

FOURTH
QUARTER
2025

ARCHITECTURAL precaster

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Watching YOU

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FOURTH QUARTER 2025



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Jesse Thompson, Northern Design

Our Convention in Austin was a Great Success

Thank you to everyone that was able to come and the sponsors that helped make it happen. As you will see in this edition, the award winners were top notch.

Mark your calendars, we'll kick off the year with a webinar on January 14th, just in time for plant inspections. Northern Design's very own Brian and Jessica Vaillancourt will walk you through how to set yourself up for success and ensure your next inspection goes smoothly. Then, mark your calendars for the APA Spring Workshop, April 24-26 in Charlotte, North Carolina. It will be another valuable opportunity to learn, collaborate, and strengthen our network. More information will be sent as the details are finalized.

APA has had an outstanding year. We've accomplished much, starting with a new testing system and new firm for

inspections. It has been a pleasure serving as your President for the last two years. As we look forward and I pass the torch to Jennifer Welding our incoming president and welcome Lisette Mariner our Executive Director, I know they will continue to foster the growth and technological advancements we have accomplished.

I wish everyone happy holidays and a prosperous new year in 2026!

Jesse



SAVE THE DATE

2026 APA
Annual
Convention
Sept. 25-28, 2026

Vinoy Hotel
St. Petersburg,
Florida





An In-Depth Look at an APA Award Winning Project

THE POPULOUS HOTEL UNLIMITED DESIGNS

APA 2025 Craftsmanship Award Winner & Design and Manufacturing Award Winner

Architect: Studio Gang

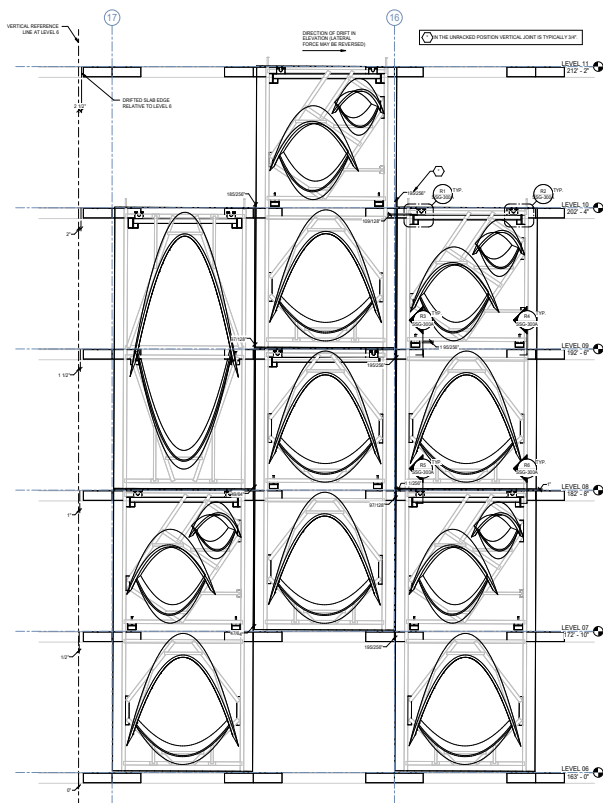
Contractor: HCBeck, LTD

Overview

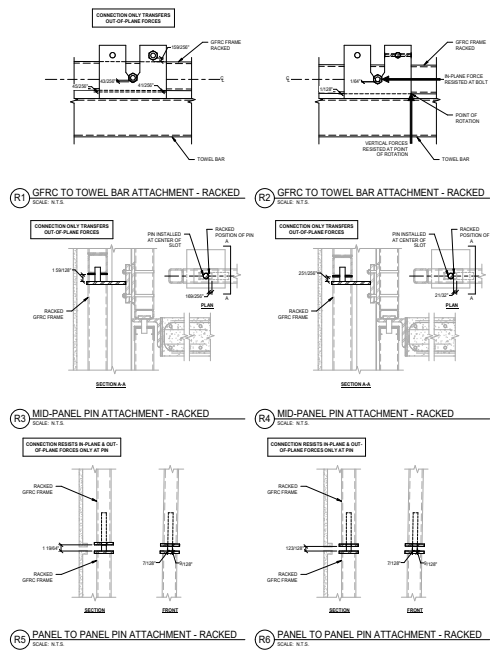
In downtown Denver, a new building stands that seems to bring a mountain forest into the heart of the city. Inspired by the white and black aspens native to Colorado, this project's exterior is more than decoration—it is a bold example of contemporary design meeting regional identity, innovation, and technical mastery. In a commercial landscape crowded with the conventional, this structure sets itself apart through both vision and execution, speaking to the future of architectural precast in America's urban revitalization efforts.

