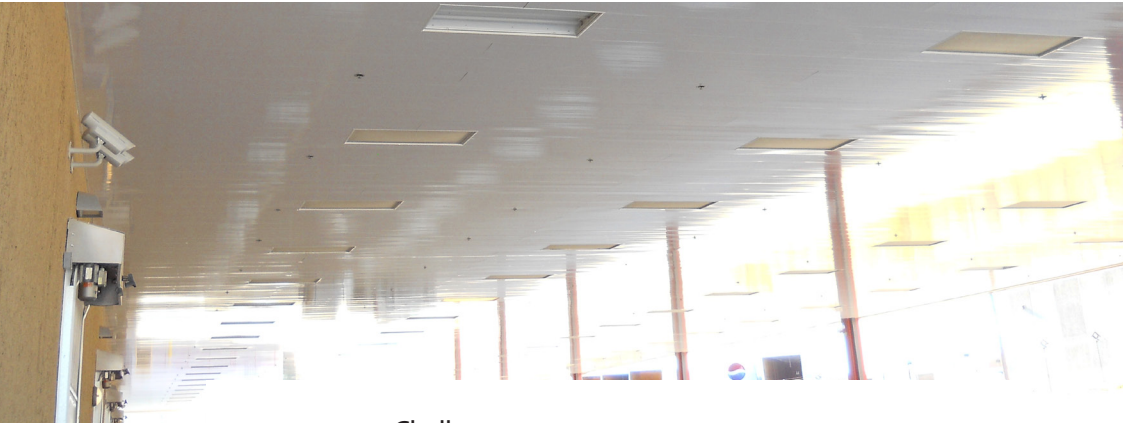


## Secured Upgrade: Homemakers Furniture Inc., Des Moines, Iowa



### Challenge

During an expansion of their facility's warehouse and office space, Homemakers executives had a 22,000-square-foot canopy installed over the drive-through furniture-pickup area. The location of the canopy allowed high winds to race through the covered space, causing uplift to the vinyl-covered gypsum tiles and aluminum grid system used for the soffit and dislodging them.

After problems continued for a year after installation, the company asked contractor Hilsabeck Schacht Inc. to upgrade and better secure the canopy's soffit while reusing the existing light fixtures installed in the original 2- by 4-foot grid.

### Solution

Vice President Jeff Hilsabeck researched a variety of options, and Homemakers executives chose Utilite™ panels from Nudo. The corrugated, plastic-core planks are lightweight, durable and moisture resistant. The high-gloss, UV coated white surface resists discoloration and offers a highly reflective surface.

"They liked the smooth, monolithic look of the panels," Hilsabeck explains. The original 2- by 4-foot grid provided a smooth surface but produced a lot of joints, he notes. The

20-foot by 16-inch size of the Utilite panels, coupled with their tongue-and-groove fastening design, created a smooth visual look.

The contractor took down the existing aluminum grid, which was too soft to support the required load, and installed a heavier gauge steel grid with wider flanges. The panels were screwed into the steel grid, with metal kickers providing additional bracing against uplift.

A key challenge arose in positioning the original fixtures, which were designed for the 2- by 4-foot grid. The installers had to plan around those modules and trim them to provide visual appeal while retaining access for maintenance and bulb replacement. The fixtures were turned 90 degrees to provide more stability.

### Result

Although the contractor hadn't worked with the Utilite panels before, the installation went smoothly. "Now that we've used it, I can see that there will be more applications where we can specify it," Hilsabeck says. "I like the way the panel handles, and I like its looks, with the smooth face. I think it has additional benefits for interior applications, where its ability to be cleaned easily and its bright surface will create a nice, clean appearance."

Homemakers' executives have been happy with their installation, he reports. "We've had high winds come through several times, with few problems. So far, so good."

Homemakers Furniture - Des Moines, Iowa - Specifier/  
Installation by Hilsabeck Schacht Inc., - West Des Moines,  
Iowa - Distributor Midwest Acoustical Supply, Des  
Moines, Iowa - Product Utilite plastic-core planks from  
Nudo - Project Square Footage: 22,000