

*Village of Riverdale, IL*

## Marantz PMD670: Village Clerk's solution to legal quandary

When the Illinois legislature mandated that local governments maintain an audio or videotape of any closed session, Riverdale Village Clerk Joyce Forbes wasn't satisfied with lawmakers' suggestion that a \$20 tape recorder would suffice to make that record.

"I've tried that," she says. "They're unwieldy to maintain, and what if the tape jams or the batteries run out in the middle of the session? Then there are gaps and it no longer meets the legal requirement for a verbatim record."

The law affects not only village boards and city councils, but also their committees and subcommittees, municipal planning commissions, zoning boards of appeal, park districts, libraries, school boards – in short, any local governmental body.

While each of those bodies could have invested in its own tape recorder, Forbes found a better solution in conversations with other clerks at a Municipal Clerks of Illinois conference – a Marantz PMD670 professional solid-state recorder. The state-of-the-art equipment has no moving parts to jam or break, no tapes to run out and is affordable enough for small towns on tight budgets. Originally built and sold for government surveillance and recording operations, the PMD670's omnidirectional microphone has no trouble picking up soft-spoken members of the Riverdale Village Board even when they are sitting at the opposite end of a 20-person conference table.

"The clerks I talked to at the conference were glowing about Marantz," Forbes says. "I called to learn more and I realized there was an array of uses for the village that I just hadn't thought about."



*Riverdale Village Clerk Joyce Forbes uses the Marantz PMD670 (below) to record village meetings.*



One is the municipal court, where adjudicators decide cases involving municipal ordinance violations. When defendants appeal those decisions, the village must provide a transcript of the original hearing to the court.

"These sessions run longer than a tape lasts, but I have a 17-hour flash card that allows me to record more than one thing on the card," Forbes says. "Every time you start recording, it creates a new track that you can burn by itself to a CD."

Having seen a competitor's product at a trade show, Forbes was very impressed with the compact size, light weight and overall portability of the Marantz PMD670.

# PMD670



*The Marantz PMD670 captures every word spoken at Riverdale Village Board meetings.*

“The other unit involved a laptop and speakers that were tied into the audio system in the room,” she says. “I needed something much more portable and easy to use. Besides that, the software I was looking at was much more expensive than I could ever budget for.”

There is no software with the PMD670. Instead, a flash card similar to those in digital cameras records the meetings. A USB cable transfers the recordings directly to Forbes’ computer, where she archives to CDs for permanent storage.

“The CDs aren’t real expensive, and they’re so much easier to store than tapes,” she says.

Marantz representatives helped ensure that the CDs meet Forbes’ expectations by showing her how best to burn them for data, rather than audio, storage. As a result, she gets excellent playback and is able to store a great deal of information on a single CD-R.

“I embrace technology,” she says. “But even though I’d read the manual inside and out and had even highlighted sections, I still had some questions when I first started.

The Marantz representatives were very, very kind in helping to walk me through some of my issues.”

Most of the time, the information on the disks is stored for the required amount of time – 18 months for closed session meetings and 35 days for municipal court proceedings – without being needed.

When transcriptions are required, however, the disks can be sped up to find a specific portion of a meeting or slowed down to accommodate a typist’s speed.

Because Forbes stores each section of a proceeding on a separate disk, only the relevant information need be revealed for transcription or judicial review.

“I prefer to store things separately to preserve the integrity of the information,” she says. “I don’t want to have to give everything away if someone else has to hear it.”

Forbes has been so impressed with the Marantz PMD670 that she recommended it to the Riverdale school district.

“They watched a demonstration and they bought it, too – even though they’d already bought a little tape recorder,” she says. “I’ve had this a couple of months now and I’m still totally sold on it.”

## Village of Riverdale, IL

Population: 15,055

Location: 23 miles southwest of Chicago

Mayor: Zenovia Evans

Village Clerk: Joyce Forbes

Incorporated: 1892

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