# RAiNA REPORT

First & Second Quarter 2026



FEATURE ARTICLE

## Fundamentals of Rainscreen Design Part 1:

**What Makes a Wall a Rainscreen?**

# RAINACONFERENCE2026

# WEATHERING THE FUTURE

## RAINSCREENS, RETROFIT AND RESILIENCE

## PORTLAND, OR | SEPT 30, 2026

**Register Today**

# Presentations

**Why Building Owners Don't Buy Rainscreens: The Human Side of Resilient Construction** presented by **Tyler Smith, BEE Engineers**

**Finding Closure: Integrating Architectural Cavity Closures into the Rainscreen Assembly for Durable Design** presented by **Emma Mahoney & Jeffrey Kerr, SGH**

**Rainscreen Reality Check: Designing for Movement, Resilience, and Real-World Performance** presented by **David Young, RDH Building Science Inc**

**Rainscreen Backup Wall Design Considerations and Lessons Learned for Better Coordination Between Trades** presented by **Corey Zussman, AECOM Hunt**

**Panel Discussion on Retrofit** with **Geoff Duck, Brian Nelson, and Jake LaManna**

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# A Letter from the Executive Committee

As summer moves quickly toward fall, excitement is building across RAiNA as we prepare for our annual conference this September. This event represents more than just a gathering of industry professionals, it is an opportunity to strengthen connections, share knowledge, and advance the future of rainscreen design and construction throughout North America.

The building enclosure industry continues to evolve at a remarkable pace. New materials, changing code requirements, emerging technologies, and increasing performance expectations are creating both challenges and opportunities for architects, engineers, contractors, manufacturers, and building owners. Our conference provides a unique platform for members and industry leaders to come together, exchange ideas, explore solutions, and learn from real-world project experiences.

This year's program will feature expert presentations, technical discussions, and valuable networking opportunities designed to help attendees stay informed and engaged with the latest developments affecting our industry. Whether you are a long-time RAiNA member or attending for the first time, the conference offers a chance to connect with peers, gain practical insights, and contribute to conversations that help shape best practices for rainscreen systems and building enclosure performance.

Equally important, the conference is an opportunity to celebrate the strength and growth of our association. The dedication of our volunteers, committee members, industry partners, and member organizations continues to drive meaningful progress across education, advocacy, technical resources, and industry collaboration. Their efforts help ensure that RAiNA remains a trusted voice for the rainscreen community.

As you make plans for September, we encourage you to register, review the program, and take full advantage of everything the conference has to offer. Whether you are looking to expand your technical knowledge, build new professional relationships, or help guide the future direction of the industry, this event is designed with you in mind.

We look forward to welcoming you and delivering an informative, engaging, and productive conference experience. Thank you for your continued support of RAiNA, and we hope to see you in September.

**- Andrew Ashton**
Vice Chairperson
RAiNA

# Welcome New Members

**Maxxon Corporation**

**Hoover Architectural Solutions, LLC**

**Johns Manville**

**Simpson Panel**

**Maucor Inc.**

# Committee Highlights

## Building Codes Committee

The Building Codes Committee remained actively engaged in the development of future building and energy codes, monitoring proposals within the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) and International Code Council (ICC) code cycles. Committee members reviewed and provided input on topics affecting rainscreen assemblies, including thermal bridging, panel attachment requirements, water-resistive barrier inspections, and ventilation provisions. The committee continues to advocate for code language that supports high-performance building enclosure practices and the advancement of rainscreen technology.

## Industry Outreach Committee

The Industry Outreach Committee continued to strengthen awareness of rainscreen technology through marketing, communications, membership engagement, and industry events. Key initiatives included development of a structured social media strategy, expanded webinar programming, enhanced member communications, and promotion of the 2026 RAiNA Conference and Design Awards. The committee also established goals to increase membership growth and retention while encouraging greater industry participation in RAiNA activities.

