

# The Tabernacle: Phoenix Award Winner for Excellence in Restoration

*By Casey M. Geisler*

**H**istorical buildings face a myriad of challenges to keep them in pristine condition while maintaining their functionality. Modernizing a building without losing its historical charm is a challenge in itself, and restoring these buildings takes skill and dedication to preserve their history. This year, the recipient of the Phoenix Award for Innovation in Restoration took on the task of preserving a nearly century old building.

Built in 1910, The Tabernacle in Atlanta, Ga., was originally named for Dr. Leonard Gaston Broughton. First known as the Broughton Tabernacle, this building was the birthplace of the Georgia Baptist Medical Center and nursing school. From there it was converted into the Third Baptist Church, with over 4,000 active members until the mid 1980s. It was vacant until 1996, when it was then turned into a House of Blues Club during the Centennial Olympic Games. The Tabernacle is currently owned by Live Nation music and utilized as a live music venue and site for corporate functions.



On March 14, 2008, this historical landmark was struck by the tornadoes tearing through downtown Atlanta. Throughout its modernization the original stained glass windows, maple flooring, mill-work and hand-crafted plaster details of the structure were preserved. The devastating tornado had compromised the structure of this landmark. In need of restoration in a timely manner, Rolyn Companies, Inc. ([www.rolyncompanies.com](http://www.rolyncompanies.com)), of Rockville, Md., responded to the call. Utilizing their abilities and resources, and despite numerous challenges, Rolyn was able to complete the restoration within 73 days, in time for the next scheduled music event.

The Tabernacle suffered damage to both its interior and exterior. The strong tornado blew portions of the roof off of the building, exposing the attic and rafters to the elements. The chimney collapsed through the roof, falling 50 feet on the performance stage below and exposing the interior woodwork to the weather and possible water damage. The original stained glass windows were shattered with some pieces of glass found up to 250 feet away from the building.

In order to begin working on the building, Rolyn crews first had to make sure that the building was structurally safe for workers. The hole in the roof posed a threat to workers because of the falling bricks and other roofing debris. Rolyn began by removing as much debris from the roof as possible using a 120-foot bucket truck with a drop-pan. Any unstable debris and the compromised HVAC system were removed, and Rolyn teams constructed a temporary tarp roof

