



FIRST
QUARTER
2026

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FOURTH QUARTER 2025



In-Depth Look
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Jennifer Welding, Unlimited Designs

2026 Is in Full Swing—And Charlotte Is Next

2026 is already off to a strong and exciting start. We launched the year with a board meeting at World of Concrete and are pleased to welcome Pennoni as our new Plant Certification Inspectors. Northern Design then set the tone for the inspection cycle with their insightful webinar, "Preparing for Your Next Inspection: Tips to Ensure You Get It Right the First Time" — the perfect blend of practical takeaways and fresh perspective. Spring inspections will be completed in April.

The momentum continues as we head to Charlotte, North Carolina for our Spring Workshop. A heartfelt thank you to our host, Lucas Concrete Products.

If AI has felt confusing or just out of reach, this workshop was designed with you in mind. We're bringing it down to a practical level — what it is, how it works, and most importantly, how you can put it to use in your plant today.

The experience begins with three plant tours and a behind-the-scenes visit to the Hendrick Motorsports Heritage Center, followed by four high-impact AI sessions on Saturday led by industry experts, as well as a roundtable discussion. You'll walk away with real ideas, actionable strategies, and the confidence to start implementing AI in your operations.

Need CE credits for your renewal? This event qualifies — another great reason to register today.

Charlotte is calling. We look forward to seeing you there.

Jennifer



SAVE THE DATE

2026 APA
Annual
Convention
Sept. 25-28, 2026

Vinoy Hotel
St. Petersburg,
Florida





Curved precast seating and planters define the civic terrace and guide circulation.

An In-Depth Look at an APA Award Winning Project

SUNNYVALE CIVIC CENTER QCP

APA 2026 Craftsmanship Award Winner & Design and Manufacturing Award Winner

Architect: SmithGroup

Contractor: Hathaway Dinwiddie

Overview

In Sunnyvale, California, a new civic space demonstrates how architectural precast concrete can shape both experience and identity within the built environment. Defined by flowing forms and integrated seating, the Sunnyvale Civic Center blends landscape and structure into a cohesive public destination.

What appears as a clean and understated design is, in reality, the result of precise coordination and technical

execution. Through the combined use of glass fiber reinforced concrete (GFRC) and steel-reinforced concrete (SRC), the project transforms complex fabrication into a seamless architectural expression.

Design Excellence

The design centers on continuity—both in form and in experience. Curved seat walls, integrated planters, and terraced amphitheater elements guide movement through

the space while encouraging gathering and interaction. Each precast component contributes to a unified composition that feels both intentional and natural within its landscape setting.

A defining achievement of the project is the visual consistency between GFRC and SRC elements. Despite differing structural systems, the components maintain a shared language of color, texture, and geometry, allowing the project to read as a single, cohesive environment rather than a collection of individual parts.

