

# Virginia Mall Skips the Mess with Latest Retrofit

By Susan Schierwagen, *Victaulic*

Steve Kirby, co-owner and vice president of Horizon Fire Protection, Inc., recently learned of a tenant improvement project in a Chesapeake, Virginia mall. The mall totals nearly 900,000 sq. ft. and boasts over 120 retailers, several restaurants as well as a Cinema Café dinner movie theater. Kirby, a 20-year industry veteran, knew that the aging structure of the mall that originally opened in 1981 presented an opportunity to continually modernize the original fire suppression system.

“We’re a company that embraces new innovations and puts them to work for us, making our installations as well as service and inspections more efficient,” he says. Horizon won the bid to retrofit an existing fire suppression system in the Things Remembered on the second floor of the mall, requiring their team to add and relocate the system’s small-diameter hard-pipe components and sprinkler heads. While this original project only required the relocation of 10 sprinkler drops, Horizon knew they could showcase the value built into their work and open-up future opportunities within the mall.

“While preparing for the job, the Facilities Manager at the mall asked that we set up our tools and staging site in an unfinished area of the mall that was far from the store where we were going to install. He was especially sensitive to new carpet that had just been installed in the space,” said Kirby. And we confirmed from other contractors that’s a typical set-up for retrofits. It’s industry-accepted practice to locate conventional tools, such as threaders, that require oil to operate and produce a significant amount of metal shavings far away from finished spaces to avoid ruining finished floors or walls or disturbing adjacent tenants.

Kirby agreed but asked to show the facilities manager a new tool, “Preparing small diameter pipe with a threader can have an odor and make a real mess, and that’s what the facilities manager was used to seeing. When we set up our new 1-inch grooving tool, he even asked where our oiler was.”

Kirby had set up Victaulic’s Innovative Groove System (IGS) RG2100 Roll Grooving Tool, a fast, mess-free solution for grooving 1-inch hard-pipe, and planned to install *VicFlex*™ Series AH2-CC fittings, a braided flexible sprinkler hose with an added captured coupling that expedites installation to the branch line. Choosing these Victaulic IGS and *VicFlex* solutions meant that Kirby and his team could eliminate the need to thread and the mess and odor associated.

“After showing the facilities manager the

IGS products and how the new grooving tool and flexible fittings worked, he gave us permission to setup inside to complete the job,” explained Kirby. “Aside from how clean it was, utilizing the Victaulic IGS and *VicFlex* solution also helped us reduce a large portion of both the pipe-preparation and installation time. Not only did the system install 4 times faster than if it were threaded, by eliminating wrenches, we were able to minimize the wear and tear on our fitters’ shoulders and prevent injuries.”

Once Kirby and his crew completed the job and recharged the system, the facilities manager brought in additional staff from the facilities team to examine Victaulic’s IGS grooving tool and *VicFlex* products along with Horizon’s quality of work. Steve Kirby has kept in contact with the Virginia mall’s facilities team, hearing from them a couple weeks after completion, reaffirming their satisfaction working with Horizon Fire Protection Inc.

“This would have been a one-and-done job for us if it was not for the cleanliness and speed of Victaulic’s products which played a huge role in impressing the customer,” added Kirby. *“The RG2100 is one of the best tools we have ever purchased for our installers.”*



**RG2100 Roll Grooving Tool**