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REHAU Provides Potable Plumbing Solution for West Texas A&M University

LEESBURG, Va., July 21, 2005 – Originally constructed in the late 1960s, the main dining hall at West Texas A&M University's (WTAMU) campus in Canyon, Texas, has served many a hungry college student over the years. By 2004, deteriorating water quality caused by the corrosion of the dining hall's antiquated galvanized steel potable water pipes had worsened to the extent that a complete re-piping job would be necessary.

"The dining hall's water quality had become so compromised that the kitchen staff needed to run the water for a period of time after any extended length of shut down before being able to use it," said Roger Wilson, master plumber at WTAMU.

In addition, significant leaks had formed to the point where stainless steel sealing clamps had been installed as often as every two to three feet, with pinhole leaks continuing to form.

"When we originally approached the wholesaler, Morrison Supply Company, we were looking for a clamp that would go over a clamp," Wilson explained. "We soon realized that it was time to replace the complete system."

Greg Levassar, sales representative for Morrison Supply Company in Amarillo, Texas, encouraged Wilson to consider REHAU's RAUPEX[®] cross-linked polyethylene PEX-a pipe and INSULPEX[®] pre-insulated RAUPEX pipe products for the re-pipe of the 56,000 square-foot

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facility and its 68 plumbing fixtures. “The flexible nature of RAUPEX would allow for easier installation in the challenging crawl space area underneath the kitchen floor, while the pre-insulated INSULPEX would conserve on the required steps of installation,” Levassar explained.

REHAU sales coordinator Peter Schumacher worked with Wilson and other facilities and maintenance staff at the university to further educate them on the benefits of these products in relation to the project’s challenges.

“There were numerous challenges with this job, the first being very tight quarters in the space where the new pipe would be run,” said Schumacher. “RAUPEX and INSULPEX were a natural fit as their long coil lengths would reduce installation time. In addition, the use of EVERLOC® fittings allowed for simple, reliable connections to be made despite the cramped conditions.”

As the exclusive dining hall for WTAMU is responsible for serving 11,500 people each week, an additional challenge was posed by the fact that the extensive re-pipe job would need to be completed during the school’s winter recess. Also, the university planned to utilize onsite maintenance staff—who would be using REHAU products for the first time—to complete both the tear-out and re-pipe portions of the job.

“The small window of installation time, coupled with the need to train the general facilities staff on the use of the products, made it all the more important for the plumbing material to be easy to work with,” Schumacher stated.

REHAU plumbing engineers specified RAUPEX cold water pipe in ½-inch to 2-inch diameters for the main cold water supply line. Additionally, INSULPEX pipelines in 1¼-inch, 1½-inch and 2-inch diameters were specified for the 160-degree hot water line, which would be run from the building’s mechanical room via the crawl space to numerous areas of the dining hall kitchen.

In conjunction with specifying materials and assisting with the initial design layout, REHAU provided onsite training to the university’s maintenance staff. REHAU plumbing engineers were also onsite to assist the staff during the initial stages of the re-pipe.

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“We were very pleased with this project from all aspects,” said Wilson. “The materials were easy to work with and helped us conserve time on the job, including the pre-insulated nature of INSULPEX saving on the step of insulating the hot water line post-installation. In addition, the 180-foot, two-inch diameter RAUPEX main cold water supply line was installed in just 30 minutes using only one EVERLOC coupling.”

The complete tear-out and re-pipe of the job by WTAMU's facilities and maintenance staff was finished in a short eight days. According to REHAU's Schumacher, the same job would have probably taken about 30 days to complete using rigid copper plumbing. “Not only did utilizing REHAU products save a significant amount of time on this project and subsequently allow the university to finish well within the tight window, but we estimate a savings of approximately \$10,000 in material and labor,” Schumacher said.

Since completion of the dining hall project, REHAU's RAUPEX pipe and EVERLOC fittings have also replaced copper recirculation lines to supply water to the campus irrigation system, and have additionally been used in the transition of a residence hall into a laundry facility.

Wilson and the university are currently working with REHAU to specify heating and plumbing products for projects in an additional five buildings at WTAMU, including the replacement of an original steam heating system with radiant heating.

“REHAU's product quality, ease of installation and professional product support all helped solidify our decision to use them on additional projects,” said Wilson.

REHAU, a global polymer processing company with more than 50 years of experience, offers innovative design solutions and customer service programs. With a commitment to continuous product development and uncompromising quality, REHAU has emerged as a leading system supplier to automotive, industry and construction. An independent, privately held company, REHAU has the expertise and versatility to cater to a diverse customer base—from small businesses to major corporations.

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TO THE EDITOR: Please do not convert REHAU to lowercase. Thank you.