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55 YEARS

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## **Transitions at Associated Subcontractors of Mass. - by Joe Bodio**

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At the end of this month, ASM will say goodbye to CEO Monica Lawton, who is retiring after 20 years at the helm. I've only been involved with ASM for just over 10 years myself, but that's long enough to know the great strides we've made as an association during her tenure. While ASM has always been a force in the industry, going back to the 1950s under Atty. Joe Corwin, it has been the past two decades that have really put ASM on the map. During that time, we have doubled in size to 400 members, tripled in staff, moved into our own downtown Boston office – and most important of all, expanded our services for subcontractors, and raised our advocacy to new levels.

Monica Lawton, ASM

Twenty years ago, the state's "filed sub bid law" was under attack, and subcontractors were unfairly blamed for any and all problems with public construction. It was ASM's staunch and unwavering defensive actions that ultimately saved competitive bidding for subcontractors, but also led to the sweeping Public Construction Reforms of 2004 – which raised the bar with certification and prequalification of both GCs and subs, created the new role of "owners project manager" for better project oversight, and gave the state new flexibility in procurement with the use of CM at Risk on building projects and design-build for roadwork. Thanks to the 2004 reforms, in which ASM played a key role, our public projects today earn high praise, and our laws have become a model for the rest of the country.

In more recent years, ASM has brought major improvements to private construction as well, through passage of the Prompt Pay Law in 2010, followed in short order by the passage in 2014 of the Fair Retainage law, speeding up release of retainage, and limiting it to 5%.

But we didn't stop there. In 2014 ASM took the lead in coordinating industry opposition to a proposed 36% increase in Unemployment Insurance rates for contractors – and successfully persuaded the Legislature to lower the rates instead! And we coordinated the industry's feedback to the Attorney General on the new Sick Leave Law – winning beneficial cost-saving changes to the final regulations. Today, ASM is in the vanguard of a business coalition resisting proposed legislation that would impose vicarious liability on businesses for wage violations by other companies with whom they have a contract – and calling for stronger enforcement of existing wage laws instead.

In all of these initiatives, Monica has been our advocate and voice of reason – and in the process, has earned the respect of the legislature, state agencies, the industry and the business community. As an association and as an industry, we've all benefitted greatly from ASM's accomplishments of the past 20 years, which provide a solid foundation for the future. In the coming months, we look forward to building on this proud legacy with new CEO Carrie Ciliberto, Esq., who joins us on July 20 and will be working with Monica to ensure a seamless transition. We look forward to more formal introductions in our next column. For now, on behalf of ASM, we express our appreciation to Monica for her contributions to our industry and wish her the best in her future endeavors.

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