

Texas

January 2016

MERIT SHOP

Defending the Rights

Journal

The ABC of Texas
Strategic Plan

Inspiring Hearts
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Chapter Contact Information

ABC of Texas

Jon Fisher, President
P.O. Box 1891
Austin, Texas 78767-1891
ph (512)470-5756
www.abctexas.org

Central Texas Chapter

Josh Tompkins, President
2600 Longhorn Blvd., Ste. 105
Austin, Texas 78758
ph (512)719-5263
www.abccentraltexas.org

Greater Houston Chapter

Russell Hamley, President
4910 Dacoma
Houston, Texas 77092
ph (713)523-6222
www.abchouston.org

Southeast Texas Chapter

Kimberly Bernard, President
2700 N. Twin City Highway
Nederland, Texas 77627
ph (409)724-2519
www.abcsctx.org

South Texas Chapter

Steven Schultz, President
814 Arion Parkway, Ste. 204
San Antonio, Texas 78216
ph (210)342-1994
www.abcsouthtexas.org

Texas Coastal Bend Chapter

Kathy Burnette, President
PO Box 2584
Corpus Christi, Texas 78403
ph (361)289-5311
www.abctcb.org

Texas Gulf Coast Chapter

Terry McAlister, President
PO Drawer 2650
Freeport, Texas 77542
ph (979)233-1616
www.abctxgulfcoast.org

Texas Mid Coast Chapter

Kristi Stevenson, President
1408 N. Ben Jordan
Victoria, Texas 77901
ph (361)572-0299
www.abctxmidcoast.org

TEXO Chapter

Meloni McDaniel, President
11101 Stemmons Freeway
Dallas, Texas 75229
ph (972)647-0697
www.texoassociation.org

Texas
MERIT SHOP
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Defending the Rights of Merit Shop Contractors

4910 Dacoma
Houston, Texas 77092
(713) 523-6222 www.abctexas.org

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Account Manager: Janice Peters
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Jasmine Swoope
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LETTER from the Chairman



JOHNSON

Welcome back from the holidays! ABC of Texas is back to full strength (8 chapters) with the addition and active participation of the Southeast Texas Chapter, and we are fortunate that Jon Fisher has agreed to stay on through the 2019 legislative year. As you all know, Jon had been thinking about "transitioning" out of ABC Texas earlier than 2019, and the board had established a transition task force which had been working hard on planning Jon's transition. With the additional time which Jon has agreed to remain full time, and the addition of the Southeast Texas Chapter, the State organization now has more options and flexibility for future planning.

ABC of Texas views the Texas legislative world in two year cycles, because the Texas legislature meets only every other year, and only for a short period of time unless special sessions are called. ABC of Texas plans its political strategy around that two year cycle. For a detailed view of what has happened and what is upcoming for the 2016/2017 legislative cycle, take a look at President Jon Fisher's letter contained in this issue of Texas Merit Shop Journal.

On a more personal note, I want to say something about "rights" and "rain drops."

It goes without saying that one should understand one's obligations and know and protect one's rights, as best they can. Fortunately, in the United States and Texas, if we are required to protect those rights, or if we misunderstand our obligations, we have access to the court system. More importantly, however, is all citizens are allowed a voice in establishing and affecting those rights and obligations through the political process. Although some participate in this political process directly, the vast majority allow others to participate for them in a representative capacity, for example, through electing a state or US representative. Unfortunately, one representative represents many diverse beliefs, and many times it is difficult for an individual to make themselves heard to that representative.

As a result of this practical hurdle, many like-minded individuals join in a group so that their voice can be more easily heard. ABC of Texas is such a group of individuals. ABC of Texas functions politically through individual lobbying efforts but also through the contributions from its political action committee to candidates for public office. I used to view the money I contributed to a PAC to be like a rain drop; small, and likely evaporated quickly. If you are like me, no matter how much money I contribute, it really was little more than a rain drop. But when I think about it longer, I realize that my small, single rain drop combines with other small single rain drops, and eventually forms something more formidable, like a river or ocean, all made up of small, single rain drops which alone aren't much, but together are quite something. When I go to work every day, I go to a merit based workplace I had the right to create and the right to protect, and I thank those single, small, rain drops I contributed for creating and protecting those rights.

Wes Johnson
2015 - 2017 ABC of Texas Chairman
The Gardner Law Firm

LETTER from the President



FISHER

I hope everyone was able to spend time with family and friends over the Christmas and New Year's holidays.

I'm looking forward to this year because things have changed for the better at ABC of Texas.

Welcome Southeast Texas Chapter!

This issue represents the first issue of Texas Merit Shop Journal since ABC of Texas again became an 8 chapter entity!