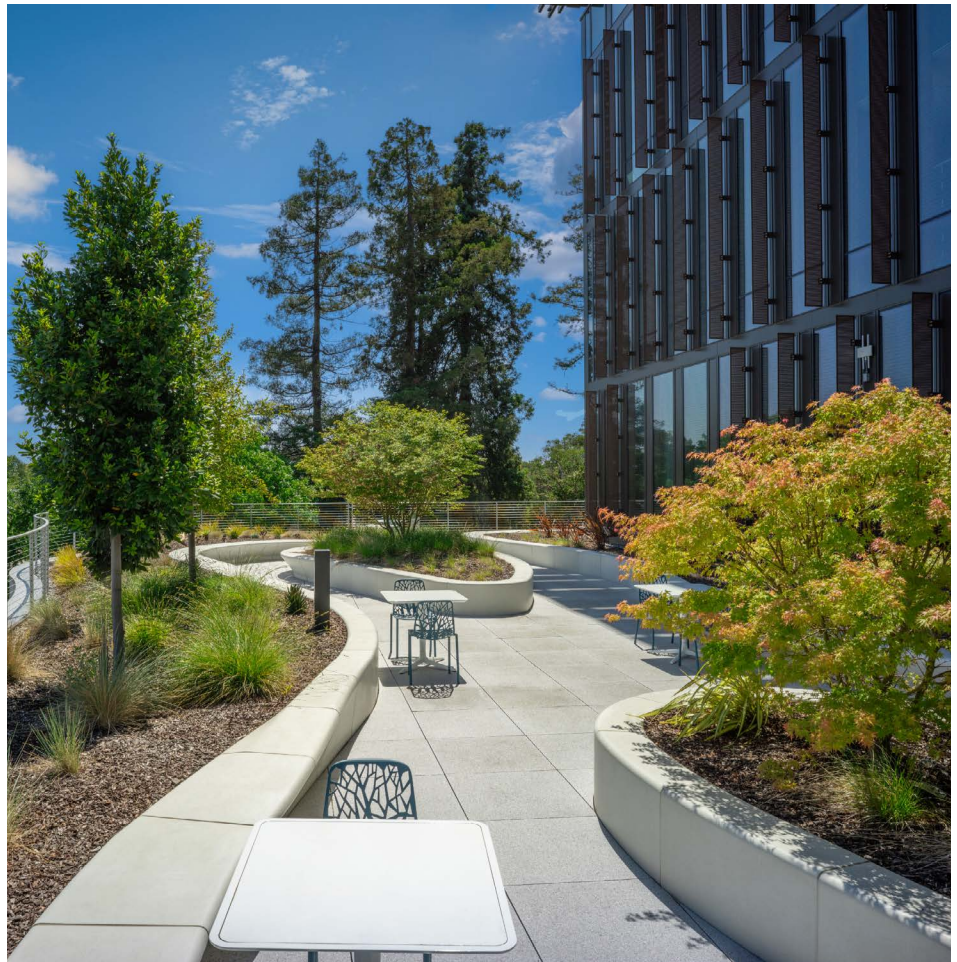
Manufacturing Excellence

Delivering that level of continuity required a high degree of precision throughout the manufacturing process. Using mix design Cmix#1240, the team fabricated 239 pieces across both GFRC and SRC systems, carefully controlling color, texture, and finish to ensure uniformity.

The curved GFRC seat walls demanded tight tolerances and consistent replication across multiple molds, while the SRC amphitheater elements required structural performance without compromising appearance. Coordination between modeling, mold fabrication, batching, and finishing teams was essential, resulting in a final product that reflects both technical discipline and craftsmanship.

Challenges

The project's simplicity in appearance belies the complexity of its exe-



“The Sunnyvale Civic Center challenged our team to push the boundaries of GFRC fabrication while maintaining the precision and visual consistency expected in public civic architecture.”

Ricardo Lopez, QCP's Quality Assurance & Technical Manager

cution. Maintaining alignment across long, continuous runs of curved seating elements required strict tolerance control and close coordination with field installation.

Equally challenging was achieving a consistent finish between GFRC and SRC components. Differences in material behavior required careful calibration of mix designs and finishing techniques to ensure a seamless

visual transition across adjacent elements.

Lessons Learned

As with many successful precast projects, early alignment proved critical. Establishing mock-ups and sample approvals at the outset helped set expectations for color, texture, and finish across all stakeholders.