Design Excellence

The project team was tasked with creating an exterior that captured the spirit and ambiance of the mountains, integrating this natural influence into the DNA of the design. The entire facade employs glass fiber reinforced concrete (GFRC) panels crafted to simulate the appearance of aspen bark, with window openings carefully positioned and shaped to recall the dark knots among the aspen trunks. These unique elements not only echo the region's signature flora but also reinforce the building's relationship with its natural surroundings—an example of contextual architecture in the city's core.



1 RACKED ELEVATION (WT-03)
SCALE: 3/8"=1'-0"



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PERMIT SET

RACKED ELEVATION
(WT-03 & WT-04)

DATE: 07/15/2023
DRAWN: SSS/MLC
CHECKED: SSS/MLC
SCALE: 3/8"=1'-0"

SSG-300C



3/8 GRAVITY
 3/8 SEISMIC
 3/8 FLEX

① FRAME VIEW
3/8" = 1'-0"

② DETAIL 1/2" = 1'-0"
 ③ DETAIL 1/2" = 1'-0"
 ④ DETAIL 1/2" = 1'-0"
 ⑤ DETAIL 1/2" = 1'-0"
 ⑥ DETAIL 1/2" = 1'-0"

ALL FLEX ANCHORS AROUND THE WINDOW (CIRCLED IN GREEN) TO BE WELDED AFTER CURING, BEFORE DEMOLDING

GRAVITY ANCHORS POINT UP; FLEX ANCHORS POINT DOWN;

ANCHOR TAKE OFF		
SYMBOL	TYPE	Q-TY
	CURVED FLEX	1
	FLEX	50
	GRAVITY	4
	SEISMIC	4

REVISIONS:

APPROVED SIGNATURE:

STAMP OF APPROVAL		
<p>14TH + COURT</p> <p>245 14th Street, Denver, CO 80202</p>		
PROJECT	DTY #:	
		2
MATERIAL:	FACE:	
DRAWER: ORIGIN	BACKING:	
DATE: 10/17/2023	COLOR: N/A	
WEIGHT:	FINISH: HDG	
	SOFT:	
PART #:		
14-FPX.1		
PAGE #:		
SF.B-PX.1		

Manufacturing Excellence

The GFRC panels form a robust rainscreen system, engineered with Colorado's severe winter weather in mind. The panelized facade withstands heavy snow and wind-driven rain, with a weather-resistant barrier behind the panels for added resilience. Achieving this performance required up-front planning and precision: window openings of varying sizes demanded exacting coordination, and the building's terrace used custom, double-sided panels that added significant complexity. A high degree of 3D scanning, mold-building, and CNC programming was essential, as was the creative thinking of Unlimited's creative team.

Challenges

The details always matter, but on this project, no detail was too small for Unlimited's team, from maintaining consistent color by batching all light-colored aggregates at once to inventing new installation techniques due to limited lay-down space at the tight urban site. "The installers had to use an extra hoist connected to the crane so they could lift the panels off the truck at a 90-degree angle from the final orientation on the building. This allowed for a smoother rotation into the final position on the building. It was pretty cool to watch it all come together on site." said Jennifer Welding, CEO of Unlimited Designs.

