

# Recycling a mall

*Pieces and parts of City Center are crushed, melted or otherwise rendered for new uses*

By Doug Caruso  
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

As demolition crews carve up Columbus City Center's carcass, they are finding ways to recycle or reuse most of its skin and bones.

Millions of pounds of concrete have been ground into gravel for use in road construction. Thousands of tons of the mall's steel skeleton have been melted and rolled into sheets that will end up in cars and appliances.

Even the hydraulic oil from the mall's elevators found a new use — heating the headquarters of S.G. Loewendick & Sons, the demolition contractor that has been dismantling City Center since late August to make way for a Downtown park.

The 930 gallons of oil that workers took from the building are already gone, supplying about half the fuel needs for the company.

"We went through it this winter," said David Loewendick, the company's president. "We burn 2,000 gallons of it in a winter."

The effort helps save landfill space, but it's also good business. The company figured the price it could get for the scrap metal into the \$17 million the demolition job is expected to cost.

"The demolition contractors are the original green companies," said Amy Taylor, chief operating officer of Capitol South Urban Redevelopment Corp., the nonprofit group that owns the mall.

"Their bids are based on what they can recycle."

Much of the metal goes to I.H. Schlezinger, the area's largest scrap dealer, which bales it and cuts it into sizes that can easily be melted and reused.

John Miller, vice president of the company, said nearly all of City Center's structural steel has been sold to the AK Steel plant at Middletown, in southwestern Ohio. Having a local buyer cuts transportation costs, he said.

There, the steel is melted and rolled into a thin sheet for manufacturers. "The fender on your car could be from City Center," Miller said. "Or the wheelbarrow you buy or the lawn mower."

Copper wiring and plumbing parts eventually are turned back into wire and pipes, he said, and aluminum can end up as car wheels, screen doors and many other things.

The mall's 17,774 fluorescent light bulbs went to a recycler who captured the gas inside and divided the metal and glass for recycling, Loewendick said.

Crews also captured the Freon from City Center's air-conditioning system. The gas was sent to Eastpointe A/C and Refrigeration, a Columbus company that can reuse it to top off older systems still in use. Newer airconditioning and refrigeration systems do not use Freon.

The building's air-handling systems and electrical equipment — including switches, transformers and breaker boxes — were sold to companies in Minnesota that will refurbish and resell them.

Demolition workers used carpets from the mall's stores to pad walls of nearby buildings during demolition so they wouldn't be damaged. After that, the carpets went to a landfill, Loewendick said.

Some things go straight to the company's demolition landfill, he said. There's not much you can do with painted wallboard and wood with nails in it.

"If it's got wallpaper or paint on it, the mills won't take it back."

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DISPATCH



**JONATHAN QUILTER DISPATCH**

There's not much left of City Center. By the end of the year, Columbus Commons park will open at the Downtown site.



**FRED SQUILLANTE DISPATCH**

Most debris from the City Center demolition, seen from E. Town St., is being recycled.