

# They Built New Studios During COVID

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Come inside Bonneville's open concept AoIP broadcast facility in the Bay Area



*Key players in the project, from left: James Jenkins, principal of GCI; Tom Frank, superintendent of GCI; Jason Ornellas, project manager for Bonneville; Darrell Brown, president of Bonneville International; Chuck Bullett, director of engineering, Bonneville San Francisco; Kurt Kerns, principal of V-Three Studios; and Kyle Larson, project manager at GCI.*

Bonneville International Corp. currently operates 22 radio stations, four of which are now broadcasting from its new facility in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Bonneville Bay Area consists of four FM radio stations, each of which holds a special place in the community. They are 96.5 KOIT, 99.7 NOW, KBLX 102.9 and 98.5 KFOX.

Building a brand-new facility during COVID-19 is one for the books. Bonneville has since debuted this new open concept, fully interactive, audio over IP broadcast media plant in Daly City, Calif.

It is a showcase, with high-quality construction, from the beautiful design in architecture to the technology deployment of Bonneville's engineering team.

While this move from the SOMA District meant no more penthouse views of downtown San Francisco, we left behind a dated facility and layout. The new design was well thought out prior to construction and creates an experience for our listeners and clients, as well as a collaborative space for our employees.

## **Blank canvas**

At the start of the project, the new suite, formerly used by Avid Technology, still had edit bays but the rest of the existing space was completely gutted back to concrete.

We brought in [V-Three Studios](#) as the design and architects to create our vision on a blank canvas. V-Three Studios specializes in spaces that meet technical and functional demands while maximizing aesthetic appeal and respecting environmental and civic contexts and achieving their client's unique goals.

Our contractor [GCI Inc.](#) is a premier Bay Area commercial general contracting firm specializing in building and site renovation, infrastructure, labs and tenant improvement with a focus on sustainability and LEED.

Bonneville's construction and design team was led by Scott Jones, senior VP of engineering and technology (corporate); Carl Gardner, SVP and market manager for San Francisco; Chuck Bullett, director of engineering for the market; and myself, the director of engineering for Bonneville Sacramento.

I was tasked as the project manager to oversee the cutting-edge renovation of a floor in an existing building in the Daly City area, as well as the integration.

Having worked with all the vendors in the past on numerous other projects made for a smooth transition from San Francisco to Daly City, given the circumstances Bonneville was up against.

The new 18,000-square-foot facility is exactly what Bonneville was looking to achieve with a high-tech performance space, a multipurpose break room, a roof deck and the latest technology and digital integration for both broadcast and employee workspaces.



*Scalloped positions and outside greenery make the talent more comfortable at 96.5 KOIT.*

Beyond the visual elements throughout the suite, with both graphics and branding on video displays, the work area for non-programming employees features flexible seating arrangements known as a huddle space, as well as a mesh corporate Wi-Fi network to allow seamless flexibility. Studios were assembled in record time and the office

furniture delivery and assembly went off without a hitch.

“In recent years, we have had numerous studio projects with Bonneville San Francisco, Salt Lake City, Sacramento and Seattle in 2011,” said David Holland, the chief design officer at [Omnirax](#).

“This project really was the confluence of the dream team — V-Three Studios and Bonneville Construction Team — and everyone involved was committed to make this facility a showplace collaboration. Scott visited Omnirax a couple of years ago at our showroom in Sausalito. Seeing our curved open plan and private office furniture, he immediately ‘got’ what we have been doing with our WeDesk line. This provided the entrée to allow Omnirax to bid on and then furnish the entire facility for Bonneville.”

### **Natural wood, neutral colors**

As guests enter the facility, views of a “showcase” on-air studio for 99.7 NOW greet them, as well as a display of the technical operation center for which engineering is responsible.



*A gorgeous first impression. Visitors are greeted with views of the Technical Operations Center, right, and a showcase air studio for 99.7 NOW.*

Also visible from the lobby is a performance space fitted with a stage and truss with lighting, a sound system, a movable front-of-house station, and adjacent audio and video control rooms. This gives visitors a sense of what goes into making modern day media and shows off the new digs.



*The performance space and adjacent audio and video control rooms.*

Glass blankets the suite to allow natural light throughout, and the interior is set against the exposed concrete floors and finished with natural woods. A neutral color scheme was designed to enhance the LED cloud lighting for color to flow throughout ceiling grid of the suite.

The enhanced finishes, flow, continuity and efficiency now rival that of any modern office and multimedia facility.



"This facility is built for the future, with its planned flexibility in the technology infrastructure and the office/studio environments," said Kurt Kerns, principal at V-Three Studios, LLC.

