



### DUE FOR A DESIGN UPDATE

In 2011, an iconic, Des Moines-based financial services company unveiled its plans to begin a massive renovation project on its downtown Des Moines world headquarters. Built in the early 1940s, the vision for the original campus had been to create an assembly line type space for processing insurance claims with efficiency being the top priority. But the digital revolution changed everything, and it left the company with a massive amount of dreary space that had quickly become a drain on productivity and an even bigger drain on resources as the company maintained facilities designed for a bygone era.



Encompassing as many as nine buildings, the aging campus needed a design update to emphasize collaboration over processing efficiency. Many of the tasks that were paramount for the business's daily operations had already been automated using electronics and computers, leaving about 70 percent of the now knowledge-based workforce stuck in buildings designed for paper processing.

### PRIMARY GOAL



The newly renovated buildings are designed to create open spaces, enabling employees to work wherever is comfortable for them, and to easily collaborate with any of the company's 15,000 global employees or outside vendors and clients. To do this required renovating, rewiring, redecorating and installing new fixtures throughout the campus. But renovating a building from the 1940s poses some unique challenges.

### ASBESTOS REMOVAL

Asbestos, the versatile and once lauded material used in everything from adhesives to electrical wiring, is the carcinogenic compound that lurked in each of the nine buildings. While undisturbed asbestos poses no significant danger, and is an excellent fireproofing and soundproofing material, removing floor tiles, ceiling tiles, electrical wiring and piping insulation coated with asbestos can be extremely hazardous. The renovations that the company was undertaking required removing all of the asbestos-laden materials before upgrades could take place.



## TEAMS THAT WORKED TOGETHER

Ryan Companies was selected as the general contractor, and DCI Group was selected as the construction manager on the renovation. Being a Des Moines-based company, DCI Group looked to keep as many aspects of the project as local as feasible. But when dealing with asbestos, they needed specialists who could properly handle and dispose of the dangerous substance while maintaining the highest levels of project safety, especially because the campus and buildings were not to be closed during the renovations.



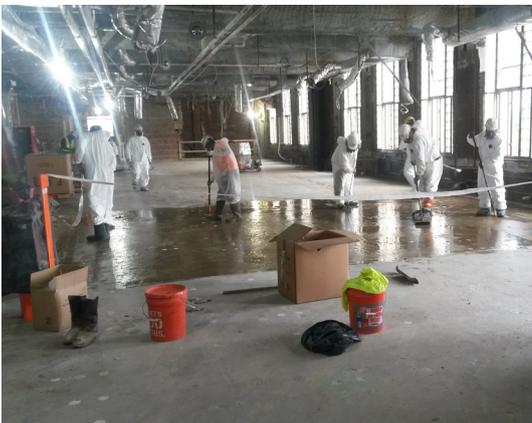
## AT TO HANDLE ABATEMENT

On the recommendation of another construction firm, AT Industries was hired as the abatement specialist for the project. The Kansas City based firm that recommended AT did so on the recommendation of an oversight manager who saw AT's methodical, well-executed, timely and unfailingly safe approach to abatement work first hand.

The buildings may have been the first west of the Mississippi to have air conditioning, but it certainly wasn't the first to use asbestos. Asbestos could be found in almost every part of the building, including inside the walls, the fireproofing, the floor tiles, some of the pipe fittings and in the building's unique, if antiquated, radiant heat system that once kept the building warm by heating the walls. Before removing the asbestos, everything that could be salvaged or scrapped from the inside of the building without any danger was removed by a demolition contractor, leaving only the components that still contained asbestos. Now it was AT's turn.



Each portion of the building that was to be abated had to be completely and carefully sealed off from the rest, ensuring that no asbestos was left behind and that none escaped through other means like the ventilation system. Each area had to be contained, and a negative air pressure system setup for safety. Each area had special access zones set up as well, with a dirty room, a clean room and a shower so that abatement workers could safely enter and exit the area without risking exposure. With the area now sealed, AT completed the demolition that had been started by the previous contractors.



