The Earthbuilders’ Guild

The Earthbuilders’ Guild - Newsletter

2026 Q4

The Earthbuilders' Guild

Nov 14, 2026

Newsletter Update

As we come up to the new year, we at The Earthbuilders’ Guild are looking to stay abreast to the digital outreach trends with the intention of helping further disseminate the knowledge and wisdom of building with earth. We will be transitioning our newsletter distribution from direct email to the use of third-party providers, such as SubStack.

We are receptive to new ideas and/or comments so do take a moment to fill out our survey below;

If you are a current member of TEG, please utilize this **LINK**

If you are a former member of TEG and/or a subscriber, please utilize this **LINK**

Louis Edwards, *TEG Board Member*

Earth USA 2026 Summary



Earth USA 2026 was Adobe in Action's **13th International Conference on Architecture & Construction with Earthen Materials**. The formal conference took place from **Friday, September 18 to Sunday, September 20, 2026** at the Scottish Rite Center's Alhambra Theater in **Santa Fe, New Mexico**. Earth USA 2026 indicated a wider field of interest than previous conferences and included adobe, rammed earth, compressed earth block (CEB) and monolithic adobe (cob). Any material or method that uses clay as a binder was considered. Over **200** people from around the United States and **11 countries** attended.

Most of the full papers by our podium and poster presenters are available as **PDF downloads** on the conference website. Some additional **pre-recorded video presentations** by presenters who were not able to attend in person can also be found there. Click the links below to navigate directly to the online materials:

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- **Podium Full Paper PDFs:** https://www.earthusa.org/conference-schedule-earth-usa-2026
- **Poster Full Paper PDFs:** https://www.earthusa.org/poster-presentations-earth-usa-2026

- **Online Presentations:** https://www.earthusa.org/online-presentations-earth-usa-2026

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all presenters, sponsors, attendees, staff members, volunteers and board members for making the 2026 conference such a success. We look forward to seeing you all again at **Earth USA 2028**!

Mud Talks 40: Four Years of Living in an Owner-Built Adobe Home with Ethan Novikoff

In our fortieth Mud Talks podcast, we speak to **Ethan Novikoff** on the four-year anniversary of living in his owner-built adobe home.

Ethan Novikoff built an adobe house for his family on a mountaintop in southwestern New Mexico. He earned a Certificate in Adobe Construction from Adobe in Action in 2014 and started his adobe career with Mule Creek Adobe in 2015. Ethan is the author of www.visioncreationadobe.com, and has been the Board Treasurer for Adobe in Action since 2020.

Listen here:
https://www.adobeinaction.org/mud-talks/2026/10/22/mud-talks-40-ethan-novikoff

Kurt Gardella, *TEG Board Member + Adobe in Action Executive Director & Instructor*

NEW ALBUQUERQUE JOINERY BUILD

Albuquerque Joinery has a new adobe build underway. This sweet 800 sqft casita is being built for a very special person: Kenny's mom. Tucked in amongst an existing orchard, this little house will require some 3,000 adobes and packs in all the good stuff you might expect from an adobe home built by us: a Rumford fireplace with a masonry chimney, 14" thick interior adobe walls, radiant in-floor heat, a custom kitchen and doors, and a covered porch on three sides. We look forward to sharing construction updates with the TEG community, and are eager to start laying these adobes!

Esther Fredrickson, Albuquerque Joinery + TEG board member



TEG MEMBERS ATTEND FALL 2026 TMS CONFERENCE

Several TEG members attended the annual The Masonry Society (TMS) conference on October 27th with the express purpose of participating in the ongoing effort to bring a set of proposed

earthen modular masonry unit (EMMU) standards forward to the International Code Council (ICC) for the hoped-for eventual inclusion in the International Building Code (IBC), used for commercial construction, and the International Residential Code (IRC), used for residential construction. These folks were Ben Loescher (current EMM Committee chair and past TEG Chair), Lisa Morey, Anthony Dente, Jim Moore, and me. The conference was held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and was set long before anyone believed (other than Brewers fans!) that their baseball team could compete, much less win, the World Series. (See my "View from the Chair article in this newsletter for more about this).

