

THE SMARTEST DEMO HOME

When an AV integrator uses his own home to demonstrate the full capabilities of an RTI Control System



What does a smart home look and feel like? And how can home technology installers demonstrate the elegance that smart capabilities add to a home? For Steven Brawner, owner of ProAudio Georgia and Carolinas, the answer was to create a custom demo home where customers can see, touch, and experience the latest in intelligent home control.

In the last 5 years, Brawner's AV integration company has grown beyond his home state of Georgia to North and South Carolina. As more customers in the region invested in new smart home technology, it was evident Brawner needed a secondary office to serve the Carolina arm. Rather than rent office space and continue to dump money into hotel stays, he purchased a 1,400-square-foot home in Asheville, North Carolina. The home, built in 1956, was the perfect opportunity — and challenge — for Brawner to create a technological showcase where customers could experience the latest home control systems up close.

The AV integrator has built a profitable company as a

home control expert. Whether control is via a touchpanel, remote, mobile app, or voice, Brawner has worked to create a seamless control experience in the home that's natural, intuitive, and vastly capable. In fact, in 2018, he received nationwide exposure for how he tied Alexa voice control to the RTI home control system by leveraging the home control system's open architecture. Alexa was fast becoming a dominant force in homes. Ever curious and eager to take on and conquer challenges that define innovation and smart homes, Brawner was able to leverage RTI to integrate the system with Alexa to enable voice control commands within the system. It's that same spirit that led him to developing his demo home.

"There weren't even lights in the ceiling," said Brawner. "My thought was if I can show customers what I can do to retrofit this house, then I can do that for any home, whether it's a new build or an old home like this one."

What the home lacked in modern updates, it made up for

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"RTI has the most powerful, open-architecture interface that can be programmed to do anything and integrates with anything."

*Steven Brawner
Owner, ProAudio Georgia and Carolinas*

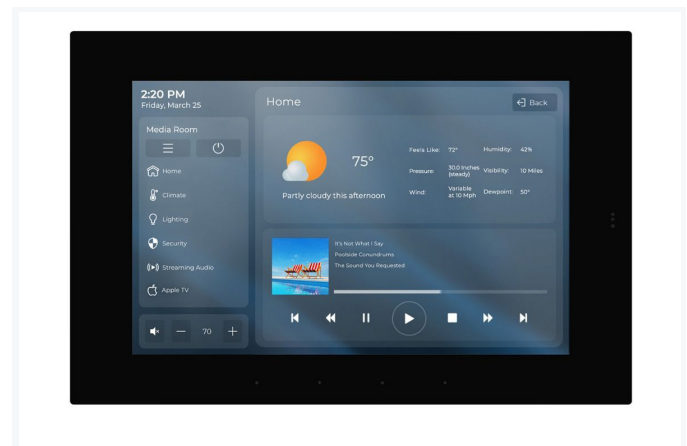
in location. It's situated on a major road leading to one of the largest and most affluent developments in Asheville. It's a strategy that has proven effective, with Brawner receiving numerous phone calls. Those seeking his services meet at the house and are able to experience all the finest technology design that's available today. The entire home — from its lighting and shading to its security and AV entertainment — is controlled through an RTI control system.

Lighting

Although the house was lacking lighting fixtures, Brawner wanted to use lighting in a much more impactful way than the traditional approach. As all interior designers know, lighting is a powerful tool. As such, it has become a massive revenue source for AV integrators, with the 2021 CEDIA Home Market Analysis for the U.S. and U.K. identifying lighting categories — lighting/shading and lighting control — as key areas for growth.

For homeowners, lighting is one of the most satisfying ways to enhance any room. By combining natural and artificial lighting components with a smart control system such as RTI, homeowners can create a beautiful space that changes throughout the day. For example, a home control system can be programmed to automatically raise the shades as the sun rises in the morning and lowering them during the hottest part of the day. In the evening, as the shades close, lighting fixtures in the home can be turned on and automatically adjust to the brightness and hue for the task at hand — low lighting for entertaining or brighter hues to mimic a sunlit room to encourage productivity, for example.

