

# CEPro

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## 'Greatest Showroom on Earth'

How to juggle a 22,000-square-foot space that's part CE design center, part circus. PAGE 48

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**Are You Retrofit?**  
PAGE 57

Mike Abt,  
Abt Electronics,  
Glenview, Ill.

# Neat-O!

Thankfully, not every project we profile on this page stems from the poor work of a custom integrator. Sometimes it's just the general "neat" in "Neat-O!" that we admire. Installer Thomas Marino of Advanced Technologies in Baton Rouge, La., gets this month's gold star for his uniquely tidy wiring and equipment rigs in a couple of locations at the "Louisiana Blair House," a 4,700-square-foot homage to the famed Blair House in D.C., where dignitaries stay when they're visiting the neighbor across the street, President Obama.



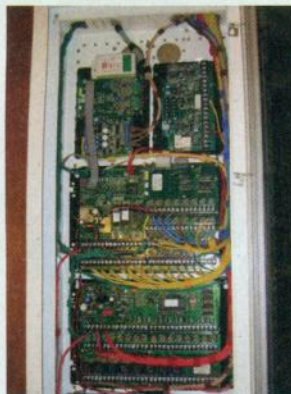
**MASTER CONTROL STATION**

The main brains of the whole-house systems are stored in a room below the stairs that lead to the second floor. On the floorstanding equipment rack, from top to bottom: the custom-built media center, Onkyo receiver for the bedroom, two cable boxes, Onkyo multidisc DVD player, Denon AM/FM tuner, Elan switching components for communications, doorbell, distributed audio and such, Key Digital matrix switcher, and ATI surveillance camera controller.



**DRIVING UP A WALL**

To the right of the two wall-mounted enclosures is what looks like a tidy roadmap of cabling. Among the stops: punchdown blocks and central distribution point of all the Cat 5; three silver IR controllers in the middle for the URC MX3000 touchscreen system; Elan automation controllers on the far right; white Ethernet and coaxial cable plates on the upper left for communications and power to two Elan touchscreens; and three surge protector strips at the bottom, trimmed with custom cut cord lengths to eliminate extra wire loops.



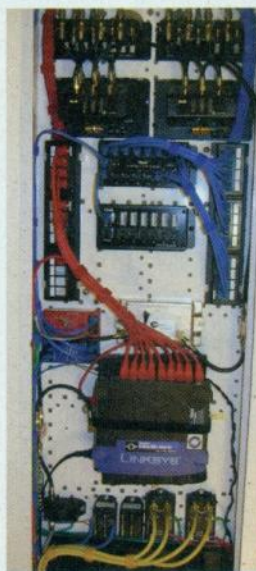
**FULL CIRCUIT BOARDS**

The structured wiring panel on the left is geared toward the whole-home automation system. The board on the top left is a voice board for the HAI system, which can announce activities over the speakers. The circuit board below it handles the flex sensors, and to the right of that is information for the driveway sensors. The main OmniPro Controller 2 board comprises the big chunk toward the bottom, and just below it is an expansion/closure piece that allows Marino to add more zones to the HAI Controller.



**RAINBOW OF WIRE RUNS**

The other side of this wall is the home's second-story theater room, complete with a 7.1-channel surround-sound system featuring JBL floorstanding speakers recessed into the walls, an InFocus projector, and some fancy settings programmed into the HAI and Elan systems. For instance, there's the little black box toward the top of the rack unit, which is a rear-channel interrupter from Elan that routes the home's doorbell chime through the ceiling to the rear surround speakers. Other wires from that box include the motion detector and floor sensor wires — thanks to the latter, when someone steps into the room the lights go on automatically. Below the black box is a Cat 5 punchdown block, with control room cables coming in as green (live) or red (spare, for future use). From the bottom, the colorful cabling bunch includes component wires to the projector, as well as a USB wire that runs between a USB balun and custom media center PC in the control room. And all of those Cablofil trays may not be the most aesthetically pleasing things, but they keep the cables from hanging like vines.



**RED, WHITE AND BLUE**

Two structured wiring enclosures are mounted side by side on the control room wall. The right box includes patch panels on top for the neatly terminated coaxial cables; splitter boxes for the coax on the bottom; a Linksys router that's stacked on top of the cable modem, with future-designated red Ethernet cut to length for reaching the nearby Leviton termination punch panel; and yellow wiring on the bottom leading to surge protection for the cable signal.

Congratulations to Thomas Marino for a Neat-O! installation. We're looking for over-the-top projects. Cool, unique, tidy or meticulous, share your best work with our readers. E-mail your submissions, with high-resolution images, to managing editor Arlen Schweiger at [aschweiger@ehpub.com](mailto:aschweiger@ehpub.com).