



## HAKISPAN 750 Provides Ceiling Painters Access Advantage at Old Cathedral in St. Louis

### *Facility Remains Open for Services During Renovation*

Michelangelo never had it so good.

The Old Cathedral in St. Louis doesn't have quite the status of the Sistine Chapel, but it is, nevertheless, a venerable place of worship with a rich history. And like the Vatican icon, the American church deserved to have its ceiling painted.

Fortunately, the ceiling painters at the Old Cathedral had a unique advantage that Michelangelo did not. Safway Services, a leading international provider of specialized access planning, engineering and equipment for challenging environments, made it possible for the church to do major interior renovations while the facility remained open for services, just as it had for nearly 180 years. The key was a unique movable platform made possible with HAKISPAN, and smart design from Safway.

The needed interior paint work at first looked like it would come with a heavy cost, both in terms of money and in terms of serving the faithful, according

to Eric Thacker, Safway's project manager for the St. Louis Branch. Based on the capabilities of another scaffolding provider for the exterior aspects of the church renovation, the general contractor, Musick Construction, assumed the interior would be a maze of floor-to-ceiling scaffolding for the duration of the project. This would mean the church would be closed to

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Sunday Mass, weddings and many other important services.

Only when Safway got a chance to bid on the access project was the “pleasant surprise” of the HAKI trusses revealed.

“By using HAKISPAN, we came up with a way to provide the necessary access,

without closing the church,” Thacker said, adding, “Plus, it was thousands of dollars cheaper to do it this way.”

HAKI trusses are lightweight, modular, easy to handle and can be quickly connected to create long, strong spans. The spans are often used to support enclosure systems, but can be adapted for use anywhere a strong, large temporary span is needed.

In this case, HAKISPAN was adapted by Safway to create a solid, safe platform that spanned traditional scaffolding set on the sides of the church, at the outside ends of the pews. The key was that the HAKISPAN was set on wheels, which rode on elevated rails set on the traditional scaffolding. The result was a rolling platform 32 feet wide from side to side, and 20 feet from front to back, about 24 feet above the pews. The platform allowed access to any part of the main ceiling during work hours and could be



easily rolled to the back of the church at the end of the work day.

“We’d never seen a rolling scaffold that high up,” said Clyde Schwartz, Musick’s project superintendent.

“You can just roll the platform back out of the way over the weekend. That was a pleasant surprise. It really sold us on Safway’s solution,” he said.

Not only did the HAKI solution allow the church to remain open during the renovation, it also saved costs and shortened the work schedule – all while insuring worker productivity, containing splatters and debris, and keeping everyone safe. The project was completed on time with no safety incidents.

Schwartz said Safway’s engineering expertise and on-site service were helpful in keeping the project on schedule.

It took about ten days to set up the rolling access platform, from the time the Safway crew came in the front door to when the painters could get to work.

“It was really good to work with Safway. They jumped on it quickly so we could get to work. You can’t beat their service,” Schwartz said.

Construction on the Basilica of Saint Louis, King, as the Old Cathedral is formally known, began in 1831 and later expanded to take on its present form, more or less, in 1853. A part of the fabric of the community since pioneer days, it was the

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only building in the neighborhood spared when the St. Louis Arch was built next door in 1965.

The interior paint job is just part of a two-year, \$65 million renovation, inside and out, that aims to restore the building to its historical grandeur as much as possible. The ceiling paint job was finished in July 2014.

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