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GCI chairman's message: Education doesn't stop in construction

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As merit shop contractors, we constantly hear that we are unskilled and unsafe. Even though negative characterizations about merit shops may not be accurate, merit shop contractors must do more than just complain, we must speak with our actions. When you hear something often enough, you tend to start believing it. That is why training your employees to be skilled and safe can not only better your industry but your image as well. You need to convey this message to your employees to never stop doing the next job better than the last. When you come right down to it, our employees are paramount. If you do that one thing, I think you will find that, unlike most other industries in this country, there are no stop signs in construction. The only limit on how far they can go in this industry is the limit they place on themselves. Few Americans today can experience the deep sense of personal pride in being able to drive by a building, a school or a church and say, "I built that."

For most Americans, their greatest accomplishment at the end of the day is an empty in box. What a unique opportunity it is to create something that will improve the lives of those around them for the next 50, 70 or 100 years. Most Americans can never experience that level of career satisfaction. Make no mistake about it. I don't care how much business sense an individual contractor has, or how sharp the pencils are in estimating, or how convincing marketing can be, or how accurate the drawings are: The success of any construction company rests squarely on the shoulders of the craft professionals on the job site. Every contractor knows that. Construction is the one industry that makes all others possible.

With that said, we must continue to train all of our employees to allow them to build better and safer. Doing so will help our employees, our industry and the way it is perceived.

Vic Pelletier is the chairman of the George W. Gould Construction Institute, Burlington, Mass.

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