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ABC MA chairman's message: More members, more clout

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For years you've probably seen the phrase "more members, more clout" at ABC's office, in our publications and at events. The logic of this simple message is unassailable, and I'm glad to say that as 2013 draws to an end, our clout is on the rise.

As of early December, ABC Mass.'s membership hit 400 for the first time in six years. All of us should thank our new membership team of Ken Ledwak and Dave Murphy for the great job they're doing on our behalf.

You can see the impact of our growing membership on Beacon Hill, where we have been able to turn to allies in both parties to stop legislation that would be harmful to the merit shop and provide an extra push to bills that promote fair and open competition in the Mass. construction industry. And we have been able to achieve this success despite an administration that is more hostile to the open shop than any in recent memory.

When ABC staff and lobbyist John Bartley meet with legislators, there is nothing quite like bringing along a few members who are employers in the legislator's district to get his or her attention.

While political clout is critical, it's not the only reason why a growing roster of members is so important. Membership revenue produces the financial stability that allows us to provide the legal, lobbying, public relations and programming resources on which you rely.

For example, since my last message, Alexandra Auer has joined the staff as program & event manager. Alexandra is a Certified Meeting Professional who comes to ABC with over a decade of meeting planning experience with a strong focus on professional trade associations.

One of Alexandra's top priorities is to call upon the membership to help enhance ABC programming. If you'd like to give back to ABC MA by presenting a topic at a small gathering or moderating a roundtable discussion, please let her know!

By the end of next year, we will know who our next governor will be. Regardless of who wins, ABC is likely to have greater access than we do in the Patrick administration. That means that if we continue to increase membership, we are likely to be in a good position to have a voice in the corner office to go along with our growing legislative influence - and a healthy balance sheet to enhance our businesses and support our employees...and accompany our growing clout.

Thomas Descouleaux is chairman of ABC-Massachusetts chapter, Woburn, Mass.

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