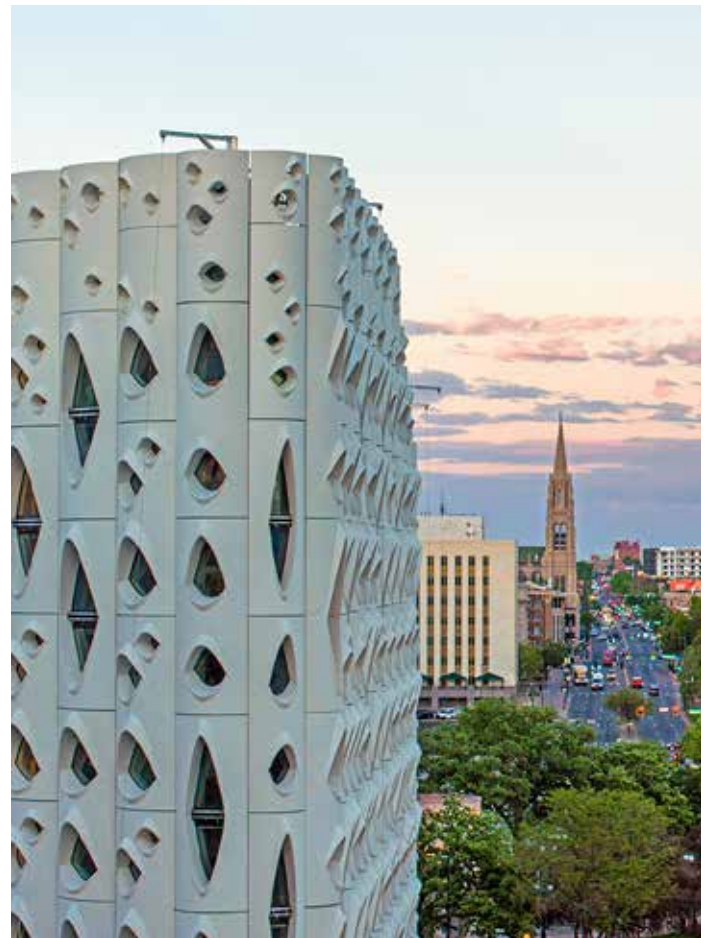
Lessons Learned

As with any award-winning project, the real story is one of teamwork. Mold builders, CNC operators, Casting and finishers all played a critical role, their collective creativity and eye to detail is the only way to ensure all components of the quality control processes were in synch. Lessons learned included the importance of perfect alignment for double-sided panels—an insight hard-won through late-stage troubleshooting and collaborative problem-solving.

The finished building is three-sided, a first for Unlimited Designs, and stands as a testament to the design team, manufacturing team and site crew. Welding said, "Our entire staff went above and beyond in the execution of this project, and we are thrilled that their work was recognized with two APA awards! Especially the

Craftsmanship award which is an award given by our peers in the industry. They understand the complexity and thought process that goes into a complex project."

The building doesn't just reference its mountainous backdrop; it claims its place within that landscape, providing Denver with a bold new landmark and an ongoing case study in the possibilities of today's architectural precast.



BY THE NUMBERS:

Production time: From starting of frames to substantial finish 16 months
 Total Square Feet of Material: 83,000 SQ. FT.
 Weight: 500 Tons of GFRC
 Pieces: 374 panels
 Molds: 87 unique molds



APA Annual Convention Wrap-up

The APA's 2025 Annual Convention in Austin, Texas, was a resounding success that brought the industry together for an inspiring, educational, and fun-filled event. Attendees were welcomed to the "Live Music Capital of the World" and immersed in Austin's vibrant culture — all while forging memories and meaningful professional connections.

The convention's education kicked off with a Saturday session from Brad Humphrey, who provided attendees with actionable strategies for business growth and talent recruitment.

Sunday maintained the momentum with Scott Millson's keynote, "The Frequency of Excellence," where his BE5 Framework inspired participants to foster cultures of excellence and lead with intention. In addition, Brian Miller's session on the impact of precast concrete on the build environment delivered compelling and practical insights into materials, mix designs, and sustainability.

Networking opportunities were plentiful during the cocktail receptions and casual breaks where industry

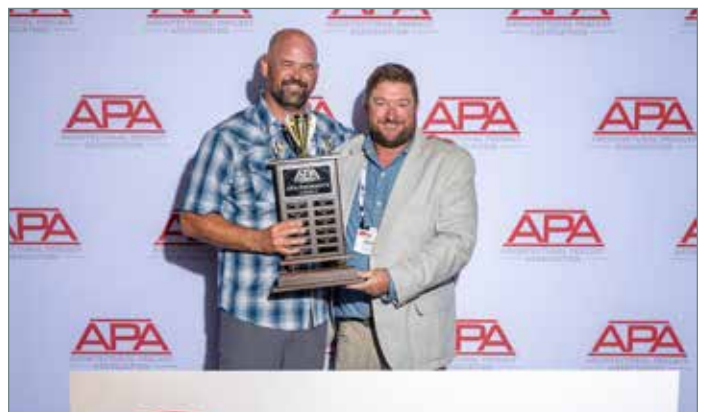
partners and vendors showcased new technologies and solutions. One of the signature highlights was the 11th Annual JBT Championship Golf Tournament, where laughter, competition, and philanthropy met — all for a great cause supporting The Cure Starts Now Foundation in memory of John Bradley Thompson.

