This home in the Governors Grant subdivision, located just outside Columbia, S.C., features a water-managed synthetic stucco exterior.

Throughout North and South Carolina, EIFS distributors and contractors are reacting to the controversy surrounding the discovery of water-intrusion problems on EIFS construction in Wilmington, N.C., in a variety of ways.

Continued on page 34
Most, if not all, contractors are following the lead of the EIFS Industry Members Association in stressing increased applicator training and education.

A-1 Exteriors, Inc., a leading residential exteriors contracting company based in Columbia, S.C., is taking things one step further. The company has stopped installing barrier-type EIFS and is now offering customers only “water-managed” synthetic stucco systems.

The water-managed direct-applied exterior finish system from U.S. Gypsum Company protects against water intrusion along wall/roof intersections and window penetrations.

“My business is located just two and one-half hours from Wilmington, N.C. (where EIFS moisture-damage problems were discovered) and I don’t know of a single homeowner or builder who doesn’t know what happened there,” said Rick Velilla, president of A-1 Exteriors.

“Deciding not to install traditional EIFS was a difficult decision, but it is one we feel good about,” Velilla continued. “Usually our customers are sold on the synthetic stucco look, but they want assurances that there won’t be any problems. They want to be confident about the materials and the installation of the cladding.”

To provide an increased comfort level for homeowners, Velilla says he now offers U.S. Gypsum Company’s Du
pense,” he said. “Once the homeowner learns about the system’s merits, it is an easy sell.”

Since Spring, Velilla has converted a number of residential projects from barrier EIFS to water-managed systems, including a spectacular 5,000-square-foot custom home. A-1’s first home using the water-managed system recently opened in the award winning Governors Grant subdivision, located just outside Columbia. A-1 had previously installed 30 conventional EIF systems in the subdivision.

“The water-managed home received everyone’s attention and the response has been very positive,” Velilla remarked. “Although we learned a great deal as we built the home, the system installed very easily. The owners love the look and durability of the system.”

Water-Managed Approach

Water-managed exterior finish systems, as defined by U. S. Gypsum, include four primary features:

- Flashing at all horizontal terminations to direct intruding water outside the system.
- A water barrier to protect water-sensitive elements and provide a second line of defense against water intrusion.
- A water durable substrate to permit adhesive application of EIFS.
- Termination and trim details that enhance the installation and facilitate maintenance of sealant joints.

Specifically, the Durock water-managed systems feature a #15 felt drainage plane applied over framing. The felt is properly flashing and weeped and Durock Cement Board, a water-durable portland cement-based substrate panel, is then applied over it.

The systems can be installed as either direct-applied or insulated. For direct-applied systems, the base coat and finish are applied directly onto the cement-board surface. Insulated systems feature a minimum 1-inch-thick layer of expanded polystyrene board adhesively attached over the cement panel. A reinforcing mesh is applied over the foam insulation and the surface is completely covered with a minimum 3/32-inch-thick layer of portland cement basecoat.

Distributor Support

Like A-1 Exteriors, Specialties, Inc., a Columbia, S.C.-based exteriors distributor, has opted to go with water-managed systems in place of barrier EIFS. The company has 10 years experience in the EIFS business, both on a contracting and distribution level.

“We studied the research before we made our decision. It took courage for us because we had a steadily increasing EIFS business,” said Olin Kirkland, sales representative for Specialties.
successful in our residential market. As a primary residential installer of water-managed systems, A-l has converted every EIFS job to water-managed. In addition, we just landed a 30,000-square-foot commercial project using the water-managed system. We’re convinced that growing the water-managed system business is the future of this industry.”

New Details

Robert Tate, partner and project superintendent at A-l Exteriors, discovered that some new trim products are facilitating the water-managed installation process. His company is using a 45-degree Bead, a new EIFS product from U.S. Gypsum that eliminates the need for backer rod and provides his crews with a means to easily ensure a proper sealant joint around windows and doors.

Another innovation used by Velilla is Insulscreen Water-Barrier Tape. The tape is applied over window sills, creating a sill pan that catches water leaking from window joints and directs it to the system drainage plane where it exits the wall cavity without damaging water-sensitive framing components and/or sheathing.