

MAPEI BRINGS THE WORLD TO VISITORS AT THE INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL IN CLEVELAND

Walk through the doors of the dazzling new Intercontinental Hotel in Cleveland and you will find the world at your feet. A 2,600-piece granite-stone map of the world greets visitors to the lobby of the combination hotel and cutting-edge business conference center. An array of MAPEI products were used to help place the stones that make up the mosaic and a similar 1,200-piece stone compass mural.

The mosaics are among the most stunning features of the hotel, which is another crown jewel in Cleveland's continuing renaissance. Acme Arseno Co. turned to MAPEI products time and again while installing the tile and stone features that add timeless beauty to a structure designed to meet 21st century business needs. "The special project conditions and the wide range of MAPEI projects seemed like a good marriage," said Kevin Macko of Acme Arseno Co., the contractor that performed the installation. "MAPEI was consulted from day one."

Located on the campus of the world-famous Cleveland Clinic Foundation medical institution, the Intercontinental Hotel caters to business clients in an ever-changing, ultra competitive global economy. The hotel features 300 guest rooms and 23 suites, 35,000 square feet of event space, and 28 guest rooms designed to serve the needs of large groups.

Meanwhile, the hotel's conference center boasts a 500-seat amphitheater. Each seat includes a data port for high-speed Internet access, a standard dial-up modem and an audience-response keypad. Other features include surround sound, microphones at each seat and a robotic camera that zooms in on individual audience members. Amphitheater meetings can be broadcast to any room in the hotel.

The conference center also houses an 8,000-square-foot ballroom featuring viewing screens that drop from the ceiling for audiovisual presentations. The ballroom can be separated into three sections and can accommodate up to 1,000 guests.

While the InterContinental Hotel boasts some of the most advanced meeting technologies in the Midwest, old-world elegance was not forgotten in the facility's design. Installers used custom-fabricated stone to install more than 300 countertops for suites and other locations, as well as fireplace surrounds, decorative backlit onyx panels and window ledges.

However, it is two decorative murals that form the hotel's *piece de resistance*. "The mosaics feature over 20 different granites, ranging from the size of a quarter-dollar to about 12 inches square, beat into a fresh mortar bed," Macko said.

MAPEI sales representative Tony Mancuso said laying the thousands of stones into the mosaic pattern presented a major challenge. Unlike tile, each stone had its own unique size and shape.

"You had these mosaics with all these tiny pieces," Mancuso said. "That makes it very hard to grout, because the mud comes up. It squishes up between the joints."

Mancuso brought the problem to MAPEI's Technical Services Department, and received a possible solution: Mix *Keracolor S* with *Keracrete* and set and grout the project in one step. Macko's team followed the advice, which worked beautifully.

Installers also used MAPEI products in other locations throughout the hotel project. They waterproofed shower pans in hotel bathrooms with *Mapelastic™ PRP 315* and set exterior vertical granite tile with *Granirapid®*. Mancuso said installers also used *Quickcem® 101* on walls throughout the hotel to level them out.

Macko says MAPEI products – and the company's 10-year warranty -- were the perfect fit for the project. "With any condition that arose, we were able to work out an appropriate solution with consultation," Macko said. "MAPEI was instrumental in helping to make this a successful project."