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## **A pause to look at all the positive - by Michael McDonagh**

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March brought us a pandemic and with it, changes to virtually every aspect of our personal and professional lives. Social distancing, virtual meetings, and remote work are the norm. Many in construction were forced to shut down for a period back in March, April, and May. Many jobs were lost. Many lost family and friends to the deadly virus.

Through all the challenges, ASM members have remained resilient and have dedicated themselves to adapting to the new normal of construction. Even when things go back to “normal,” some changes are here to stay. Despite all the hardship, it helps to pause to look at some of the positives from the past six months. Here are a few that come to mind.

Some construction was deemed an essential service by the governor. This meant that some ASM members were able to continue working throughout and were given strict and clear safety requirements from state and local government. Those working on public construction as well as certain other essential jobs, continued to work. For those who were shut down, the PPP Loan program provided a lifeline to keep employees on the payroll.

Safety became a true focus and priority for construction. Governor Baker and many cities and towns released detailed new requirements to keep construction workers safe. New procedures were put in place and have been enforced. This also provided a new area of collaboration among the general contractor and subcontractors on jobsites. Massachusetts construction safety guidelines became a model for other states.

Construction employment, while down, has remained strong. Members got back to work around the middle or end of May and have remained busy. Of course, no one knows yet what the next 6 to 24 months will hold for construction and development.

ASM transitioned quickly to virtual events and programs. In prior years it was typical for us to hold three to four webinars per year. Since March we have held over 20. This includes educational based webinars giving members the latest information on legal, legislative, economic, and strategic information as well as virtual networking programs.

ASM Committee and Board meetings have continued with great attendance and participation

because of technology. Joining a Zoom meeting means no commute and no traffic hassles.

Advocacy has continued strong. Despite the Massachusetts State House building being physically closed, access to legislators and staff has continued and shifted online. The legislature is looking toward October when state budget discussions will be necessary to keep state finances going past October 31st. Also, about five major policy issues remain in negotiations- including an economic development bill, a climate change bill, and a transportation bond bill.

Membership is up. ASM Membership has increased in 2020 with approximately 20 new subcontractor members joining the association since January. As a membership organization, we are stronger together. The more members we have, the stronger voice we have when representing the interests of subcontractors.

Fall Construction Summit. ASM is looking forward to bringing members the latest updates on legal issues, legislative progress, and economic outlook in our Fall Construction Summit planned for October 15th.

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