasking audio/video equipment. "NetLinx worked nicely," Bauman said. "It gave us the technology we needed to make all of this happen. NetLinx delivers the most flexibility. We knew going in that this control system would fit perfectly."



#### **A Higher Level Of Integration**

The Assembly's Chairman of Committees presides over each session, directing the Hansard Clerk when to show a video, launch a PowerPoint presentation, or prompt other networked equipment. The clerk provides this immediate and ongoing assembly support, monitoring an AMX 15" Table Top Touch Panel and two PCs positioned side-by-side at the head of each room. The sizeable Touch Panel displays on-screen icons and scalable windows for activating and monitoring the status of audio/video. The PCs are programmed to manage the network audio discussion system, which recognizes assembly members in attendance and keeps the minutes by digitally recording each debate and discussion. The "Hansard" is the official verbatim record of all proceedings. "Depending on the type of meeting, the chairman and members will use a variety of equipment," said Don Scheirer, Principal of Comtec Associates, Ltd., in Sherwood Park, Canada. Comtec was the prime consultant and systems designer for this two-year project. "Everything that was provided was for a direct application. It was designed for a functional aspect and integrated to a higher level than most boardrooms. The technology becomes transparent and the AMX Touch Panels go a long way to maintain that transparency."



### **Highly Intelligent, Future Uses**

The legislative committee rooms offer a unique, extremely useful seating configuration. The U-shaped head table can be revamped in different arrangements at any moment. "These rooms were set up as prototypes," Scheirer explained. "They are being studied for the design other future projects. The technologies in these rooms are designed to be investigated for possible future use in the main Legislative Chamber and other government venues." In the meantime, any chamber equipment integrated through NetLinx can be moved without having to reset the system or rewrite code. Strategically placed ports located on the floor allow a piece of equipment to be unplugged,

moved to the other side of the room, and reconnected. NetLinx instantly recognizes the device, so control and automation features are never lost. "The control system knows which connection you plugged the A/V equipment to," Bauman said. "You don't have to go back to repatch things for control. NetLinx automatically finds the device. First, it will know when you plug in the device. Then, it will determine its location. NetLinx is highly intelligent."

### **Recognizing, Fulfilling End User Needs**

The same set-up applies to legislative members. Upon entering the chamber and taking a seat, each person places an identification card into the audio discussion system. The system's software recognizes who they are and where they are currently seated at the table. This information is linked to the PC for digital recording and the AMX Touch Panel for activating the correct member's microphone on cue. This alleviates having to postpone sessions to wait for members to arrive. It also minimizes the amount of disruption when a member joins the meeting at a later time. "Many of the things being used were put in after we conducted an exhaustive user needs assessment with the Legislative Assembly Office and Albert Infrastructure (public works department)," Schreirer said. "We investigated what needed to be done and followed through."

