



An equalizing primer will counter texture and porosity variations.

related to the finish application but, rather, stem from problems inherent in wall construction or in surface preparation.

Undulations due to improper framing or fastening must be corrected *before* the finish coat is applied.

Joint compound must be applied and sanded properly. Remember though, that even a perfectly treated joint may still cause decorating problems, due to the texture and porosity differences between the joint treatment and the gypsum panel face paper. To correct these, application of a skim coat or an equalizing prime coat is essential.

Finally, paint selection also plays a role. Semi-gloss or egg-shell finishes will telegraph non-uniformity problems more readily than standard flat latexes, especially under critical lighting conditions.

Only by being aware and by controlling all these factors can the contractor truly have a chance to achieve the "perfect" finished gypsum board wall surface.

United States Gypsum Company's *Gypsum Construction Handbook* contains a wealth of information on drywall finishing. To order a copy of the handbook, send \$15 to: Dept. #193, Handbook, United States Gypsum Company, P.O. Box 806278, Chicago, IL 60680-4124 or call (312) 606-4111 (VISA and MasterCard accepted). For free product information, write to the same address. ■

Robert Negri is a member of the Technical Staff in the Interiors Finishing Systems Laboratory at the USG Corporation Research Center, located in Libertyville, Illinois. He has more than 15 years of formulatory experience in joint treatment, paint, and texture coatings applications. Negri holds two U.S. Patents, and he is a member of the Chicago Chapter of the Federation of Societies for Coatings Technology.

### Defining the terms

**"Joint banding"** refers to visual differences between treated joint areas and the remaining gypsum board surface after drywall has been decorated. To understand the cause of the problem, it is necessary to understand the functional and performance differences between paints, primers and sealers.

**"Finish Paints"** are generally a highly pigmented dispersion that is applied in a thin layer that converts to an opaque solid film after application. These paints are formulated to opacify (hide) and provide a specific level of sheen, durability and protection. Paint coatings can be high or low solids and high or low resin binder systems, providing a multitude of sheen levels (that is, flat, satin-flat, egg-shell, gloss, semi-gloss, and high-gloss).

**"Primers"** are formulated to impart filling characteristics to smooth out surface texture irregularities and provide a porous surface for proper adhesion of the finish coat. Primer coatings are often high solid/low resin binder formulations, designed to allow for absorption of the finish coat medium into the substrate. As such, they do not usually correct for porosity variations between gypsum board face paper and joint treatment. This can negatively impact finish uniformity especially when high sheen paints (most commonly egg-shell and semi-gloss) are used resulting in porosity-related joint banding.

**"Sealer Sealers"** are coatings specifically formulated to prevent the gypsum board surface from absorbing subsequent coats of paint. They equalize the porosity of the substrate by eliminating or greatly reducing the permeability of the substrate surface. Sealers are often low solids/high resin binder coatings that conform to the varying textures of the gypsum panels and treated joints. They do not correct for surface texture irregularities and can result in texture-related joint banding. ■