Sunday's Awards for Excellence Dinner Ceremony capped off the day with a celebratory evening where the outstanding work of APA members was recognized.

The final day of events included Monday's plant tour at Austin Block Hardscape, which offered a detailed look at their cutting-edge Quadra automation technology and the facility's innovative approach to production.

This year's APA Annual Convention in Austin not only delivered top-tier education and invaluable networking, but also deepened a sense of community and collaboration. Don't miss next year's meeting at the historic Vinoy Resort on the shores of Tampa Bay in St. Petersburg, Florida – September 25-28, 2026!





Developing Competitive Compensation Packages That Attract and Retain Top Talent

Business owners and managers often find themselves navigating complex HR and employment law issues—especially when it comes to employee compensation. To shed light on one of the most frequently asked topics, the FCCFA’s Human Resources Consulting Partner, Seay HR, shared insights from Sissy Egan, HR Consultant.

According to Sissy, one common question involves how employers can ensure their compensation packages can be used to help attract and retain talent. Below, she answers some of the most common questions.

Q: Why are competitive compensation packages so important for employers today?

A: Competitive, well-rounded compensation packages are essential because they help attract and retain top talent. A poorly designed plan, on the other hand, can demotivate key employees and even drive them to look elsewhere. Since COVID, employees have begun asking a different question: “How will this job support my life and career?” When compensation accurately reflects an employee’s value and provides financial stability, it sets the foundation for a long-term, rewarding relationship between employer and employee.

Q: How should employers think about the purpose of a compensation plan?

A: A strong compensation plan does more than pay wages; it helps attract and retain talent, reward performance and productivity, promote internal equity, and align with organizational goals and budgets. A comprehensive plan should include four components: base pay, variable pay, benefits, and non-monetary rewards. Together, these elements form a structure that’s both motivating and sustainable.

Q: Can you explain what those four key components look like in practice?

A: Of course. Base pay is the fixed salary or hourly wage

for performing a role. Variable pay includes bonuses, commissions, or incentive structures tied to performance. Benefits typically include healthcare, retirement plans, paid time off, and other perks like profit sharing or stock options. Finally, non-monetary rewards—such as professional development, flexibility, and recognition programs—help foster engagement and satisfaction beyond direct pay.

Q: Once those elements are in place, how do organizations make their compensation packages stand out?

A: It requires strategic planning, benchmarking, and adaptability. Businesses should build a strong base pay structure, incorporate meaningful benefits, and review their compensation regularly. The most effective employers monitor both internal data and market trends to ensure their packages remain competitive.

Q: Let’s walk through each step. How should employers set base pay?

A: Start with research. Look at government reports, industry salary surveys, and competitor packages to gauge current rates for each role. Then conduct a competitor analysis—compare similar positions in different industries and geographic areas to spot gaps. From there, create structured pay grades using job families and market data, considering factors like experience, qualifications, and company profitability. Finally, review and adjust for inflation annually. Many organizations now include automatic cost-of-living adjustments, which employees really value.

Q: How about variable pay?

A: Bonuses and incentive programs are excellent tools to reinforce performance and align individual and company success. They keep employees motivated and create a sense of shared purpose. When employees see their efforts directly tied to business results, it strengthens both loyalty and productivity.

Q: What are the most attractive monetary benefits employers can offer today?

A: Health insurance, child-care assistance, 401(k) matching, profit sharing, and generous paid time off are consistently valued. These benefits support an employee's health, financial future, and work-life balance, which are all critical factors in retention. In fact, great benefits often weigh just as heavily as salary in an employee's decision to stay.

Q: And what about non-monetary benefits—how do they fit in?

A: Non-monetary rewards are about culture. Offering flexible work schedules, recognition programs, and leadership development opportunities can greatly improve morale and commitment. I always recommend surveying employees to learn which perks they value most—personalizing these benefits ensures they truly resonate.

Q: How does Seay HR help organizations design these kinds of strategies?

