

For More Information Contact:
Lisa A. Thorburn, CTS
Thorburn Associates, Inc
510-886-7826
LAT@TA-Inc.com

**Thorburn Associates Designs AV Systems for Historic 1829 Jeffersonian
Courthouse in Madison County, VA**

Madison County, VA (PRWEB) January 28, 2009--

A layout unique to Jeffersonian courtrooms posed interesting design challenges to audiovisual and acoustic engineers Thorburn Associates, Inc. in the restoration/expansion of the Madison County Courthouse in Madison, Virginia, which houses the Madison Circuit Court of the state's 16th Judicial Circuit. The project is slated for completion around the end of the year.

"Like most of the judicial facilities our company has designed for, the Madison County Courthouse called for a combination of sound recording, sound reinforcement, and video display," says Thorburn Associates' Senior Consultant Lance Sturdevant, CTS-D. "But the layout of the main courtroom here is quite different from what people generally expect. The jury box is located directly in front of the judge's bench facing into the room, and the witness stands at a podium facing the judge and jury (instead of sitting to the judge's left). Hiding the audio system components in this space was relatively simple, but video systems presented a special challenge."

"The sightlines for projectors or other visual aids presented some unique circumstances to design around," concurs Eric W. Amtmann, AIA, partner with Dalgliesh Gilpin Paxton, PLLC Architects, which brought Thorburn Associates

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Corporate Office:
Regional Office:
Regional Office

Castro Valley, California
Burbank, California
Morrisville, North Carolina

Tel: 510-886-7826
Tel: 818-569-0234
Tel: 919-463-9995

onto the project. "The boilerplate solution for a courtroom didn't fit. This is Thomas Jefferson's courtroom layout and you only find it in Virginia."

Thorburn Associates' design locates microphones for recording and speech reinforcement at the normal positions (judge, witness and counsel tables). As in all courtrooms, attorneys occasionally get up and address the jury directly. Small, surface-mounted microphones will be mounted in the railing in front of the jury box to pick up the voices of these wandering attorneys. The ability to record court sessions is also provided, via an automatic microphone mixer/DSP (digital signal processor) plus a wall-mounted audio connector.

For the video display, small, individual monitors were considered but would have cluttered the "old world" look of the Jeffersonian design. Two large, wall-mounted, flat panel displays were also proposed, but one would have blocked a new window that the architect had carefully placed near the front of the room. Thorburn Associates' ultimate design solution was a large, fixed wall-mounted projection screen at one side of the room, and a wall-mounted video projector on the opposite wall, providing very good sightlines for judge, jury and counsel tables, and for most observers in the gallery. A 23-foot high ceiling prevented a more typical, ceiling-mounted, recessed motorized projection screen.

Now under construction, the finished project will add a total 15,020 square feet to the facility's core 3,260 square feet. Thorburn Associates provided audiovisual and acoustical design for the new construction spaces as well.

"The court needs to be able to conduct proceedings that are undisturbed by noise outside of the room, and have good audio intelligibility within the room," notes Amtmann. Thorburn Associates' design includes ADA hearing assist systems and sound-dampening material that simulates the look of a plaster ceiling, plus suggestions for mounting equipment and insulating ductwork. Thorburn Associates will oversee and approve the installation of these systems when they take place near the end of the construction phase.

"Thorburn Associates was very adept at meeting our particular design needs on this unique and challenging project," testifies Amtmann. "There are all kinds of things you encounter in an historic courtroom project and you need to do things in a sensitive way. They were successful in that, proposing various options for how to make things work. They were good at staying within the budget, too: We had a contract and they followed it."

"This has been a remarkable project and we look forward to seeing the finished result," says Thorburn Associates Principal Steven J. Thorburn, PE, CTS-D, CTS-I. "As audiovisual technology system consultants, we often have to wait two or three years for our designs to come to fruition. We believe that this particular courtroom project will be worth the wait."

About Thorburn Associates Inc.

Thorburn Associates Inc. is a professional service firm providing acoustical consulting and technology system engineering and design for the commercial, corporate, leisure, residential and retail industries, and for houses of worship. Thorburn Associates works in both new construction and renovations, as an independent consulting firm offering unbiased designs to improve communication and fully realize the functionality of all projects. Headquartered in Castro Valley, California, with regional offices in Los Angeles and Raleigh-Durham, NC, Thorburn Associates has been recognized as one of the leading firms in the acoustical and audiovisual system design industry. In the course of 16 years in business, the company's projects have received multiple awards, from the International Communications Industry Association (ICIA-InfoComm), the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and the Themed Entertainment Association (TEA). Thorburn Associates Principal Steve Thorburn is sitting president of TEA. Visit www.ta-inc.com.

About Dalglish Gilpin Paxton, PLLC Architects

The firm of Dalglish Gilpin Paxton (DGP) is the continuation of an architectural

practice founded in 1933 by Milton LaTour Grigg, FAIA. Prior to establishing his practice in Charlottesville, Virginia, Mr. Grigg worked on the original restoration of Colonial Williamsburg. His respect for tradition continues to be a major focus of the firm's work today. W. Douglas Gilpin, Jr., FAIA became a principal in 1982, and Robert L. Paxton, AIA in 1985. One or more principals maintain continuous active involvement in each project and are complemented by project architects and support staff. The firm currently consists of 10 registered architects, an interior designer, and ten support staff. DGP strives to achieve solutions that are complementary to a site's vernacular architecture and landscape. Energy efficiency and sustainable design are part of the practice, and two staff members have obtained LEED certification. DGP has worked with a wide variety of architectural styles and building types in the United States, the US Virgin Islands, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, West Indies.

Thorburn Associates: 16 years of Designing Quality Environments

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