## Join A Committee

RAiNA's committees are actively tackling critical issues, developing resources, and advancing the rainscreen industry through collaborative work. From technical standards to retrofit guidance, our committees are where meaningful progress happens. Be part of the important work underway in 2025. Make your voice heard, contribute to the conversation, and help RAiNA lead the advancement of rainscreen systems across North America.

**Download the Committee Application**

## Definitions Committee

The Definitions Committee continued its work to establish clear, consistent terminology for the rainscreen industry. During the first half of 2026, the committee advanced and refined definitions related to backup walls, drainage and ventilation mats, vented cladding, drainable membranes, and retrofit terminology. These efforts support greater consistency across RAiNA publications, educational resources, and future standards development initiatives.

## Education & Training Committee

The Education & Training Committee made significant progress on conference planning, educational programming, and installer training initiatives. Committee members reviewed and evaluated presentation abstracts for the 2026 RAiNA Conference while also advancing development of educational resources and training materials. Planning continued for multiple hands-on installer training programs, with efforts focused on expanding industry education and increasing access to technical learning opportunities.

## Nominations Committee

The Nominations Committee continued supporting leadership succession and volunteer engagement across the association. Efforts focused on identifying and recruiting qualified candidates for committee leadership positions and Board service while ensuring continuity of expertise and representation across RAiNA's programs and initiatives.

## Rainscreen Performance Committee

The Rainscreen Performance Committee advanced several important technical resources designed to support the design and construction of high-performing rainscreen assemblies. Progress continued on the Design Guide for Rainscreen Assemblies, Technical Bulletins, Drainage and Ventilation Standards Development, and a new Field Quality Control Checklist. The committee also initiated work on future standards development activities and continued efforts to provide practical guidance for designers, consultants, and contractors.

Retrofit Committee Meeting at RAiNA 2025 Conference

## Residential Committee

The Residential Committee continued development of several key resources aimed at supporting residential rainscreen construction. Major initiatives included the Residential Installer Site Reference Manual, NFPA 285 educational resources, guidance for siding installation over rainscreens, and a technical paper comparing rainscreens and drainable wraps. The committee also began exploring the development of a residential rainscreen standard to address gaps in current industry guidance.

## Retrofit Committee

The Retrofit Committee made substantial progress on its Retrofit Guidance Document, which is nearing completion and will provide valuable information for building enclosure retrofit projects. The committee also expanded its case study program, advanced work on standards review initiatives, and explored opportunities to develop additional technical resources related to retrofit design, evaluation, and implementation. These efforts are intended to help building owners and practitioners better understand the benefits and best practices associated with rainscreen retrofit

# Member Opportunities

### RAiNA Hosted Monthly Member Webinars

Amplify your voice by showcasing your rainscreen-related presentation in our monthly AIA-accredited webinars. **Contact our office to schedule your webinar.**

### Presenting? Let us know!

Whether it's an in-person presentation or virtual, let RAiNA help spread the word via the events calendar on our website. **Email us with the details to start sharing your next upcoming presentation.**

### Member Spotlight

We want to continue to feature our incredible list of members on our social media platforms. This include a write up, your company logo and images of projects your company has been working on, any image you feel best represents your company/brand. **Contact our office to be featured.**

# RAiNA AWARDS
## DESIGN & TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE

The **RAiNA Design Awards** recognize outstanding new construction and retrofit projects that showcase the performance, innovation, and architectural excellence of rainscreen assemblies. Winning a RAiNA Design Award highlights your team's expertise, elevates your company's profile, and demonstrates a commitment to excellence in building enclosure design and construction. Award recipients are recognized and celebrated during the **RAiNA Conference in Portland, OR on September 30, 2026.**

**Call for Entries Open until August 14, 2026. Submit Your Project Today!**

# 2025 Award Winners

### NEW CONSTRUCTION
### Humboldt Park Wellness Center

Humboldt Park Health Wellness Center is a facility that provides state-of-the-art services for patients of the campus and members of the community.