Now, where there was once zero lighting in the show home, there is a full Lutron RA2 system, with every light in the house controlled via the RTI system. At the windows in the dining room are Lutron Palladiom shading. With a touch of a button, every shade raises and lowers simultaneously, instantly brightening or dimming the room. Brawner also set up scenes within the RTI controller so that the room's lighting and shading change together throughout the day. This includes such scenes as good morning and good evening, which automatically raises and lowers the shades at a preprogrammed time, and "watch movie," which lowers the shades, lighting, and lowers the projectors from the ceiling. It's a touch that feels state-of-the-art and helps customers see how even the smallest and oldest home can feel grander.



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Security

Another element that is becoming more important and intersecting the lighting category is security. Indoor and outdoor lighting naturally lend themselves to a home's security system. Brawner tied the RTI home control system to the Lutron lighting and shading system not only for aesthetics but for security as well. At dawn and dusk, the RTI system can automatically turn on and off indoor and outdoor lights, providing presence in and around the home even when it's empty. Brawner also installed automated Kwikset door locks on all the doors that are programmed to lock upon arming the QOLSYS alarm system.

Entertainment

Of course, no home is complete without entertainment. One area that homeowners and interior designers wrestle with is how to make displays, projectors, and screens in their living and media rooms blend in with the décor and style of the home. Homeowners don't want to see a display's black rectangle hanging on the wall or a projector dangling from the ceiling 24/7. For that reason, in the media room, Brawner installed a JVC DLA-NX7 projector inside a Nexus 21 dropdown projector lift. Likewise, there is 100-inch Screen Innovations motorized projector screen that rolls up and out of sight when not in use. With a touch of a button on the RTI KA11 touchpanel mounted to the wall, the screen and

projector can be instantly lowered, transforming the room into a top-of-the-line home theater. It's a creative solution for small, multifunction rooms as well as those where the interior design must take center stage.

The home's 7.1 audio system that includes Origin Acoustics D105 speakers is run through an AudioControl XR-6 theater receiver with inputs for the room's multitude of video sources: AVPro Video Flux QuadViewer, Apple TV, Roku, and Kaleidescape movie player as well as audio via RTI's MS-3 Music Streamer. An RTI T2x remote control gives users full command of the system, mirroring the control options available from the touchpanel as well as the ability to select the source, adjust the volume, and change the channel.

The entertainment options continue into the living room, where a 65-inch LG Wallpaper TV hangs inconspicuously. It's so thin, it looks like a piece of art — another clever way for designers to camouflage screens. Users can use the room's T2X remote control to stream content from the video sources.

Control

The brains of the home is the equipment closet — at least in the eyes of the integrator. Every piece of AV is tied to the RTI XP-8V control processor, which is housed alongside the



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home's Access Networks Core network switches in a small equipment rack in the hallway closet. In addition to the touch panel in the media room, Brawner has full control from his mobile device or PC via the RTI Control App.

What's more, Brawner used what he learned integrating Alexa voice control with RTI and paired the home to Josh.ai. Josh.ai is a growing artificial intelligence company known for evolving voice control technology that is popular in high-end, luxury homes.

"We were on the cutting edge of voice control when it first started," said Brawner. "Thanks to RTI's open architecture and powerful interface, I was able to program custom phrases to make the voice experience more intuitive and natural. Josh is even more sophisticated. They're using natural speech patterns that are less robotic. It furthers the elegance of voice control, so users can simply say, 'Good morning,' or 'Let's watch Netflix,' and it opens the shades or turns on the display and automatically selects Netflix as the source."

Evolutionary Home

Brawner sees the technology in the home like one would

the décor — needing to evolve to reflect what's trending and meet homeowners' changing tastes and needs. For that reason, he has several updates planned: more shading in the dining room and bedrooms, motorized TV lifts in the bedrooms, landscape lighting, as well as a move to RTI's Integration Designer 11, the latest version of the company's award-winning control application software.

"It's the only software out there for programming absolutely anything you want it to do — period," said Brawner. "It's powerful, and I want my customers to see just what's possible in this system."

List of RTI products used:

- 1x XP-8V Control Processor
- 1x KA11 Touchpanel
- 2x T2X Remote Control



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G E O R G I A



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