



Broyhill—A Work in Progress

...By Danielle Beavers

The largest ballroom in the High Country has taken its place among the leading convention facilities in the region following a dramatic technological facelift.

Since its makeover was completed last January, The Helen A. Powers Grand Hall at the Broyhill Inn & Appalachian Conference Center is one of the most technologically advanced conference facilities in the region.

Since its opening in 1973 as the Center for Continuing Education, the Appalachian State landmark was initially designed to host teacher's workshops. From its innovative yet humble beginnings, the Broyhill has been a work in progress ever since.

Renovations in the mid-eighties added the Alumni Hall and the Powers Grand Hall, then known as the Trillium Ballroom. Over time the Broyhill developed into a full fledged conference center and full-service hotel operated by Appalachian State for faculty, staff, tourists and alumni visiting the High Country. And it proved the perfect laboratory for the resort management and hospitality curriculum offered by the university.

The Powers Grand Hall was renovated in 2005 and while its appearance was greatly enhanced, the installation of audio/visual tools was not part of the plan. That changed this winter when the Whitlock Group of Charlotte installed state-of-the-art audio/visual technologies.

Given the current economic climate, those upgrades in audio/visual services

couldn't have come at a better time to meet the challenges in the conference and travel industry today.

Competing for the business meeting trade, the Broyhill is better positioned than ever to attract groups that require sound systems, video capabilities, and recording options for their presentations. The new audio/visual systems allow meeting planners to control the multi-media technology in the palm of their hand with a portable touch-pad control panel.

"It's becoming more and more of a necessity for the groups we attract. They are looking for this type of technology," general manager Doug Uzelac observed. "In the past we could bring it in, but now all we do is touch a screen and it's already here."

Two oversized projection screens face in opposite directions allowing for more comfortable viewing of DVDs, or PowerPoint presentations. No matter where people sit during the conference the intended message comes through loud and clear. The ballroom's primary wall features a 16-foot by 16-foot automated projection screen served by a 12,000-lumen, cinema-quality LCD projector. The opposite wall features a 10-foot by 10-foot automated projection screen with a new 5,500-lumen LCD projector.

The new sound system complements the stunning visual capacity of the ballroom. It replaces a system that was once the source of disappointment from visitors conducting meetings at the Broyhill. That's all in the past now, however, as the

new 15-speaker audio system with Video Graphics Array surrounds visitors in the style of a grand theatre.

"Over 200 plus groups from off the mountain utilize this conference space," Uzelac said. "It is nice to have the equipment to back up the excellent customer service."

Any discussion of the evolution of the conference center must include the outstanding food service the Broyhill provides. Centered in the James W. Jackson Dining Room, conference guests and the general public enjoy exceptional cuisine and ambiance, not to mention lovely views. The dining room opens for supper nightly at 5:30 pm. Breakfast and lunch buffets are served Monday through Saturday. Sunday features the Broyhill's Grand Buffet Brunch from 10:30 am until 3 pm., a celebrated presentation that has become a High Country tradition.

The Grand Hall at the Broyhill can accommodate up to 425 people for sit-down dinners and boasts a capacity of one thousand for receptions. But smaller, more intimate spaces are available as well. Whether you're looking for a night out with the family or the full service conference facilities available to your company's personnel, the Broyhill is setting the pace in the hospitality and lodging trades.

For more information on the Broyhill Inn & Appalachian Conference Center call (800) 951-6048, or visit www.broyhill.com.