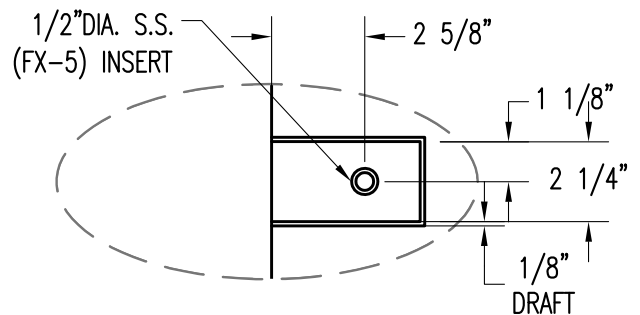
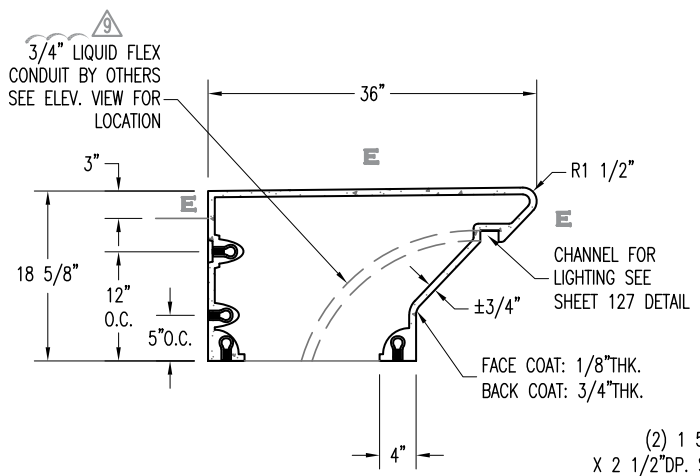
The project also reinforced the im-



PRECAST SEATING DETAILS

Section detail corresponding to amphitheater seating shown above, illustrating profile geometry and integrated lighting channel.

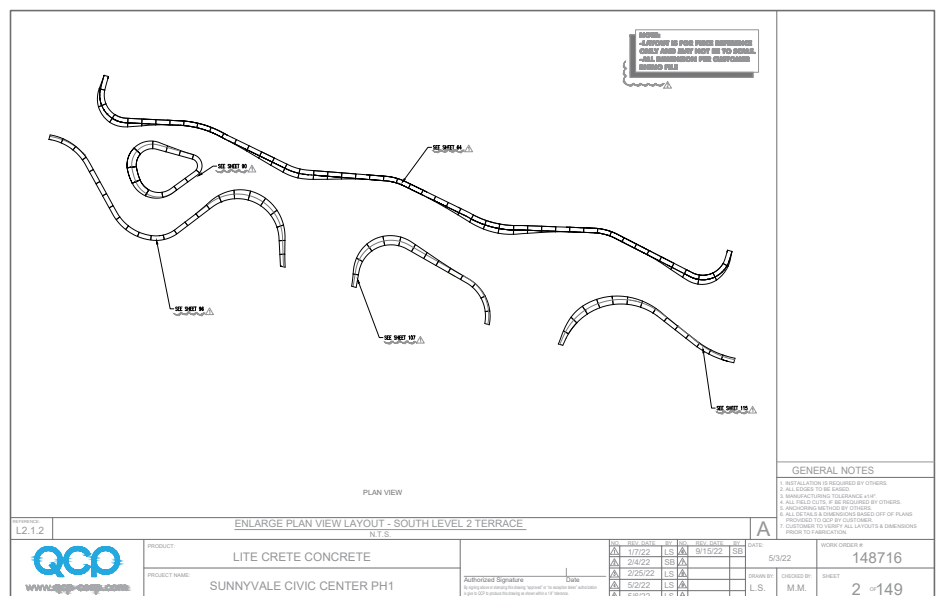
Anchoring detail illustrating connection of precast seating elements used in the amphitheater system.





portance of communication between design, manufacturing, and installation teams. By aligning production capabilities with field conditions early in the process, the team was able to navigate complexity and deliver a cohesive final result that reflects both design intent and technical excellence.

“The project’s success depended on complex coordination, attention to detail, and multi-discipline collaboration. It stands as a testament to the value of architectural precast in enhancing community spaces with durability, beauty, and precision.” says Ricardo Lopez, QCP’s Quality Assurance & Technical Manager.



BY THE NUMBERS:

Total Weight: 14,037 lbs

Number of Molds: 138

Number of Pieces: 239

Lineal sq ft of precast: 1,337



2026 APA SPRING WORKSHOP

CHARLOTTE, NC | APRIL 23-26

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REGISTER TODAY!