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Why were we attending? Because we believe that there is a more than reasonable chance that we can seize this opportunity to actually get a set of legitimate, validated codes and specifications that will greatly aid in allowing a wider and less expensive adoption of earthen blocks in construction.

Why do we believe this? Because the TMS folks have granted us a window to put together a basic set of proposed standards that can be adopted and updated on a regular basis using the same methods that other masonry types use to get their standards into the IBC/IRC. In other words, TMS has opened the door for us to get earthen blocks on a par with concrete blocks, fired clay bricks, and the other types of masonry that are currently used in construction. This is a very big deal, especially since the reason for needing these earthen codes is due to a potentially catastrophic decision regarding the TMS codes that are used by the ICC for specifying masonry into the IBC/IRC. We petitioned for and were granted authorization by TMS to form the Earthen Modular Masonry Committee (EMMC). We have been active for three years at this point.

What is this decision? Up until several years ago, earthen blocks did have at least a reference within the TMS codes. There is an appendix (Appendix A) that has been used as a de-facto set of useable codes that was referenced from within the larger set of TMS codes related to masonry in general. However, it was decided that Appendix A was no longer supportable since it hadn't been updated or modernized in many years. It was also decided that it was too problematic to simply update some parts of this appendix, so the decision was made to remove it. This left no legitimate codes for earthen blocks in the TMS sphere of influence. Ben and others became aware of this and petitioned TMS to allow a committee to form that would propose a set of codes as described above. TMS agreed with the caveats that first, only TMS members can vote on TMS issues, so we all had to join TMS as paying members, and second, that a minimum number of EMMU committee members have to attend the annual TMS conference. So, we joined and we traveled. Actually, it has been about three years since this effort started and we

have been to four total annual conferences, all in pretty nice places and in different parts of the country.

There are many more members of this committee that are both members of TMS and that travel every year to these conferences, and they do so because of their interest, belief in, and even passion for earthen blocks. They are TMS Officials, business owners, university Professors, non-profit organizers, and many more. They attend because they, like you and I, believe that earthen construction is not only desired, but can play a very beneficial role in providing answers to an ever-changing climate, resource, and social world. I wish to extend my thanks to all the members of the EMMU Committee, a better set of folks couldn't be asked for.

The members of this committee understand that this effort will take years, perhaps up to 7 to 10 years in fact. The nature of organizations like TMS is that they have rules, methods, and requirements that are designed to keep things at a manageable pace. There isn't a "fast track" means to get things done, instead you have to work within the boundaries of the organization and play by their rules. We are doing that. We are patient and persistent, but we also realize that this window of opportunity is going to close at some point and we better have something that passes through this window. That's our goal, and we are sticking to it! We meet multiple times each year virtually (on-line) working on the actual material that will be part of the proposed standards, wrestling with the hard work of getting accurate information, research data, existing standards and codes, putting pen to paper, and making meetings. It is a challenging effort, but well worth it.

If you would like more information on this effort or think that you might be of help to our efforts, please don't hesitate to contact one of us (info on the TEG website). Also, I might have oversimplified some of the more complex issues surrounding the TMS Appendix A or am incorrect in my understanding of them, but I'm pretty certain about the basic situation.

John Jordan, *EMMC Secretary + TEG Chair*

NEW MEXICO EARTH WORKS ARE RAMMERS ! AND IS RAMMING !

Below are a few pictures from our current project. Just getting started, we've got 400 linear feet to go 18 feet tall. Should have the project done for a full article by the time the next TEG newsletter comes out next year.

