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ABC Mass. chairman's message: We have made progress developing talent - by Joe Barbone

December 15, 2017 - Construction Design & Engineering

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Writing the final message of my tenure as chairman is naturally a time of reflection. When I look back on 2017, I'm pleased that we continued to build on the success of our government relations efforts. Members stepped up to support a number of office holders and candidates, and we were welcomed with open arms in offices where doors were closed to us just a few short years ago.

But our top priority this year is developing a pipeline of qualified talent for our member companies in a time of serious construction industry labor shortages. I'm pleased to say that we have made significant progress toward achieving that goal.

When we recognized workforce development as our top priority, we also identified a number of steps we needed to take to achieve the goal of creating a pipeline of qualified workers. They included developing and marketing a brand, establishing and funding new training initiatives, recruiting more young people to the construction industry, and using all these steps as a tool to recruit new members, which in turn increases the influence of ABC's government affairs initiatives.

I'm happy to report that we have launched and begun to market the new Building Mass Careers website (www.buildingmasscareers.com), which highlights the many benefits of a career in construction. Next month, we will launch a pre-apprenticeship program at Malden High School, which will work to instill a strong work ethic and provide its participants with basic construction training, made possible with ABC's first-ever grant from the Commonwealth Corporation.

None of this progress would have been possible without the successful collaboration of ABC, our Merit Apprenticeship Program (MAP), and the Gould Construction Institute. Together we provide members with a wide range of education and training resources.

This good work is paying handsome dividends when it comes to building membership. This fall, another successful membership drive yielded 30 new members, and our chapter is enjoying its fifth consecutive year of membership growth.

Whether it's taking part in the membership drive, becoming a member of MAP, training at the Gould, or supporting our government affairs efforts, continuing to build on the momentum we have established ultimately depends on the support of ABC members. We will have excellent leadership in 2018 from John Anderson, who as chair of the Government Affairs Committee has been one of the main reasons for our growing impact on Beacon Hill.

Our chapter has much to build on in 2018, but we also face many challenges as we work to further market our brand, recruit new candidates and fund additional training initiatives. Achieving success in these areas is important to our companies and to the industry, and I know that both John and all of you are up to the task.

Thank you for the honor of serving as your chairman this past year. I wish each of you a happy and prosperous holiday season.

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.

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