



# nerej

## **Chairman's message: 40 great years and counting**

June 18, 2008 - Construction Design & Engineering

It's only natural for an organization to mark its 40th anniversary. What is particularly impressive about this milestone for the Mass. chapter of ABC is that it finds us looking ahead to even greater achievements than what we've accomplished in the past.

The goals that drove our founding members in 1968 - a level playing field and free choice regarding labor affiliation - still drive us today. But even as political winds shift, we are defining ABC on our terms, not by what others claim us to be.

For years, ABC was routinely overlooked on Beacon Hill. But in the 1990s, we teamed with governors Weld and Cellucci to stop the spread of exclusionary project labor agreements. Despite some success, we recognized the need to broaden our efforts. Today, political leaders on both sides of the aisle see ABC members as responsible construction industry leaders who value their employees.

With help from Beacon Hill leaders, we beat back union attempts to exclude us from the all-important public construction reform commission that was formed in 2004. But even more important than securing a seat at the table was what happened after we took that seat: ABC worked to achieve consensus through thoughtful deliberation. On some issues, we agreed with our union colleagues. When we didn't, we focused on policy, not personality.

Over the course of the year-long commission, we changed the way Beacon Hill viewed the ABC-Mass. chapter. We have built on that transformation to bring positive results to our members and our industry. Today, we are leading an industry coalition that works with attorney general Martha Coakley's office on the hot-button independent contractor law, working with the AG and industry colleagues to develop a pro-active compliance program.

We have used our growing influence in the industry to promote other initiatives that are important to ABC members. We have taken a lead role in green and sustainable construction, and have formed an alliance with the Boston Green Roundtable.

Looking to help build career ladders for young people entering the construction industry, our Gould Construction Institute has launched a partnership with Wentworth Institute of Technology. The first offering, a project management program, is getting rave reviews.

Our focus on partnerships and recruiting talented young people into the construction industry has led us to create a Strategic Alliances Task Force and an active Young and Diverse Leaders initiative. These efforts made ABC's future even more promising.

The ABC-Mass. chapter has reason to be proud of our first 40 years. But even more important is the fact that we have positioned ourselves to make the next 40 even more productive.

Chris Kenney is the chairman of the Associated Builders & Contractors-Mass. chapter, Burlington, Mass.

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