Sean, *New Mexico Earth Works*







SFCC Adobe Program - Latest News

The **Santa Fe Community College Spring 2027 Adobe Construction** classes have been announced and registration is open. Two of the courses use a blended learning format (50% online + 50% field work) and are great for students who don't have time to attend during the workday.

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ADOB 1114 - Floor Design and Construction
Dates: 01/19 - 03/13/2027
Format: Online
Instructor: Kurt Gardella

ADOB 1116 - Roof Design and Construction
Dates: 01/19 - 03/13/2027
Format: Online
Instructor: Kurt Gardella

ADOB 1115 - Finish Practices
Dates: 03/15 - 05/15/2027 (class meets in person on or off campus March 20, March 21, April 10 and April 11)
Format: Blended (50% online + 50% field work)
Instructors: Kurt Gardella & Issac Logsdon

ADOB 1118 - Preservation Practices
Dates: 03/15 - 05/15/2027 (class meets in person on or off campus May 1, May 2, May 8 and May 9)
Format: Blended (50% online + 50% field work)
Instructors: Kurt Gardella & Issac Logsdon

View the full **Spring 2027** online schedule here: https://sfccssb.sfcc.edu/PROD/pw_pub_sched.p_listthislist?term_in=202630&subj_in=ADOB

Full details the **Adobe Construction Program at SFCC** can be found at: https://www.sfcc.edu/programs/adobe-construction/

Kurt Gardella, *TEG Board Member + SFCC Adobe Program Co-Lead Adjunct Faculty*

TEG HONORARY MEMBERSHIP NOMINATIONS

The Board of Directors is accepting nominations for Honorary Lifetime Membership in TEG for 2027. Below is the Criteria. Deadline for nominations is March 1, 2027.
Email your nomination to *theearthbuildersguild@gmail.com*

Honorary Lifetime Membership Criteria

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One Honorary Lifetime Membership may be awarded to a member of the earthbuilding industry annually, with a two-thirds majority approval of the Board of Directors. Nominees should be submitted in writing to the Board by any member(s) in good standing, with a description as to why the nominee should receive this recognition, along with the material to substantiate the reasoning. The nominee should be of good character, meet TEG's ethical standards and must meet at least two of the three criteria listed below for consideration. Submissions must be received by March 1st of 2027; the Board will announce its decision by the end March. It is the discretion of the Board to award the honor every year.

Advancement of Earthen Construction
- Research related to better understanding of earthen materials
- Development of earthen material technology
- Advancement in earthen engineering

Service to the Community
- Education
- Increase in public awareness and recognition of earthen construction
- Charitable and social benefit work

Service to the Trade and Organization
- Contribution to TEG as an organization
- Work enabling and serving earthen tradespeople and professionals

Our past Honorary Lifetime Members:

2012 Joe Tibbets

2014 Quentin Wilson

2016 Simone Swan

2019 Jake Barrow

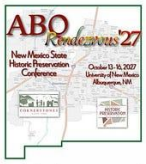
2020 Jim Hallock

2024 Helen Levine

2025 Pat Taylor

2026 Ernest Aragon

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS - NEW MEXICO STATE HISTORICAL PRESERVATION CONFERENCE 2027



CALL FOR ABSTRACTS / PARTICIPATION
New Mexico State Historic Preservation Conference 2027
Albuquerque, New Mexico | October 13–16, 2027
University of New Mexico

We invite proposals that explore the challenges, opportunities, and evolving practice of historic preservation in New Mexico and beyond. We welcome research, practical knowledge, case studies, community perspectives, innovative approaches, and best practices from completed or ongoing projects within the past five years. We especially encourage proposals that share useful knowledge, bring diverse perspectives to the conversation, and demonstrate how preservation can strengthen communities and sustain New Mexico's cultural heritage. Potential presentation themes are described on the website.

