



Episode 682 | 12:00 PM EST

Rick Sims & Pete Consigli

Florida Hurricane Response/Recovery, HVAC Industry Perspective

&

The Andy Ask Building Science Symposium

This week we welcomed Rick Sims and Pete Consigli for a report on Hurricane Ian recovery, HVAC industry update and the Andy Ask Building Science Symposium aka Winter Break. It's always great to have the Restoration Industry Global Watchdog join us and this week we also welcome his SW Florida HVAC expert and friend Rick Sims. This show not only provided us with some insight into the current events in Florida and addressed some HVAC related issues that are front and center in the industry today.

Rick Sims is a Florida mechanical contractor with over forty years experience in dealing with Climate Zone One moisture levels. Rick serves on the Mechanical Technical Advisory Committee for the Florida Building Commission and teaches code related topics all over Florida. Rick has been teaching HVAC professionals since 1987. Rick has collected field data for Andrew Ask for many years and has assisted in research projects involving use of dehumidifiers with central air conditioning systems.

Pete Consigli is a Restoration Industry Association (RIA) Certified Restorer (CR) and Water Loss Specialist (WLS) and has been a member of the Restoration Industry Association since 1977. Over the years he has been an active volunteer and filled various association leadership roles. Pete is RIA's "Resident" Historian and an archival resource to the industry. In 2008, Pete received RIA's most prestigious honor for excellence in restoration, the Martin L. King award. In 2012 RIA made Pete the second honorary member to its association, only the third such honor in RIA's 75 years.

The RIA recognized Pete in 2021 at their 75th Diamond Anniversary Convention in Orlando, Florida by naming its new scholarship program, “The RIA Pete Consigli Educational Scholarship Award” in his honor. RIA presents the award at its Annual Convention and Exposition. When asked, Pete advises the RIA education committee and staff on matters impacting the restoration industry and its members. In his 5th decade in the industry Pete enjoys his reoccurring role on IAQradio+ as the “Restoration Global Watchdog. He is well-known as the Building Science Summer Camp’s “Executive Chef Emeritus.” Pete and long-time friend Cliff “Z-Man” Zlotnik, CR, WLS, CIEC are Consigliere’s (advisors) to the Moisture Mob!

Nuggets mined from today’s episode:

Rick where are you from originally and how did you end up in Southwest FL?

I began in HVAC in late 70’s in Sarasota; moved 100 miles south in 1981 have been here since. All of my experience has been in climate zone one and so I don’t get to heat things very often. I am lifelong ACCA member and past president of SWACCA and FRACCA. I am active in Florida HVAC industry issues many years.

Johnson’s AC please tell our audience a little more about the type or work you do?

Johnson’s is Naples longest established AC company established in 1960. Naples has grown up around us. One thing that hasn’t changed is that Naples is home to very wealthy people. We served the WW2 generation when they owned the buildings and now we are serving the boomers; both the buildings and occupants have changed. Our local industries are: golfing, fishing and boating. Much of my work is done on rooftops inspecting cooling towers, unless our firm is maintain the cooling tower out of concern of Legionella exposure; I avoid walking downwind from the cooling towers.

What is the HVAC market like at this point? Are you busy? I would imagine you cannot keep up. Can you get equipment? People?

I have spent a lifetime improving the HVAC workforce. Talent demand for HVAC is not new. I started teaching apprenticeship classes (nights) in 1987 and never looked back. I don’t teach nightly classes anymore. I teach all over Florida for ACCA chapters and other groups. Education is the thing I am most proud of. It’s still the most important thing I do. These days, I am honored to be the keynote speaker for many Florida HVAC apprenticeship program graduation ceremonies. It’s a labor of love.

I have heard several guests and others talk about the difficulty of getting equipment. For the first time ever my Sheet Metal Worker nephew is having problems getting equipment on a very large hospital project. How is equipment supply in Florida especially now that you have the hurricanes on top of it?

