THE LINE

The Masonry Magazine of Texas

Volume 30, No. 2 Summer 2026



TEXAS MASONRY CONVENTION & 38TH ANNUAL GOLDEN TROWEL AWARDS

SEE REGISTRATION DETAILS ON PAGE 5.

AUGUST 26-28, 2026

WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

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THE WOODLANDS WATERWAY MARRIOTT

SPECIAL FEATURE IN THIS ISSUE:

The regional nominees for the statewide Golden Trowel Awards



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Summer 2026

A Message From Our Executive Director

All eyes are now on The Woodlands.

As we move deeper into summer 2026, the Texas masonry industry is hitting its stride. Regional Golden Trowel programs have wrapped up across the state, and the results are already generating excitement. Houston and statewide winners have been finalized, and first-place regional projects are advancing to the big stage. These competitions continue to showcase the craftsmanship, collaboration, and design excellence that set masonry apart—whether on schools, commercial buildings, churches, or restoration work.

All eyes are now on The Woodlands. The 2026 Texas Masonry Convention & 38th Annual Golden Trowel Awards, August 26–28, will bring contractors, suppliers, architects, engineers, general contractors, educators, and industry partners together for education, networking, and celebration. Registration is open, and hotel rooms at the group rate should be booked soon—the block deadline is August 5, and rooms are filling. This year's Golden Trowel will again recognize outstanding projects across categories that include architects, mason contractors, general contractors, owners, developers, engineers, and suppliers. Nominated architects are invited as TMC guests, with tickets and rooms covered so that we can honor entire project teams. I encourage every member to personally invite the architects, owners, and design partners connected to your projects. Strengthening those relationships remains one of the most effective ways we expand masonry's place in the marketplace.

Beyond the convention, our workforce efforts continue to gain momentum. Conversations around regional masonry training centers, video and webinar resources for architects and installers, and partnerships with schools and SkillsUSA are moving forward. Membership is also growing as more contractors and suppliers recognize the value of a unified voice.

Thank you for your energy, your craftsmanship, and your commitment. I look forward to seeing many of you in The Woodlands as we celebrate another outstanding year for Texas masonry.



