

## Sonex™ Contour Ceiling Tiles Improve Children's Education at the University of Minnesota Arboretum

The University of Minnesota's Landscape Arboretum recently installed the Sonex™ Contour Ceiling Tiles in the facility's learning center interactive exhibit area and throughout the hallways leading to the various activity rooms and offices. The tiles blend with the interior and improve the acoustical quality of instructor-led classes and interactive activities.

The Learning Center exhibit area is used to educate children, typically ages five to twelve, about the natural world. Exhibits and classes include dissecting flowers, viewing tiny objects through a microscope and growing their own "garden snacks." The Learning Center also provides teachers with resources to be utilized while guiding children along the paths of the arboretum.

With as many as two school bus loads of kids in the exhibit area at once, acoustics became a priority. The echo caused by the sound of children's interactions bouncing off the marble and other hard, flat surfaces prevented teachers and guides from communicating clearly. When speech is distorted, it is more

difficult for children to pay attention and they have a harder time than adults deciphering the language. The noise and subsequent sound distortions in the Learning Center diminished the educational experience and made it more difficult to manage the kids.

"The echo was terrible," said Sandy Tanck, Manager of Youth, Family and Teacher Education. "The building just wasn't designed to control the noise generated by all the kids."

The Learning Center's interior design features, such as marble floors, white walls and peaked ceilings, actually added to the echo problem. These features required an acoustical material to blend in so they didn't attract attention from the exhibits or diminish the beautiful decor.

"As soon as they started to go up, I knew they'd make a difference," said Tanck. "You could tell the difference in the acoustics before even half of the tiles were installed. And they matched the décor perfectly. They were exactly what we needed."

Sonex™ Contour Ceiling Tiles are available in two different styles: one adheres directly to any ceiling or wall surface using panel foam adhesive; the other fits into any standard drop-ceiling grid. Depending on the style selected, the noise reduction coefficients (NRCs) range is 0.65 to 1.20. CONTOUR tiles are made of

illbruck's exclusive willtec® foam core and feature a Hypalon® coating for durability and easy cleaning with a damp cloth.

Sonex™ Contour Ceiling Tiles are available in colors that can be mixed and matched to complement any decorating requirements. Sonex™ Contour Ceiling Tiles add style to offices, call centers, lobbies, retail stores, conference and boardrooms, among many other locations.