Hurricane Ian was similar to Hurricane Donna; Ian flooded 500,000 cooling units. I can't say much more about business and economic conditions without placing blame on government and monetary policy for creating it all. Time to stop blaming CV19. These are self-inflicted wounds in my opinion. I expect things to decline further before any improvement. I wonder if we are just expected to lower our standards for everything from now on? Substitution of equipment is common due to reduced availability. There is a shortage of resin products (plastics) circuit breakers and PVC fittings. I've seen empty shelves in electrical wholesalers.

Do you get many people asking about IEQ in your HVAC business?

Our area of expertise is moisture control; that's where we have the most immediate impact on IEQ. In CZ1 If you don't get that right nothing else will matter. The strategies that I teach to others in my classes are all about psychrometrics, mechanical systems and building science.

When it comes to the tougher IEQ questions and current debates about IEQ; I am hesitant to call myself an IEQ expert; I just quote my favorite experts such as John Ellis and Allison Bailes whose new book I have just read. Also enjoy learning from the mold contractors at the AEML symposium in Deerfield Beach. My favorite presentation at BSSC 22 was Dr. Bahnfleth. After learning from these guys I humbly pass along what I am learning.

Because I am an old guy; I have watched things improve greatly; when I was a kid ETS was everywhere. I remember my first mold seminar at an ASHRAE event in 1986 before we started saying "IAQ". I remember when Andy Ask was president of the new IAQ association! Over the years I met many experts and took what I could from them.

I sit on Florida's mechanical TAC for the building commission and so I listen to lots of proposals to modify Florida's ventilation requirements. I have very different opinions about what are best practices that I recommend to my customers as

opposed to what should be required in Florida's code in every single case. I have no opinions about how to do things up north.

Pete welcome back, it's always great to get your perspective. You specifically asked that we use a title with both Response and Recovery in it. Why?

From the restoration perspective Response and Recovery are different. In restoration Phase 1 is Emergency Response, Phase 2 may be Strategic Demolition/Remediation and Phase 3 Repair/Reconstruction (redecorating, painting, wall covering, flooring, etc.).

There are single event losses (e.g. structural house fire, or a pipe burst) and there are geographic losses that adversely affect large areas (e.g. hurricanes, wildfires, catastrophic flooding). Geographic losses come with mobilization and logistical challenges. Recovery in geographic losses may take years to complete. Along the I-75 corridor in Florida, there will be 1.5 million fewer tourists because there no places for visitors to stay.

Rick, what are you seeing from the HVAC perspective on recovery?

Our company has been through Donna, Andrew, Charlie, Wilma, Irma and Ian; our whole community is good at this unfortunately. The quick power restoration was due to upgrades made after past storms. We have been wind tested many times and our durability has improved significantly. This one is additionally stressed by self-inflicted supply chain and regulatory issues.

On top of everything else, we have to switch our energy compliance systems to the new SEER2 equipment standard as we simultaneously transition to mildly flammable lower global warmer potential refrigerant alternatives. It's a regulatory pile on during already tough circumstances. Flood insurance is easier to use than wind damage insurance.

Florida ends up with many, many contractors coming in from out of state. With the mold licensing law etc. how has that gone? HVAC contractors in Florida are used to codes and permits. 65% of the permits in Collier County are for AC unit replacements. California has more stringent laws because California's contractors are less compliant.

Florida is trying to protect its aging population from being taken advantage of by unlicensed or unscrupulous contractors. The Florida (DBPR) Department of Business and Professional Regulation is responsible for licensing. Violating licensing or contracting laws after a hurricane is a felony. On nightly news, contractors in orange jumpsuits have been paraded in front of TV news cameras on their way to jail being sent to jail for felonious violation of local regulations. Lee County where Ft Myers and Sanibel Island are has a population of over 1 million with only 104 licensed contractors.

Rick who is using building science consulting services at this time? Are there many consultants that provide building science services in your area?

The building science community in CZ1 is a patchwork of forensic engineers, mold professionals, energy raters and various HVAC specialties. I met many of the best in Florida while in Westford at BSSC; others I met at AEML Mold Symposium in Deerfield.