## THE ABATEMENT PROCESS

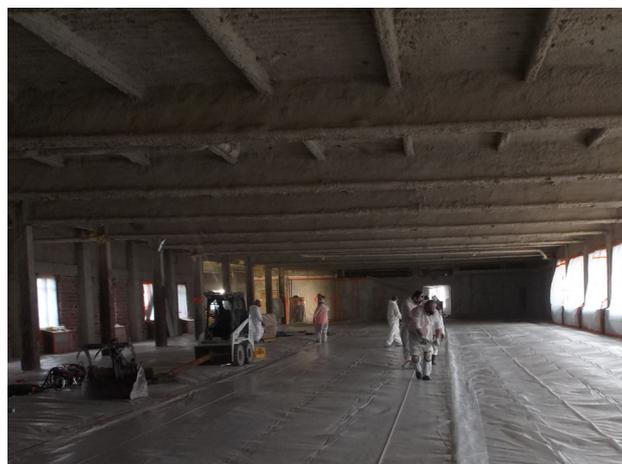
Removal of the fireproofing was one of the most important aspects of this process, and one of the most difficult.



Every piece of the fireproofing for the building contained asbestos, and it had been applied in a thick layer that covered the ceiling of each floor from wall to wall. Removal required special tools and that special precautions be taken to protect those working in and around the environment.



To expedite the removal process, we used a proprietary tool that our team developed and crafted in house, specially for this project. The tool was built like a large scraper and fitted onto the bucket of our Bobcat construction lift, allowing us to take off large chunks of the fireproofing material at once. Because AT Abatement is part of the AT Industries family, it took advantage of the services offered by its sister company, AT Sheet Metal, and had the specially-fitted tool both designed and built in Kansas City.



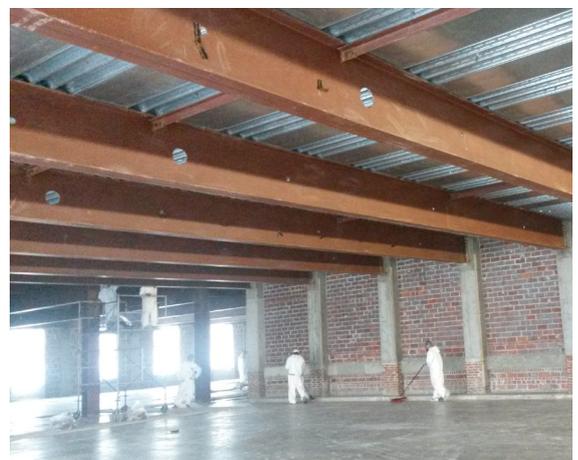
The AT team removed the panels, walls and flooring, exposing the asbestos so that it could be properly abated. Unlike the previous demolition team though, nothing that AT removed was recycled. Everything that had been exposed to asbestos was loaded into cubic-yard boxes with a special liner, sealed, rinsed, carefully logged and labeled, and then transported for disposal at a sanitary landfill.

After the tool took the majority of the asbestos off of the ceiling, the AT Abatement team used aerial lifts and scaffolding to reach it and abated the entire ceiling again, by hand, to get a thoroughly asbestos-free area.

Using hoses and water, we cut down on airborne asbestos and trapped most of it on the floor tarps, where disposal was easy. Any particles that did escape were caught by the HEPA air filtration system.

## SAFETY IS A TOP PRIORITY

Everything that came into contact with asbestos was either thoroughly cleaned or properly disposed of before being allowed outside the dirty area. Equipment was all decontaminated, while clothing, like the paper suits the abatement teams wear, was destroyed daily. One of AT's partner companies performed air sampling and testing throughout the process, ensuring that the building was a safe environment to work in before, during and after abatement. Through the entire abatement process, the top priority was always safety – for employees and the public alike.



In the abatement business, that means sticking to established procedures and not cutting corners. When an unexpected OSHA inspection took place during the course of this project, the



AT team was never even concerned about receiving a citation, because every team member follows the procedures that keep everyone safe, every time. AT's record on safety was a significant reason that it was brought in to abate this building.

### **ALL ASBESTOS REMOVED**

AT Abatement worked section by section through the affected floors in the complex, performing demolition and abatement, and were closely followed by teams upgrading the facilities. As soon as AT finished

abatement, a team immediately came to install new, asbestos-free fireproofing. Following them were teams setting up and installing new wiring, new insulation, new lighting, new paint, installing new fixtures and more.

### **30 MAN AT TEAM & 10 MONTHS LATER**

It took the daily work of AT's 30-man team for nearly 10 months to complete the project. The clients were extremely pleased with the organization of our team and the safety procedures they continually observed.



While AT finished its portion of the project in late 2015, the overall renovation of the complex is still ongoing. The entire project may not be completed until the end of 2017, when the company is slated to open all of its newly renovated, energy-efficient and modernized facilities.

The companies that AT worked with were so impressed with the professionalism and the quality of AT's work that they are planning to work together on additional abatement and demolition projects already in 2016.

