

# For Innovation in Reconstruction...

By Patricia L. Harman

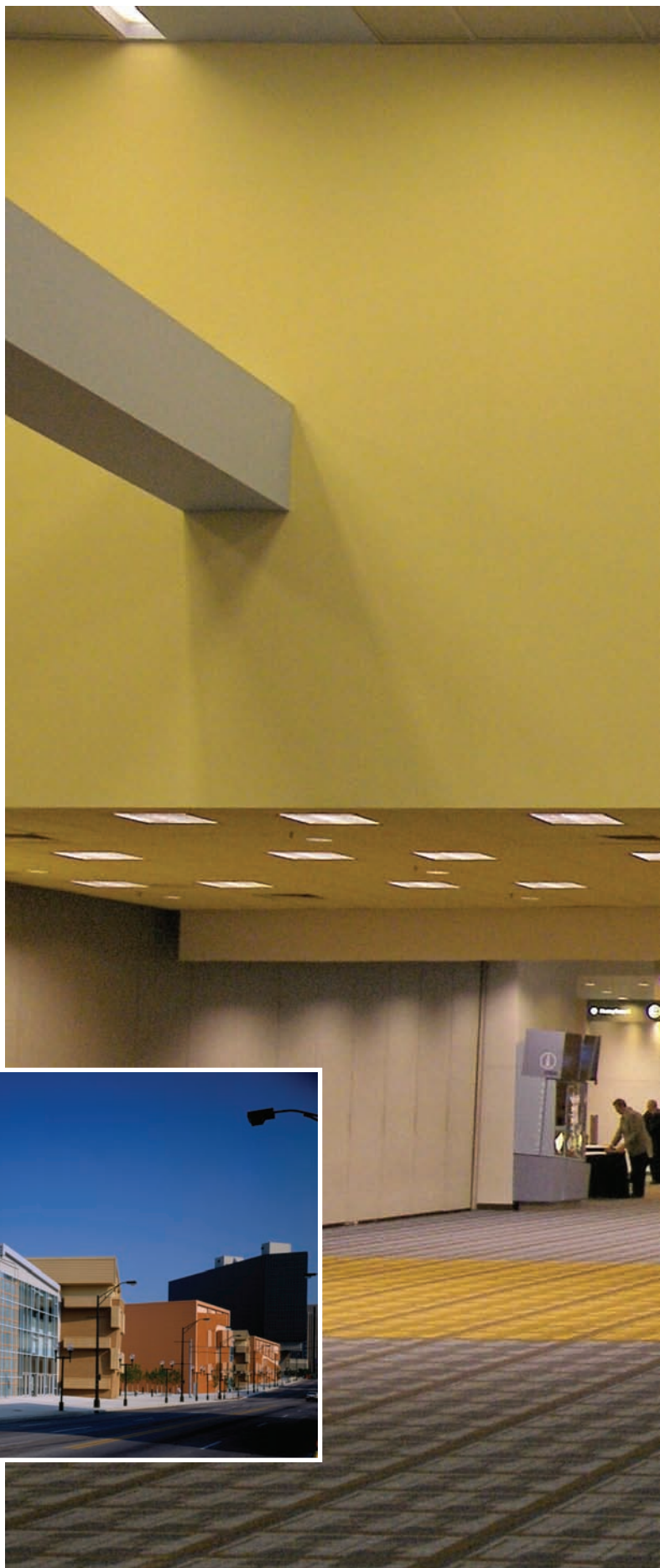
Restoration firms encounter hundreds of different perils every day, but what distinguishes a winner of the Phoenix Award from more traditional restoration or remediation projects may not be apparent when a company first arrives on the scene. This year's winner of the Phoenix Award for Innovation in Reconstruction encountered a little water damage — about 110,000 square feet of it in the Columbus Convention Center in Ohio.

The Convention Center opened in 1993 and completed a \$77 million 300,000 square foot expansion in 2001, growing to nearly 1.7 million square feet of space. It was this northern section of the Convention Center that was affected when the end cap blew off of a 16-inch water main, allowing water to rush into the building through doors, the foundation and any other entry point imaginable.

Columbus has nearly 4,000 miles of pipeline that runs throughout the city, and drawings used by the architects and other project planners working on the expansion showed the water main ending under the sidewalk in front of the building and not beneath the convention center itself. When the endcap burst at 4:30 a.m. on January 9, 2008, everyone found out otherwise.

Security footage of the event shows the water rapidly spreading throughout that wing of the building. First responders on the scene were concerned about the structural integrity of the building because of the force with which the water entered and the ensuing damage. There was enough pressure to dislodge large sections of the concrete floor and ram structural columns into the ceiling of the Convention Center.

By the time the Columbus office of Belfor USA ([www.us.belfor.com](http://www.us.belfor.com)) arrived on the scene, water was running out of every door in the building, spilling onto the sidewalks and streets. City work crews began repairing the broken main about 9 a.m.



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