



Texas
MERIT  **SHOP**
Journal

July 2013

Defending the Rights of Merit Shop Contractors

**Gov. Perry Signs
Landmark
Education
Reform Bill**

**Cost of Goods
Sold Victory**

**What Happened
in Austin
This Year**

**One on One with
State Rep.
Cecil Bell, Jr.**

**ABC Chapter
Initiatives
Around the State**

*Learn more about ABC of Texas,
scan the following QR Code with
your smartphone or visit our
website.*



www.abctexas.org



**State Representative Cecil
Bell, Jr., Talks About
Legislative Priorities and
Why He Decided to
Become an ABC Member**



**TURNAROUNDS ARE OUR BUSINESS.
 QUALITY SERVICE IS OUR PRODUCT.
 SAFETY IS OUR WAY OF LIFE.**

We offer exchanger specialty services, tower services and complete turnaround management and execution services including cost control and subcontract management. And we are the undisputed leader in HF Alky turnarounds. Our ability to execute mechanical services in multiple units provides a resilience that many contractors can't or won't offer. Contact us for your project needs whether it is a planned outage or an emergency.



Corpus Christi, TX
 (361) 289-6342

Beaumont, TX
 (409) 861-2323

Houston, TX
 (281) 542-9590

Baton Rouge, LA
 (225) 644-8713



www.repcon.com

Turnarounds • Construction • Maintenance • Refining • Petrochemical • Chemical • Oil & Gas • Power & Utility



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

David Ford, President
3006 Longhorn Blvd., Ste. 104
Austin, Texas 78758
ph (512)719-5263
www.abccentraltexas.org

GREATER HOUSTON CHAPTER

Russell Hamley, President
3910 Kirby Dr., Ste. 131
Houston, Texas 77098
ph (713)523-6222
www.abchouston.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 McAllister, President
PO Drawer 2650
Freeport, Texas 77542
ph (979)233-1616
www.abctxgulfcoast.org

TEXAS MID COAST CHAPTER

Kathy Autry, President
116 Jason Plaza
Victoria, Texas 77901
ph (361)572-0299
www.abctxmidcoast.org

TEXO CHAPTER

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

ABC Texas Merit Shop Journal
3910 Kirby Drive, Suite 131
Houston, Texas 77098
(877)577-6ABC www.abctexas.org

Publisher: Associated Builders & Contractors of Greater Houston
Exec. Editor: Jennifer Woodruff
Account Manager: Janice Peters
Contributing Writers: Jon Fisher, Mike Gremillion, Mike Meroney
Graphic Design: Jennifer Woodruff

Legislative Advertising by Jon Fisher on behalf of ABC of Texas, P.O. Box 1891, Austin, TX 78767

Texas MERIT SHOP Journal

Defending the Rights of Merit Shop Contractors



4 Letter From the ABC of Texas Chairman

5 Letter From the ABC of Texas President

6 Governor Perry Signs Landmark Education Reform Bill Into Law

After months of lengthy committee hearings and contentious negotiations, Gov. Perry signed House Bill 5, a Bill that will help move Texas toward becoming a national leader in career and technology education.

8 Cost of Goods Sold Victory

One change in interpretation saved construction companies an estimated 25-40% increase in franchise taxes each year for the past four years.

10 One on One with State Representative Cecil Bell, Jr.

State Representative Cecil Bell, Jr., sits down with Texas Merit Shop Journal to discuss his take on the free enterprise system, the state's economy, and his reasons for joining ABC as a member.

12 What Happened In Austin This Year

ABC of Texas president, Jon Fisher, provides a recap of the recent session, highlighting the association's priorities and discussing those that passed as well as those that didn't.

14 Mike Gremillion Discusses His Involvement with ABC of Texas

ABC of Texas outgoing Chairman discusses his reasons for getting involved with the state organization, as well as the accomplishments he's seen ABC of Texas make over the past several years.

16 ABC Chapter Initiatives Around the State

Learn about ABC Chapter Initiatives in your area.

INDEX OF ADVERTISERS

ABC South Texas	11	Marek Brothers Systems.....	11
Infinity Construction Services, LP	5	Repcn, Inc.	2
ISC Constructors	7		

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mike Gremillion - Chairman
ISC Constructors, LLC
Chapter: Greater Houston

Mark Roach - Chair Elect
Dealers Electrical Supply
Chapter: Texas Coastal Bend

Donald Day - Secretary
Texas Glass and Tinting
Chapter: Texas Mid Coast

GPaul Holliman - Treasurer
Holliman Consulting Group
Chapter: TEXO

Gerald Andrews
Victory Insurance
Chapter: Texas Gulf Coast

Buck Blevins
Infinity Construction Services
Chapter: Texas Gulf Coast

Michelle Seward Davis
Joeris General Contractors, Ltd.
Chapter: South Texas

Russ Garrison
SEDALCO
Chapter: TEXO

Jeff Hagar
Rogers-O'Brien
Chapter: Central Texas

R. Wes Johnson
The Gardner Law Firm
Chapter: South Texas

Paul Lembke
LEMCO Construction
Chapter: TEXO

Shelly Masters
Segal, McCambridge, Singer &
Mahoney
Chapter: Central Texas

Bob Parker
Repcon, Inc.
Chapter: Texas Coastal Bend

Tony Pieprzyca
Hart Company
Chapter: South Texas

Tim Ricketts
Cajun Constructors
Chapter: Greater Houston

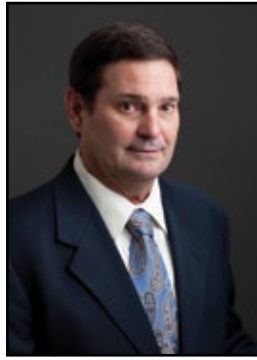
Jared Tomanek
K&T Construction Co., Inc.
Chapter: Texas Mid Coast