Should You Use AI to Monitor Employees?

These days, it feels like AI employee monitoring tools are everywhere. The pitch is simple: track what people are doing, spot problems faster, boost productivity, and keep everyone accountable.

But that pitch skips the part that actually matters: should you use AI to monitor your employees? Just because a tool can watch emails, track time-in-app, or flag “unusual” activity, does that mean it’s a smart move for your company?

Used the right way, monitoring can help with a multitude of security, compliance, and workload issues. But it can also crush trust, tank morale, and create legal headaches you didn’t see coming.

In this article, we’ll break down the most common types of AI employee monitoring, where it tends to backfire, and what a practical approach looks like.

Q: What Is AI Employee Monitoring?

A: AI employee monitoring is a broad bucket, and different tools track different things. Here are the most common types you’ll run into:

Productivity and work tracking: time in apps or systems, task activity, workflow progress, “idle time” signals, and productivity dashboards or scores

Communication monitoring: scanning work email and chat for policy issues, risky language, sensitive data, or other red flags

Device and behavior monitoring: keystrokes, mouse movement, screenshots, window focus, browser activity, and device connections

Location and field tracking: GPS, route history, check-ins, and time-on-site for drivers and field crews

Security and data protection: unusual logins, unusual downloads, access to sensitive files, and warnings tied to data loss or insider risk

The important thing is this, “AI monitoring” can mean light reporting, or it can mean full-on surveillance. That difference matters when you’re thinking through trust, morale, and risk.

Q: What Are Some Reasons To Use AI Employee Monitoring

A: If you’re looking at AI employee monitoring, it’s probably because you’re trying to solve a real problem, not because you want to play hall monitor. Here are the most common reasons companies give, and when they can make sense.

1. You want clearer accountability: When you’ve got multiple shifts, remote roles, crews spread across job sites, or work that moves fast, it’s easy for things to fall through the cracks. Monitoring tools promise a clearer picture of what’s getting done, what’s not, and where follow-ups are needed.

2. You’re trying to improve productivity: Some employers use monitoring data to spot patterns, like which tasks take longer than expected, where people get stuck, or which tools slow everyone down. In the best case, it helps you fix the process instead of blaming the worker.

3. You need help managing workload and coverage: On paper, monitoring can show whether a team is overloaded or underutilized. That can help with scheduling, staffing decisions, and preventing burnout, especially when supervisors can’t be everywhere at once.

4. You’re dealing with security and data risk: If your company handles customer data, pricing, bids, payment info, or any sensitive files, you may have a legitimate need to watch for risky behavior. The goal isn’t to track “effort,” it’s to prevent leaks, fraud, and costly mistakes.

4. You’re dealing with security and data risk: If your company handles customer data, pricing, bids, payment info, or any sensitive files, you may have a legitimate need to watch for risky behavior. The goal isn’t to track “effort,” it’s to prevent leaks, fraud, and costly mistakes.

5. You want documentation: Some industries and client agreements expect stronger oversight, especially around safety, quality control, and handling sensitive information. Monitoring is sometimes used to create a record that policies are being followed.

Q: What Are the Downsides of AI Employee Monitoring

A: AI employee monitoring can look clean and simple on a dashboard, but real life is messier. The more you track, the more likely you are to create problems you did not have before.

1. It can damage trust: When people feel watched, they stop feeling trusted. Instead of focusing on doing good work, they start focusing on looking busy. That shift hurts initiative, communication, and teamwork, especially on crews where trust is everything.

2. It can hurt morale, and drive good workers out: Most employees will tolerate reasonable oversight. What they will not tolerate is a system that feels like it assumes they are guilty until proven innocent. If your best people have options, heavy monitoring can push them to take those options.

3. It can reward activity, not results: These tools often measure what is easy to measure—clicks, time, key-strokes, and time spent in an app—rather than quality, safety, customer satisfaction, or problem-solving. That can lead to the wrong behaviors, rushing work, cutting corners, or doing busywork to keep a score up.