A: At Seay HR, we work with clients to develop structured, scalable compensation plans tailored to their goals and industry. We focus on aligning pay practices with company growth, performance, and employee satisfaction while ensuring compliance and internal equity. Beyond compensation, we advise on HR structure, leadership coaching, and organizational design to help businesses build workplaces where employees thrive.

Q: Any final thoughts for employers reviewing their compensation strategies?

A: The key is flexibility. Compensation plans shouldn't be static. As the job market, cost of living, and employee expectations evolve, so should your pay strategy. Revisiting compensation regularly not only keeps you competitive but shows employees that their value is

recognized and respected—that's what keeps top talent with you for the long haul.

Resources

- [1](<https://seayhr.com/blog/how-to-develop-competitive-compensation-packages-that-attract-and-retain-top-talent/>)
- [2](<https://seayhr.com/blog/category/hiring/>)
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Sissy Egan is Vice President of Seay Management Consultants. As a team member since 2004, she advises on HR compliance with employment regulations and resolution of employment matters in the workplace. Her experience and knowledge include employee handbooks, OFCCP compliance, EEO-1 reporting, compensation analysis, and employee opinion surveys.



Sissy Egan

APA members with HR questions can send their HR questions to Sissy and the consulting team at admin@seay.us or call the Seay HR Hotline Toll Free at 888-245-6272.

APA Announces 2025 Award Winners

The Architectural Precast Association (APA) Awards for Excellence program annually recognizes excellence in design, manufacturing and craftsmanship of architectural precast concrete. In 2025, seventy-one award entries were received, with thirteen awards being granted: nine in Design and Manufacturing and four in Craftsmanship. The awards were presented during the APA 2025 Annual Convention in Austin, Texas.

In announcing the awards, APA President Jesse Thompson said, "The APA members' commitment to making the highest quality products can be seen in the beauty and craftsmanship that went into all the submissions. The 2025 award winners represent the best of the best in architectural precast."

The Design & Manufacturing Awards are judged by a jury of architects

who evaluate the overall design of projects, looking at factors such as beauty, proportion, scale, innovation, and technical detail, among others.

The Craftsmanship Awards are judged by a jury of architectural precasters and focus on issues, such as forming, overcoming obstacles to production and overall quality of individual precast units.

DESIGN & MANUFACTURING AWARD WINNERS

Project: Port Covington, Baltimore, MD

Precaster: Arban, Carosi, & Diana Precast, Woodbridge, VA



Project: Virginia Tech – Undergraduate Science Laboratory, Blacksburg, VA

Precaster: Arban, Carosi, & Diana Precast, Woodbridge, VA



Project: UCSD Viterbi Family Vision Research Center, San Diego, CA

Precaster: Unlimited Designs, Salt Lake City, UT



Project: Populus Hotel, Denver, CO

Precaster: Unlimited Designs, Salt Lake City, UT



Project: Union Square, Somerville, MA

Precaster: Northern Design, Loudon, NH



Project: UHS Cedar Hill Hospital , Washington, DC

Precaster: Arban Carosi and Diana Precast, Woodbridge, VA



Project: Sunnyvale Civic Center, Sunnyvale, CA

Precaster: QCP-Corp., Los Angeles, CA



Project: Casper Wyoming LDS Temple, Casper, WY

Precaster: Unlimited Designs, Salt Lake City, UT



Project: 1900 Crystal Drive, Arlington, VA

Precaster: Arban, Carosi, & Diana Precast , Woodbridge, VA



CRAFTSMANSHIP AWARD WINNERS

Project: The Cleveland Museum, Cleveland, OH

Precaster: Advanced Architectural Stone, Plano, TX



Project: Virginia Tech – Undergraduate Science Laboratory, Blacksburg, VA

Precaster: Arban, Carosi, & Diana Precast, Woodbridge, VA



Project: Texas Tech University – Jones AT&T Stadium South End Zone & Womble Football Center, Lubbock, TX

Precaster: DeVinci Precast, Oklahoma City, OK



Project: Populus Hotel, Denver, CO

Precaster: Unlimited Designs, Salt Lake City, UT



This year's jury was comprised of:

Ping Cai, AIA, LEED BD+C (Jury Chair) Senior Associate, Senior Architect, Grace Design Studios

Jim Gabel, AIA, LEED, V.P. CannonDesign

Ritsaart Marcelis, AIA, NCARB, V.P. and Design Leader, CannonDesign

APA Scholarship Winners

The Architectural Precast Association would like to congratulate Luna Pitaniello and Dylann Monastra on receiving the 2025 Tom Cory Scholarship. This scholarship is awarded to students who display outstanding academic achievement in the pursuit of an architectural degree.