This 46,800 square foot wellness building features programs that promote healthy lifestyles, including a pool, indoor track, and multiple fitness areas. This project is an example of how architecture has a chance to reinforce an organization's brand, and with that, reflect the core principles and mission of the organization. One of these principles being health equity, which is something that prevails with ...**Read More**

### RETROFIT
### Emil & Grace Shihadeh Innovation Center


Central to the project's success was the implementation of a high-performance rainscreen façade system engineered by ECO Cladding. Installed directly over the existing brick exterior using adjustable bracket technology, the new façade dramatically modernized the building's appearance while overcoming the challenges commonly associated with renovation projects. The rainscreen system provided the flexibility needed to accommodate irregular existing conditions while delivering a clean, contemporary architectural expression that reflects the building's renewed educational mission.... **Read More**

# Fundamentals of Rainscreen Design Part 1:
## *What Makes a Wall a Rainscreen?*

Adapted from RAiNA Presentation Fundamentals of Rainscreen Wall Design

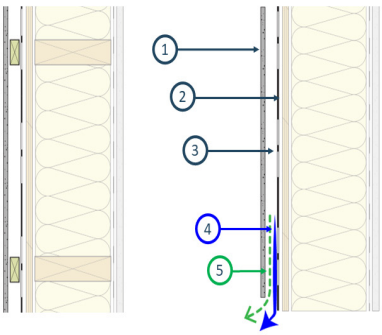
Rainscreen wall systems have become a cornerstone of modern building enclosure design, helping buildings better manage moisture, improve durability, and support energy efficiency goals. Yet despite their widespread use, there is still considerable confusion about what constitutes a rainscreen—and what makes it different from other wall assemblies.

At its core, a rainscreen is not a specific product, cladding type, or proprietary system. Rather, it is a design approach that manages water and moisture through a combination of layers working together.

According to the Rainscreen Association in North America (RAiNA), a rainscreen is an assembly applied to an exterior wall that consists, at minimum, of an outer layer, an inner layer, and a cavity between them that is sufficient for the passive removal of liquid water and water vapor.

This definition highlights the three essential components found in every rainscreen assembly:

- An outer layer (1), typically the cladding
- An inner layer (2), commonly a water-resistive barrier (WRB)
- A cavity (3) that separates the two and allows drainage and drying

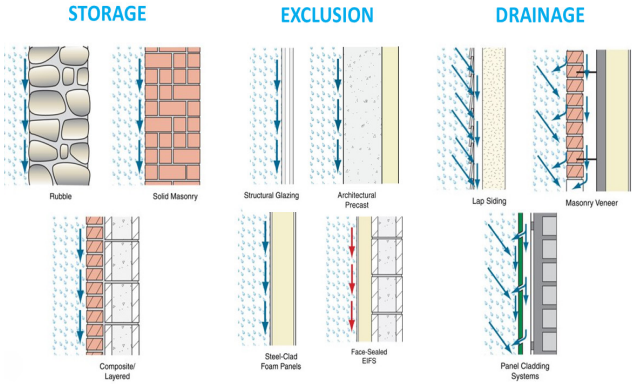



Together, these components create a wall system that acknowledges a simple reality: no cladding is perfect.

### UNDERSTANDING WATER CONTROL

Every exterior wall must manage exposure to rain and moisture. Historically, designers have relied on three primary approaches to water control:

- **Storage** systems allow materials to absorb moisture and then dry over time.
- **Exclusion** systems attempt to prevent water from entering the assembly altogether through seals, joints, and barriers.
- **Drainage** systems accept that some water may penetrate the outer surface and provide a means to safely remove it before damage can occur.




Rainscreens are fundamentally drainage-based systems. Rather than relying on the outer cladding as the sole line of defense, they incorporate a secondary layer of protection and a dedicated drainage space that allows water to escape.

This “deflection and drainage” strategy has proven to be an effective and resilient approach to moisture management across a wide range of climates and building types.

## MORE THAN JUST AN AIR GAP

One of the most common misconceptions about rainscreen design is that any space behind cladding automatically creates a rainscreen.

In reality, the cavity serves several important functions. It creates a capillary break that helps prevent moisture from moving from the back of the cladding to the inner wall components. It provides a pathway for water drainage, and in many assemblies it also promotes airflow that can accelerate drying.

