

## Nashville Business Journal

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### Sounds good: Durrell tech services used at Houston track

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Race fans at the new Houston Superspeedway will be able to hear all the track announcements if the team at Durrell has anything to say about it.

Nashville-based Durrell will provide technical services for the race track, work it already provides for similar facilities in Bristol, Va., Atlanta, Las Vegas and Indianapolis, as well as the Gaylord Entertainment Center. The \$160,000 job will include all underground planning, design of fiber system hubs and wiring for the public address system, suites and media rooms.

"We knew them by reputation, by talking with other track owners who have employed them to do things," says David Miller, senior project manager with Hermes Architects, Houston, which is helming the speedway project.

Work on the Houston track, slated for a spring 2005 opening, further solidifies Durrell's position in the sports-entertainment world, a niche the company talked itself into when it began almost four years ago, says John Horrell, vice president.

Horrell met company President Steve Durr when he was installing equipment at a church.

"He'd just come back from a race at Bristol," Horrell recalls. "He explained to me how awful the sound was. He contacted the president of the speedway up there and before I knew it, he said if we thought we could do better, the job was ours."

Now Durrell's seven-member team travels around the United States, servicing and monitoring existing systems.

"Every track has different needs," Horrell says. "Some of the older ones require intensive rebuilding of their systems, while some of the newer ones are more of a maintenance and operation-style relationship."

Durrell also has done several church installations, most recently updating the sound system for All Saints Chapel at the University of the South. Between that market and professional sports, Durrell's team stays fairly busy.

Prior to forming the company, Horrell owned Traffic Watch, an airborne traffic service that eventually became Metro Networks. Durr operated his own acoustic design firm, installing recording studios around the country for such luminaries as Lenny Kravitz and Steven Spielberg. When they partnered to form Durrell, the pair wanted to focus on television engineering and sound installations, Horrell says.

"We've found a real niche in pro audio," he says. "We've found that pro sports needs not just maintenance but long-term design.

"Most stadiums are in dire need of these services because people design them, put them in and hand them over to someone who doesn't understand the nuances of what the system can do. If bad audio was fatal, it would be a leading cause of death in some facilities."

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