

## ETCP rigging renewal credits: stay up-to-date with modern technology

Daktronics makes it easy to stay current with the latest equipment while earning ETCP credits

IT IS ASTOUNDING to have witnessed the last couple of decades of entertainment rigging technology development. We have gone from borrowing technology from sailing ships to industrial motion control. Plenty of manual rigging systems are still being used, and will be as long as there are stages and theatres. However, the last decade has seen motorized rigging systems become more performance-minded, complex, and more popular in performing arts and entertainment facilities, as well as public gathering spaces. It has become widely accepted that Entertainment Technician Certification Program (ETCP) Certified Riggers are preferred and increasingly required in many installation and production settings. As entertainment technology continues to advance, ETCP riggers will be required to install, inspect, and work on a wide variety of traditional and motorized rigging systems. Daktronics understands the need for these men and women to maintain a current knowledge base and sustain their certification status. ETCP has acknowledged our commitment to this by approving our Factory Training Program to become a part of a very select group of ETCP Recognized Training Programs.

The nineties witnessed increased awareness of standards and related assessment programs. ESTA established its Technical Standards Program (TSP) in 1994 because the entertainment

industry needed its own voice to address issues of technology and establish industry appropriate American National Standards.

Around the same time, Daktronics started down a parallel path. For years we used various hoist manufacturers to hang our large centerhung scoreboards. In November of 1996, a scoreboard in a Buffalo, NY, ice arena fell to the ice before the start of a National Hockey League game. Thankfully, no injuries occurred. However, that experience propelled the South Dakota-based company into developing a relationship with a hoist supplier in Victor, NY, that would be a partner in evolving the safety standards associated with these projects. Ten years later, Daktronics acquired that hoist manufacturer and its signature Vortek product line. Innovative secondary-braking systems, mandated installation standards, and quality and safety remain top priorities.

With thousands of hoists and hundreds of systems installed across the country and the globe, Daktronics began a Factory Training Program in 2008. Our program was recognized by ETCP for renewal credits in April of 2010. We respect the integrity and prestige of the theatre rigging industry, and our team is pleased to provide dealer-training classes that meet the high criteria established by the ETCP renewal credit program.

Over 50 individuals have completed our program, in professions ranging from rigging installer, equipment dealer, project manager, theatre consultant, and end-user, and from places as varied as China, Colombia, Poland, Portugal, and Missoula, MT. Attendees receive in-depth, hands-on, modular training. Special attention is paid to best installation practices. Rules governing the proper use of galvanized steel utility cable (wire rope) and fasteners still apply, so we make sure attendees understand and respect them. Participants receive, at minimum, basic training on all our control systems, and have the opportunity for advanced training as needed. Our controls engineering and field service personnel lead the training module dedicated to maintenance and troubleshooting of our electronic control systems.

A big part of putting motorized hoist systems in the air is material handling. We offer guidance on the best ways to move big, heavy pieces around in the limited installation spaces on stages and in arenas that often challenge even the most seasoned



Participants at a recent dealer training session in Victor, NY.



Operations Manager, Dave Rossi, explains the latest control innovation at LDI2011.

installers. Attendees may also gain mechanical knowledge, to enable them to service Vortek hoists and custom hoist products, including scoreboard hoists and banner hoists. Many of the first Vortek packaged hoists systems are now approaching 10 years in the field. We believe it is imperative that these technicians

who inspect and maintain the hoist systems year after year are comfortable knowing what to look for, what to listen for and what to feel for when doing this work.

Our industry is facing an enormous challenge today as rigging systems become increasingly complicated. It is not unusual to see multi-axis stage movements, at very high speeds, being choreographed by computerized control systems in places such as regional and local theatres, road houses, and even on high school stages. ETCP Certified Riggers will be called on to verify these systems stay operational and safe. Four times annually, we invite interested individuals and companies to attend factory training at our design and manufacturing facility in upstate New York. ETCP Certified Riggers who complete the training will receive 11.25 hours of renewal credit. You can find the schedule for training sessions at: [www.etcplasa.org/cert\\_recognized/training\\_programs/rigging\\_list.html](http://www.etcplasa.org/cert_recognized/training_programs/rigging_list.html). ■



**Dave Rossi** is the Operations Manager for Daktronics rigging group in Victor, NY. He has been involved in the design and development of the Vortek product since 2002. He may be reached at [Dave.Rossi@daktronics.com](mailto:Dave.Rossi@daktronics.com).

**The ETCP examinations will be offered at USITT's Annual Conference and Stage Expo in Long Beach, CA. All three examinations will be given at the same time and are scheduled for the morning of Saturday, March 31. Candidates who wish to take more than one exam should contact ETCP. Interested applicants must submit their application, along with supporting materials and fee, to the ETCP office no later than March 1. Space is limited, so submit your application today!**