It's too bad these professionals spend so much time working on things that went wrong instead of getting ahead of it. One thing that's too common is Florida contractors, architects and engineers learning building science in a courtroom. The majority of discussions I have with HVAC contractors are after they are already in some sort of trouble. I teach contractors how to play defense, the most common contractor mistake is failure to properly document. You need seasonal dew point readings, cabinets at 70°F dew point will sweat. A courtroom is a lousy place to learn building science.

This leads into Winter Break aka the Andy Ask Building Science Symposium.

Rick, what is the Andy Ask Building Science Symposium and why was it started?

Andy Ask introduced Climate Zone 1 to Joe Lstiburek more than 2 decades ago. It changed many things for many people; erased things we had wrong and opened our eyes to many things. I was one of them. We have changed many big things in that time. Most of the ducts were in unconditioned spaces back then; today it's very rare; the building are sealed better. We have blower doors and duct testers. This symposium was the CZ1 connection to that progress and led a few of us to Westford. The same things were happening on the east coast; mold contractors made lots of progress in the past twenty years.

The highlight this year is the Pioneer Panel. Let's talk about the importance of that. For me, these guys are the Building Science Beatles. They were groundbreaking and mapped out the path to success for my generation. We have heard some of the great stories and we want to know more.

Joe Lstiburek is simply the most engaging speaker I have ever heard on any topic. SWFL loves Joe; at AABSS we give them two days of Joe; that's hard to find. Joe heightened awareness of building science and triggered change in how we build and how we think.

I have been blessed with direct access to Gary Nelson. He is brilliant and has always made himself accessible and helpful to anyone trying to figure things out. He is a wonderful man to be with and interesting on many levels.

This will be a very rare appearance from Neil Moyer. I trained directly under him. He helped me become an energy rater. He is retired from FSEC and is not seeking attention. I am so glad he will do this for us. He is the least well-known nationally, but he has a huge following of grateful students in Florida.

This is history. They haven't been seen with each other before this and there are no events like this afterwards. This is authentic. For more information on the 2023 Building Science Symposium: <https://www.climatezoneone.com/>

Rick what do you mean by Conductsation?

"Conductsation" is the most popular class I have taught in 45 years. It's all about why ducts and equipment components sweat and drip and strategies to combat the problem if you can't just put the ducts in a conditioned space.

The manufacturers are no help, codes don't prevent it; service technicians are expected to do quick inexpensive things to stop it. This is a building science workshop where the wall insulation we discuss is a duct wall but the science is exactly the same.

Brian Orr Published This Course on You Tube: <https://youtu.be/LYKqGQozW8c>

Roundup:

Andy Ask-

- Along with the late Jerry Wicks, Andy conceived an event where 25 likeminded people would get together to discuss building science.
- 75 people attended their first event. Andy is proud of the event and willingly accepts credit for their success.
- People often forget where good ideas came from.
- Andy says that ventilation is for people, when people aren't in the building you don't need ventilation.
- Ventilation in hot humid climates is expensive. Andy recommends adding the least amount of ventilation necessary to do the job and to dehumidify the outside air to a 60°F dew point.

Brittany Gordon -AEML

- Is happy and excited to join forces with Andy Ask and the building science group.

Pete Consigli-

- The future of insurance in Florida is questionable. Some carriers have gone out of business and others have abandoned the state. Residents who have been unable to buy insurance can purchase insurance from Citizens Insurance and the state insurance pool.
- It's buyer beware due to questionable business practices of: contractors, roofers, insurance carriers, attorneys and public adjusters.
- Local contractors are educating the public how to qualify service providers and contractors. We live here and we will be here long after the storm chasers are gone.
- Winter Break is a one of a kind weeklong event, with formal programs; a building science pioneers panel, many networking opportunities and an exciting post event program.
- For more info on the Post Conference Hurricane Workshop, visit the workshop host's home page: <https://www.thedyojo.com/>

Rick Sims-

- AEML and the Andy Ask group share custody of Pete Consigli who has worked hard at building collaboration and synergy between both groups.

Z-Man signing off

Trivia Question:

Including shared numbers, how many international climate zone names/numbers are there?

Sorry no correct answers

Answer: 17, source for question:

https://www.iagradio.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2008_-International-Climate-Zone-Tables_Benchmarking.pdf