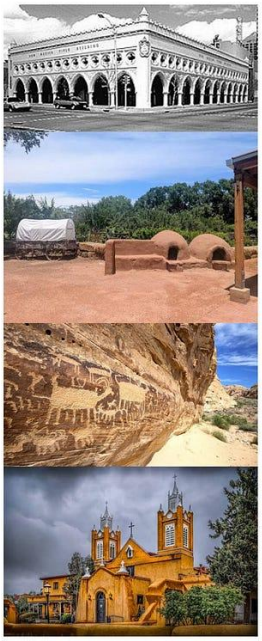
Submission Information
Call for Abstracts Opens: December 1, 2026
Submission Deadline: March 1, 2027
Acceptance Notifications: April 1, 2027
Registration Opens: May 15, 2027

All proposals must be submitted online through the conference submssion portal
Sessions are 50 minutes, including discussion and questions.
Presentations may be eligible for continuing education credit

Please note: Acceptance of an abstract does not include complimentary conference registration. All presenters and panelists must register for the conference and pay the applicable registration fee.

Presentation Formats:
- **Themed Panel**: 10–15 minutes per presenter - may be submitted individually or as a panel with 10-15 minutes per presenter; Individual submissions may be grouped around a shared topic; 10 minutes of Q&A for the full panel; total session time: 50 minutes
- **Individual Presentation**: One presenter with 35-40 minutes of presentation time; 10 minutes of Q&A; Total session time: 50 minutes

Visit https://www.preservenewmexico.com for more information



VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

Greetings Fellow TEG members,

Happy Halloween, and also may Dia de los Muertos be a day to remember those of our family, friends, and our earthen fellowship that have gone on to their eternal rests. I know more than enough of these folks and don't want to dwell on their loss, so I want to instead focus on what we have in front of us. May those behind us rest in peace and those in front of us be blessed by our presence!

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Ok, what's the topic this time? Yeah, time. I have been wrestling with how to frame and express what time topic is most appropriate. I think it's the concept that time defines the boundaries of what we can accomplish in this life, in the amount of time we've been given to do the things that make our time on earth of benefit to ourselves and others. In one respect, I want to respect ***your*** time by keeping this view short.

So, I was reminded of time this past week when I attended the annual fall TMS (The Masonry Society) conference. This conference is focused on moving forward with rules, regulations, standards, etc. that are relevant to the masonry world. And guess what? These fine folks have given us, the earthen fellowship, the opportunity to make the relevancy of earthen masonry standardized in a manner that will possibly give our adobes and CEBs a place in international

standards for years to come. This will take time. Perhaps even enough time that some of us working on this effort may not be around to see the results. But what better way to spend the time that we've been granted than to work on something that may last for time immemorial?

The meeting was in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. At the time of the baseball World Series. It was a wonderful thing to see the hope, enthusiasm, and persistence of the Milwaukeans in rooting for their home team. How long have they been waiting and hoping for this? More time than nearly any other team in the baseball leagues. Yet they didn't give up, didn't abandon their team and didn't feel that they have been shortchanged all these years. Just like us who are hoping that our earthen products not only keep being available, but that they grow with time and reach the kind of audience that ensures a robust earthen construction market.

I believe our time as earthen believers has come. While we richly benefit from the efforts and experience of those who have been working towards this, it is also true that we are now adding to the momentum that appears to be real. Many people believe that we are running out of time to make a difference in the all-to-real environmental and weather challenges that this world faces. Well, it's time to roll up our sleeves and get to work, one way or another. Let's make sure that earthen construction continues and grows.

As always, I welcome your feedback and your thoughts. I encourage you to share any ideas you have been tossing around regarding the future of earthen. If you send me your ideas, I will do my best to get them into this newsletter, and I do promise that I will respond to it no matter what.

With respect and hope,

John Jordan, *The Earthbuilders' Guild - Chair*

Support The Earthbuilders' Guild

Launched 2 days ago

Promote, preserve, and expand the building methods of adobe, rammed earth, and compressed earth block construction.

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