4. It creates “false alarms”: These tools often measure AI flags patterns, but it does not always understand context. A slow day might be a broken tool, waiting on materials, a training issue, a customer delay, or a manager changing priorities. If leaders treat the dashboard like truth, people get blamed for things outside their control.

5. It can turn into a legal and HR headache: These tools Privacy and notice requirements vary by state, and certain monitoring choices—especially content monitoring, off-duty tracking, or personal device monitoring—can bring real risk. It can also get complicated with unions,

protected activities, and claims of unfair or inconsistent discipline. their control.

6. It can poison your culture if it’s used as a “gotcha”: Even a few cases where monitoring data is used to embarrass someone, punish without listening, or play favorites can create a lasting reputation, and once you have that, it’s hard to undo.

The bottom line is that monitoring can create clarity, but it can also create fear. If you decide to use it, the way you roll it out and the boundaries you set matter as much as the tool itself.

AI employee monitoring can sound like a simple way to boost productivity, track performance, and keep people accountable. Sometimes it can help, especially for security, compliance, or field operations where you need better visibility. But if it’s rolled out heavy-handed, or kept vague, it can lead to more HR problems than you started with.

If you’re considering AI employee monitoring, the best first step is not more tracking, it’s getting your approach right, so it supports the work and protects your business at the same time.

SEAY | MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS

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.

The Other AI...Unlock "Authentic Influence" to Become Indispensable within the Trades

By Mack Story



More and more people in the trades are talking about AI (Artificial Intelligence) these days and how it's going to be impacting nearly everything in some way. There's no doubt this type of AI is coming for many white-collar jobs, but blue-collar jobs will also be impacted more and

more as time passes. Different industries will be impacted at different speeds and in different ways. Change is coming!

The Other (AI) Authentic Influence

In this newsletter, I want to focus on the other AI. The other AI that many within the blue-collar industries have overlooked for years:

- The AI that changed my life for the better, personally and professionally.
- The AI that WILL allow you to separate yourself from the masses of average as you strive to become exceptional.
- The AI that WILL increase your income at any level at any age within any industry.
- The AI that WILL accelerate your climb up the corporate ladder into leadership roles (if you want to climb; otherwise, it WILL help you excel right where you are).

What if the real key to thriving in 2026 and beyond lies in understanding the power of the other AI. What is the other AI? It's Authentic Influence. The kind that doesn't come with a title, rank, or position of authority.

Authentic Influence must be earned. Authentic Influence not only makes you employable, but it also makes you highly valuable...not only valuable, but essential when high impact leaders, who are focused on building high performance teams, realize you have the capability and desire to lead others from wherever you are...with OR without a position of formal authority.

What I'm referring to is leading from the frontlines in the

various trades, manufacturing and warehouse environments, and the wide variety of blue-collar jobs that keep our great nation running.

How do you leverage Authentic Influence? You intentionally and methodically learn to develop it. And, here's the good news. Anyone at any level can do it!

But luckily for you, most want do it. It's easy to do. However, it's easier not to do it.

Because your influence is real. It's authentic. People actually want to follow you. They don't have to follow you. Your influence is not tied to or related to a position of formal authority. It's based on who you are (moral authority), not what you are (the boss).

Moral authority is very powerful. Your value is multiplied when you can lead without a position.

Positions are overrated. Developing Authentic Influence is underrated.

Don't focus on becoming more successful (seeking a position). Focus on becoming more valuable (developing your character and competency). Those who intentionally and methodically choose to develop a high degree of Authentic Influence will rise to the top of the corporate ladder and the top of the corporate pay scale.

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>

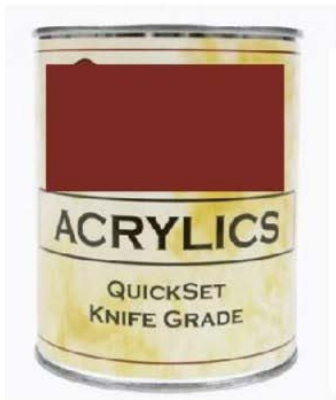
Polished Granite Repair

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

Welcome back, in this edition of the APA Precaster we will cover the repair of granite cladding.

