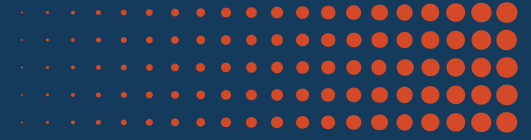


2025

air barrier  
**abaa**  
association of  
america



# 3<sup>RD</sup> QUARTER NEWSLETTER

## *LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT*

Interview with Incoming Chair  
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## INTERVIEW WITH *Incoming Chair*

Andrea Wagner Watts

**A**s ABAA enters an exciting new chapter, we're pleased to welcome Andrea Wagner Watts as our incoming Chair. With a career spanning research and development, technical leadership, and now education and outreach, Andrea brings a unique blend of experience and passion to the role. From first attending an ABAA Conference more than a decade ago to helping lead key committees, she has been deeply involved in shaping the association's growth.

**Q: To start, could you share a little about your background and how you first became involved with ABAA?**

A: I have a degree in civil engineering, but right out of college I took a sidestep into manufacturing. I began in sales, then moved into research and development, application engineering, and technical support. As part of that work, I was on a team tasked with developing an air barrier product—a new area for the company. That's how I first came across the Air Barrier Association of America.

I attended my first ABAA Conference around 2012 in Chicago, which gave me my first real exposure to the association. Like many first-time attendees, I wasn't quite sure what to expect—it felt a little surface level

at first. Then Brian Stroik (who was on his way to becoming Chair at the time) pulled me aside and invited me to help energize the Technical Committee, co-chairing with John Posenecker. That was around 2014, and coincidentally about the time the air barrier material we'd been working on launched. From there, I became much more actively involved.

Over the years, I've worked primarily in R&D for manufacturers, so the Technical Committee was a natural fit. Along the way, I've had career changes—starting at Corning, through acquisitions and restructurings, and ultimately finding my way to DuPont. But through it all, ABAA has been a constant presence.

**Q: What motivated you to step into the role of Chair at this point in your career?**

A: Timing is never perfect, but it feels right. Most of my career has been focused on research and development. In my current role, I've shifted more toward education and outreach, which has always been a passion of mine. This change also gives me more flexibility and visibility to commit time to ABAA.

It's also an exciting moment for the association. I think we're at a turning point, moving from a smaller, "growing" organization into

one preparing for a much bigger future. It feels a bit like we're moving out of our "teenage years" into early adulthood—figuring out who we are and where we want to go. Having the opportunity to help shape that strategy is something I really value.

**Q: As you look ahead to your term, what are the key priorities or goals you're most excited to focus on?**

A: While things like bylaws and contracts may not sound thrilling, they're essential building blocks. Much of our documentation was created when ABAA was still a smaller organization. As we approach our 25th anniversary, it's time to update these foundations so the association is well positioned for the next 25 years.

Another big focus for me is transparency and communication. There's incredible work happening in our Technical Committee, Research Committee, Contractors Committee, and others. I want to make sure members know what's going on, how they can get involved, and how their contributions matter. The more people are aware of what's happening, the more excitement and engagement we'll generate across the membership.

**Q: What do you see as the biggest opportunities for the association and its members right now?**

A: One of our greatest strengths—and biggest opportunities—is being the go-to source for education and technical knowledge in the air barrier space. With evolving building codes, professionals across disciplines—contractors, designers, engineers—are all being asked to do things differently than before.

That can be daunting, but it's also where ABAA shines. We've been building this expertise for decades, learning from trial and error. Now, we have the opportunity to share that knowledge so others don't have to reinvent the wheel. Whether it's expanding our education offerings, finding new ways to deliver content, or becoming a more accessible reference resource, I see tremendous potential for ABAA to grow its impact.

**Q: On the flip side, what challenges do you anticipate, and how do you plan to help the association navigate them?**

A: One challenge is generational transition. Many of the founding members who shaped the association and carry valuable institutional knowledge are retiring or stepping back. Capturing and documenting their wisdom now is critical so we can pass it on to the next wave of leaders.

At the same time, we need to bring new voices into the fold. Not everyone is ready to jump straight into a leadership position, so part of our challenge is finding ways for people to get involved in smaller ways that build comfort

and confidence. The energy and enthusiasm of our membership has always set ABAA apart, and ensuring that continues for the next 25 years is essential.

**Q: Thinking long-term, how do you envision the association evolving over the next few years?**


A: I see the Standards Institute (ASI) playing a major role. Having ABAA's name tied to standards that can be adopted into code is a game-changer. It will draw more attention to the association, and with that comes both opportunity and challenge.

