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ABC Mass. Chapter chairman's message: I will work to continue Joe's progress

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John Anderson

ABC faces no shortage of challenges in the year ahead, but as I begin my term as chair of our chapter, I am fortunate that so much has already been done to address them. For that, we all owe outgoing chairman Joe Barbone and ABC's hard-working staff a debt of gratitude.

Many of our challenges are the result of good economic times for the construction industry. And though the challenges are very real, it's important to remember that they are far better than those we faced during the Great Recession less than a decade ago.

In the coming year, I will work to continue the impressive progress Joe made on two fronts. The first is to help member companies address the shortage of qualified employees, and the second is building on our growing success on Beacon Hill.

Last year saw the launch of our Building Mass Careers website, a collaboration between ABC, our Merit Apprenticeship Program and the Gould Construction Institute. Next, we'll focus on marketing the site, which highlights the many benefits of a career in construction.

Late in 2017, ABC received a \$129,000 grant from the Commonwealth Corporation to create a pre-apprenticeship program. Beginning this spring, we will work to instill a strong work ethic in the inner-city youth we are targeting, and provide participants with basic construction training.

Having previously chaired ABC's government affairs committee, I'm well acquainted with the progress we have made when it comes to stopping legislation that would hurt ABC members and the construction industry. Now we are beginning to affirmatively push bills that promote fair and open competition.

On the government affairs front, working to ensure that governor Charlie Baker is re-elected in November is job one this year. After eight long years in which we had no access to the governor's office or his administration, governor Baker has been a breath of fresh air. Trade boards that were once made up exclusively of union members are now balanced and our opinion is sought out and valued when it comes to issues that affect the construction industry. It is imperative that we do

everything we can in the coming months to ensure that he stays in the corner office and our collaboration continues.

These are just a few of the issues we at ABC must collectively address in the coming months. None of it will be easy, but we should be inspired by all that has already been accomplished. Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your chair this year and best wishes for a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

John Anderson is the 2018 chairman of the Associated Builders and Contractors Inc.-Mass. Chapter, Woburn, Mass. and is the president of Plumb House Inc., Milford, Mass.

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