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## **Chairman's message: Time to recognize the talented apprentices - by John Cruz**

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John Cruz

At a time when so many of us grapple with how to find enough qualified talent to meet the demand for construction services, it's important to take time to recognize the talented young apprentices who excel at our member companies. There's no better place to do that than at our Craft Championships, to be held on Saturday, November 19th from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Medford High School.

The winners will move on to compete in the national championships, to be held at the annual ABC Convention, March 15-17 in Kissimmee, FL. The National Craft Championships (NCC) feature the nation's best carpenters, electricians, pipefitters, plumbers, welders and other construction craft professionals vying for top honors in 15 competitions with skills on display across 12 crafts.

NCC also includes a team competition with journey-level professionals from different crafts working to complete a joint project. The competition includes a two-hour online exam and a six-hour practical performance test.

ABC MA has a rich history of success in these national championships. Just last year, Nate Gallagher from Notch Mechanical Constructors in Chicopee won Silver in pipe welding and Caio Torres from Medford Wellington Service Co., Inc. in North Billerica won Bronze in the team sheet metal competition.

The NCC recognizes the men and women who are building America and highlights the career opportunities construction can provide, whether to a graduating high school student seeking an alternative to college, a veteran exploring their next chapter after completing military service, or an individual rejoining the workforce or seeking a career change.

I hope you'll think about coming out to support these talented young members by coming to the Craft Championships in Medford. To attend, you can get your tickets online to see the young apprentices who are our chapter's future before they go on to represent ABC MA in Florida in March.

John Cruz is the chairman of Associated Builders and Contractors Inc.-Mass. Chapter and president & CEO of The Cruz Companies, Roxbury, Mass.

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