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Chairman's message: New training facility means more opportunity - by Joe Camilo

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Joe Camilo

This month, ABC MA and the Gould Construction Institute get to celebrate the fruits of years of hard work, when we hold the ribbon-cutting for the new GCI training facility in Billerica.

The event was combined with our annual Craft Championships apprentice competition on Saturday, November 16th. There was a luncheon at 12:30, followed by the ribbon cutting at 1:00 with a video message from governor Maura Healey. The apprentice craft competition winners were announced after lunch. Our winners will go on to the national championships, to be held at the annual ABC convention in Las Vegas from February 25-27.

A dedicated facility will open up a number of opportunities for Gould and its students. For example, we can now schedule apprenticeship training year-round and offer daytime programs as well as evening. GCI can also offer a summer semester to allow students a chance to fast track their educational hours and will facilitate an enhanced curriculum with hands-on learning with shop space and virtual simulators.

The facility will also allow GCI to offer workforce programs to attract much-needed talent to the trades, such as exploratory trade/apprenticeship programs, middle school summer camp programs and career fairs. It can also host the pre-apprenticeship programs our 501(c)3 partner Building Mass Careers uses competitive grant funding to conduct.

Having our own brick-and-mortar facility will also increase brand awareness. It will be identified with GCI/ABC signage and provide both public relations opportunities and the chance to host state and local officials and showcase merit shop training programs.

Perhaps Gould Construction Institute president Julie DeStefano put it best. "This facility becoming a reality makes us excited for the future of GCI and what it will be able to offer ABC members."

Joe Camilo is the chairman of Associated Builders and Contractors Inc.-Mass. Chapter and is the vice president/general manager at Tocco Building Systems, Billerica, Mass.

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