

Selling 5.1: Building a Center Channel for Your Display



Completed center channel in use on top of the display board.

By Rob Elliot

Installing theater sound in a car can be difficult due to lack of available space for a dedicated center channel. The same problem exists when trying to demonstrate it in your showroom. Where do you put the center channel so it still looks like it belongs? Micah Williams of Audio Specialists in Hopkinsville, Ky., came up with a cool and effective solution. Micah uses steps that can be adapted to all different types of installs.



The entire skeleton is made out of MDF. Cut the bottom ellipse out of one-half inch MDF. Using a rabbit bit, rabbit 1/4-inch down and 1/8 inch in to allow room for cloth material that will be stretched later. Make four support blocks for the depth of your speaker. These blocks will hold the speaker ring and the top ellipse. The top ellipse is made out of two pieces of 1/4-inch MDF CA-glued together and curved using spacers on the ends between the two pieces. The end spacers give the front piece its "dished" effect. Notice that the bottom piece of 1/4-inch MDF also includes the speaker ring for the speaker to mount to. Cut the bottom of the two pieces slightly smaller to allow for cloth material to be added.



Completed center channel display close-up.



A 1/4-inch MDF insert piece must be made to act as a grille template and will be duplicated later out of ABS. Make sure to save the two end shapes and circles as they will be needed later. The ABS piece will be painted and will be used as the final flushed panel.



Grille cloth should be stretched to connect the front and rear enclosure pieces. Coat the cloth with fiberglass resin. Also notice the back strap material that was screwed into place. This is where the tweeters will be mounted.



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Once the resin has dried, tape off the front of the enclosure to allow for a clean edge after the body filler has been applied. Apply body filler to the entire cloth area.



Trace the 1/4-inch MDF grille template onto a piece of 1/4-inch ABS. Cut out the ABS and scuff the surface to allow for painting. The reason ABS is used instead of just painting the MDF template is that ABS requires much less prep work before painting. All that's necessary is a light scuffing with 240-grit sandpaper and any spray primer. In this picture you can also see the body filler that was applied in the previous steps. Williams also left a horizontal bar in place to provide a place to mount the store's logo.

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This step requires quite a bit of description. The idea is to make templates for the perforated grille that will cover the tweeter areas. Once templates are made, the perforated metal can simply be cut using a router. Take the 1/4-inch MDF grille template and mask off the entire inside area. Secure the 1/4-inch grille template to another piece of 1/4-inch MDF with double-face tape. Now lay the tweeter area inserts into their original holes and fill the gaps with body filler.



Once dried, pop off the grille template and you will be left with pieces that can now be cut out of the bottom board. Now place the perforated metal grille material on top of the plugs and route accordingly.



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Don't forget to rabbit a groove in the rear of the front ABS grille panel to allow for the perforated metal to be secured.



Williams used Testor model paint on the ABS panel. All that's left now is to add the finishing touch of the store's logo.

Do you have a unique fabrication method? A time-saving technique? A favorite plan to tackle a common (or uncommon) request? Want to share with the industry? Take digital photos of the process and contact info@me-mag.com!

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Tech Tips

2007 Ford Expedition Alternate Security Wire Locations

Nicholas Berman, an install manager in Portland, Ore., posted this info on finding alternate — and potentially easier — locations to pick up several vehicle security wires on the new Expedition. Wires are in the passenger running board and Body Control Module (BCM) in the passenger kick panel. He notes that all of the wire colors are the same as you would find at the steering column, with the exception of a positive parking light wire. Test all wires before connecting.

12V+ Constant – Blu/Red
12V+ Ignition – Wht/Org
Starter (+) – Blu/Wht
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Door Unlock (-) – Blu/Brn
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Dome Light (+) – Gray/Vio
Horn (-) – Yel/Red



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HYN-K1130 – Installation kit for 2007 Hyundai Sante Fe; double-DIN

GM-K418 – Installation kit for 2007 Chevy Aveo; double-DIN

ND-K744 – Installation kit for 2006-07 Nissan 350Z; double-DIN

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Got tech tips? Got questions?

Post them on the Vehicle Information Forum at www.InstallerCentral.com!