Granite requires the use of a tinted epoxy resin to repair damaged areas. The repair process also requires a finishing technique to either mimic a polished finish or a thermal finish. Regardless of the finish the first step is to tint an exterior grade repair resin such as an UV stable Acrylic Knife Grade epoxy to match the base color of the cladding and at least one of the colors within the veining or speckling. Never use a polyester resin, polyesters are for indoor stone only.

Once the resin is tinted, apply the resin with a small trowel to roughly fill the damaged area. Do not try to smooth out the roughness, the low areas are utilized to apply the secondary colors mimicking the pattern of the veining or speckling. After the resin has completely set, polished granite repairs must be honed with a small angle grinder equipped with a series of resin pads starting with 300 grit and progressing to 3000 grit. Finally, the repaired area must be polished with polishing wax to achieve the glossy finish of the parent stone.



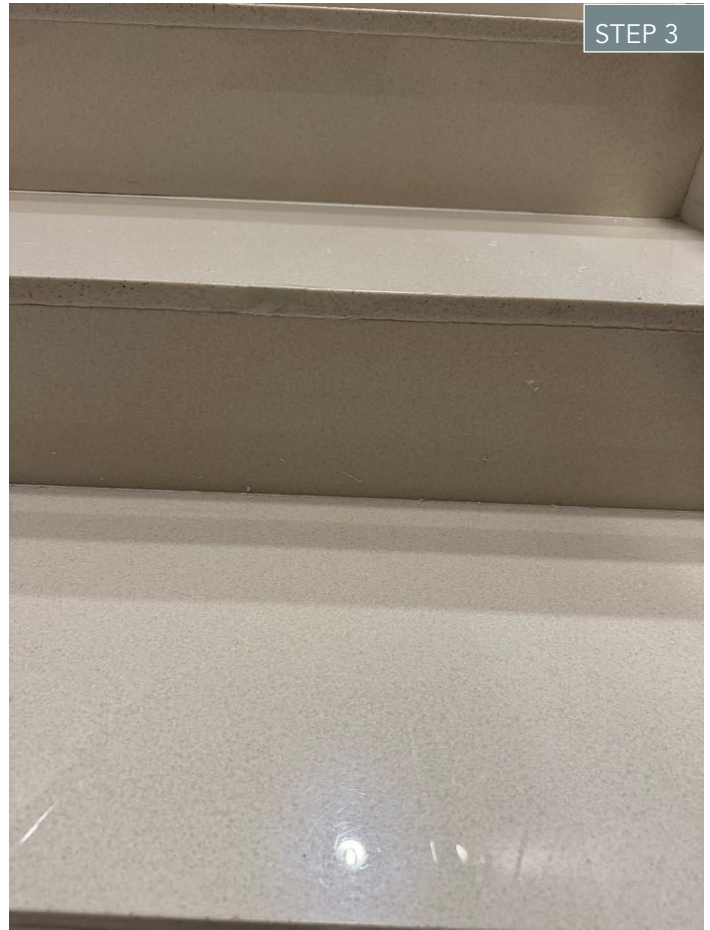
Step 1: Tint the resin to mimic the base color and to mimic the speckle color(s).



Step 2: Remove all fractured material and install the base colored resin, do not worry about making the resin perfectly level. Any low spots will be used to install the secondary colors.