Luna Pitaniello is a graduate from the University of Vermont where she earned her Bachelor's degree in Economics and a Minor in Community and International Development. She is currently pursuing her Master of Architecture at the University of Utah. She currently holds a 3.75 GPA and is active on the American Institute of Architecture Students where she has served as Event Chair. She is also an active member of Women in Architecture on campus. Additionally, Luna has gained experience in the field of architecture by designing a community center for Salt Lake City's Japantown, integrating Japanese American cultural heritage with modern architectural strategies.

Congratulations Luna Pitaniello!

Dylann Monastra is a Senior at The University of Cincinnati where she is studying Architecture. She currently holds a 3.455 GPA and is active on the UC DAAP Craft Circle. Additionally, Dylann is gaining experience in the field of architecture by participating in a historic preservation design internship in New York City.

Dylann has also been recognized for her outstanding academic achievements. Her honors include multiple semesters on the University of Cincinnati Dean's List, National Honor Society Member, Canton Preservation Society Scholarship recipient, NAWIC Scholarship Award recipient, and Jaamison Scholarship Award recipient.

Congratulations Dylann Monastra!



Luna Pitaniello



Dylann Monastra



Someone is Always Watching YOU!

By Mack Story



You ARE a *role* model whether you want to be one or not because someone is always watching.

Think for a moment about the people working on the front lines. Each of them is a role model.

Which type of role model will have more options, more opportunities to advance and grow, and more influence among the leaders?

- A positive role model or a negative role model?
- Someone embracing change or someone resisting change?
- Someone offering new ideas and suggestions for improvement or someone who isn't?
- Someone who is just there to get paid or someone who is there to make a difference?

Stop and Think: Which type of role model are you?

Common sense reveals which type of role model will be most valuable. However, doing what is commonly understood often requires uncommon sense.

Who You Are Matters!

You are always teaching what you're modeling, regardless of what you are teaching.

There's often a lot of resistance to everything new and different by many working on the front lines. Those resisting change usually don't have very much influence with the high impact leaders, only with others who are also resistant and believe what they believe.

However, there are a few that embrace change and new things.

They have a lot of influence with the high impact leaders who are responsible for moving the organization forward.

"Example isn't another way to teach, it's the only way to teach." ~ Albert Einstein

Which team would you want to be on?

- A team moaning and groaning with little or no influence?
- A team with leaders who want your help, have a lot of influence, and can help shape your future?

Again, common sense right?

Lead Yourself with Purpose!

You would think front line team members who step up will be admired and respected by all of their peers. However, they are often ridiculed by some for "brown-nosing" or "sucking up" because they are seen as making the others look bad.

Don't let average people keep you from becoming exceptional. Some will try very hard to hold you back.

Don't let it happen. Keep climbing!

The text above is an excerpt from "*Blue-Collar Leadership & Supervision: Unleash Your Team's Potential.*" You can preview the first 5 chapters, listen to a 5 minute audio sample, & learn more about this leadership development book & the associated online video course at <https://lnkd.in/eqPJTdCa>.

Mack Story is the founder of Blue-Collar Leadership. For more information on his books, podcasts and more, go to: <https://bluecollarleaders.com>



APA MEMBER BENEFIT: HR & EMPLOYMENT HOTLINE



As valued association members of the **Architectural Precast Association**, you have unlimited access to a complimentary HR & Employment HOTLINE through our partnership with **Seay Management Consultants**. This HR & Employment HOTLINE is available to you at **NO COST** and will provide answers to your human resources, personnel management and employment related questions.

Hundreds of employee questions arise in day to day business and almost every one of them can be different – questions about COBRA, FMLA, EEOC, ADA, and so many others. Sometimes a simple

question can turn into a complicated or costly concern if it's not handled properly.

When you have a question and need an accurate, straight forward answer, simply contact Seay Management Consultants and identify yourself as an APA member.

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**Special Projects will be offered at a reduced hourly rate for clients of APA.*

Welcome back, in this edition of the APA Precaster we are covering the dying art of exposed aggregate repair.

Exposed Aggregate Repair

By Kiley Marcoe, Metro Precast & Stone Services, Inc.