Tony Topping
Executive Director
Texas Masonry Council

TEXAS MASONRY CONVENTION

MASONRY THROUGH THE AGES

38th Annual

GOLDEN TROWEL AWARDS

The Masonry Industry's Flagship Awards Event



GOLF TOURNAMENT

LIVE AUCTION FUNDRAISER

INDUSTRY NETWORKING EVENTS

WHEN THE AWARDS END... **THE NIGHT KEEPS GOING**

WITH MUSICAL GUEST

Payton HOWIE

August

26-28, 2026

The Woodlands, TX

TMC Supporting Talented Young Masons







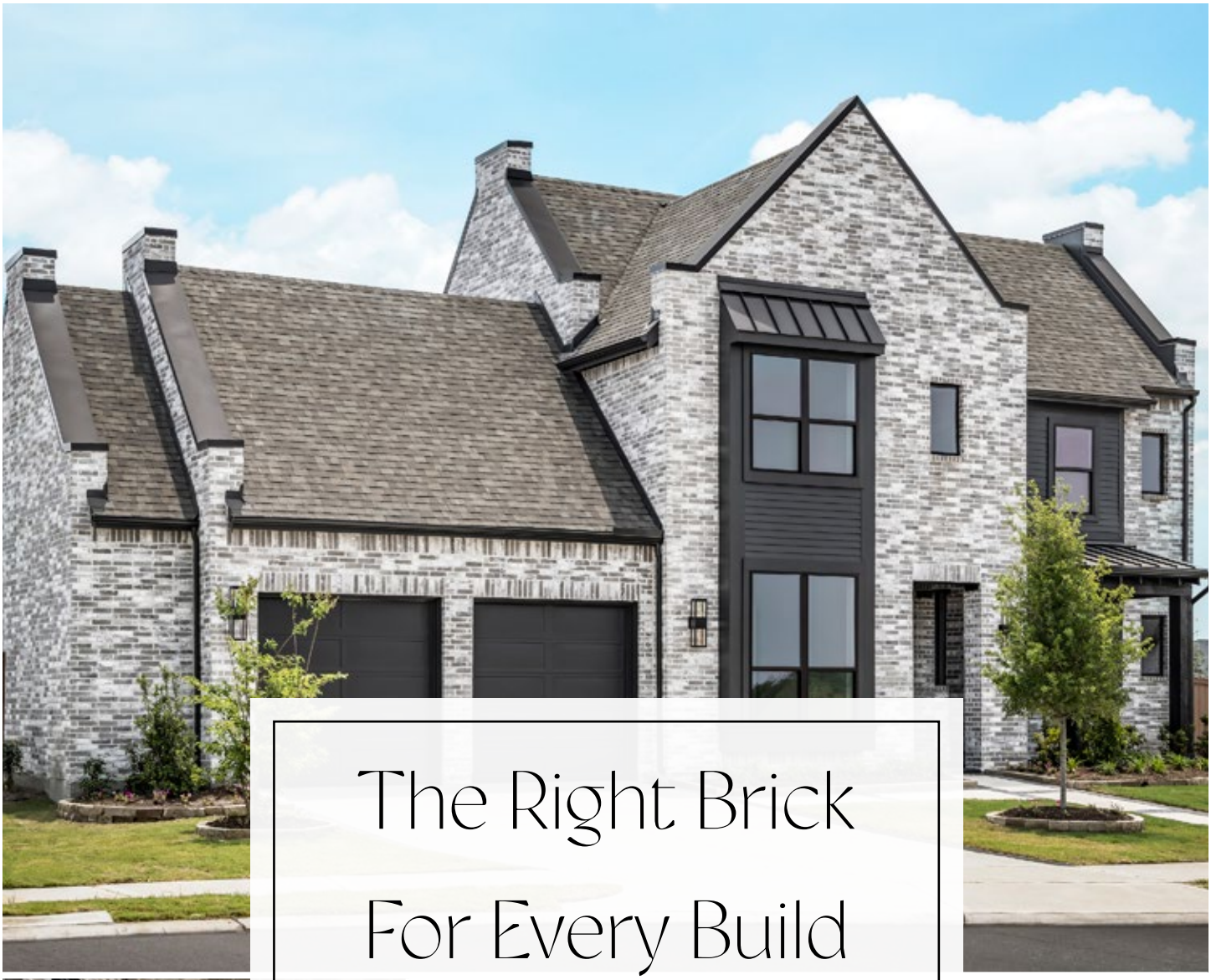
Texas Masonry Council was proud to travel to Atlanta, Georgia recently to support the SkillsUSA National Masonry Competition and cheer on Texas competitors Eddy Olalde of Dallas College and Arturo Acosta-Escamilla of Red Oak High School.

TMC members David Barnes, Steve Cantu (Dee Brown), and Mel Smith (Smith Custom Masonry) were on hand to encourage and support these talented young masons as they showcased their skills on the national stage.

A special thank you goes out to the dedicated Texas educators who continue to invest in the next generation of masonry professionals: Lawrence Johnson, Bud Johnson, and Sadat Gutierrez of Red Oak High School. Your commitment to workforce development and craftsmanship helps strengthen the future of our industry.

Congratulations to all the competitors, instructors, and supporters who made this event a success. We are proud to see





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2026

Texas Masonry Council

STATEWIDE

Golden Trowel Nominees

The following projects were First-Place Winners in this year's Regional Golden Trowel Awards and are the Nominees for the TMC Statewide Golden Trowel Awards. The categories are listed alphabetically.

Block



Robbins Athletic Complex

Region: SAMCA

Mason Contractor: Ericstad Masonry

Architect: LPA INC.



Sunnyvale Gateway Park – Tom Thumb

Region: UMCA

Mason Contractor: Smith Custom Masonry

Architect: Heights Venture Architects



Rockwell All Purpose Facility

Region: CTMCA

Mason Contractor: Brazos Masonry

Architect: Turner Ramirez Architects

GOLDEN TROWEL NOMINEES

College & University



UTSA Blanco Hall

Region: SAMCA
Mason Contractor: Rick Stone Masonry, Inc.
Architect: HKS, Inc.



Lamar State College Port Arthur

Region: AMCH
Mason Contractor: Camarata Masonry Systems, Ltd.
Architect: Stantec Architecture Inc.



SMU Cox School of Business

Region: UMCA
Mason Contractor: Dee Brown, Inc.
Architect: RAMSA



Foster Pavilion

Region: CTMCA
Mason Contractor: Legacy Masonry
Architect: AE Com



Texas A&M University Nursing & Education Research Building

Region: South Texas
Mason Contractor: Limon Masonry
Architect: Stantec Architecture, Inc.