We believe that ABC of Texas has progressed a lot in the last 7½ years. We believe we will be able to progress even more now that all Texas ABC Chapters are working more closely together on the state level.

It's no secret that we all get older. I'm actually looking forward to retirement. But, I recently decided that, if ABC of Texas wants me to, I will stay on full time through the 2019 Legislative Session. This, coupled with the timely addition of a new chapter, makes transition planning easier.

By the time you get this issue, your State Board will have met and (hopefully) adopted a Strategic Plan for the next two years. This is the fourth strategic plan since I've been with ABC of Texas, and we've done something slightly different each time.

Chuck Swallow of TDIndustries, a former State Board Member, guided us through the process this time. His idea was to float a "strawman" for goals ahead of time (since those seemed to change very little in the past 3 plans) and focus on strategies and tactics for those goals. This is covered in more detail in an article later in this issue, but I wanted to use every opportunity to recognize the invaluable role Chuck played in putting together a plan which attempts to better establish who needs to do what and when to help us reach our goals.

One of the things that will help us make sure we stay focused is to review progress at each Board meeting. Although we generally have full agendas, this focus should help us get further along toward fulfilling the goals we set. Again, this is Chuck's idea.

Your State Board will initially set our Legislative Priorities at the April Board Meeting. I say "initially" because everything is always subject to change. If the list developed at the Strategic Planning Meeting is any indication, we have some hard choices to make. Do we have a long list and see what opportunities present themselves and risk diluting our efforts on our high priority items? Or do we shorten our list and focus all our resources on our highest priorities?

Since the State Board will be setting these priorities in April, it is important for ABC Members that have issues you believe we need to be working on to communicate that to your State Board Members. We can't promise anything specific will get on the list—the other 7 chapters have to weigh in—but it certainly has less of a chance if you don't bring it up!

Jon Fisher
ABC of Texas
President

THANK YOU

The following ABC of Texas Members have provided financial support which is above and beyond their normal dues commitment.

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The ABC of Texas Strategic Plan

It obviously takes more time to plan than the Strategic Planning Meeting itself. We were blessed that TDIndustries' Chuck Swallow, a former State Board Member, volunteered to be our facilitator.

Chuck brought some new ideas and a fresh perspective to the process. Of course, the first thing we did was sit down and look at all our past plans and planning meeting agendas. Chuck noticed that our goals really did not change from plan to plan. And, we had been spending a lot of time setting goals and very little time on strategies & tactics. He wanted to change that.

Working with our new State Board Chair, Wes Johnson of The Gardner Law Firm, Chuck put together an agenda that focused on spending most of the time on identifying strategies to achieve goals. Of course that meant the goals needed to be generally agreed on before the meeting.

The "strawman" goals were circulated to the entire State Board and Chapter Presidents (and other invited attendees from local chapters) prior to the meeting. At the meeting, we spent about 10 minutes changing only a single goal your State President thought needed rewording to be more closely aligned with what we really do.

Chuck wanted to use smaller groups to get more input from more people. That required assigning folks to 6 different tables with no table having more than one person from a specific chapter.

After we reviewed the Vision, Mission and Operating Principles and made one minor change to a goal, Chuck had the smaller groups evaluate our previous SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats). Each previously identified item was evaluated for importance and

performance. The average results are a part of the plan.

Then, for each of the previously determined goals, the small groups developed a list of strategies or tactics to help achieve that goal. We then had each group explain its list from a flip chart and attach their list to the front of the room. As successive groups put their lists up, we tried to eliminate duplicate suggestions. Then, using stickers, we voted on the strategies and tactics to help achieve the goal.

The results of the meeting have been compiled and a DRAFT plan has been circulated to the State Board and Chapter Presidents for consideration at the January Board Meeting (which was likely held before you received this issue).

Below are some of the highlights of the DRAFT plan listed by Goal. The Goals are not listed in priority order.

Expand Communications with Members

The plan proposes development of materials and means to better educate our membership on what ABC of Texas does. In addition, it proposes some specific ideas for chapters to help in this effort. Some of the items proposed are dependent on financial resources; some are not. For example, the plan contemplates some material showing what ABC of Texas has done for its members. For no additional expenditures, we can provide a one-pager (actually, it is already produced). Does the Board want something more sophisticated like a professionally produced brochure? If so, that costs money. The plan also contemplates some regular form of communication for the full membership. Again, the level of sophistication is dependent on money and possibly the ability of your State President to use new technology or find some human resource to assist (the latter again involves money).

