References

Skyhouse



Uponor involvement

Project highlights

- General contractors: Novare Group, Atlanta; Andrews Urban, Austin
- Engineering firm: Jordan & Skala Engineers, Dallas
- Mechanical contractor: Kilgore Mechanical, Houston
- Architect: Smallwood, Reynolds, Stewart, Stewart & Associates Inc., Atlanta
- System: Uponor AquaPEX® plumbing system

Products used

- Uponor AquaPEX pipe sized from 2" to ½"
- ProPEX® Engineered Polymer (EP) Fittings
- Milwaukee ProPEX Expansion Tools

Building confidence with Uponor PEX

Witness the premium customer experience during this hands-on support as this Austin Texas apartment complex converts... With a growing trend to live downtown, Austin, with its bustling nightlife and thriving business community, has spent the last decade adding condos and apartments to its ever-expanding skyline. Atlanta-based Novare Group added a 320-unit, 23-story high-rise to the downtown scene with its SkyHouse-branded high-rise; joining Orlando, Houston and Dallas who recently added their own downtown SkyHouse condominiums.

The initial design for the project included copper for the plumbing system, but when engineering firm Jordan & Skala in Dallas, an advocate of Uponor PEX plumbing systems, came to the project, they specified Uponor PEX instead. Kilgore Mechanical, a large Houston-based contracting firm, had not used PEX in previous commercial jobs, but they decided to give it a try with the Austin SkyHouse project.

Project Facts:

Location	Completion
Austin, TX, USA	2014

Building Type

Multi storey building

Project Type

New building

Contractor ‘excited’ for future projects after premium customer experience with hands-on support from Uponor

To aid with the installation, Uponor’s technical sales rep Eric Lane and local rep firm Pepco Sales were on hand to provide support since both had recently been involved in other SkyHouse condominium projects in different Texas cities.

When the engineering firm saw the design and studied the project, they became convinced that specifying PEX would be advantageous over a copper design, and Pepco worked closely with Kilgore to get the installers trained and comfortable with, to them, a brand-new method for plumbing.

‘‘We did a lot of company and jobsite training,’’ Uponor’s Eric Lane said. ‘‘We even set up mock-up rooms for the general contractor and the building owner to show them the benefits of PEX and the ease of making connections.’’

And Pepco’s Brittany Moreland took the show-and-tell a bit further by visiting recent Austin-based PEX projects with Kilgore Mechanical and the two contractors, and, even more effectively, toured projects that were in the middle of PEX installations.

‘‘It was helpful for them to see other projects in process,’’ Moreland said, ‘‘and it spurred a healthy conversation among peers on the benefits of using PEX over other products.’’

During the first week of installation, the installers had many questions and the installation itself was slower than the installers expected. ‘‘We have come to know that the learning curve can be a bit overwhelming in the first few days of a project when contractors switch from copper to PEX,’’ Lane said. ‘‘But after the first week, I visited the site again and the same guys were raving about the speed of installation and the reliability of the connections. They especially loved that there was no need for soldering.’’

When the project was completed, Kilgore Mechanical had become a firm believer in the benefits of PEX. ‘‘Normally, on large commercial jobs, one floor is poured and then contractors come in and pull the plumbing, HVAC and electrical. But Kilgore Mechanical was able to run PEX ahead of schedule so the general contractor was not waiting on them to complete the job, and therefore they could move on to pouring the next floor quicker,’’ Lane said. ‘‘This is a very important benefit, and Kilgore Mechanical never worried about causing any delays. In fact, because of the speed of the PEX installation, I think Kilgore Mechanical inadvertently helped the other trades stay on top of their allotted time schedules.’’

And with this initial installation under its belt, Kilgore is excited to move forward with more PEX jobs on future installations.





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