

The Bronc busts out in a new home

Rider University's WRRC is a 21st century learning space

Students at Rider University who want to learn about the operation of a modern radio or online station now have the opportunity to work on some of the latest broadcast technology.

107.7 The Bronc WRRC(FM) is licensed to the university in Lawrenceville, N.J., part of the Trenton market.

General Manager John Mozes said WRRC was part of a scheduled move of 18 departments. The station itself was moving from the student center to the fine arts building a half-mile away.

Rather than try to continue to use equipment that was as much as 20 years old, WRRC secured backing from the university for a new buildout (assisted, no doubt, by the fact that the station was a 2019 nominee for an NAB Marconi Award as College Radio Station of the Year, an honor it would achieve again in 2021).

"It would be more cost-effective to purchase all-new studio equipment," Mozes said, "to develop, design and construct a broadcast learning space that would complement the station's regional and national prominence and present our students with a state-of-the-art broadcast facility that would make WRRC more competitive when recruiting students.

"Creating a second-to-none learning environment would also help engage and retain students; and more importantly, it would provide them a true competitive edge when entering the job market, post-Rider."

State of the art

WRRC worked closely with Spiegle Architectural Group to create a visually inviting space where current and prospective students and their families, as well as Rider alumni and donors, can see students broadcasting live

on-air, producing a variety of audio projects and perfecting their craft.

Each of the three broadcast/production studios is designed with floor-to-ceiling, soundproof glass walls to not only showcase students at work, but to highlight the state-of-the-art industry equipment they are working with and learning on — an important facet of the project.

One goal was to create three multi-functional studios that could be used for both broadcast and production, to maximize space and efficiency for this busy working and learning environment.

Also, "Since 107.7 The Bronc is a student organization and our student volunteers come to the station from a wide array of majors and minors as well as very different technical backgrounds, we wanted to ensure the new studios were easy to use."

Thus the studios are built with only minor differences. The FM on-air studio is a stand-up design and features six RE320 microphones, while Production 1 and Production 2/WRRC2 are sit-down studios and have only four mics. Otherwise the studios are indistinguishable.

"One of the other goals of this project was to provide the students with even more learning opportunities," Mozes said. "We made the most of the new studio space — and the addition of WideOrbit Automation for Radio and our new MusicMaster music scheduling software — to add a second, internet-only radio station, 107.7 The Bronc Retro/WRRC2, which the students have programmed to play 'The Classic Hits of the 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s' to complement the 'Biggest Hits and Best Variety' of WRRC(FM)."

The stations can also be heard via Apple, Google Play and Amazon Alexa.

WRRC's WideOrbit Automation for Radio system is integrated with and works in conjunction with Google Drive, which means both 107.7 The Bronc and 107.7 The Bronc Retro's entire song library and complete collection of underwriting announcements, PSAs and station imaging are routed to and from Google Drive. "We use absolutely no hard drive space to store and play back any elements on the radio station."

Because IT departments are understandably protective of their internal and external network systems and wary

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Left
107.7 The Bronc's on-air studio.

Below
Station members are seen at work in the 107.7 The Bronc studios, as viewed from the reception area, which picks up on design elements of the studios including their cabinetry color and surface.



about who can access them, the station's student engineer, Anthony Collesano, facilitated a system where all three of the studios, as well as all 15 computers that operate the radio station 24/7, are able to be accessed through AnyDesk, a free remote desktop application.

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"Cool visual flow"

Assembling of the studio space began with cabinetry from Studio Technology, including custom-built red cabinets with Corian counters.

"Vince Fiola and his team designed, constructed and installed all of the studio cabinets, including incorporating and integrating the reception desk into the overall design, so it perfectly matched the consoles in each of the three broadcast/production studios for a cool visual flow."

Key components of this beautiful new facility include Wheatstone L-12 and L-8 consoles, supported by 14 talent stations, mic processing Blades and AirAura X1 audio processor; WideOrbit Automation for Radio; MusicMaster; EV RE320 microphones with Yellowtec mic arms; Genelec 8020DPM and KRK RP5G4-NA speakers; Telos VS Prime and VoIP Talkshow system; and Denon Pro DN-500CB CD/media Bluetooth players. Two Comrex Access rackmount receivers came over from the old facilities; everything

else is new.

The air chain also includes a GatesAir IX-IPL200-DPKG codec package as STL, a BW Broadcast TX50 V3 transmitter and a Comrex BRIC-Link II IP audio codec.

Dealer SCMS was the source of much of the equipment. Mozes and consulting firm Public Media Engineering, led by Peter Femal, were the technical leads for the build.

The design was produced by a collaboration of WRRC, Rider's facilities department and the architects at Spiegle. Schiller and Hersh Associates handled mechanical and electrical engineering, while construction was done by V.J. Scozzari & Sons Inc.

The project was completed in the summer of 2020. 