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Chairman's message: Working together in 2009

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As I assume the chairmanship of ABC's Massachusetts Chapter, there is no doubt about the challenges facing our membership and industry. These challenges, though, only point out the need for ABC to be a more valuable resource to help members through the difficult times. I am very pleased to say that rather than being daunted by our tough climate, our leadership and staff are energized.

Now more than ever it is important to keep our chapter strong. Some of the themes of our previous years...members using members and Good to Great...are especially important in times like these.

Last year we began a proactive strategic plan which we are expanding this year. We have identified several priorities for ABC and are working strategically to leverage benefits for our members.

First is Political Activism and Mobilization. This is a must for any merit shop contractor. Many years ago, ABC coined the phrase "Get Into Politics or Get Out of Business." Never has then been truer than in 2009.

We are facing major challenges. The card check bill before Congress seeks to fundamentally change the landscape by doing away with secret ballot union elections. And that is just the beginning of legislation that could significantly harm our ability to do business. If I am sure about one thing in 2009 it is that we must be politically active. We must get in front of our politicians and have our voices heard. As you receive the calls from our political committee, please do what you can to help. Our future depends on it.

We have also made Strategic Alliances a priority for ABC. The connections we have made with other organizations will help us individually and collectively. We are creating partnerships that will not only help support our agenda, but will allow us to build lasting relationships by helping our allied groups with their priorities. We will continue to cultivate both external and internal alliances. A good example of this is ABC's Meet the Generals events. They provide great opportunities for our GCs and subs to foster relationships, and they also provide a forum for industry alliances, as we saw with our Diversity Meet the Generals at Madison Park High School.

Diversity is an important topic for ABC for many reasons. The construction workforce is getting smaller. As the economy comes back we will all see a shortage of skilled workers. To bring more people into our industry, and have an industry that better reflects our society, we will continue programs such as the Diversity Meet the Generals and work closely with our active Young Leaders Council. We also plan to expand upon last fall's Diversity Dinner by holding a forum with ABC general contractors and the women and minority contracting community. I think we are well-positioned to help expand opportunities within our membership and the broader industry.

One of our largest and fastest growing ABC initiatives is green/sustainable construction, and there is a reason for this. Today it is almost impossible to go a day without hearing about green buildings or our carbon footprint. There is rarely a set of specs that does not include some sort of LEED

certification requirement or green component. Municipalities and schools, both private and public, are going green. Politicians at all levels are promoting green. ABC has a very active Green Committee that works to be a conduit to our members on new business opportunities that will benefit our member companies as well as our industry and our environment.

The ABC Board, committees and staff are eager to support our members and the industry in this tough time in as many ways as we can. We truly are in this together, and I believe an appreciation of this common purpose is something that makes ABC a special organization. I am honored to serve as ABC chairman and I look forward to working with you this year.

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