Advance and Protect the Interests of the Merit Shop Construction Industry in the Texas Legislature

This was the one goal that was reworded. Previously, the goal was addressing taking advantage of the pro-business environment at the Texas Legislature to advance our interests. That was much narrower than what we do. Since your State President looks at the Strategic Plan when evaluating the use of his time, it became apparent that ABC of Texas actually spends significant amounts of our resources both protecting the industry from bad ideas (arguably our #1 priority) and addressing issues that affect local governments or other segments of the business community (developers, financial institutions, etc.—not all of our disagreements are with plaintiff lawyers and labor unions). Since we develop our legislative priorities at the State Board Meeting in April, we used some time to develop a comprehensive list of issues. Although we did vote on the priorities, the results were consistent with previous actions. It should come as no surprise that Neutrality in State Government Contracting and Lien Law Reform ranked the highest.

Expand Relationship with Elected Officials

Almost all of these strategies focus on becoming more active in local races and developing strong personal relationships at the chapter level. There were lots of specific ideas suggested. It will be interesting to see how many get implemented at the Chapter level. It is likely that most Chapters will do some but not all of the activities suggested in the plan. And, since the plan is still in draft stage, scrutiny by the Board might indeed result in some changes.

Increase the Amount of PAC Money Raised and Distributed

Some really good ideas were developed here. One of the ideas that is already being implemented is a statewide

meeting of local chapter PAC Chairs in Austin with the State President and our lobbyist to better inform chapters how their local efforts fit into the statewide efforts. We do expect the Board to increase Chapter PAC allocations in the future and it appears we will have some type of function before Legislative Day to assist in raising PAC funds.

Provide Funding to Allow the State Office to Pursue the Board's Goals

Since the Board has established a Revenue Task Force chaired by Mike Gremillion of ISC Constructors, and that task force has not finished its work, the planning meeting concluded with a discussion of the issues, challenges and potential solutions. There was a timetable developed that will require a decision in June to allow for compliance with the bylaws if there is a dues increase.

All in all, it appears that your State Board and Chapter Presidents, with assistance from some invited guests from the local chapters, have developed a sound Strategic Plan to advance the goals of ABC of Texas through the next two years. 🇹🇽



Jon Fisher

Jon Fisher has been President of ABC of Texas since mid-2008. Prior to that he was senior vice president at Texas Chemical Council. He has led ABC of Texas in preparing plans for legislative sessions and participation in the Texas elections. Most recently, he helped ABC of Texas prepare a Strategic Plan for the next 4 years with emphasis on the next 2 years. To contact Jon, email jon@abctexas.org.

Inspiring *hearts* & *minds* – one step at a time

by Jasmine Swoope

Workforce development within the construction industry is more than getting boots on the ground and bodies to work sites. The work for desired long lasting results starts way before the first tool is used. Associated Builders and Contractors of Greater Houston (ABC) and TEXO The Construction Association in Dallas, Texas understand that one must inspire the hearts and minds of today's youth to see the long-term growth industry professionals are craving.

Show & Tell Classics

Developing the workforce is top priority for many construction industry professionals. A classic, impactful tool that both ABC and TEXO use to inspire students is career fairs—with an interactive modern twist.

Both ABC Greater Houston and the Construction & Maintenance Education Foundation's (CMEF) Construction Careers Expo, and TEXO's Construction Education Foundation's (CEF) Construction Career Day are hosted annually. The desired goal of both career fairs is to connect companies with potential employees, while creating an engaging and interactive learning experience for students.

On November 5, 2015, during National Apprenticeship Week, the ABC Greater Houston Chapter invited approximately 400 high school students in efforts to engage and educate students about the many career paths in the construction industry. Students received more than professional connections, but a chance to demonstrate their skills when more than 40 Houston-area contractors provided hands-on activities such as scaffolding, drilling, pipefitting, and more.

"The construction industry workforce is more than just one job," said John Membreno of the Stuart Career Center. "I have many students interested in welding, I appreciate that this event allows my students to see that the industry is more than just one occupation."



TEXO's CEF event began five years ago with 200 students in attendance. This year's event required 200 volunteers to assist and drew 1300 students and 60 member companies. Students were exposed to many avenues they could take within the industry.

"The biggest challenge with young adults is trying to change their perception about the industry," Meloni McDaniel, President and CEO of TEXO The Construction Association said. "They see people working out in harsh conditions and it doesn't seem fun. We want to share with students that there is depth and success within the construction industry." The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates we will need 1.6 million new construction workers by 2022. With such a large goal, educators and industry professionals have to work hand-in-hand to help promote such growth.

Connecting Educators to the Industry

It is not only important to inspire students, but one must focus on inspiring the educators and professionals who will be there to guide them. Passionate and informed professionals are some of the best tools in the industry's arsenal.

ABC & CMEF hosted a Workforce Development Luncheon where construction industry & educational leaders joined to discuss how to improve construction education with HISD schools, providing external learning opportunities for students and encouraging good work behaviors.

