

Gulfshore Playhouse takes control of its AV network

NETGEAR Professional Services helped Gulfshore Playhouse transform an unstable AV network into a reliable, segmented foundation for live productions. After months of joint planning and one day on site, the theater now has a network its own team can manage with confidence.

From performance risk to a reliable network

Gulfshore Playhouse is one of the fastest-growing regional theaters in the U.S. Its Baker Theatre and Education Center in Naples, Florida, opened in 2024 with a 350-seat mainstage, a 125-seat studio theater, and multiple rehearsal, event, and educational spaces.

The facility relies on Q-SYS, Dante, and a networked AV environment running across NETGEAR M4250 switches.

The original design called for a fully redundant Dante network, with primary and secondary paths on isolated switches, plus a separate control network. Budget cuts during construction scaled this back, and in one central location the remaining networks were terminated on the same switch, eliminating the redundancy and segmentation the design depended on. The switches were configured with default settings and connected in an ad hoc mesh rather than the specified star topology.

GULFSHORE PLAYHOUSE

"I didn't expect NETGEAR to engage the way they did. This wasn't a new sale, we already had the equipment. But they came in, understood what we were trying to do, and didn't let go until it was right. That kind of support makes all the difference."

Kaleb Pecoraro, sound technician, Gulfshore Playhouse



When sound technician Kaleb Pecoraro joined Gulfshore Playhouse in September 2024, he inherited persistent network instability. Periodic spanning tree reconvergence dropped lobby audio and silenced the control booth's show feed for up to 30 seconds, leaving the stage manager unable to hear the performance while calling cues. Mid-season, the WiFi access points used for wireless device control also crashed and could not be recovered.

"We knew the network was wrong. We just didn't have the knowledge or the support to fix it."

Kaleb Pecoraro, sound technician at Gulfshore Playhouse

Expert planning enables a one-day transformation

Ahead of the 2025–26 season, Pecoraro engaged NETGEAR Professional Services. Over several months, he worked closely with a NETGEAR engineer to document every device, define a clean VLAN structure, and develop a new IP scheme across all twelve switches.

The engineer translated that groundwork into a detailed remediation plan, mapping every physical and logical change in advance. By combining specialized AV networking expertise with a clear understanding of the theater's operational needs, NETGEAR Professional Services was able to schedule the entire transformation for a single Sunday with no performance planned.

During the on-site visit, the team updated switch firmware, rewired the network into a proper star topology, and deployed the new VLAN and IP configuration. Dedicated VLANs were established for Dante primary audio, intercom, Q-LAN, and Visionary show control. The network also gained a building LAN with internet access, something the control network had never had.

For Pecoraro, the value of Professional Services extended beyond the technical changes. The collaborative process gave him a clearer understanding of the network and the confidence to manage it independently.

Network infrastructure at Gulfshore Playhouse

- 8 × NETGEAR M4250-40G8XF AV Line Managed Switches
- 4 × NETGEAR M4250-8G2XF-PoE+ AV Line Managed Switches
- NETGEAR Engage management software

Greater control and creative freedom

A minor IP conflict surfaced the following week because of a manual entry error. Pecoraro diagnosed and resolved it himself. Since then, the network has remained stable.

NETGEAR Engage now gives him centralized management of all twelve switches from a single interface. He can monitor port status, reassign ports, and make configuration changes without using a command line. Sound designers can also connect from anywhere in the building and access the console, Dante network, amplifiers, and other systems without repeatedly visiting an AV closet.

Pecoraro describes the difference the new network has made: “We’ve never had this much control over the system. Instead of running to an AV closet to make a change, a sound designer can sit anywhere in the building with a laptop and have full access to everything: the console, the Dante network, the amplifiers. One cable, one connection, total access.”

Gulfshore Playhouse now has a properly segmented star network, and its own team understands it well enough to manage and repair it. The spanning tree dropouts that cut the stage manager’s show feed have stopped. For a theater that already owned the hardware, NETGEAR Professional Services turned that investment into infrastructure it can count on for every performance.



As the theater prepares for one of its largest musicals to date, the network is no longer a source of uncertainty.



“Thanks to Professional Services’ assistance, for the first time, I’m not worried about the network.”

Kaleb Pecoraro, sound technician
Gulfshore Playhouse

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