Everyday Excellence



Holiday Ford

Region: UMCA

Mason Contractor: Smith Custom Masonry

Architect: 97W



Pullman Market

Region: SAMCA

Mason Contractor: Mills Brothers Masonry Contracting LLC

Architect: Clayton Korte



Aransas County Community Center

Region: AMCH

Mason Contractor: Galindo & Boyd

Architect: Architexas

GOLDEN TROWEL NOMINEES

Government & Institutional



Corner Stone Church Community Hall Addition

Region: SAMCA
Mason Contractor: Mills Brothers Masonry Contracting
Architect: FGM Architects



Waller County Courthouse

Region: AMCH
Mason Contractor: Camarata Masonry Systems, Ltd.
Architect: Brinkley Sargent Wiginton Architects



Baylor Scott & White Medical Center - Frisco

Region: UMCA
Mason Contractor: Dee Brown, Inc.
Architect: HKS, Inc.



Cedar Park Library

Region: CTMCA
Mason Contractor: C.W. Oates Masonry, Inc.
Architect: Lake Flato Architects, Inc.

GOLDEN TROWEL NOMINEES

Hardscape & Landscape



Alamo Master Plan - Phase 2

Region: SAMCA
Mason Contractor: Shadrock & Williams Masonry
Architect: Gensler & OJB Landscape Architect



UTPB Odessa Bright Star Memorial

Region: UMCA
Mason Contractor: Golden Construction Services
Architect: Ten Eyck Landscape Architect, Inc.



Baylor University - Founders Mall

Region: CTMCA
Mason Contractor: K4 Construction
Architect: Sasaki



Sienna Crescent Spring Roundabout

Region: AMCH
Mason Contractor: Hoggatt, LLC
Architect: TBG Partners

GOLDEN TROWEL NOMINEES

Industrial & Commercial

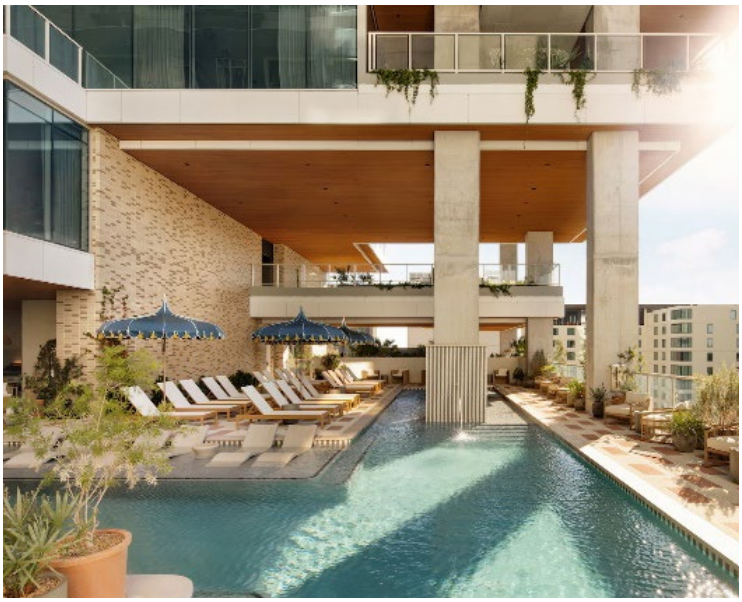


University Health – Public Health Building

Region: SAMCA

Mason Contractor: Mills Brothers Masonry Contracting

Architect: Alta Architects



80 Rainey (Paseo Tower)

Region: CTMSA

Mason Contractor: Galindo & Boyd

Architect: Pappageorge Haymes Partners



ION Garage

Region: AMCH

Mason Contractor: Dee Brown, Inc.

Architect: Gensler

GOLDEN TROWEL NOMINEES

Multi-Family Residential



South Laredo

Region: SAMCA
Mason Contractor: Galindo & Boyd
Architect: Boarman Kroos Vogel Group, LLC



The Galatyn

Region: UMCA
Mason Contractor: Galindo & Boyd
Architect: Streetlights Creative Studio, LLC



The Langley

Region: AMCH
Mason Contractor: Galindo & Boyd
Architect: EDI International, PC



Broadmoor Block A

Region: CTMCA
Mason Contractor: Galindo & Boyd
Architect: GFF Architects

GOLDEN TROWEL NOMINEES

Primary & Secondary Education



NISD Building Upgrades Colonies North Elementary School

Region: SAMCA
Mason Contractor: Mills Brothers Masonry Contracting
Architect: Huckabee