"I've been studying and practicing welding since I was a sophomore in high school," Eleazar Hinojosa, Fabrication Division Welder at Turner Industries, said. "Without the help of ABC, CMEF, my teachers, and Turner Industries, I can't say that I would not have been able to achieve my goals, but with their help I feel that I was able to achieve so much more."



Many of the attendees are part of the Construction Careers Youth Committee and high school programs—a joint effort between ABC, CMEF, and Houston Business Roundtable (HBR). The mission of the Construction Careers Youth Committee is to promote and support Construction Industry workforce education in public schools.

Keeping the conversation open between professionals and educators is pivotal to the changes desired within the industry. One year ago, TEXO built a workforce development committee with 25 people whose mission was to conduct high school outreach by connecting students with a company or mentor to help them develop a career path.

“Communication is the key,” Meloni McDaniel, President and CEO TEXO The Construction Association said. “The professionals have to make sure the educators understand what’s next for them.”

ABC and TEXO are also striving to provide a financial solution and skills testing opportunities to interested students through TEXO’s Construction Education Foundation (CEF) and ABC’s Scholarship Foundation.

Projects on the horizon

ABC Greater Houston’s goal is to establish more relationships with high schools located throughout the Houston-area to grow the list of partnering schools, increase the number of applicants for the Scholarship Foundation, and continue to provide career development events.

TEXO is strategizing for a new event for Spring 2016. The focus will be to provide a construction day experience for middle school and younger children. TEXO will have a park set up with different machines and activities, free gifts and giveaways. This event will also allow many children to see first-hand what their parents do on a job site, in an effort to combat the stigma that has been placed on the industry.

“It’s a critical time, the recession really hurt us. Many trades and degreed professionals left us and have not come back. Owners our feeling it, subcontractors are feeling it, general constructors are feeling it,” Meloni McDaniel, President and CEO TEXO The Construction Association said. “If we don’t change the perception of what a construction career looks like, then we are going to be dealing with a bigger issue.” 🇺🇸



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TEXAS SENATOR

Paul Bettencourt

Senator Paul Bettencourt is Chief Executive Officer of Bettencourt Tax Advisors, LLC., a Radio and TV personality, former Harris County Tax Assessor-Collector from 1998 to 2008, and the current Texas Senator from District 7. At the Tax Office, he introduced "Smart Government" and developed a customer service-driven organization. His team created the first major online Property Tax Payment System and the first county tax office website with online Automotive Registration in Texas. (His motto was "Get on-line, not in-line.") His leadership in office and the community earned Paul the "Taxpayer Advocate of the Year" award from Americans for Prosperity, the "Hero of Faith" award from the Houston Area Pastors' Council, and the "Pioneer" award from the Harris County Republican Party.

Paul has also held the offices of the Texas Republican Party Treasurer, the Harris County Republican Party Vice Chair and Treasurer, a National Republican Party Alternate from Texas in 2000, a National Delegate in 2004 and 2008, and Presidential Elector in the 2012 Presidential Election from Congressional District 7.

After a decade of public service, Paul started his own business in 2009. With a focus on customer service, technology, and best business practices, Bettencourt Tax Advisors, LLC assists in reducing property tax bills for its clients and has successfully expanded to over 30 employees.

Paul ran for the Texas Senate in District 7 and won with 71.8% of the vote. As the newly elected Senator of SD 7, he was honored to be appointed to the Senate Finance Committee by Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick, who also appointed Paul to the Senate Committees on Intergovernmental Relations (Vice Chair), Education, and Higher Education. At the conclusion of the Legislative Session, Senator Bettencourt was recognized by Capitol Inside as "Most Valuable Freshman" and by Governor Abbott as an "architect of tax relief." He is now the Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Property Tax Reform and Relief.

Please describe your business background:

I served as V.P. of the \$100 million Oil & Gas Process Automation division for ABB in Houston. I spent ten years as the Harris County Tax Assessor-Collector, where my office motto was "get online instead of in line." My office was the first in Texas to automate tax collection, vehicle registration, and voter registration, all while keeping my budget flat. In 2009, I formed Bettencourt Tax Advisors, which has since grown to 33 employees.

Additionally, I am a weekly radio talk show host, a former business consultant, and when I was fresh out of Texas A&M had a great starter job in industrial robotics!

What is your view of the free enterprise system?

I believe that a free enterprise system, and a free market,

offers a chance for everyone to succeed on their own merits. There is no other system, devised by mankind, that has lifted so many out of poverty and expanded opportunities for everyone. I will continue to advocate for a free enterprise system in Texas.

How do you believe the Legislature did last session in addressing our state's needs?