"As the broadcast industry continues to evolve in the digital age, the facility will be ready to adapt to the changing needs of the business model."

Moving away from traditional office design and having less square footage, the open office layout dramatically improves the openness and visibility of the facility with a focus of huddle areas to promote collaboration and inter-



department interaction.

## **End of May or Bust**

Completion had been targeted for spring, with business commencing on April 13. Then the world got hit with a pandemic.

The project had been proceeding seamlessly and on schedule when the virus hit, right after delivery of the studio furniture. The project was just three weeks away from completion when lockdown went into place. A waiting game began for of all parties trying to find a solution to proceed cautiously.

Bonneville faced an additional challenge of its lease ending at its prior facility, which needed to be fully demised by the end of May.

The company was prepared to reopen the job site and resume construction with multiple shifts, subject to GCI's site-specific plan for COVID-19 prevention and remediation. Kudos to GCI for a detailed plan and a full decontamination team to sanitize the site before remobilizing.

As GCI got back on site, we saw requirements for more additional notification, site signage and other added protocols. GCI's safety and field teams, along with the industrial hygienist, walked the site with no indications that

there would be any problems.

Visual inspections and site practice demonstrations went extremely well. They went through every process of the competent person training, site deliveries, subcontractor management and work procedures. Bonneville had a team of engineers from Salt Lake City, Seattle and Sacramento, waiting to fulfill the integration needs.

It is a testament to the trust amongst all the stakeholders, including GCI, that all were all able to weather the extended break and resume the project once the authorities deemed it safe to return to work.

## **AOIP Flexibility**

The team of Bonneville engineers built 11 studios, four on air, with adjacent support rooms, a main production studio, and two voice-tracking booths.



*This studio serves KFOX. All four on-air studios feature Wheatstone LXE consoles; and the workflow relies on RCS G Selector and Zetta for music playout and scheduling.*

The backbone of Bonneville Bay Area now runs off [Wheatstone](#), with its WheatNet-IP architecture, allowing any studio to be utilized for any function of the business. All four on-air studios feature the LXE consoles, and the eight production, support and voice tracking booths are equipped with L-8 consoles.

Various flavors of I/O WheatNet Blades plus multiple M4 and M1 microphone processors, [Yellowtec](#) mounting systems, [KRK](#) Rokit 7 Gen 4 monitors, and [Telos](#) VX enterprise studio phone system round out the broadcast infrastructure.

Also, during this transition, the cluster had an automation transition to throw into the mix. Bonneville has committed to [RCS](#) as a standard for all markets, utilizing both G Selector and Zetta to handle the music playout and scheduling functions. The Field Tech Services team of RCS did a lot of work prior to arriving for the cutover and made it a smooth transition as the stations began to operate from their new spaces.



*Station branding is integrated into the design. The studios are inside DC Station on Junipero Serra Boulevard, a nine-story, multi-tenant LEED-EB Silver office tower with bay hill views.*

The Technical Operation Center at the previous facility

housed 30 racks, and our new space has 14. We went with in-line CRAC (computer room air conditioning) units with an HVAC unit in each row creating a hot/cold aisle like a data center. A great amount of thought went into rack placement and layout, with a standard of color-coded cables all leading into a master patch panel that interconnects the whole facility, making it extremely versatile.



*Closer view of the Technical Operations Center*

Bonneville wanted the glass-enclosed TOC to be on display with all the lights and meters visible from the lobby as people enter the suite. Bonneville's integration team of

engineers moved into the TOC and studios to receive and rack equipment and begun cabling the space from start to finish in record time.

## **Unified Look**

The result of this collaborative design effort is a space that has a unified look that extends from reception, studios and conference spaces, out to groups of open-plan desks and private offices. We are excited to put this facility on display and ready to have it filled with our employees as soon as it is safe to do so.

“The leadership team at Bonneville dedicated a serious amount of time to work with V-Three Studios in the planning stage of the project,” said Kurt Kerns of V-Three. “That kind of early input makes for a well thought out facility and minimizes the potential damage further down the road while building such a complex technical facility.”



102.9 KBLX. Note station logos on cabinetry legs.

Bonneville wishes to thank all the vendors and partners that went above and beyond for this project, as well as the dedicated engineers from out of market who contributed a significant amount of time to the build. This is a huge technical success that accomplished Bonneville's goals and exceeded all expectations.

*Radio World welcomes proposals for facility profiles including studios, RF plans and other technical infrastructure. Email [radioworld@futurenet.com](mailto:radioworld@futurenet.com).*

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