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Venue-Wide Sound System For New Nationals Ballpark Features EAW Loudspeakers, Exclusively More Than 450 MK, MQV Series Play Lead Role In Just-Opened New Home For Major League Baseball's Washington D.C. Franchise

Whitinsville, MA – May 22, 2008 - Nationals Ballpark, the new 41,000-seat ballpark of the Washington, D.C. Major League Baseball (MLB) franchise, offers a dynamic venue-wide sound reinforcement system featuring EAW full-range loudspeakers, exclusively.

The system, serving serves all outdoor seating regions, was designed by Wrightson, Johnson, Haddon & Williams (WJHW) of Dallas, with Principal Ron Baker serving as lead designer. Tech Inc. of Latham, Maryland handled the fast-track installation, while the Columbia, Maryland offices of AVI-SPL supplied custom system engineering services.

As they've done frequently with ballpark sound reinforcement projects, WJHW elected to deploy a distributed system. "There are numerous benefits to this approach. It places the loudspeakers much closer to each listener, so delay times are dramatically reduced in comparison to a longer throw center cluster," explains Baker. "This is advantageous both in matching sound to the numerous video presentations that are now a big contributor to the ballpark experience, as well as putting sound much more in sync with on-field performers."

Frequency response is also much broader, and there's much better overall management of sonic energy. And, portions of the system can also be turned off when not needed or different program sources can easily be directed to difference areas of the venue. The bottom line is vastly improved control over the entire production.

The system includes more than 450 EAW loudspeakers, with the majority being compact, two-way members of the MK Series that have proven popular in numerous large-scale stadium and ballpark projects due to their quality sonic properties, durability, and compact footprint. Most of these loudspeakers are outfitted with either 12-inch or 15-inch woofers, although some MK Series enclosures with 8-inch woofers also proved fortuitous in regions dictating a particularly low profile.

All three major decks comprising the main grandstand that surrounds more than 75 percent of the playing surface receive primary reinforcement from sets of three MK Series loudspeakers. Mounted to the underside of the seating decks (and the canopy on the upper deck), these supply long-, medium-, and short-throw output to carefully defined zones.

A sizable number of "dual face" loudspeakers, developed for exactly this type of application by WJHW and the EAW Engineering Department, were also deployed. These special models incorporate two MK Series loudspeakers within a single compact enclosure with a 60-degree splay between the two sets of transducers.

"The two-in-one approach removes the need to install an additional loudspeaker at numerous locations, while we still get the same benefits of coverage and output," Baker notes. "The transducers are

independently driven, so each set can be optimized to best serve its respective coverage area, while additional infrastructure needs, cost and complexity are lessened.”

Zones of lower level seating running along the edge of the playing field are better reached via high-output EAW MQV Series loudspeakers mounted on the fascia of the upper deck. More MQV Series loudspeakers are positioned toward the top of the largest stadium scoreboard in the U.S., delivering coherent, intelligible long-throw (well in excess of 100 feet) coverage to a large seating section in right field. Other bleacher areas beyond the outfield are served by MK Series loudspeakers mounted on poles.

All loudspeakers for the project were supplied with additional weatherproofing to provide suitable protection from direct exposure to the weather elements. Further, all were painted a custom color by EAW that perfectly matches and blends into the color scheme of the stadium’s primary structural elements.

Following a comprehensive tuning and alignment process, the system was pronounced ready for the historic grand opening. “The overall quality and capability of ballpark audio systems is moving ahead nicely,” Baker concludes.

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Photo Captions (All photos by Ron Baker, WJHW)

EAW News Image-Nationals Open Night-1: Grand opening of the new Nationals Ballpark in Spring, 2008, with President Bush on hand to throw out the ceremonial first pitch.

EAW News Image-Nationals Open Night-2: Perspective of the main grandstand of the new Nationals Ballpark on opening night, 2008.

EAW News Image-Nationals Speaker Set: EAW loudspeaker sets serving a portion of the lower grandstand at Nationals Ballpark, including a look at some of the custom “dual face” loudspeakers developed especially for stadium systems.

About EAW

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