In the last session the Legislature took big steps to ensure a great future for Texas. We passed a budget that kept growth below 2% a year. We provided nearly \$4 billion in property tax, franchise tax, and occupational licensing fee relief, allocated over \$800 million in additional money for border protection, and addressed critical infrastructure and transportation needs, such as dedicating the first \$2.5 billion of sales tax over \$28 billion to the State Highway Fund.

What were your personal priorities last session and how did they fare?

We had a lot of legislative accomplishments this session, but there are two that I am most proud of. I was honored to sponsor the "Right to Try" legislation in the Texas Senate. This moves government out of the way so terminally ill patients and their doctors have faster and easier access to experimental, potentially life-saving treatments. Additionally, I am proud of our property tax relief efforts, which were successful with the passage of Proposition 1 with 86% of the vote.

I also helped establish some new safeguards to protect Texans from increasing property taxes. I was able to add an amendment to SB 1760, which now requires a taxing entity to have a supermajority before they are authorized to raise taxes. This is a beneficial next step in taxpayer protection in Texas.

You were recently appointed as Chairman of the Select Committee of Property Tax Reform and Relief. What issues does the committee intend to tackle this interim?

Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick charged my Select Committee to look at appraisal reform and property tax relief. The problem has been that property taxes have been increasing at up to six times faster than Texans' paychecks. That is bad public policy as taxpayers cannot afford government to grow at that pace. The full charge language is below:

Property Tax Process: Study the property tax process, including the appraisal system, and recommend ways to promote transparency, simplicity, and accountability by all taxing entities.

Reduce Tax Burden: Examine and develop options to further reduce the tax burden on property owners. 📍



TEXO Hosts First Annual Construction Safety Professionals Day for more than 250 safety professionals and industry peers.

TEXO Hosts First Annual Construction Safety Professionals Day

Construction safety and health is vital for the success of the industry and on November 4th more than 250 safety professionals and industry peers came together for a full day of informative presentations to prepare themselves and their employees for the challenges they will face on the job site in 2016 and beyond!

Six informative topics were covered during the event. Owners' Representatives from Lancaster Independent School District, Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport, the Fort Worth District U.S. Army Corp of Engineers and KDC came together on a panel to discuss "Safety: From an Owner's Perspective." The discussion provided open dialogue between panelists and attendees addressing several items including how contractors can assist owners with their safety concerns.

The Keynote Speaker for the event was Howard Mavity with Fisher & Phillips. Mr. Mavity's topic was of interest to all and dealt with an issue being addressed by contractors across the country, temporary labor.

"What Makes a Safety Program Best in Class?" That was the question Chris Williams, Director of Safety, ABC National and Kevin Cannon, Director of Safety & Health Services, AGC National were challenged with answering. These two national safety directors sat together to provide their insights and fielded questions from the audience. The national directors also acknowledged award winning companies presenting the Safety Training Evaluation Program (STEP) and the Construction Safety Excellence Awards (CSEA).

This day and topic was very important to David Walls, President of Austin Industries, so important that he rearranged his schedule to attend. Mr. Walls' discussion was based on his book, World-Class Safety Program which was written for the sole purpose of eliminating accidents and fatalities by helping organizations develop a World-Class Safety Program. Mr. Walls provided each attendee a copy of his book.

Byron Adkins with Sunbelt Rentals represented Fleet Management with the main focus being on safety. Illness, distractions, faulty equipment, careless drivers were covered during this presentation.

The final speaker of the day was Doug Huddleston, Regional Emergency Response Manager for OSHA. Mr. Huddleston

provided OSHA's State of the Union address covering multiple topics including new updates, rules and answering audience questions.

As the final speaker left the stage, it was time for networking and door prize giveaways. Everything from Yeti coolers and gift cards to an extra-large Big Green Egg were given away during the networking hour.

Also helping make the event successful was the Vendor Showcase which was open and available all day. Twenty-five vendors took part in the showcase.

TEXO thanks their guest speakers, sponsors and Showcase vendors as well as TEXO's Safety Committee. Their hard work and dedication to the safety community is what made the event a huge success!

Central Texas Chapter

The ABC Central Texas chapter looks to end 2015 on a high note! Safety training, events and planning for 2016 have occupied both staff and members since the Fall, and the consensus is that 2016 is poised to be a great year in Austin.

2015 has been a year of collaboration for the chapter. In November, ABC and AGC came together for a common cause – to



The best projects in Central Texas were honored at the Excellence in Construction Banquet.



Texas Mid Coast Chapter's Annual Dove Hunt was held at the Hartman Family Ranch.



Greater Houston Chapter celebrated their PAC Christmas Party at Nouveau Art Bar.

show appreciation for Representatives Paul Workman and John Cyrier. It is rare not only to have two members of the construction industry in the Legislature, but basically unheard of to have them both here in Central Texas. The chapter recognized the opportunity to show support for local Representatives, and the dinner was a great success.