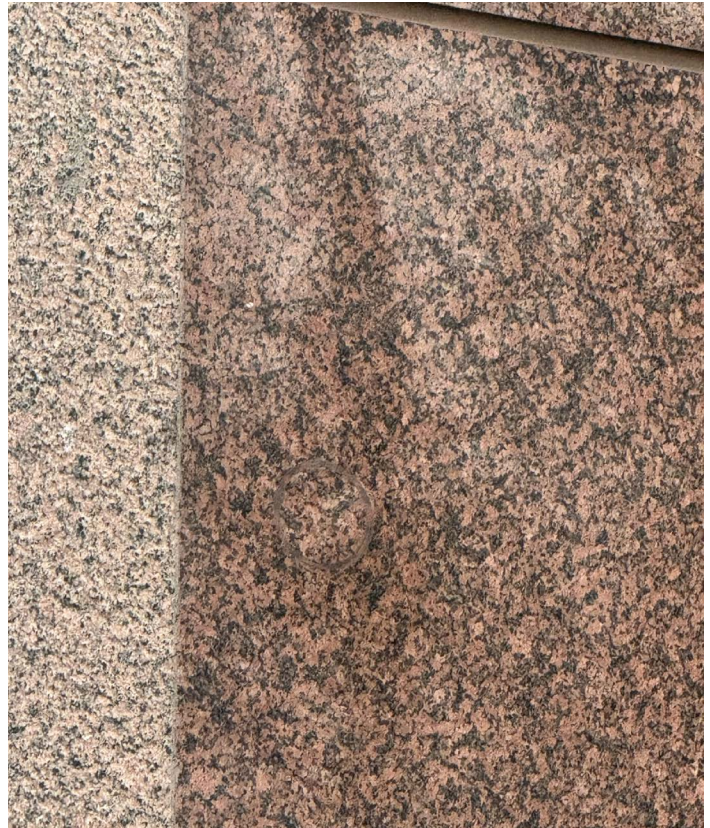
Step 3: The repair is then honed to make level using an angle grinder equipped with resin pads, starting with 300 grit and progressing to 3000 grit. Then the repair is polished with polishing wax using steel wool and soft towels.



Dutchman Granite Repair

Larger damaged areas require Dutchman repair. A stone "Dutchman" is a repair technique involving the insertion of a new or salvaged piece of stone into an existing damaged facade to replace spalled, cracked, or deteriorated sections. This method ensures a durable match in color and texture, secured with structural epoxy and/or stainless-steel pins. .

