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## **ABC-Mass. chapter president's message: Honored and humbled by this opportunity**

January 20, 2017 - Construction Design & Engineering

Joe Barbone, Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc. - Mass. Chapter

Happy New Year to all our Associated Builders and Contractors - Mass.Chapter (ABCMA) members and dedicated staff. I am extremely excited to be given the opportunity to serve as board chair for the coming year. It is a responsibility that should not be taken lightly and I certainly will not treat it in that manner. The primary responsibility of the chair, all board participants and ABC's staff is to serve the members to the best of our abilities. This association, along with its rich history and tradition, is designed to enhance and further the success and well being of our contractors, our associate members, and our industry in general.

To that end, I remain committed and focused...but our enhanced strength and success can only be accomplished through the active involvement of all the aforementioned stakeholders. To become more relevant and vital to our member companies, we must make it our primary goal to meet the needs of those members. As such, I welcome any ideas, comments, and particularly suggestions for improved membership services.

Although the economy -- and specifically the short-term outlook for the construction industry -- appears to be relatively strong, there are still many challenges to be addressed and overcome. Among those are needed improvements in workforce development such as expanded training opportunities, greater diversity amongst the workforces of our member companies, more widespread recruiting and attraction of potential workers, and more programs offering lower-cost group benefits. The shortage of skilled workers is an ongoing crisis within our industry. Left unresolved, it will have a long term negative impact on the success of all our businesses.

We have established a Workforce Development Council and I will be working closely with that council to devise potential solutions to this challenge. We will also look at ways to unify and strengthen existing assets such as the Gould Construction Institute, Merit Apprentice Program, and our ABCMA Chapter. We are unique across the entire industry in that we have all these assets under one umbrella and we need to take advantage of that in helping to solve our workforce shortage.

The Gould offers extensive training opportunities while MAP administers the apprenticeship program which is the pathway for candidate employment and for fulfilling voids in the ranks of our members. ABC, as the parent organization, is available to coordinate, promote and market all of it to the

construction industry and to tell our story to legislators. In this manner, not only will ABC become more relevant to our members, it will become more widely recognized throughout the industry as a leader and a player in the legislative decision making process.

Government Affairs will continue to be an important part of ABC's work and we will need your support and commitment to further the gains we have made in recent years, particularly now that we have a friendly administration that is willing to listen to our ideas and suggestions.

Let's also have some fun as we take on these challenges. We will strive to conduct new and innovative events that will be engaging, attractive, and beneficial to our members.

I am once again honored and humbled by this opportunity and I look forward to working with all of you as we make ABCMA invaluable to our members and to our communities.

Joe Barbone is the 2017 chairman of the Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc. - Mass. Chapter, Woburn, Mass. and is the president and CEO of Methuen Construction, Plaistow, N.H.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540