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Kansas Audio Visual Professional Making Mark Nationally

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On the front page story in the April issue of the New York-based business magazine Systems Contractor News. And a positive mention in the editor's column of the July/August issue of ARCHI-TECH, a national design and technology magazine out of Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

And there's a grateful thank you for the work Larry Heilman, president of Smith Audio Visual, has done on the authoring team of Electronic Systems Technician Level Four Trainee Guide, a full-color workbook packed with training information for technicians on everything from broadband systems to media management systems.

This spring and summer, Mr. Heilman and his Topeka Company are gaining lots of national recognition. The company, which specializes in professional sound installation, presentation, digital surveillance, controlled access, and home theatre, is quickly becoming a recognized leader in the audio visual field.

In Kansas, Smith Audio Visual is well regarded for major multimedia installations at the Lyon County Courthouse, in Emporia and the Topeka Shawnee County Public Library and the design of boardrooms for Hill's Pet Nutrition, AmerUs Annuity Group, and the Federal Home Loan Bank. Smith Audio Visual also completed the Montana Statehouse project just a few years ago in Helena, MT.

The company also installed a wireless information system -- Sennheiser's revolutionary new guidePORT -- that very successfully provided explanatory audio for the Topeka exhibition "Czars: 400 Years of Imperial Grandeur."

But it is through Mr. Heilman's national presentations, his teaching, and his articles about current trends in the audio visual field, that the company became involved on a national level.

Mr. Heilman became aware long ago the direction the audio visual profession was headed. Recognizing the importance of system integration has been key to business success and national recognition, he said.

The Electronic Systems Technician Level Four training guide is done for the National Center for

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Construction Education and Research. It is the only training guide recognized by the United States Department of Labor. The guide is the only four-year certification program for low voltage and was developed in conjunction with the National Systems Contractor Association (NSCA).

Mr. Heilman was an editor and (SME) subject matter expert for the guide. He received high praise for the work he did on the project.

“Larry’s leadership and dedication to NSCA and the electronic systems industry has been tremendous,” said Chuck Wilson, NSCA executive director. “Systems integrators across the country have benefited from his work, most recently in developing a program that can be customized and delivered to other construction professionals. He’s also a very popular instructor with our members and well received by the architectural community.”

On the national level, much of the information Mr. Heilman has recently provided involves the integration of the audio visual profession with the work of architects. As these two professions become increasingly intertwined, Mr. Heilman has been a leader in trying to integrate the two industries.

In his editor’s column in ARCHI-TECH, a magazine working to bridge the gap between design and technology, editor John Andrews said Mr. Heilman is among those who have focused on the need for audio visual professionals to foster alliances with architects. And Mr. Heilman, who teaches a class for architects at NSCA events, was quoted on page one of Systems Contractor News on this same subject.

“The architect doesn’t know what to ask.” Mr. Heilman said. “They don’t know the ins and outs of what the customer is trying to present. How are they going to use the room? What are they going to use in the room?”

In the article, Mr. Heilman went on to point out that he has recently been getting more positive feedback from architects as the lines of communication between them and audio visual professionals opens.

Mr. Heilman regularly is asked to put on a presentation Boardroom 101 for architects, engineers and design consultants on the requirements of sound, presentation and control for boardrooms, meeting rooms and other venues. His program has been continually updated and is certified by the American Institute of Architects and is the most requested program offered by the NSCA.

He also has put together a 4 hour course called “The Right Projector” which was developed to offer rules for the designers on how to properly calculate a display sizes, design presentation viewing angles, and other important considerations in the use of space.

In Mr. Heilman’s view, during the past 10 years the traditional audio visual dealer has had to change -- really change -- or simply live with ever-fading margins. For him, the ability to change has been recognition of what the audio visual professional truly has become -- a systems integrator. Whether in designing a board room, distributing sound or video, moving information electronically, creating multimedia distribution systems, or integrating different technologies, integrating systems has been key. He also is thankful for his expert staff that supports their mission. For more news about Smith Audio/Visual visit their website at www.smithav.com/news/newshome.html.

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