One of the things I value most about ABAA is the spirit of collaboration—even among competitors. We all come together to move the industry forward. As standards become codified, we'll need to ensure we keep that collaborative, industry-wide focus, even as the stakes get higher.

**Q: What excites you most about the future of the association and the industry it serves?**

A: The progress we've made in 25 years is incredible. We've gone from "what is an air barrier and why do we need it?" to a broad understanding of its value, especially in new commercial construction.

Now, I'm excited about shifting that focus to existing buildings. How do we take the stock we already have and improve it—affordably and practically—without always aiming for extreme benchmarks like passive house standards? The work being done by groups like the Existing Buildings Task Group is just the beginning. I see huge potential



*IT FEELS A BIT LIKE WE'RE MOVING OUT OF OUR 'TEENAGE YEARS' INTO EARLY ADULTHOOD—FIGURING OUT WHO WE ARE AND WHERE WE WANT TO GO. HAVING THE OPPORTUNITY TO HELP SHAPE THAT STRATEGY IS SOMETHING I REALLY VALUE*

for us to expand our scope and make a real difference.

**Q: Finally, is there a message you'd like to share directly with members as you begin your term?**

A: I'm honored and excited to serve as Chair. ABAA has always been a place where I've felt welcome, and I hope every member feels the same.

If you're curious about getting more involved but aren't sure where to start—reach out. Call me. I'm always happy to talk and help find a spot that fits your interests and availability. There are countless ways to contribute, from committees to conference participation, and every piece adds to the whole.

What makes this association unique is the willingness of members to share knowledge, ask questions, and learn together. I look forward to seeing more of that spirit in action as we move forward.



# AIR BARRIERS' IMPACT ON ENERGY USE IN A BUILDING

Air barriers significantly reduce energy use in buildings by minimizing air leakage, debunking long-held myths about “breathable” buildings and demonstrating through research and field testing that airtight construction—when paired with proper ventilation—improves energy efficiency, durability, and indoor air quality.



BY LAVERNE DALGLEISH,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - ABAA

**B**uildings need to breathe and we need to be careful how tight we make a building. The building will not really use that much more energy if it's not too tight. These are the myths that are circulating when people discuss the installation of air barriers that needs to be addressed. The work done by the U.S. Department of Energy, Oakridge National Laboratories, Syracuse University and the Air Barrier Association of America have answered the questions about whether a tight building can really save energy. The Army Corps of Engineers has shown how tightly we can build or renovate buildings. This information has then been translated into practical

ways of benefiting from the proper installation of air barriers.

## History of Air Barriers

The use of air barriers in buildings started when we constructed the first building. This could have been a cave, a teepee, a mud or a sod hut. Whatever the first building was, it included an air barrier. We have always included materials that would provide, at a minimum, a wind break.

An air barrier stops the air from moving in and out of a building or from one part of a building to another. We construct a building envelope to separate one environment from another environment. These

**0.001 L/(S·M<sup>2</sup>)  
AT 75 PA**

**EXTREMELY LOW AIR LEAKAGE  
RATE ACHIEVED BY MODERN AIR  
BARRIER MATERIALS**

environments could be an inside environment as compared to an outside environment, or it could be two different environments within a building. Examples of this are the area around a swimming pool needs to be separate from sleeping rooms in a hotel, or the intensive care unit or a quarantine area in a hospital needs to be separate from the normal patient bed areas. If we allow air to move freely between these two environments, we defeat the purpose of an environmental separator, which is commonly called a building envelope.



Stone air barrier on five sides



Textile air barrier

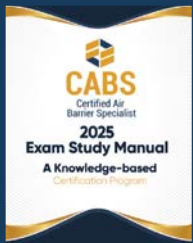
Read full article: [bit.ly/4g2DRwD](https://bit.ly/4g2DRwD)

# Join the Contractor's Committee



The Contractor's Committee is your chance to have a voice in shaping industry best practices, share insights with peers, and stay ahead of emerging trends. Join today and help strengthen the contractor perspective while building valuable connections.

➤ Apply Today: [www.airbarrier.org/committees](http://www.airbarrier.org/committees)



## CABS Study Manual Now Available for Purchase

Updated and revised, the CABS Study Manual is now available for purchase, separate from registering for the exam.