Paula Walker Elementary School

Region: UMCA
Mason Contractor: J&E Companies
Architect: VLK Architects



Gene Tomas High School

Region: AMCH
Mason Contractor: City Masonry, LLC
Architect: PBK



Wooten Elementary School

Region: CTMCA
Mason Contractor: Division 7 Waterproofing
Architect: Kirksey Architecture

Restoration



Cabana Residential

Region: UMCA
Mason Contractor: Metro Masonry Construction, Inc.
Architect: Gensler



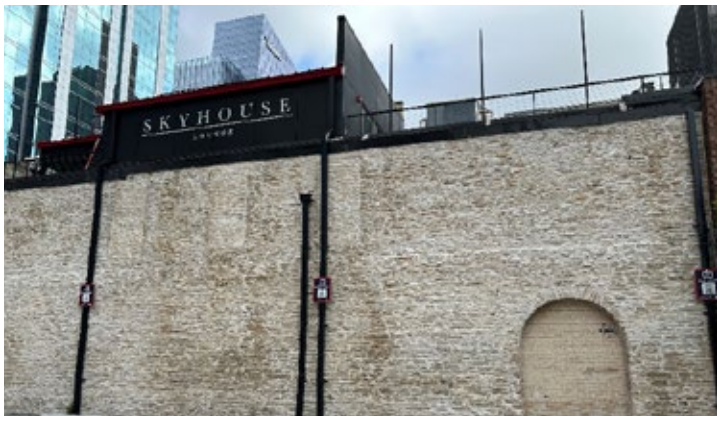
Houston Police Complex

Region: AMCH
Mason Contractor: Veazey Enterprises
Architect: Page



The Continental Building

Region: SAMCA
Mason Contractor: Curtis Hunt Restoration
Architect: Alamo Architects



408 Congress Roof and Facade

Region: CTMCA
Mason Contractor: Western Specialty Contractors
Architect: ECS Southwest



Mason County Courthouse

Region: West Texas
Mason Contractor: Curtis Hunt Restorations
Architect: Architexas

GOLDEN TROWEL NOMINEES

Single-Family Residential



Lakeview Residence

Region: UMCA
Mason Contractor: Metro Masonry Construction, Inc.
Architect: Robert Trown & Associates



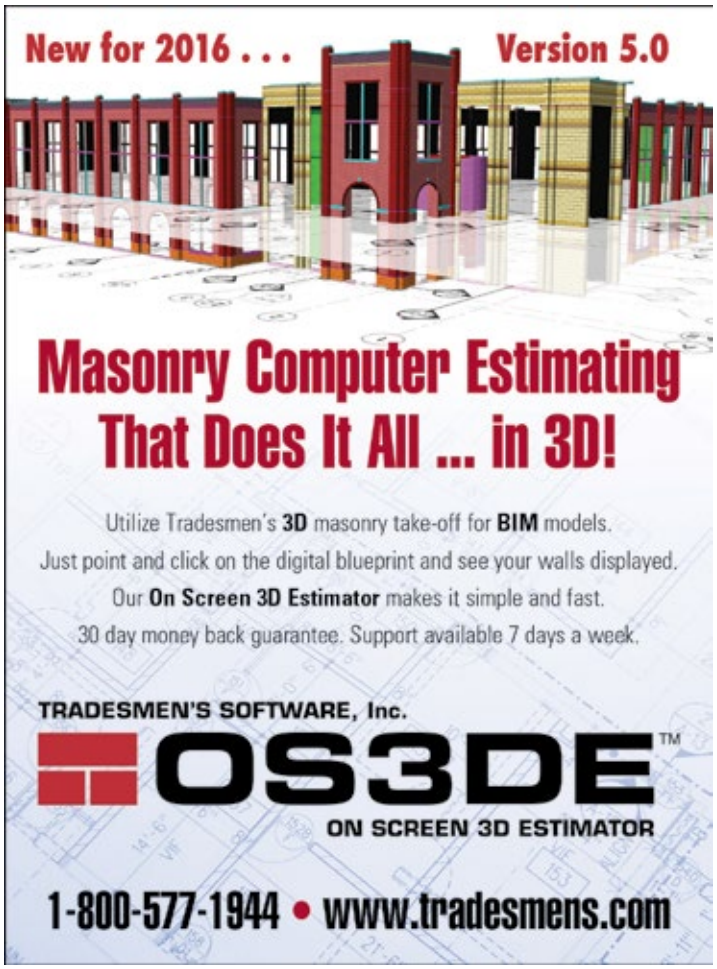
Winding Way Residence

Region: SAMCA
Mason Contractor: Curtis Hunt Restorations, Inc.
Architect: smithdish Architecture



Do Residence

Region: AMCH
Mason Contractor: Stone Cast, Inc.
Architect: Robert Dame Designs



Acme Brick Company Releases 2026 Pocket Guide to Brick Construction

For more than four decades, all the basics of brick building have been in a guide small enough to fit in a pocket. Acme Brick has just released a 2026 version of its Pocket Guide to Brick Construction. And yes, it's still printed on paper just like the 1984 original.

