



Mission Yogurt, San Jose International Airport

When You Cannot Put Plumbing Where It Needs to Go

CONTRACTOR:

Legends Group, Inc.

Mission Yogurt selected AcornVac's vacuum plumbing system for their new food court in the Norman Y. Mineta San Jose International Airport because it solved a construction stopping problem. AcornVac's system guaranteed plumbing leaks from food court waste lines would not occur let alone penetrate the baggage handling area below the food court.

AcornVac was the chosen solution because the vacuum system:

- Will protect expensive CTX (Computer Tomography X-ray) machines from potential water damage.
- Is a flexible solution that would accommodate changes to the food court layout should they be required in the future.

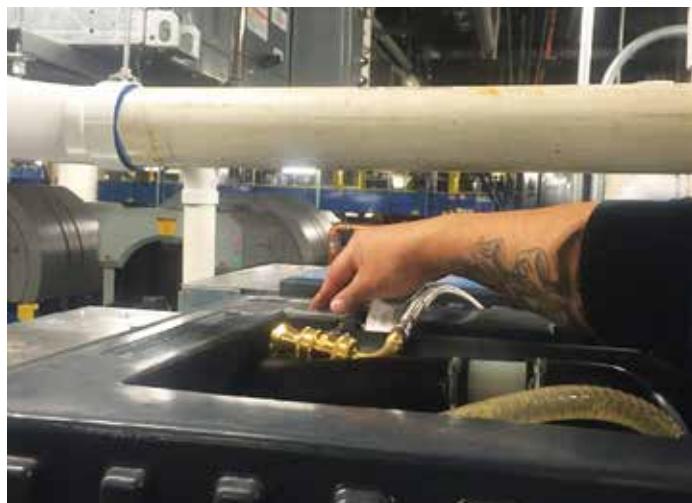
THE PROBLEM

In 2012, Mission Yogurt was all set to start the build-out of a new food court in the Mineta San Jose International Airport. It's common to have to deal with complex baggage conveyor systems that run in the level below the public areas when installing plumbing. However, this situation was unique.

Right under the area slated to be the new food court were expensive CTX machines. Airport authorities said plumbing could not be installed above those machines because of the possibility of waste line leaks damaging the CTX machines.

ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION

The only option anyone could come up with at first was to install a system of gutters to catch and redirect the water should a leak occur. It was not an elegant solution, but it would protect the equipment. That idea was quickly rejected because there was not enough clearance in the space above the baggage system.



ACORNVAC A MORE RELIABLE SOLUTION

Rod Tafoya, President of Mission Yogurt, said that the general contractor, Legends Group, Inc. suggested AcornVac as a potential solution. Legends had worked with an AcornVac vacuum plumbing system on another project, and they felt the airport authorities might approve the vacuum system.

Tafoya was well equipped to grasp the mechanics of vacuum plumbing and understand the challenging airport environment. In addition to his MBA from UCLA, he has an engineering degree from John Hopkins University. His father was an engineer for the City of Denver and his mother worked at the Stapleton International Airport in Denver, so you might say owning and operating the food court in the San Jose airport as well as in Denver and San Diego was in his blood.

Representatives from AcornVac flew to San Jose to meet with the general contractor, Mission Yogurt, and the airport authorities. They explained that with vacuum plumbing waste line leakage is virtually eliminated because of negatively pressurized vacuum piping. You can literally drill a hole in the waste pipe, and not a single drop of wastewater will fall.

By early 2014, all parties were convinced that vacuum plumbing was the right solution. The airport trusted the system would protect their CTX machines and gave the AcornVac system the green light.

AN ADDED BONUS

In addition to getting the stamp of approval from the airport, Mission Yogurt liked the fact that an AcornVac system provides flexibility when it comes to architectural and space design.

Should Mission Yogurt want to change the layout of the food court in the future, the plumbing can be easily and quickly re-routed. Instead of shutting down the concessions for weeks and having to jump through hoops to get access to the baggage area below, drainage piping can be easily re-routed to accommodate any changes in food court design or layout.



Unlike gravity plumbing, vacuum waste lines don't require continuous slope – they can go straight up, over or around any obstacle. Moving a sink from one wall to another becomes an easy, overnight job.

RESULTS

The AcornVac vacuum plumbing system has been quietly working away since going online in 2014, providing drainage without a single incident. There has not been a single drop of water interfering with the critical baggage screening machines, much less falling on the bags as they make their way along the conveyor system.

While Rod Tafoya said he has no plans to reconfigure the space any time soon, should he change his mind, the vacuum system will make the job a lot easier.



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