

## Maryland State Senate

# Marantz PMD670 brings new life to public records in Maryland

From Jan. 14 to April 12, 2004, state senators in Maryland introduced 934 bills for consideration. Thanks to the Marantz PMD670 and American Amplifier, every word the senators said during that legislative session is available on demand.

"We're required to keep recordings of full Senate sessions in the Chamber, but we also tape the hearings that are conducted during the 90 days the legislature is in session each year," says Vicki Fretwell, public information officer for the Maryland Senate in Annapolis, Md.

Until two years ago, Fretwell's staff was using a DAT tape system that was cumbersome, bulky, costly and inconvenient. When they were ready to upgrade, they turned to American Amplifier, a Lanham, Md., company that has specialized in audio and video system integrations since 1927.

"They wanted us to bring them into the 21<sup>st</sup> century," says Bob Burdett, president. "We redesigned and installed a new system, but we were still looking for a way to modernize the recordings and transport audio from the senate chamber and seven committee rooms to a central library for archiving."

A primary consideration for Fretwell's staff was time.

"One reason we tape hearings is so that individuals can get audio copies to prepare for other hearings or to follow up on questions the senators raise," she says. "The process went minute-by-minute with the old system. The DAT tapes weren't markable, so we had to flash through looking for the right section. It was very time-consuming."



*The Marantz PMD670 system blends seamlessly with the stately history of the Maryland Senate to create readily accessible, permanent audio records of all proceedings.*

Burdett had additional concerns:

"Tape deteriorates over the years and sometimes will bleed through from one side to the other, which creates distortion," he says. "And DAT isn't compatible from manufacturer to manufacturer. We originally installed a new DAT system for the Senate, but the equipment in the hearing rooms and chamber wouldn't work with the system in the library. That's when we started looking for something different."

Burdett knew he'd found the solution when he found the Marantz PMD670. The state-of-the-art digital recorder has no moving parts to wear out, no tape to degrade and no bulky storage requirements.

## Professional Solid-State Recorder

# PMD670



The compact flash cards it uses to store recordings can easily hold 12 hours or more of meetings – more than enough time for even the longest-winded senate sessions – and the card can easily be exchanged for a fresh one should the need arise.

“No DAT machines or anything else on the market would do what we needed, but the Marantz unit was exactly what we were looking for,” Burdett says. “The compact flash card is removable and easy to get back to the central library, where the staff can download the recordings and archive them in computers.”

The process is swift and painless, Fretwell says.

“This system is almost instantaneous,” she says. “We save considerable time, and storage is easier because we can put everything on CDs rather than tape. We can store and transmit all our audio files much faster now.”

Although it’s easy to use, the new audio system faced some obstacles to installation.

“This is the oldest continuously operating senate chamber in the country, and it is protected by historic preservation regulations,” Burdett says. “We had to be sensitive to the number of holes we drilled, and we had to put a faux

marble finish on the speakers. They had to blend with the marble walls so we could install them without disturbing some very old wallpaper.”

The result is a nearly invisible blend of technology and history that is ideally suited to even the most hectic of modern days.

“The PMD670 is a lot less expensive than DAT machines, and they don’t have to keep buying tapes,” Burdett says. “Since the units provide compressed files, the staff could really just pull the files out of the machine and e-mail them to the library. Cassette machines and DAT tape systems are dying. These are the next generation.”

Burdett has been so impressed with the PMD670’s capabilities that he is recommending the unit to other customers.

“We were instrumental in bringing the units to the attention of some federal agencies,” he says. “They use a couple hundred of them now. Law enforcement, healthcare facilities that want to archive patient information – any application that requires audio recording would benefit from these units. I don’t see a better means for that type of application. This is just the way to go.”

## American Amplifier

Lanham, Maryland

Founded in 1927

Audio, video and presentation system design and installation

Bob Burdett, President

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