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 Hidden in Plain Sight

Best Government AV Project (State & Local)

Illinois House and Senate Chambers

By: [PRO AV Editors](#)

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The Illinois House Chambers with faux wood-finished steerable line array speakers flanking the white center columns, voting/video displays on the side of the room, and custom 34-inch gooseneck mics folded into historically accurate, reconstructed legislator desks.

Credit: [Eric Hausman/Vinci Hamp Architects](#)

STEP INSIDE THE CHAMBERS OF THE HOUSE OR SENATE AT THE ILLINOIS State Capital building and you might think you stepped into a museum rather than the workplace for Illinois' elected state officials. Architecture firm Vinci Hamp Architects perfectly restored the original architecture, furnishings, and room finishes to their 1870s glory.

But as beautiful and historic as these rooms are, they're still 2008 legislative venues and as such, have 21st-century technology needs. Look closer. There are more than 200 microphones, two massive DSP matrices, and new video and speaker systems hidden in plain sight.

In the Senate chambers, two Renkus-Heinz IC24 steerable column line arrays are tucked between columns behind the rostrum. Hertfordshire, England-based Clock Audio custom-built the 78 34-inch long gooseneck microphones with hidden shock mounts installed into the Senate's historic roll-top desks. The House chamber uses much of the same audio equipment.



According to Jeffrey Lipp, the AV consultant, the key to the AV system in both chambers is the voting system, which controls both the microphones and cameras in addition to tallying votes from the floor. Simply pressing the "Speak" button on the desk-mounted voting panel sets off a string of commands. When the request to speak is granted by the presiding officer, the sound operator presses a button on a large touch screen that remotely controls the entire system. The system sends a command to the Crestron AV2 control system that

simultaneously sends a control string to the Peavey DSP Matrix to turn on the mic and to the two pan-and-tilt cameras, mounted behind the rostrum, directing one to pan to the legislator who has the floor. A Chyron title generator sends the legislator's name to the existing LED displays mounted to the sides of the chambers as well as to the press feeds and Internet streaming system.

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