



## Case Study



# International Center for Automotive Research Drives Home Maximum Safety and Flexibility with Fire-Lite System

There's a lot riding on Clemson University's new International Center for Automotive Research (ICAR) in Greenville, SC, a venture that has already attracted more than \$100 million in public and private investment. And it's no wonder – this 250-acre graduate school campus promises to bring high tech, high paying jobs to the area and attract fresh partnerships for the two ICAR core companies - BMW and Michelin. It will also serve as the future jumping off point for many exciting new product and manufacturing innovations.

The ICAR project is a joint project sponsored by the state, Clemson and BMW. The graduate school will be comprised of at least two stand-alone main build-

ings - the BMW Information Technology Research Center (completed in August of 2005), and the Carroll A. Campbell Jr. Graduate Engineering Center (with a planned summer of 2006 opening) - with three other engineering-based buildings in the planning stages. Each of these buildings represents a tremendous investment in the future of South Carolina - an investment in technology, science, ideas and the people who spawn all of the above.

Such an investment needs to be protected in many ways. Perhaps most importantly, the buildings and their extremely talented inhabitants need to be protected in the event of fire and other life-threatening emergencies. To ensure the highest level of fire and life

safety in the first completed building, the ICAR project manager, Harper Corporation's David Wise, turned to Pace Electric, a distributor with solid experience in projects of this size and complexity. And Pace Electric, in turn, determined that the best life safety system for this job was the MS-9600 from Fire-Lite.

Wise said, "Pace Electric is a UL-registered installation firm with a solid breadth of experience handling projects of this size and complexity, including projects at Furman University, Southern Wesleyan University and Wofford College. Although we had not worked with a Fire-Lite system before, the fact that the system is FM (Factory Mutual) approved was extremely attractive to us."

The MS-9600 is a compact, intelligent addressable fire alarm control panel with a capacity of 318 addressable Fire-Lite devices on one Signaling Line Circuit (SLC) and is easily expandable to 636 devices with the addition of a plug-in SLC board. The panel uses surface-mount technology and is designed not only for ease-of-use, but also for easy programming and maintenance.

The first completed building, the BMW Center, posed a number of challenges for Pace Electric and the Fire-Lite system,



*Center for Automotive Research  
Greenville, SC*



as this four-story high tech looking and functioning facility featured a complicated matrix of safety systems.

David Marshall, manager of Pace's Fire Alarm and Security Systems Group, pointed out that the Fire-Lite system had the flexibility and power to interface with this complex functional matrix.

"The open architecture of the MS-9600 was a key variable in the system's success," Marshall explained. "There is a lot going on in the BMW Center. The Fire-Lite system can interface with just about any other life safety system, including all the systems in this building. This open architecture makes it easy for us to satisfy industry and geographic-based fire codes while meeting the needs of building occupants and managers."

"It also makes it much easier for installers, contractors and maintenance and repair people to do their jobs," Marshall continued. "Fire-Lite system components and compatible parts are readily available - you can go anywhere and pick up the part you need. There's no downtime while you're trying to track down an original manufacturer component."

The ICAR BMW Center's "complex matrix" includes two Orion air sampling systems, a CO2 system, two pre-action panels, an air handling unit, three remote NAC (Notification Appliance Circuit) power supplies, positive pressure fans, elevator relay modules, and fire shutters and smoke curtains for smoke control. All of these system functions are monitored by the MS-9600 control panel, which is located in the building's Data Center.

Marshall offered an example of a potential scenario. He said, "Let's say the Air Sampling System senses potential danger. It sends an alarm signal to the Fire-Lite Control Panel which in turn triggers the system alarm, activates the horns and strobes, opens the pre-action valves, shuts down associated area units, and kicks the positive pressure fan into gear."

The first ICAR building also had certain aesthetic requirements - this high profile project required life safety components that kept a low profile.

"The Fire-Lite devices and components do a great job of blending in with the building's high-tech architecture and

design elements," said Marshall.

All parties involved in the installation process were extremely pleased with Fire-Lite's technical support. "It's always very easy to get technical service assistance from Fire-Lite," Marshall relayed. "They are just a phone call away and readily available."

Project Manager, David Wise concurred, saying, "This was a complex project but the team of Pace Electric and Fire-Lite provided the technical expertise to ensure that that there were no glitches in the system's installation or continuing operation. Our entire ICAR team, including our insurance representative, is very pleased with this fire safety system."

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*- David Marshall  
Manager  
Pace Fire Alarm and Security  
Systems Group*



*The Fire-Lite System protecting the Center for Automotive Research*



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