

# LIGHTING DIMENSIONS®

## NEWS



### Shop talk

**C**elebrating sales success and international expansion, retail giant Wal-Mart added a fair amount of show to its business at the company's annual shareholders meeting held this past June at the Bud Walton Arena in Fayetteville, AR. While the six-hour session delivered plenty of company facts and figures, the event provided enough entertainment to keep close to 20,000 shareholders in the audience rising to their feet.

Celebrity supporters, including Richard Simmons, Alex Trebek, and Kathie Lee Gifford, were on-hand to pump up the crowd. While behind the scenes, producer Mike Flagler of Flager Productions and production manager Greg Pierce of Vista Productions, lighting designer Donnie Brawner of Brawner and Associates, and video sup-

plier Performance Audio & Video, steered the production from conception on.

"The meeting used to be in the round, but this year Wal-Mart wanted to put the stage on one end," says LD Brawner. "They also requested three videoscreens positioned close enough to the audience so that the video could look like continuing images."

In fact, lighting for high-end video is one of the most crucial components of Brawner's design. "The meeting is 99% video, and Wal-Mart invests a lot in the best equipment," says Brawner. "It's important I make the lighting look good both on tape and IMAG."

Beyond lighting for video, a new challenge this year was the addition of a live concert staged the night before. Featuring pop stars Britney Spears and

Brandy, the concert was broadcast live via satellite to Wal-Marts nationwide. "We had to design something that would look like a live concert and be broadcast quality," says the LD. His solution was to isolate the artists in level lighting for video by using followspots from the front of stage and truss spots from the back. This also allowed him rich color saturation for both the live and taped show.

Six hours later, Brawner switched gears to prep for the corporate meeting that began at 6am the next morning. "Because of the short turnaround, all the lighting went up as one system." That system consisted of over 700 conventional fixtures, including Thomas PAR-64s, ETC Source Fours and Source Four PARs, Mole-Richardson 5ks and 2ks, Altman scoops, Wybron color scrollers, Lycian 1275 followspots, and 2k xenon Strong Super Troupers. There was also over 1,000' (305m) of Thomas and Tomcat truss, over 400 ETC Sensor dimmers, and 45 High End Systems automated luminaires including Cyberlights®, Studio Colors®, and Technobeams®.

Brawner credits associate LD Jeff Payne, master electrician Shawn Lear, moving-light programmer Zach Ayres, and lighting electricians Red Shumate, John Elkins, and Doc Pruyn, who were on the job for the two-week load-in, set-up, rehearsal process, and meeting. Following its success, Brawner will make its corporate lighting even more festive for the next Wal-Mart extravaganza, the company's holiday meeting at the Dallas Convention Center.

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