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Chairman's message: Thank you for the memories

December 18, 2014 - Construction Design & Engineering

It has been a real honor to chair the Mass. Chapter of Associated Builders and Contractors for the past two years. Together, we were able to post some important achievements.

Two years ago, our association - and many of our member companies - was still reeling from the Great Recession. Those impacts were apparent in ABCMA's membership and its budget.

But two years later, fiscal stability has been restored we are back over 400 members. Thanks to the good work of our membership team, headed by Ken Ledwak, Massac. is among the nation's fastest-growing chapters.

Last year, improving communication with members was one of the main priorities that emerged from our chapter's annual planning conference. Led by public affairs director Chuck Borstel, we went to work, hired a marketing consultant and overhauled our communications operation. Today we have a significantly upgraded social media presence and the open rates on newsletters, Weekly Member News and other items have spiked.

But perhaps our biggest advance has been in government affairs. After being locked out of the Patrick administration over the last eight years, we redoubled our efforts to work with legislators and statewide officials, and began to take a more proactive role instead of just trying to stop harmful initiatives.

That strategy has paid off. We now have legislative champions in both parties, including committee chairs and members who appear to be headed for important leadership positions. Those champions have introduced important legislation, such as a bill that would prevent housing authorities from giving no-bid contracts to unions, and helped us achieve victories like allowing those who have worked in process piping for four years or more to receive a newly required license without having to take an exam.

Perhaps the best example of our new status was the recent state elections. Not only was Charlie Baker - the candidate whose policies most closely match our positions - get elected, but we are also developing a strong relationship with incoming attorney general Maura Healey, whose office may have as much impact on our members and industry as the governor.

None of this could have been achieved without your support and I thank you for that. I would also like to thank my fellow board members and the ABCMA staff.

We have accomplished much in the past two years, but there is far more to be done. I have no doubt that we will continue to make progress under the leadership of incoming chair Brian Jurgens. I know you will offer him the same support you have given me. And for that, I offer my heart-felt thanks.

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

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