"In a world of PDF-this and AI-that, we felt it was important to continue offering the Pocket Guide in a form you can hold in your hand – much like brick itself," said Britt Stokes, Acme's director of marketing.

Acme estimates that more than thirty thousand copies, spanning at least 10 editions, have been distributed to construction professionals across America over the years.

The current guide comprises 92 wire-bound pages covering all aspects of brick construction. For instance, if you want to compare the compressive strengths of Type O and Type M mortar at 28 days, refer to page 25. Want to know the 11 locations where expansion joints should be considered? Check page 29. And that's just for starters.

New Features for 2026

Like Acme itself, the Pocket Guide doesn't stand still.

A new section describes proper installation methods for thin brick applications (pages 20-23). Another offers detailed guidelines for painting brick (page 31). QR codes direct users to still more resources online.

But old favorites remain, such as a 27-page glossary of common terms used in brick manufacturing, brick laying, and construction.

To request a free copy of the Pocket Guide, Acme customers can contact their local sales representative or sales office. And all are welcome to download a PDF version of the guide at Pocket Guide to Brick Construction - Acme Brick.

"We're proud to carry on the Acme tradition of supporting people who work in masonry and specify brick for their jobs," Stokes said – "in whatever format works best for them."



About Acme

Acme Brick Company, founded in 1891, sells quality building materials and design products for the home through over 50 Acme Brick, Tile & Stone showrooms across 13 states in the Southwest and Southeast. The company manufactures bricks for residential and commercial buildings in 15 plants in four states. Acme commercial brick products are available nationwide. The company is a wholly owned subsidiary of Berkshire Hathaway, Inc. For more information, visit brick.com.

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Construction Law



BID RIGHT – SCHEDULE AND SCOPE IN YOUR BID AND SUBCONTRACT!

Spike Cutler

Attorney Spike Cutler, and the firm of Cutler-Smith, P.C., are staunch advocates for the rights and interests of construction trade contractors. Cutler provides legal counsel to a number of trade organizations, including the Independent Electrical Contractors (IEC) of Texas, IEC- Dallas, IEC – Fort Worth, the Subcontractors Association of the Metroplex ("SAM"), the Texas Masonry Council, the United Masonry Contractors Association of DFW, and the North Texas Stone Fabricators Association. He is also a member of the Attorneys Council of the National Subcontractors Alliance. He can be reached at scutler@cutler-smith.com.

It is surprising how few bid packages include detailed schedule information for the project, but what's worse, many subcontractors failed to clarify their schedule expectations and requirements - to their peril!

When bidding projects, always include reasonably detailed statements of your scheduling and sequencing expectations; this should include (at a minimum) your requirements for unimpeded access to specific work areas, the minimum size work area that you need, the number of regular working days you anticipate the work will take, and detailed listings of scopes that must be complete before your work starts. In addition, if you are bidding on a project based on an expected start date (whether that be a month or a season), say so! A job to be performed starting in March with a 60-day duration is very different from the same project starting in August or December! Further, if you are relying on a particular workforce that will be available during a specific time frame, include that time frame in your bid as well. After all, when you bid on a job, you are promising to have the required labor available when the job begins, so odds are, you are turning away other work that you could otherwise do at that time.

"The bid to perform this work is contingent upon full and unfettered access to the work and site starting no later than [date]; if the start of work is delayed, Subcontractor may require price escalations and possible schedule modification based upon workforce availability."

If you determine that the efficient performance of the project requires certain portions of the work to be performed before others, or in a particular sequence, include that as a clarifying note in your Bid. You don't want to be bouncing around the jobsite, wrecking and raising scaffolds while the GC tries to figure out what it wants to do.

READ YOUR SCOPE OF WORK – CAREFULLY!

