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## **ABC Chairman's Message: Celebrating Women in Construction - by John Cruz**

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John Cruz

March 6-12 was Women in Construction Week. I don't think of myself as one who likes to brag, but I'm proud of the number of women who are playing important roles in our chapter.

Vera Vadeboncoeur of Fernandes Masonry is first vice chair of the ABC Massachusetts board of directors and our second vice chair is Diana Hasan of C.E. Floyd Construction Co., Inc. Nancy Martin of Erland Construction, Inc. and Tiffani Tartaglia of Resource Options, who holds the Future Leaders seat, and our longtime board labor counsel is Carol Chandler of Stoneman Chandler & Miller LLP.

The Gould Construction Institute (GCI) board of directors is chaired by Luiza Mills of Interstate Electrical Corp. and Lorraine Rivera of Wentworth Institute of Technology also serves on the board. In addition to chairing the GCI board, Luiza chairs ABC MA's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force.

Julie DeStefano is GCI's president. Her staff team includes education director Diane Craven, marketing & communications coordinator Allison Jackson and apprentice coordinator Keyla Rodriguez-Santiago.

Yolanda Huertas is finance and administration manager for both ABC and GCI. Crystal Reddick also works for ABC and GCI doing finance consulting. They are joined on the ABC side by membership director Venus Williams and government affairs consultant Shelley Kaleita.

To highlight Women in Construction Month, the Coffee Break Podcast will feature a number of women who are impacting our industry. They include National Association for Women in Construction past president Catherine Schoenenberger, Jennifer Landon of ABC NH/VT, ABC member and GCI presenter Ellen Dorian, Luiza Mills, and Diane Craven.

At Cruz Companies, we are proud of all the awesome women in our ranks. There are so many talented women at Cruz that we are unable to list all of them. Members of our construction division include HR director Robin Preston, office manager Deborah Whiting, and the administrative support team of Lois Simpson and Christie Destine. They are joined by members of our real estate management division, including office manager Vernessa Fountain, senior property manger Betsey Hayes, controller Teresa Cardoza, HR director Katherine Kayirra, area manager Magdalene Luciano, property accountant Robin Johnson, Dareline Jackson of resident services, and Norma Clark from accounts payable.

Actions speak louder than words, and ABC Massachusetts and our member contractors demonstrate every day that recruiting, training and retaining women is a priority for us all year round. We're rightfully proud of the important roles women play in the success of our chapter – and this is just the beginning!

John Cruz is the chairman of Associated Builders and Contractors Inc.-Mass. Chapter and president

& CEO of The Cruz Companies, Roxbury, Mass.

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