The effectiveness of this cavity depends on its design, continuity, and detailing. Drainage openings, flashings, and proper integration with the wall assembly are all necessary to ensure moisture can safely exit the system.

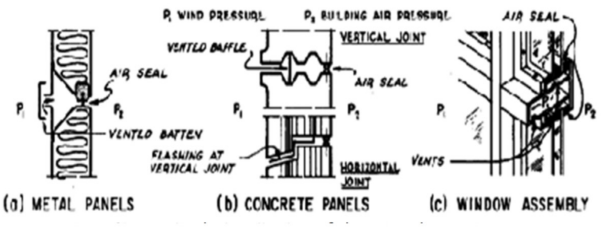
## A FLEXIBLE DESIGN STRATEGY

Another common misconception is that rainscreens are associated with a particular cladding material. In practice, almost any cladding can be incorporated into a rainscreen assembly when it is separated from the backup wall by a properly designed cavity.

Metal panels, fiber cement, masonry veneers, wood siding, terracotta systems, and many other cladding materials can all function within rainscreen designs. Likewise, rainscreens can be used over wood-frame, steel-frame, concrete, or masonry backup walls.

This flexibility is one reason rainscreen construction has become increasingly prevalent across North America. The principles remain the same even as materials and project requirements vary.

## NOT A NEW CONCEPT




Graphics from G. K. Garden, 1962 - Rain Penetrations and its Control

While rainscreens have gained significant attention over the last two decades, the concept itself is far from new. Building scientists have been studying drained and ventilated wall systems for decades, recognizing the value of separating the weather-exposed cladding from the primary moisture-control layer.

What has changed is our understanding of building performance. As buildings become more energy efficient and more airtight, effective moisture management becomes increasingly important. Rainscreen assemblies provide a reliable strategy for addressing these challenges while supporting long-term durability.

## LOOKING AHEAD

Understanding the basic components of a rainscreen is the first step toward designing and constructing high-performing wall assemblies. While cladding often receives the most attention, it is the interaction between the cladding, cavity, water-resistive barrier, and supporting details that ultimately determines performance.

**FUNDAMENTALS OF RAINSCREEN DESIGN SERIES**

- ✔ **Part 1: What Makes a Wall a Rainscreen?** (Current Issue)
- **Part 2: Managing Water, Airflow & Drying** Coming in Q3
- **Part 3: Integrating the Complete Wall System** Coming in Q4

In the next installment of this series, we will take a closer look at how water moves through wall assemblies, why cavity design matters, and how drainage, ventilation, and drying contribute to long-term rainscreen performance.

# Upcoming Events

## August

12 **FREE WEBINAR**
RAiNA Education: Introduction to Rainscreen Walls

26 **International Flashing Awareness Day -** Four Webinars, One Day

## September

22-23 **Rainscreen Installer Training**
CFS Virginia

30 **RAiNA Conference 2026**
Weathering The Future: Rainscreen, Retrofit and Resilience, Portland, OR

Rainscreen Installer Training at CFS Virginia, May 2025

RAiNA Rainscreen Presentation at MBEC, May 2025

# Rainscreen Resources

### Request a Rainscreen Presentation

RAiNA is proud to offer AIA-accredited presentations, each providing 1 LU/HSW Credit, catering to architects and professionals seeking to enrich their knowledge base. As the foremost authority on Rainscreen, RAiNA ensures that its presentations deliver comprehensive insights into this critical architectural element. Our presentations promise to equip attendees with practical and relevant information.
**Click to see all available presentations and request one for your organization**.

### View Presentations from Past Conferences

Did you miss a recent RAiNA conference or symposium? Or maybe you want to revisit a presentation that really stood out? Good news—presentations from past RAiNA events are now available on our website.
**Visit the RAiNA website and explore the archive of content from past conferences and symposiums today!**

### Glossary

Intended to provide standardized terms and definitions for the rainscreen industry and associated systems, assemblies, sub-assemblies, accessories, materials, and products.
**View the Glossary.**