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A year of progress in the workforce development battle - by Joe Camilo

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Joe Camilo

The first time I served as ABC MA chair, things started fast and only seemed to accelerate from there. Before I knew it, the year was coming to an end. “Not this time,” I said to myself when I came back for a second time. But here I am again, amazed that the year is coming to an end.

One thing the two terms have in common is the focus on creating a pipeline of qualified talent amid an ongoing construction labor shortage. I’m glad to write that we’ve made important progress on that all-important front this year.

Just last month, we held the ribbon cutting for a new Gould Construction Institute (GCI) training facility. The event was combined with our local craft championships – an example of the kinds of events we can now host in the new facility – and included a video message from governor Healy. Division of apprenticeship services deputy director Margie Gilligan also attended, spoke about her department’s initiatives and how they expanded National Apprenticeship Week by declaring November National Apprenticeship Month in Massachusetts.

In addition to giving GCI students access to state-of-the-art hands-on training with virtual simulators, the facility will also allow GCI to offer workforce programs to attract much-needed talent to the trades through programming such as exploratory trade/apprenticeship programs, middle school summer camps and career fairs. It can also host the pre-apprenticeship programs conducted by ABC MA and GCI’s partner Building Mass Careers.

Speaking of Building Mass Careers, which works to attract people from all backgrounds to careers in the trades, 2024 saw BMC receive its designation from the state as a 501(c)3 public charity and hosted pre-apprenticeship training for three more cohorts of students this year, in addition to career fairs and other recruitment activities. Executive director Steve Sullivan even took part in a White House ceremony at which Building Mass Careers was part of the latest cohort of organizations recognized as “Apprenticeship Ambassadors.”

I have no doubt that working under the leadership of incoming chair Luiza Mills, we will build on these and experience additional successes in 2025.

It has indeed been an honor to serve as chair of ABC MA for a second time in 2024. Before my term ends, I want to thank both chapter staff and you, my fellow members. Without the great team we have at ABC, we could never have had such a successful year. I wish all of you Happy Holidays and a healthy and prosperous New Year.

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