BlazeMaster®
FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEMS

Case Study

Trammel Crow Insists on Fast-Paced Construction Schedule to Maximize Investment Return at Buckhead Village Tower

Type of Construction:
High Rise Condo

Installation Type:
New

Location:
Atlanta, Georgia

Scope of Project:
Heads: 3,520
Sq. Feet: 320,000
Stories: 19 + 2 below grade

Fire Sprinkler Contractor:
Affordable Fire Protection

BlazeMaster® CPVC Fire Sprinkler System Chosen to Minimize Costs and Increase Occupancy Rate for High-Rise Condo Project in Atlanta's Trendiest Business Section

"When you buy expensive property, there's an even greater need to finish the project quickly and realize an early return on the investment," said Pat Wilson, vice president of construction for Trammell Crow Residential, as he described the rationale for the very demanding construction schedule set forth for Buckhead Village Tower in Atlanta's trendy Buckhead section. With Atlanta's current real estate boom (especially in the Buckhead vicinity), "expensive" may be an understatement in this case.

Smart Numbers, a real estate tracking firm, says that appreciation is out of control in Atlanta where people are "going nuts" to live there. A recent analysis indicates that people who want to live in Buckhead are willing to pay just about anything to do so.

The Atlanta Business Chronicle recently referred to Buckhead as the shopping mecca of the Southeast with more than 1,400 retail units and in excess of $1 billion a year in sales. The city's reputation for fine shops is so well known that it's estimated that a full 40 percent of Buckhead's shoppers come from more than 100 miles away.

Other positive publicity that is keeping Buckhead forefront in developers' minds is The Robb Report which rated Buckhead as one of America's 10 "Top Affluent Communities" for beautiful mansions, best shopping and fine restaurants.

Given this type of positive press and low vacancy rates, Trammel Crow has high hopes for its new Buckhead Village Tower, a 19-story high-rise condo tower located in the heart of Buckhead. The 270-unit complex is expected to be completed during the summer of 2006 with prices expected to range from $170,000 to nearly $400,000. The product offering is out-of-the-ordinary, starting with the tower's location which offers breathtaking views from each of the private balconies.

First-class finishes are found throughout the units, including high-end cabinetry and granite countertops. The one- and two-bedroom units feature nine- and ten-foot ceilings, while the penthouses offer 22-foot ceilings in the living areas.

The condo tower will be connected to an office building via a parking deck. In the bottom level of the office building there is retail space to offer residents the benefit of a live-work-play combination lifestyle.

The massive project is described by insiders to be on a comparatively fast-paced construction schedule to not only leverage the current popularity of Buckhead, but also to ensure a quick return on a sizable investment made by the developer.

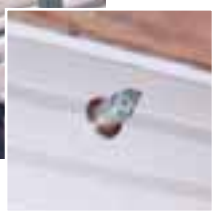
"Trammel Crow has made a significant investment in this property," said Wilson. "We cannot afford any construction delays or schedule changes."

The company's focus on deadlines and profitability is what finalized the decision to use a BlazeMaster® fire sprinkler system throughout most of the project. Compared to steel, a BlazeMaster CPVC system offers considerable cost advantages, primarily as a result of labor savings – as much as 50 percent, depending on the size of the project and nature of the construction.

"Normally a project of this size in a concrete building would have a steel fire sprinkler system," explained Milton Crosswy, president of Affordable Fire Protection, the fire sprinkler contractor for

Now listed for more types of applications than any other non-metallic system.

the project. "That is just the norm in this part of the country. However, we have a long history with Trammell Crow and work very closely with them. We were aware of their budget and timing concerns on this project and told them it had to be done with BlazeMaster CPVC pipe and fittings. It was not hard to convince them to make the change." Because it is a solvent joining system and the BlazeMaster CPVC piping is somewhat flexible, it can be attached directly to a concrete ceiling. With steel there is a threaded pipe and screwed fitting which requires a split ring hanger dropping from a ceiling to support the pipe. This limits the finished ceiling height.



This isn't the first time that Affordable has converted a Trammel Crow project from steel to CPVC. They recently were hired for another project involving student housing. Although the plans specified a steel fire sprinkler system, Crosswy and his team priced the project with a side-by-side comparison of steel vs. BlazeMaster CPVC pipe and fittings. They also invited the regional BlazeMaster CPVC sales/ technical representative to make a presentation regarding the benefits of CPVC over steel. In the end, Trammel Crow made the decision to switch. They have been a strong supporter of BlazeMaster CPVC fire sprinkler systems ever since.

"When the Trammel Crow people saw how much money they could save, it was a very easy decision," said Crosswy. In the case of Buckhead Village Tower, Crosswy estimates that it would have cost twice as much to sprinkler the high-rise with steel.

Crosswy confirmed that his company has actually declined jobs that did not include a BlazeMaster CPVC fire sprinkler system because of a project's tight budget or schedule. "There are many times when a project just doesn't make sense with steel," said Crosswy.

The cost savings related to a CPVC system is primarily a result of the easy installation. Cutting is easier. There is no pre-fabricating, threading or soldering required so field modifications can be made easily. A solvent cement bonding system is used to connect the pipe. Since the CPVC pipe weighs less (about one-sixth the weight of steel pipe), it is also easier to maneuver on the job site.

Also important in the decision-making process was the quality and reliability of the BlazeMaster CPVC system. This was critical especially due to the high profile nature and upscale location of the new building. The BlazeMaster system met the needs of both Affordable and Trammel Crow for reliability on this project. The pipe and fittings are immune to the effects of Microbiologically Influenced Corrosion (MIC) to offer a longer, low-maintenance service life. In addition, the BlazeMaster CPVC system offers better flow characteristics than a steel pipe system which allow for the option of downsizing pipe.

"We've been doing business with Affordable a long time," said Wilson. "We have faith in them and we rely on them to make product recommendations that are in line with our expectations. Most of our projects together include a BlazeMaster CPVC fire sprinkler system. It's just a good fit for us and our business. And it is certainly a good fit for Buckhead Village Tower.

For more information, call 888-234-2436, e-mail blazemaster@blazemaster.com or visit www.blazemaster.com

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