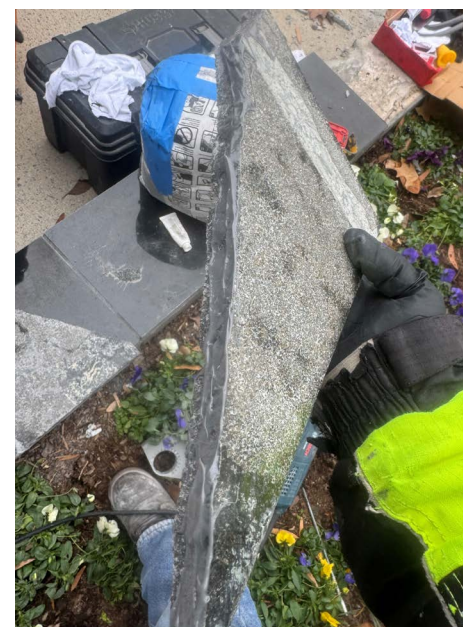


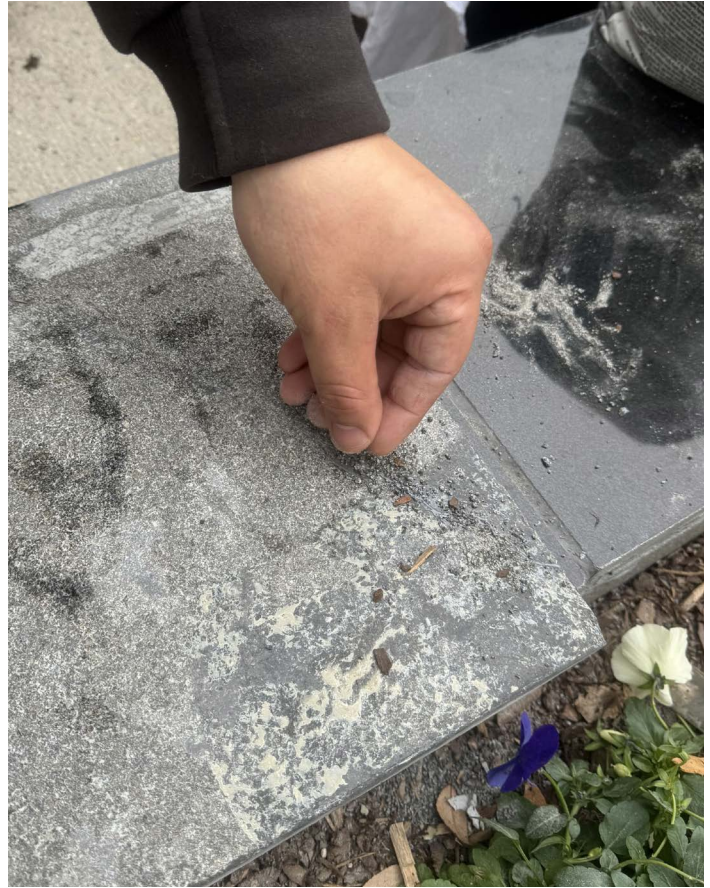


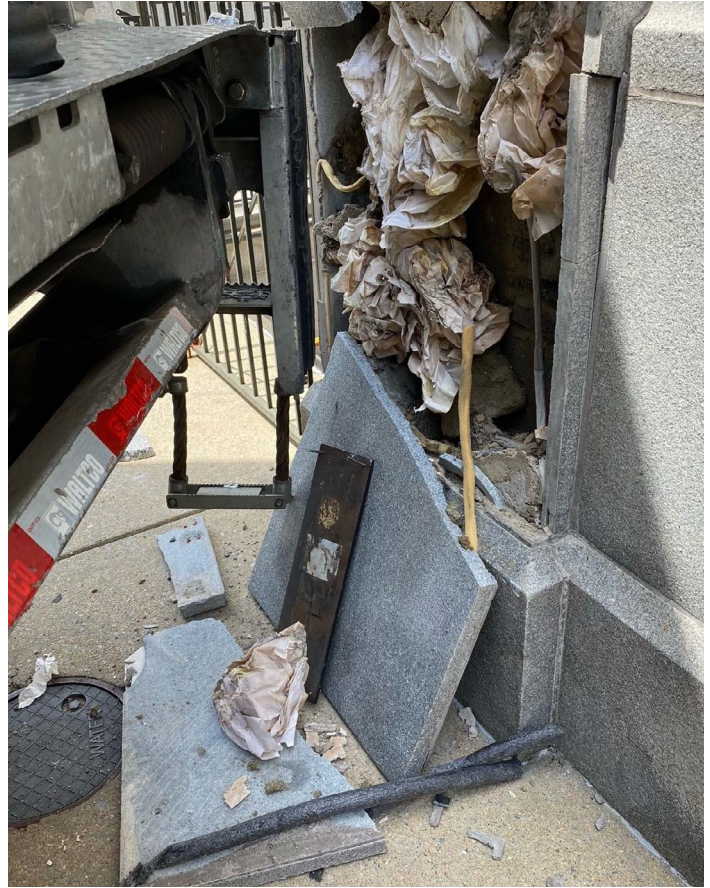
Granite with Thermal Finish

Granite with a thermal finish is repaired much in the same way as polished granite. Stone granules are added to the resin at 2 parts tinted resin to 1 part stone granules. Then additional stone granules are sprinkled onto and pressed into the repair resin.

Stone granules can be purchased, or extra granite stock can be pulverized. Once the resin has completely set, a mini grinder equipped with a diamond blade is used to distress the face of the repair to mimic the thermal finish.







Until next time, Kiley Marco Metro
Precast & Stone Services, Inc. [http://
www.metroprecast.com/](http://www.metroprecast.com/)