Going along with the theme of collaboration, ABC has taken its position alongside a group of like-minded construction associations to form a coalition aimed at keeping tone-deaf and discriminatory over-regulation from passing in the City of Austin. With strong backing from the volunteer leadership, ABC Central Texas is committed to being part of the solution for the industry as a whole – together we are greater than the sum of our parts.

Additionally, the chapter trained more than 170 people at the annual OSHA Partnership Safety Rodeo in November and honored the best projects in Central Texas at the Excellence in Construction Banquet in early October. All-in-all, 2015 was a fantastic year for the chapter, its members and the merit shop in Austin.

Southeast Texas

The Chapter is excited to be back on board, and a part of ABC of Texas. The chapter looks forward to what is sure to be an interesting election year! 2015 proved to be a year with many challenges for the small staff, however with that difficulty came opportunities too. Since the members and the petrochemical owners play such an integral role in the chapter's success, Kimberly Bernard, as the new Chapter President, along with the ABC-SETX staff, want to thank each of them for their continued support and dedication to the Chapter, Construction Training Center, and community.



John Bernard was presented the title of "President Emeritus".


While ABC-SETX hosts many member events year round, in addition to conducting industrial craft training nightly at their Construction Training Center, October 2015 was

a particularly busy month for the Chapter. Beginning in early October, a membership meeting was held wherein the Chapter's Board of Directors bestowed upon John Bernard (ABC-SETX's Past President), the title of "President Emeritus". This status is reserved to honor a former chapter president who has provided outstanding and distinguished service to the Association, and has had an extraordinary impact on the Chapter and Industry; a very prestigious title for a very deserving man!


In mid-October, the Construction Training Center, along with a few other member companies, participated in the "Southeast Texas Youth Career Expo" held at Ford Park; over 3,000 high school

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The South Texas chapter held a “coffee break” with ABC’s good friend Congressman Lamar Smith.

career & technology students from the area were bussed in. This event was a great opportunity to educate the future workforce about various career paths and the availability of good entry-level jobs in Southeast Texas. The students also attended interviewing workshops throughout the day designed to help hone their job-readiness skills. The Construction Training Center was able to set-up one of its “Welding Simulators” in the exhibit booth, and demonstrated to the students and teachers virtual simulations of the sights, sounds and dexterity of being a Welder; this piece of equipment was a huge hit with everyone!

To wrap up 2015, the Chapter’s largest members-only event each year, is its “Annual Outdoor Extravaganza/Member Trade Show”, and on October 22nd it once again proved to be bigger than in years’ past. Approximately 3,300 people came out to Ford Park in Beaumont to support ABC-SETX, and buy extra chances to win over 200 door prizes, 9 shotguns/rifles and 9 pistols. Once again, country singers Tracy Byrd and Mark Chestnutt were on stage to help give away all those prizes. A big thank you goes out to all members and sponsors who always support this event each year—it truly is the “must attend” event of Southeast Texas

Texas Mid Coast Chapter

The ABC Texas Mid Coast Chapter continues to expand workforce development initiatives. On August 13, 2015, the Chapter hosted a dinner meeting with the topic “Training our Youth to be Construction Professionals” featuring Melissa Correll –VISD Career & Technology Institute Principal, Lauri Bednorz—VISD Career & Technical Education Coordinator and Joseph Holochwost—Construction Technology Teacher. It was a packed house and the discussion was a huge success. A number of members serve on the VISD Construction Technology & Architectural Design Advisory Committee assisting the local high schools and teaming up with community outreach programs to inspire future construction workforce. By partnering with member construction firms and local schools, ABC is investing in students’ lives to prepare them to be successful construction professionals and future leaders. Workforce efforts will continue to expand over the years and illustrate the rigor and relevance the chapter offers the construction industry.

On August 19, the Chapter proudly sponsored the Chamber of Commerce Transportation Conference at the Victoria College Conference & Education Center. There were numerous speakers that updated community leaders on projects such as: TxDOT,

Corpus Christi Bay Bridge, Victoria area, South Texas railroad and funding.

After all that work, it was time to relax at \$10,000 Night on August 27 at Greek’s 205. Members enjoyed networking, great food and adult beverages as well as \$10,000 that was given away to two members, Jodie Turek of Hall Electric Company, Inc. and John Salisbury of MMR Constructors, Inc.

In September, we had our annual election of Board Members. The chapter welcomes Brant Jacobs of Weaver & Jacobs Constructors, Inc., and Corbin Lauger of Lauger Companies, Inc. to the Board. A HUGE thank you goes out to John Burgman of Victoria Insurance Group and John Wallace of DeTar Healthcare System for their service to the industry and many hours of support on behalf of the Chapter.