Just because you know what you're bidding doesn't mean the general contractor understands. When you receive your Subcontract, you had better review the Scope of Work included very carefully. We often find "scope creep," with significant items of work you never intended to perform, showing up in a detailed scope listing. This can be especially insidious because, in the body of the Subcontract, your work may be described as "'Masonry, Complete." Examples of unintended scope items we have seen in the attached Scope of Work Addenda include additional personnel dedicated to cleanup crews, waterproofing, flashing, miscellaneous steel, coring, cutting, and fireblocking, jobsite power, and dirt work/backfilling. In addition, some contractors will try to slip in modifications to the Subcontract terms in the Scope Addendum, notwithstanding any prior agreed terms within the actual Subcontract. Fact is, it is not unheard of for a general contractor to realize they forgot to get a number for

something and try to slide it into a subcontractor's Scope, in hopes the sub won't notice until it is too late.

SCHEDULES OF VALUES

Almost every general contractor expects a Schedule of Values from its subcontractors to be used as a basis for billing for the work. What gets dangerous is when a general contractor retains control over what they consider to be an "acceptable" Schedule of Values, because these GC's will sometimes manipulate your Schedule of Values (and those of other trades) to allow them to frontload profit for themselves at the expense of their subcontractors. This can hurt you in several ways; first, you may find yourself supplying earlier work for substantially less than the actual cost of performance, thus carrying an unreasonable cost burden until late in the project. Secondly, if the GC artificially reduces the value of your work in payments to you while artificially inflating the value of your work in their draws from the project Owner and then gets in a financial bind, it can materially harm your ability to protect your rights to payment through mechanics lien or payment bond protection later in the project. Improperly prepared Schedules of Values can also harm you by creating a presumption of lower value for work you have to perform pursuant to change orders. As a good rule of thumb: stick to the truth!

ALWAYS RESERVE THE RIGHT TO NEGOTIATE

I'm always beating *this* drum – never submit a bid without preserving the right to negotiate subcontract provisions. One phrase can save your bacon, especially with the flood of new GCs into our marketplace: *"This bid and Subcontractor's agreement to perform work is explicitly conditioned upon negotiation of mutually-acceptable Subcontract language."* If the GC gets all horsey with subcontract terms, schedule, or scope, that qualifying language can save you from having to work with a thief!



TEXAS Architecture

Hosted by:
The University of Texas at Austin
School of Architecture



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Concrete Masonry Architecture Symposium

Co-hosted by The Beauty of Block and the Texas Masonry Council

October 1-2, 2026, Austin, Texas

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Scan to Attend

Through project presentations and discussions, the Symposium will advance our understanding of both why and how concrete masonry has been used by architects in significant projects of the Americas.

The *Symposium* is a 2-day event for architects to learn, collaborate, and share their experiences with concrete masonry. Up to 6 hours of AIA CEU credits can be earned.

Travel stipends to cover lodging and travel to Austin are available through a partnership with The Beauty of Block and the Texas Masonry Council.

Session information and the full schedule will be available soon.

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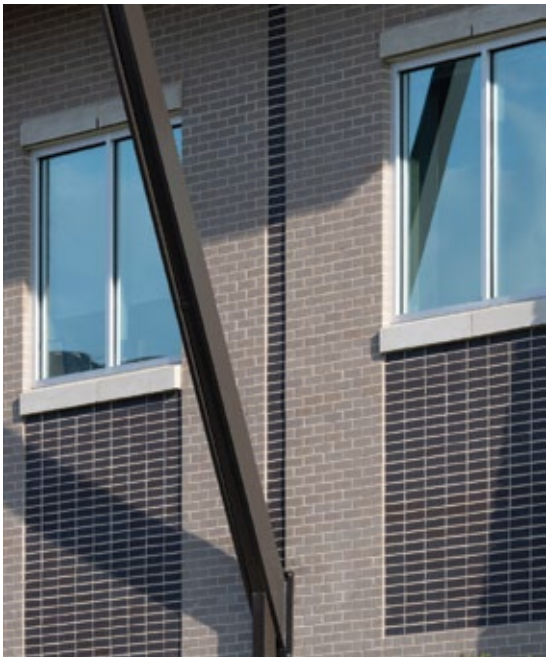
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Wayside Middle School
Saginaw, Texas

Masonry Contractor:
Accurate Masonry of Texas, Irving, TX

Owner: Eagle Mountain-Saginaw Independent School District

Architect: VLK Architects, Fort Worth, TX

General Contractor:
Pogue Construction, McKinney, TX

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