➤ Register to purchase: [bit.ly/3ViankH](https://bit.ly/3ViankH)

# SAVE THE DATE



# BUILDING ENCLOSURE CONFERENCE

# 20 26

MINNEAPOLIS, MN | MAY 5-6, 2026

## Call for Abstracts is now open

Deadline is October 24, 2025.

[www.abaaconference.com/call-for-abstracts/](http://www.abaaconference.com/call-for-abstracts/)



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# WELCOME TO THE NEW ABAA WEBSITE

## Smarter, Faster, Built for You

We've redesigned airbarrier.org to help you work faster and build better. Easily explore ABAA Evaluated Materials, dive into our expanded Resource Library, and connect through the ABAA Member Organization Search — all in one streamlined, mobile-optimized site. Whether you're specifying, installing, or learning, the tools you rely on are now easier than ever to access.

- Quick access to Evaluated Materials
- Upgraded Resource Library
- Improved Member Search tool
- Mobile-friendly browsing
- Faster, clearer navigation





## On-demand Webinars

A Guide for Building Enclosure Commissioning	➤ bit.ly/4ehy1Xt
The Evolving Landscape of Commercial Energy Efficiency	➤ bit.ly/3T60zt6
Pitfalls and Challenges of NFPA 285 Engineering Analysis	➤ bit.ly/3ZN8xLw
Development and Adoption of Air Leakage in Building Codes	➤ bit.ly/4nGqnt7
Designing Roofs to Withstand Nature's Worst	➤ bit.ly/3l4yCAc

## Upcoming Certification Trainings

### Self Adhered and Fluid Applied Training

Oct 21-23	Online
Dec 2-4	Online

### Whole Building Airtightness Training

Oct 13-17	Daytona Beach, FL
Nov 3-7	Northbrook, IL
Dec 15-19	Seattle, WA

### Sprayed Polyurethane Foam Installer Training

Oct 7-9	Online
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### Field Auditor Training

Nov 4-6	Online
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Register: [bit.ly/3zj5RLb](https://bit.ly/3zj5RLb)



## ABAA at Education Events & Conferences

Oct 1	Net Zero Conference	Los Angeles, CA
Oct 2	ABAA & CSI Madison & AIA Wisconsin – Half Day Symposium	Madison, WI
Oct 6-8	Advancing Quality in Construction	Nashville, TN
Oct 9	Wagdy Anis Symposium	Boston, MA
Oct 15-17	CSI National Conference	Cleveland, OH
Oct 21	BEC Detroit Building Consciousness Symposium	Detroit, MI
Oct 21-24	METALCON 2025	Las Vegas, NV
Oct 22	ABAA & CSI Atlanta – Half Day Symposium	Atlanta, GA
Oct 23	ABAA & CSI Chattanooga – Half Day Symposium	Chattanooga, TN
Oct 26-28	IIBEC BES	St. Louis, MO
Oct 30	BEC Indiana	Noblesville, IN
Dec 8-11	ASHRAE Buildings XVI 2025 Conference	Clearwater Beach, FL
Dec 9	ABAA & CSI Houston – Air Barrier Rodeo	Houston, TX
Dec 10	ABAA & CSI Dallas – Air Barrier Rodeo	Dallas, TX



# Taco Bell Defy

*Taco Bell Defy is the first of its kind in the entire world.*

An innovative drive-through only concept featuring food lifts that drop the food down to 4 drive-through lanes perfectly handles the challenges facing the world today. Finding the perfect air barrier to function through Minnesota’s seasons is quite the task. Add to that, installing during MN winter and we were faced with a tough decision. Ultimately, we chose to install the 3M 3015-VP due to the breathability and broad application temperature range.

**Architect:** Sperides Reiners Architects, INC

**General Contractor:** Engelsma Construction Inc. / Nate Caswell

**Accredited Contractor:** Spec 7 Group, LLC

**Air Barrier Installers:** Nick Frandrup, Denorris Stokes and Corey Laney

**Building (sq. ft.):** 3,000 **Air Barrier (sq. ft.):** 8,454

**Location:** Brooklyn Park, MN

**Type:** New Construction

➤ [See more: airbarrier.org/project/taco-bell-defy](http://airbarrier.org/project/taco-bell-defy)



## Quickly Calculate Cost

We have a simple QAP calculator, try it out!  
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## Find an Accredited Contractor

Search ABAA-accredited contractors online at  
[airbarrier.org/search-results](http://airbarrier.org/search-results)

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Gain Recognition as a Trusted Air Barrier Professional



Person-Focused



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