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March 11 is application deadline for STEP Awards

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Although ensuring one's safety is a personal responsibility, it is also the duty of the construction industry as a whole to provide education, invest in safety training and innovation. ABC and our training affiliate, the Gould Construction Institute, work hard to promote the importance of safety and education. One way we do this is through the Annual S.T.E.P. (Safety Train and Evaluation Process) Awards. With the March 11th application deadline fast approaching, this is a great opportunity to see how your company stacks up against your fellow ABC members.

Any discussion of safety and education in the construction industry also provides a good opportunity to reflect on the integral role government plays in workforce safety. However, as too many of our companies have learned under the Obama Administration, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) appears more intent on generating revenue through fines than actually working with companies to ensure they are taking the proper steps to ensure worker safety.

ABC's hope is that this disturbing trend is not being applied to companies based on their labor affiliation (or lack thereof).

Several ABC companies recently met with U.S. Senator Scott Brown to discuss this very issue and demonstrate to the Senator the importance of fair enforcement balanced with compliance assistance and education from OSHA. The focus should be on more than just issuing fines; it should be to work with the industry to further educate and train employees - our most valuable resource .

ABC remains committed to ensuring that our member companies make training and educating their employees on workplace safety a priority. The STEP program helps us demonstrate these values by putting our safety programs to the test. I encourage you to embrace the challenge of the STEP awards and ensure that your company remains ahead of the game.

Mark Roberts, LEED AP is the 2011 chairman of the ABC-Mass. Chapter, Burlington and is president of A&M Construction Co., Inc., Wakefield, Mass.

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