The very successful Annual Dove Hunt was held on October 1 at the Hartman Family Ranch. Thanks to everyone who participated and especially the Hartman Family for use of the beautiful ranch and new facility, home of the VCS Companies.

The Texas Mid Coast Chapter staff is preparing for an eventful 2016! The New Year starts off with the 33rd Annual Installation of Officers and Awards Banquet on January 21.

Greater Houston Chapter

ABC Houston fundraised over \$72,000 in 2015 and also sent \$35,000 to ABC National and over \$10,000 to ABC of Texas. The ABC Houston PAC is excited to screen and meet with candidates through January and February for the upcoming primaries. The PAC will begin the screening process on January 14th at the Houston PAC luncheon. This is the PAC’s biggest outreach to the members to join and learn about PAC activities here in the Houston chapter.

ABC Houston hosted the first runoff debate between Bill King and Sylvester Turner. The membership breakfast/mayoral debate picked up some local news coverage. The Houston runoff elections took place December 12th, 2015 with 6 city wide seats to fill and three council districts. The Houston mayoral race wasn’t decided until the final hour but Sylvester Turner won by a two point margin besting Bill King by a mere 4,082 votes. Seven out of ten ABC endorsed candidates ended up winning their races through the runoff and general elections.



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\$10,000 was donated to the John "Jocko" Taylor Scholarship Fund to benefits students at the Craft Training Center of the Coastal Bend



Texas Gulf Coast was honored to have special guest, Pamela Volm, ABC National Chairperson at their annual Christmas Celebration.

The ABC legal Issues committee met with coalition group, TARGET, to discuss the implications of the Clean Water Act. The new EPA definition of the "Texas Coastal Prairie Wetlands" restricts development of new projects along the Texas Gulf Coast and has raised concern between owners and contractors. TARGET's purpose is to challenge the Texas Coastal Wetlands provision in federal court here in Texas to rid the Clean Water Act of the overreaching newfound regulatory jurisdiction given to the EPA. More jurisdictional wetlands will mean more wetland impacts, which means more mitigation (i.e., cost and time) and less availability of Nationwide Permits (NWP). Without a NWP, an

applicant needs an individual permit, which requires Endangered Species consultation and NEPA compliance. In short, significantly greater cost, process, and time. After review with the ABC Board of Directors, ABC Houston has joined the TARGET coalition and is excited to work with the other partnered associations to reverse the ruling set by the EPA.

The legal issues committee also partnered with Construction Industry Council to review the 2012 Building Codes that will be adopted in December of 2015. The CIC is a partnered group with the city that brings together all building associations and has the



South Texas Chapter

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industry experts and leaders review the building code and give the city of Houston the industry expertise. The CIC gave the city their recommended amendments to the city and they are expected to be adopted on December 23, 2015. Hopefully if the building, fire, electrical, or plumbing codes effect your company the CIC helped you put in a small way.

ABC Houston membership has grown to 465 in 2015. This is the largest membership has been since 2001. Houston members have done an excellent job this year at making referrals and the results have shown. Not only is the Houston chapter growing but, the new membership has increased the overall contactor ratio of the association. Houston's goal is to have 500 members by the end of 2016 and maintain 90% retention within the existing membership.

South Texas Chapter Update

Last Fall the South Texas Chapter hosted a construction site visit for freshman Congressman and rising star Will Hurd at the Joeris General Contractor's Northside ISD school project. Topics discussed included workforce development, regulatory reform and immigration. Next, the chapter met with State Representative Rick Galindo to talk about the various interim committees, the past legislative session and his upcoming campaign efforts. A few weeks later the chapter held a "coffee break" with ABC's good friend Congressman Lamar Smith. In addition to talking about regulatory reform, immigration and workforce issues, there was a lively discussion on the recent leadership changes in D.C. and the 2016 elections. There has been an increase in union activity locally however it has focused on the hospitality sector. Chapter representatives met with representatives from this sector to discuss strategy, ABC efforts at the local and national level, and available resources.

Under workforce development, the chapter developed a 100 hour Supervisory Leadership program, with 15 students in the first class. There is already interest in the second class which will begin next June. The chapter is also working with other industry segments on the "SA Works" program. This multi-faceted program is designed to expose not just students but teachers, counselors and administrators to the various job opportunities, skill/education requirements and career paths. One concept being explored is the development of an "experiential learning center" - think of a charter school for students and adults on steroids.

On the membership front the chapter is going to show membership growth for the second year in a row. The Membership Committee's "Recruitment Receptions" have proven to be a successful formula in bringing together prospects, chapter leaders and staff to talk about membership over beer and margaritas!