Exposed aggregate finishes are not as popular as they once were, especially water washed finishes. Exposed aggregate can range from very deep exposure such as a chemically retarded water washed finish, heavy sandblast finish, to a medium sandblast finish.

Even though exposed aggregate is the easiest to repair, throughout the years I have found that people really struggle with repairing exposed aggregate precast and concrete. I have seen every technique from placing individual rocks into a blob of grout to epoxy placing the stone then grouting around the aggregate. Even if the appearance ends up half decent the concern is the life expectancy of these repair methods. Regardless of

the finish, precast repairs should be performed using the same ingredients used in precast and concrete, sand, cement, water, large aggregate, and pigment if applicable.

The first step of any repair is to develop a repair mix color through a series of samples. The plant's mix design will need to be modified due to placement differences from production to repair. Usually, the repair mix will need to be about 10% lighter in color than the production mix design.



The next step is preparation, the most important step in precast repair. Preparation includes chiseling out the damaged area to create a void 1 ½ times the size of the large aggregate, eliminate any feathered edges, and create a keyed pocked when possible.

When the area to be repaired is at a caulk joint or larger than a baseball, install mechanical anchors or epoxy set rebar and then apply a topical bonding agent.



To prevent sagging of the repair material at larger areas, use side boards to form the damaged area. Next install Styrofoam into any panel joints, it is important to not bond the repair material to more than one substrate.



Regardless of the finish, you need both a pail of mud (sand and cement) and a pail containing a mixture of mud and large aggregate. All concrete has large aggregate regardless of the finish, so it is important that the repair material contains large aggregate as well.

In pail #1 - create the mud material by mixing approximately 35% to 55% water to the dry sand and cement material until you have a peanut butter

consistency, the mix should stick to the trowel. The color of your repairs will be more consistent if the mix always sticks to the trowel from batch to batch.

In pail #2 mix the stone with some of the mud from pail #1 with as much large aggregate as possible, yet the material can be flattened with a trowel. It is important to use as little mud as possible; the material needs to be densely packed with large aggregate when troweled.



Installation of the repair. First wet the area and apply a scrub coat with the mud from pail #1. (Left image). Then apply the mix with aggregate to fill void. Do not worry about too much aggregate, you will control exposure when the repair is brushed out. Do not over trowel this will burn the repair changing the color, at this point the repair is tightly packed with stone but not flush. (Right image)

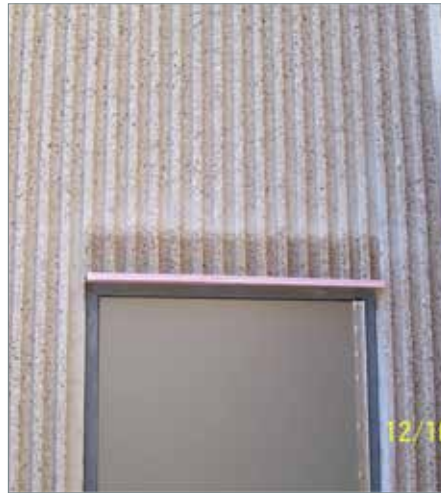


With a straight edge level, flatten the repair with surrounding substrate edge, if there is not enough mix to pack in tight with the straight edge add more mix. If there is too much mix to level flat remove some of the material. The repair must be perfectly level with surrounding substrate yet tightly packed with aggregate, check with the corner of the trowel to assure the void is filled tightly with aggregate.

When patch has started to set up (pushing with finger will not move repair) it is time to brush out, be sure not to let patch harden completely. Exposure will determine the brushing out method. On smooth and medium exposures use a sponge until the sand particles match the panel. On exposed aggregate finishes use a sponge followed by a sprayer. Brush out the repair while it is still plastic to match the substrate, do not let repair set requiring acid etching or sandblasting the next day. Heavy sand blasted panels will require patching aggregate to be sandblasted before patching.



All repairs, regardless of finish, will be installed the same way using a repair mix containing large aggregate. The exposure will be controlled during the "brush out" step. Brush out the repair while it is still plastic to match the substrate. A sand blast finish can be achieved using sponges and a water wash finish can be achieved using a spray bottle.



Follow the above procedures regardless of the finish or the size of the repair. For larger repairs simply more repair mix is required.





Until next time, Kiley Marco
Metro Precast & Stone Services, Inc.
<http://www.metroprecast.com/>

