



nerej

Chairman's message: Taking chapter from good to great

January 02, 2008 - Construction Design & Engineering

We began 2007 with a challenge, which was to take The Mass. Chapter of ABC from "good to great." With my term as chairman winding down, I feel it appropriate to reflect on the previous twelve months and speak to the future of ABCMA.

I began my term as chairman with a pledge to focus on having a prosperous and rewarding year, as well as to have a little fun. I asked members to get involved and participate in any way they could. In February we conducted a very successful member survey with over a 30% response rate. The results of this survey gave your leadership additional focus and direction for this year.

During 2007 we strived to be more flexible with our meeting scheduling. The goal was to have as many members as possible participate in ABC committee meetings, training programs and networking events. We varied our meeting time, used conference calling whenever possible and moved many meetings which normally would have been in Burlington, off site to a member's office or to other locations across the state. Regional councils throughout the state have been reactivated in order to have a more local ABC presence. We recognize that everyone wants a piece of your time, whether it is of a personal or professional nature. We have changed business as usual so more members can be involved with less distraction and time commitment.

We had a terrific dinner event in May during which we celebrated our craft, management education and apprenticeship training participants, along with the winners of our annual safety S.T.E.P. awards. Over 250 members, students and family members attended the event hosted by ABC's Gould Construction Institute (GCI). This event was a great example of how GCI has grown and offers a variety of training to member firms in the safety, management education and craft training areas. Gould also spent the better part of 2007 establishing a joint venture program with Wentworth Institute of Technology. Graduates of these particular classes will earn certificates with both the Gould and Wentworth. The first Project Management class with Wentworth is scheduled to start this coming January and is already sold out with a waiting list.

Legislatively ABC enjoyed a productive year as well. Our Government Affairs Committee in conjunction with our lobbyist, John Bartley, made some great impacts on Beacon Hill on issues ranging from limiting the impact of the local union "card check" bill to opposing legislation creating union-only positions on the electrical licensing board. ABC led industry efforts to work with the Attorney General and legislators on the Independent Contractor law, the new OSHA 10 law and a variety of public bidding concerns. We hosted legislators at our Board of Directors meetings, including Senators Steven Panageotakis, Dianne Wilkerson and Representative Charles Murphy. More ABC members became active in the political process this year, and a number of members hosted events for key legislators. We met and worked with both Republicans and Democrats to further the merit shop cause.

We had been monitoring, for several years, developments with Bristol-Myers Squibb as the firm

prepared to locate a massive pharmaceutical facility at Fort Devens in Ayer. To our disappointment, and our members' loss, BMS went in another direction and signed a private PLA for the entire project, which received state tax credits. A "Labor Locked Out" task force was formed with its focus being to inform Massachusetts of how a PLA eliminates over 80% of the Massachusetts construction workforce. Our task force met with the construction manager on the project (Parsons) in an effort to reverse the decision. We placed a billboard at the major intersection of Rtes. 93 and 128 in Braintree. Many editorials, op-eds and letters to the editor were written in both local and state publications and, with the efforts of our PR consultant, Charlie Chieppo, we continue to get a firm message out regarding the BMS project, as well as all future projects, which may be subject to a PLA. We continue to monitor the BMS project and represent the open shop in this unfair decision.

June brought out the best of our golfers at the annual ABCMA Golf Tournament, which was held at Pine Hills in Plymouth. It was a sell-out event, with over 160 golfers participating on both of Pinehills' 18-hole courses.

In the fall, we moved our offices from 1 Wall St. to 200 Wheeler Rd., Burlington. ABC had been long due for an updated and more efficient home from which we could better serve our members. The new facility has more conference and meeting space as well as a dedicated training room for the Gould. To help alleviate costs, and give members a chance to become a permanent part of ABC's new home, we began the sale of inscribed bricks for a "Wall of Merit" that will greet members in the reception area. Sales are brisk and are on a first-come, first-serve basis regarding placement. The cost is minimal so that all member firms can participate and be part of this permanent monument in the new lobby. We would encourage all to participate. Reserve your spot now and be a part of the wall and show your ABC pride.

This year's, Excellence in Construction Awards (EICA) was held at the Seaport Hotel, Boston, in conjunction with Build Boston. Some 250 members and guests attended the awards ceremony and over 350 attend our "Winners' Circle" reception, which we opened up to all the attendees of Build Boston. We have received great reviews from all who attended.

Finally, thank you to the ABC staff, board of directors and committee members for their hard work. I enjoyed a great year as your chairman and I wish Chris Kenney all the best as ABC's incoming chairman for 2008. With participation from our strong leaders, staff and a diverse group of interested members, we held a successful planning conference this fall in Newport, R.I. We've already begun work on some key areas, including green/sustainable construction, strategic alliances, increasing political activism, and developing young and diverse leaders. I am confident our "Good to Great" journey that began in 2007 will continue through 2008 and beyond.

Douglas Hunter is the 2007 chairman of the Mass. chapter ABC., Burlington, Mass.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540