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ABC-Mass chairman's message: "More members, more clout"

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In the last few years, ABC has made impressive progress toward our goal of fair and open competition in the construction industry. Making that type of progress requires clout on Beacon Hill and in city halls across Massachusetts.

It's no accident that one of the signs you'll see in our Burlington headquarters reads "More members, more clout." Membership is what makes everything we do possible.

In an effort to boost membership and the clout it brings, ABC is holding an important recruitment event on March 2, at the Charlestown headquarters of McGladrey, an ABC member and one of the nation's leading accounting firms. The event will feature Patriots assistant head coach Dante Scarnecchia.

This is our most important recruitment event of the year. One way to ensure that it will be a success is for members to invite prospects to attend. Please take the time to think about industry colleagues who should become part of our organization. In addition to inviting them and attending with them if you can, please let our membership director Mary Gilgallon know so she can follow up with an invitation. You can reach Mary at (781) 273-0123 or mary@abcma.org.

There is no better example of the importance of the clout ABC wields than the recently approved Merit Apprenticeship Program (MAP). This program is a game changer, for the first time allowing open shop firms to compete on a level playing field for public jobs. As a MAP member, your company will not only fulfill the apprenticeship requirements for all prevailing wage work, but you will also have a ready source of labor for all jobs.

MAP achieves the goal of allowing you to compete against union firms without the risk of losing your own workers. Simply by providing a letter of intent to hire a labor pool apprentice, you can ensure your apprentices stay with you.

You can join even if you don't currently have apprentices. And companies that already have an apprentice can be automatically be grandfathered into MAP.

ABC - not your company - is responsible for complying with state-mandated ratios and working with the state Division of Apprenticeship Training. We can even handle much of the necessary paperwork.

The Merit Apprenticeship Program opens a whole new market to ABC member companies. But it only exists because we had the clout to fight for it. Please help us maintain and increase that clout by doing your part to ensure that our March 21st recruitment event is a success.

Dennis Maguire is the president of Mass. Chapter of the Associated Builders & Contractors, Burlington, Mass.