The chapter ended the year with every event surpassing budget and attendance expectations. The Fall Fishing Tournament in Rockport saw an increase from 18 teams in 2014 to 30, and the November Sporting Clays Shoot went from 33 teams in 2014 to 45 teams in 2015. While part of this may be attributed to the economy most of it is due to the fantastic efforts of the various event committees. Their enthusiasm and engagement helped generate an industry buzz about ABC. A special appreciation event was held at Top Golf in December for all the committees' members.

Texas Coastal Bend Chapter

Currently the Texas Coastal Bend chapter is gearing up for 2016! The chapter hosted an annual Board of Directors Planning Conference to discuss strategies regarding membership, member services, fundraisers, political goals and many other aspects of the chapter for the new year.

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In the past few months, the chapter had several monthly luncheons and mixers. The monthly mixers are always a great opportunity for members to network and socialize. Recent sponsors were Airgas On-Site Safety, Scott-Macon Equipment, Industrial Piping and Steel and Rabalais I & E Constructors. Member sponsors are instrumental in the success of each of the Mixers!

The General Membership Luncheons were well attended and offered members the opportunity to get updates from Dr. Mark Escamilla, President of the local community college and active ABC Member, Del Mar Community College, regarding their efforts to improve and grow the workforce in the area. Judy Hawley, Chairwoman of the Port of Corpus Christi also came out and gave a very informative presentation on all the projects happening in the Port. The Nueces County Judge, Loyd Neal gave an update on the happenings within the County.

A great big Thank you goes to the Fishing Committee this year. They raised \$10,000 to be donated to the John "Jocko" Taylor Scholarship Fund to benefit students at the Craft Training Center of the Coastal Bend in an effort to offer financial assistance to those that are dedicated to training and safety within the construction industry. Job well done by Co-Chairs, Mike Garza and Cliff Johnstone, both with Swantner and Gordon Insurance Agency as well as a very dedicated committee of volunteers. Hats off to each of you!

September 11th & 12th was the 14th Annual Skeet and Trap Shoot, another successful event for the chapter. Money was raised for the PAC account and the John "Jocko" Taylor Scholarship fund. Co-Chairs Mark Roach with Dealers Electrical and Robert Parker with Repcon, along with the Skeet Committee, worked tirelessly to organize and coordinate the details for the event.

Thank you to everyone who puts forth the effort to support ABC Texas Coastal Bend as Board of Directors, Committee Chairs, Volunteers, event attendees and Sponsors. The continued support helps Associated Builders and Contractors remain a strong association in support of the Free Merit Shop philosophy!

ABC Texas Gulf Coast Chapter

The fall is always busy at ABC Texas Gulf Coast. In September, ABC Members welcomed ABC of Texas President Jon Fisher for a Legislative Update during the annual Joint Membership Meeting for ABC, BSC (Brazosport Safety Council) and MSTI (Merit Shop Training, Inc.).

Torrential rains in September caused the postponement of the 35th Annual Golf Tournament until October 2nd, but golfers enjoyed a beautiful day, won great prizes and monies were raised!

October is also a great month for shrimp! The Suppliers' Council provided members with a fabulous shrimp boil and networking opportunities with many supplier information tables and door prizes. The warehouse provided just the right venue for peeling those pounds and pounds of shrimp! October was also a month for fundraising to support local charities. This time the gamblers came out in support of ABC and outreach in the community. In addition to some long, tense looks on all those poker faces, the players were surrounded by NFL Football on big screens in the Brazos Room, a new large meeting/event space in the new facility. This facility has been well used in just over the 7 months that it has been open. ABC Member companies as well as other local companies have kept the Facilities Manager quite busy with set-up for meetings, trainings, and company parties.

November sent Board Chairman Amando Gonzalez and Government Affairs Committee Chairman Buck Blevins along

with President Terry McAlister to Austin for a very productive ABC State Planning Session. And right before the Thanksgiving Holiday, MSTI held its annual Local Craft Championships to select a competitor for the ABC National Craft Championships to be held in Ft. Lauderdale in March 2016. Once again, this chapter will send a Millwright with hopes of bringing home another medal.

December 1st was a special day for this ABC Chapter. Not only was it the day of their annual Christmas Celebration, it was also a celebration of the 40th Anniversary of this chapter. Texas Gulf Coast was honored to have special guest, Pamela Volm, ABC National Chairperson. In addition to sharing the many benefits of ABC Membership and some brief history, Pamela congratulated the Board of Directors of ABC, BSC, and MSTI for the planning and execution of a remarkable new facility. She is pictured next to the list of Texas Gulf Coast's first 100 members. Many of the contractor companies first listed in 1976 are still active today and are celebrating their own 40th anniversary of membership with ABC. Texas Gulf Coast Chapter's Board Chairman, Amando Gonzalez, President of Wolfenson Electric, is one of the original 100 Members! 🇺🇸



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