

A multi-application building system

By Dani Sheehan.

From roof decks to wall insulation and everything in between, spray foam is changing the way complex systems are designed and installed.

Spray polyurethane foam (SPF) has long been a staple in roofing systems, but its role in construction is expanding far beyond the rooftop. From insulation and waterproofing to structural shaping and even infrastructure repair, contractors are increasingly finding that foam is one of the most adaptable technologies on today's jobsites.

As Will Lorenz, president of [General Coatings](#) explained in a [live interview at World of Concrete 2026](#), there's a visible shift happening across the built environment. "Durable materials like granite and stone have been around for centuries, but they're heavy and difficult. Using an efficient material that you can spray up, carve and then put a coating system over the top of — it's fast, lightweight and cost effective," he highlighted.

A material that adapts to the job

In traditional construction, materials often dictate the process. Boards require fastening systems. Concrete requires formwork and heavy equipment. Stone requires cutting, hauling and labor-intensive installation. Because it is applied as a liquid that expands and adheres in place, spray foam can conform to irregular surfaces, bond directly to substrates and eliminate multiple layers of assembly. As Will noted, "It bonds to irregular surfaces, self-flashes around penetrations, seals everything up — you don't have to apply a boot and weld and all this stuff."

Once installed, coatings complete the system by adding UV protection, reflectivity and durability. Together, SPF and coatings create a buildable surface that can be shaped, protected and adapted to a wide range of applications.

What's accelerating adoption even further is productivity. Will explained the labor advantage clearly: "It's a low-labor type of product... you're spraying 10,000 to 20,000 square feet a day with a small crew."

Compared to multi-layer assemblies that require mechanical fastening, adhesives or multiple trades, SPF systems can often be installed with a small, coordinated crew and significantly fewer steps. This allows contractors to take on projects that would otherwise be too labor-intensive, cost-prohibitive or logistically complex.

Where spray foam is showing up next

Across the industry, spray foam is increasingly being used in:

- Lightweight architectural features and themed structures
- Waterproofing and insulation in complex geometries
- Concrete lifting and slab leveling applications
- Wall insulation systems replacing traditional fiber-based products
- Energy retrofits in large commercial facilities

Will believes this evolution is part of a broader shift in how the industry thinks about building materials. “You’ll find that waterfalls and features in places like Las Vegas likely have a steel structure with foam over it and a coating topping it because it’s fast, lightweight and cost effective,” he noted. The versatility of spray foam gives it an advantage over other materials. Depending on how it is designed and finished, it can serve as a structural, insulating, shaping or protective component within the building envelope.

What this means for contractors

Spray foam offers contractors a way to:

- Expand into new types of commercial work
- Reduce labor intensity on complex projects
- Improve installation speed and jobsite efficiency
- Compete in both roofing and specialty applications

As Will emphasized, the opportunity is already here: “Get involved, come to industry events, learn the material... there are a lot of great resources out there to understand how to use it.”