

# GALLATIN FIELD AIRPORT

MEDIAEDGE adds to the passenger experience at Montana's Gallatin Field Airport

**CUSTOMER:**

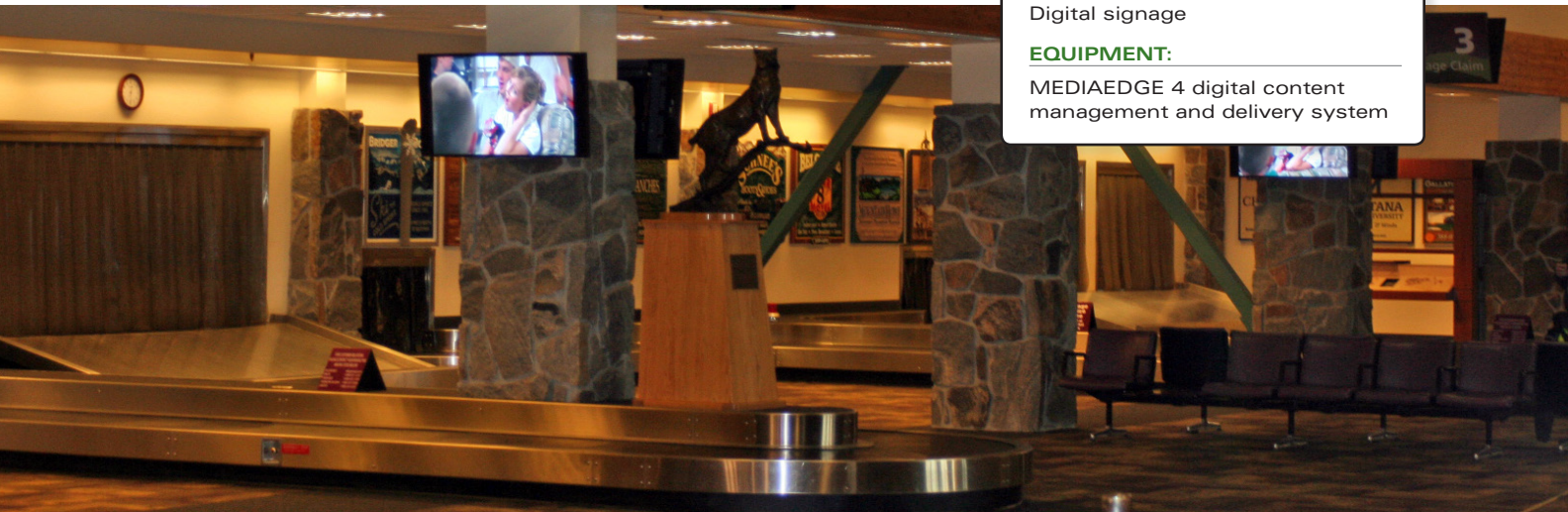
Gallatin Field Airport, Montana

**APPLICATION:**

Digital signage

**EQUIPMENT:**

MEDIAEDGE 4 digital content management and delivery system



## BACKGROUND

Gallatin Field Airport is a small regional airport in Belgrade, Montana with some big ideas about improving the passenger experience. The airport handles more than 45 flights per day and about 800,000 people each year come through its newly renovated stone and wood-bedecked main terminal.

Because it serves a mostly tourist clientele primarily headed to such natural treasures as Yellowstone National Park, airport management decided they wanted to try something different: establish a gathering place where visitors could find out more about Montana while they wait for their flights or baggage. This includes the addition of free WiFi and computer work areas at every gate, locally inspired artwork and sculptures all over the building, as well as unique video programs that promote the state and all it has to offer. This beautifully shot content is produced by MontanaPBS and displayed on flatscreen monitors located throughout the facility.

"Our focus is to have people see what they might have missed while they were in Montana and hopefully it encourages them to come back," said Brian Sprenger, Airport Manager, Gallatin Field. "We want to make Gallatin Field more of an experience than a traditional airport. If you have to be at the airport, we want you to enjoy it."

And enjoy it they do.

"We've had people stop in my office and say that they appreciate that we're not just rebroadcasting a news channel," Sprenger said. "They're happy to see something unique and stimulating."

## MAKING IT WORK

There are 16 monitors located throughout the main lobby, the security checkpoint, at every gate, and within the baggage claim area. To make it work, the airport installed a Grass Valley™ MEDIAEDGE®4 digital content management and delivery system to provide a centrally control method for displaying the same information on every screen, or for each monitor to be programmed to display a more targeted message.

For example, at the baggage claim area, incoming passengers can watch the regular programming seen throughout the terminal, as well as a loop of popular tourist sites in Montana. Yet, it all comes from the same Grass Valley MEDIAEDGE4 server, located on-site at the airport.

## CENTRALIZED CONTROL

The video system, connected via an IP system running on Cat 5 cable, has been up and running since the end of August 2011 and both airport management and passengers say they are very pleased with the results. It helps occupy waiting time (which makes the wait seem shorter) while at the same time encouraging tourism by getting passengers to see a part of Montana they perhaps didn't know existed.

Content is changed every two months and the MEDIAEDGE4 server makes for easy and quick changes. The airport can also cut in critical late-breaking news and information within minutes.



“We picked the MEDIAEDGE4 system because we wanted to have Montana-based content displayed throughout the airport and it gave us the best option to distribute that along with other information cost-effectively throughout the terminal and control it from a central location. The MEDIAEDGE4 system has really made a difference for us.”