Firsthand 2007 GMC Denali: Video Retention



Sean Young and Brian Mobley of Sound Decision in Montgomery, Ill., do it again as they replace the radio in a 2007 GMC Denali. The trick here is to be able to retain the factory-installed rear video system. The factory overhead flip-down monitor in the 2007 Denali receives its signal directly from the factory in-dash radio/DVD player. When installing an aftermarket radio, and therefore eliminating the flip-down's video source, a new DVD player must be wired into the factory wiring. Note: Be sure to tape the unshielded wires to keep them from touching each other or any grounds in the dash. The following wiring can be found at the factory radio plugs:



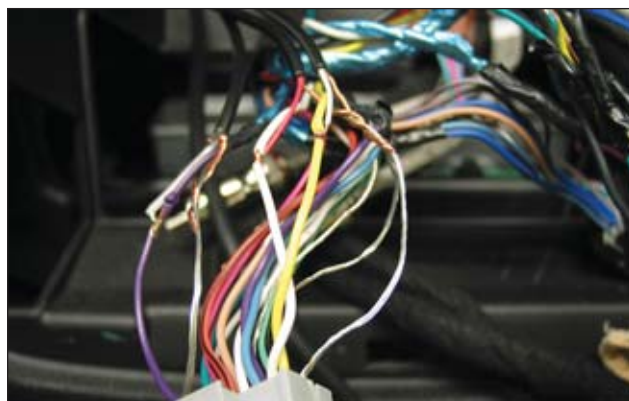
The 14-pin black plug: pin 6 White wire requires 12V+ Accessory, which powers the factory flip-down. The Metra wiring harness has a Blue turn-on wire going to this, but the aftermarket radio does not have enough current for the screen. Run a lead from the White wire to the Red accessory wire from the LAN module and do not connect to the Blue or Blue/White of the new radio.



The 16-pin grey plug: pins 3, 4, and 11 provide sound to the factory IR headphone transmitter built into the overhead flip-down. Pins 7 and 15 provide video signal to the flip-down screen. Cut an A/V cable in half and solder them onto the factory wires. Pin 3 – Blue wire is (+) left RCA. Pin 4 – White wire is (+) right RCA. Pin 11 – Purple wire is (-) left and right RCA. Pin 7 – Green wire is (+) video RCA. Pin 15 – White with Black stripe is (-) video RCA.



One connection must be made in the overhead video console. The IR transmitter requires 12V+ Accessory. With a small piece of wire and a 5 amp fuse, connect the 16-pin brown plug at the IR transmitter (pin 4) Pink wire and the 10-pin black plug at the video screen (pin 8) White wire (same White wire which now receives accessory power behind the radio as described above).



There also is an A/V game plate located on the back of the center console. If the new system can accommodate an A/V input, then the game plate wiring also can be found at the 16-pin gray plug. Pin 1 – Yellow wire is (+) left RCA. Pin 2 – White wire is (+) right RCA. Pin 9 – unshielded Silver wire is (-) left and right RCA. Pin 8 – Purple wire is (+) video RCA. Pin 16 – unshielded Silver wire is (-) video RCA.

Firsthand 2007 Pontiac Solstice: Installation Tips

Come summer, you should start to see quite a few of the 2007 Pontiac Solstice on the streets. Here, Walter Chavez from Directed's Snake Pit provides some pictures and installation tips.



Shown here is what the inside of the door looks like. The stock speaker spacer should allow for a decent-depth replacement speaker.



A great place for the alarm's LED is in the empty switch spot to the left of the ventilation controls.



Walter says that most all wiring can be found in the passenger kick panel. The fuse box and BCM are one piece.



Walter points out the Yellow ignition wire.



The driver's door trigger wire is Gray/Black and the passenger's door trigger is Tan/White. The trunk trigger is Orange/Black.



Shown here is the engine with shroud in place.



When the shroud is removed, the ignition coils are accessible.



The lock/unlock wire is White and under the hood. A ground pulse will unlock and a pulse through a 1.5k resistor will lock. The wire is activated by the passenger switch.

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2007 Toyota Avalon: Switch Sirius to XM



The 2007 Toyota Avalon is quite a car and has just about everything. There is, however, one thing that is not available when you buy a new Avalon — XM radio. The Avalon is only available with Sirius satellite radio. Dave Ellers from Sound F/X in Lewes, Del., who took these photos, will show you how he made the switch using an interface and an XM tuner.



The dash is pretty standard Toyota, except that the radio display is above the standard radio dash area. The display sits directly above the vents and is shielded by the dash so sunlight doesn't wash it out.



The dash piece that houses the start/stop button must be popped off first to allow for the radio trim panel to be removed.



The radio trim panel must now be removed in order to allow access to the radio's mounting screws. Remove the four 10mm bolts mounting the radio and slide the radio forward to allow access to the factory radio harnesses.

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The provided interface harness simply plugs into the factory harness and factory radio.



Shown here is the XM tuner, antenna, and interface.



Dave mounted the interface in a spot under the dash on the transmission hump.



The carpet nicely hides the interface.



Dave removed the plastic piece in the headliner to allow access for running the XM antenna wire.



The antenna was magnet-mounted with the moon-roof closed.



Shown here is the antenna mounted with the moon-roof closed.



Shown here is the display once the dash is reassembled.



Shown here is a close-up for the non-believers.

Have your own firsthand information? Share your knowledge! Send an e-mail to info@me-mag.com or post your information at InstallerCentral.com.

