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ABC's Merit Apprenticeship Program coming this summer

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It is with great excitement and anticipation that we at ABC MA are planning to launch our Merit Apprenticeship Program (MAP) this summer. MAP is a coalition of merit shop contractors that have joined together, for the first time, in a collective apprenticeship program to train individuals interested in pursuing careers in the construction trades.

MAP is coming to fruition after considerable development and planning led by ABC's workforce development director John Rich, in coordination with the State Division of Apprenticeship Training.

One of our main priorities at ABC is construction training. ABC's Gould Construction Institute has established a strong reputation for providing apprenticeship, craft and management training throughout the state. Now, with the MAP program, we can complement and enhance the efforts of the Gould Institute by providing a better apprenticeship resources for merit shop contractors and workers alike.

MAP will also provide a link between ABC and vocational schools since it offers both a career path and a connection to potential employers.

MAP also helps establish a level playing field in the construction trades by allowing merit shops to take advantage of the type of group apprentice programs that have previously only been available to unions. Allowing merit shop contractors equal footing in this way should expand apprentice training at a key time for the industry.

As we emerge from the recession, we have to seriously look at training the next generation of construction workers. Our industry is aging, and we need new talent to keep it moving forward. More importantly, in today's shifting economy, having access to an affordable state approved apprentice program can make all the difference to your merit shop business and others like it across the Commonwealth.

I applaud the efforts of those involved in making MAP a reality and encourage you take a look at how you can take advantage of this new program. Let ABC and MAP assist you in developing the future leaders of your company and our industry.

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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