**Brian Sprenger**, Airport Manager, Gallatin Field

## MONTANA PBS PARTNERSHIP

The airport is working closely with KUSM, the local MontanaPBS station, to obtain original programming that adds to the overall experience. Michael Ballard, a Program Producer at MontanaPBS (located on the campus of Montana State University, in Bozeman, Montana), supplies three hours worth of material, every other month.

The MontanaPBS station provides original programming, produced in Montana by local video professionals, that has also appeared on its main TV channel. Ballard cuts each of three one hour-long show into six 10-minute segments, which are loaded into the MEDIAEDGE server and played out continuously on a loop. MontanaPBS provides the programming for free and generates revenue by selling underwriting opportunities between program segments. Ballard controls the MEDIAEDGE’s Display Content Manager (DCM) software remotely from their TV facility (some 10 miles away) and downloads content to the MEDIAEDGE server via a quick file transfer, so he doesn’t have to go the airport.

“There’s been a lot of positive feedback from people in the airport who tell us they enjoy seeing something different than what they usually see at other airports,” Ballard said, adding that he also created a 2.5-minute video called *Welcome to Bozeman* that plays exclusively within the baggage claim area. “This is also a great opportunity to extend our station’s brand and showcase our original programs. And, hopefully, we can make a little money for our efforts as well.”

## SMOOTH SYSTEMS INTEGRATION

Influence Media Network (IMN)—a North American distributor for Grass Valley MEDIAEDGE, custom software developer, and systems integrator—supplied and assisted in the installation of the MEDIAEDGE4 system during the summer of 2011 and went live with it at the end of August. Ed Martin, CEO of IMN, said working on the design with facilities and infrastructure consultants Reynolds, Smith, and Hills, Inc. helped ensure a successful project. Even the implementation went very smoothly considering installers had to pass their gear in and out of security checkpoints, which made things a bit time-consuming.

Martin said the MEDIAEDGE4 system is one of the most mature, stable, flexible, capable, and affordable solutions. He thinks capabilities like H.264 HD video streaming over IP, H.264 HD encoding, web-based control, multi-region screen layout, and retail hardened intelligent media players result in a visual communication solution ideally suited to airports like Gallatin Field—as well as other public transit, shopping malls, manufacturing, education, and other retail locations—that need to display timely information and want the flexibility to delivery it easily in a variety of ways.

According to Martin, even at Gallatin Field, “they have only used a few of the many features that the MEDIAEDGE4 system is capable of and in the future we plan to implement more sophisticated functions, like a direct tie-in to their Emergency Alert System, enabling advertisers to manage their own content on the system, and some other things.”

Among the unique capabilities designed into the MEDIAEDGE platform by Grass Valley is the ability to tightly integrate with other applications. One example is IMN’s own Screen Media Control (SMC) solutions including their Phoenix Campus Automation module. Phoenix enables analog and digital device control, monitoring, LDAP user rights, content management, and a single sophisticated scheduling engine enabling playout regardless of whether the source is cable, a file on a server, a live camera feed, tape or DVD-based media, etc.

For the initial implementation phase, IMN tied the MEDIAEDGE4 system into the airport’s PA system using the Phoenix module, so the audio level of the display screens is automatically reduced when an announcement is made over the loudspeakers throughout the terminal. If there’s an emergency message, the text on the screen can also be synchronized with the audio messages overhead.

“You don’t have this type of flexible and sophisticated mixed media control with other digital signage systems,” Martin said. “Rather than cater to business travelers, management wants the airport to be more of a vacation destination and they’ve done a really good job of executing on their vision and leveraging technology to enhance the overall experience. If I had to fly into or out of Bozeman, I would like hanging out there.”

There are three software solutions that support the AV systems at Gallatin Field. IMN's SMC Phoenix module provides schedule management and device control to automate integration with some of the airport's most critical systems (like screen power, PA announcements, audio levels, alarms, lights, etc.). This software provides the graphical user interface for the MEDIAEDGE4 SVS streaming software and media server which encodes and streams content for the various MEDIAEDGE4 intelligent media players (also called set-top boxes) to display. Finally, Grass Valley MEDIAEDGE DCM application is used by MontanaPBS to create screen layouts, build play lists, create channels, preprogram events, and remotely distribute the content to the system across the Internet.

## MIXED-MEDIA FLEXIBILITY

This is all made possible, according to Martin, because the MEDIAEDGE4 system is flexible enough to allow a mixture of live and pre-encoded third-party content and traditional digital signage content, which can either be streamed live across the LAN or downloaded and played from local storage on the media players.

The installation took a bit of fine tuning to get it the way the airport wanted it to work, but training was very smooth and the system is now running "flawlessly," according to Sprenger.

"I think we'll see movement towards systems like [MEDIAEDGE4] in some of the more progressive airports, because it provides an easy and productive way to distribute information and mixed media," Sprenger said. "In our case, it also allowed us to support the relaxed motif that we're trying to accomplish here at Gallatin Field."

The goal was to establish a relaxing experience for passengers to make their stay at the airport (however long or short it may be) as enjoyable as possible. To that end: mission accomplished.

"I was walking through the baggage claim area one day and saw a man standing in front of a monitor watching one of the PBS programs," Sprenger said. "And he had already retrieved his luggage. That's all the proof I need to show me that the system is working as intended."

**"Implementations like Gallatin Field exhibit what the MEDIAEDGE system is capable of. It can do so much more than a standard digital signage system."**

**Ed Martin, CEO**  
Influence Media Network (IMN)

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