Ben Westcott
Andrews Myers, P.C.
Chapter: Greater Houston

Lawrence Wilcox
Large & Sons Foundation Drilling
Chapter: Texas Coastal Bend

*Learn how you can get involved
with the ABC of Texas Chapter, call
(512)470-5756*

Letter From the Chairman



GREMILLION

Dear ABC of Texas Member,

The regular session of the 83rd Texas legislative session has come to an end with ABC of Texas having great success with our high priority issues. Additionally, we had some success on our priority and secondary issues and there was no legislation passed that would have negatively impacted our industry. Jon Fisher, ABC of Texas President, has an article in these issue that discusses our priority issues and others that we dealt with this session. The good news for us in this session is the passage of the public education bill HB 5. This is a major victory for our industry as it should allow the Independent School Districts (ISD's) to focus on Career Technology Training as opposed to just preparing students for college. With the demand for entry level construction trainees for all crafts on the rise we hope to get the NCCER curriculum in as many high schools as possible.

While HB 5 passed both the House and Senate and the Governor has signed it into law, the ISD's still have to interpret the bill and determine how it effects them. At least that is what some of the ISD's in the Houston area are telling us. I challenge all of you to work with your ISD's to ensure that we make them accountable for what this bill is supposed to accomplish.

It has been my pleasure to serve as chairman of the Board for ABC of Texas for the last two years. We have accomplished a lot in the last six years. I want to thank Jon Fisher and all of the board members for their hard work. Success in Austin does not come easy, so again thanks for all of your efforts.

Michael A. Gremillion
2013 ABC of Texas Chairman
Vice President – Houston Office
ISC Constructors, LLC

Learn more about ABC of Texas, visit our website at www.abctexas.org.

Letter From the President



FISHER

Dear ABC of Texas Member,

The Regular Session of the 83rd Texas Legislature has ended with significant progress for our industry and no harmful legislation becoming law. The latter is always your first goal!

Your state association spent a lot of time making sure that Worker Misclassification legislation, if passed, did not negatively impact our industry. Thanks to Bob Parker of the Texas Coastal Bend Chapter, as well as Russ Garrison and Jack Baxley of TEXO, we were able to get something worked out that might form the basis for future legislation.

In separate articles in this issue, two of our biggest issues will be discussed—Cost of Goods Sold under the Franchise Tax (Margins Tax) and Public Education Curriculum Flexibility. Both of these were huge for our industry. Bob Parker was active in both these issues also.

Although we were not successful on our Open Competition effort, we were able to pass the bill in the House and get a hearing in the Senate. Thanks to Gary Roden of TEXO for testifying in both houses and thanks to both Jack Baxley of the TEXO Chapter and Russell Hamley of the Greater Houston Chapter for pitching in and helping us secure authors in both houses.

We were successful in our State Breach of Contract effort which was managed by AGC-TBB. Andy Koebel of the South Texas Chapter was our witness on this bill. There was plenty of last minute suspense when an amendment got put on the bill in the Senate that could have scuttled the whole effort. Luckily, Rep. Paul Workman was able to go to a conference committee and strip it out before both houses adopted the conference committee report with a little over 8 hours left to act.

We still have a list of unresolved issues to deal with in 2015 and hope to use this interim to try to get those issues in shape to have a better chance of passing.

Also in the near future, your State Board will likely be getting together to update the Strategic Plan. If you have input, please contact your State Board members and let them know of your concerns. We do not cover issues at this meeting; it is focused on strategic direction.

You will note that our “One on One” interview this issue is with Rep. Cecil Bell, Jr. Cecil joined ABC’s Greater Houston Chapter shortly after being elected. He was a champion on CTE and authored the Lender Notice bill in the House.

Hope to see you on my next visit to your Chapter!

Sincerely,

Jon Fisher
ABC of Texas
President

A Legacy of Performance

Quality With Integrity

622 Commerce Avenue
Clute, Texas 77531
(979) 388-8579

2301 S. Battleground Rd. 1800 S. Hwy. 35, Suite C
La Porte, Texas 77571 Port Lavaca, Texas 77979
(281) 478-4828 (361) 552-2147

www.inf-grp.com

**Definitive Service to the Chemical, Petrochemical
and Refining Industries**

Governor Perry Signs Landmark Education Reform Bill Into Law

Written By Mike Meroney, Meroney Public Affairs



Joined by jubilant students, parents, business representatives, lawmakers and officials who oversee the workforce and education in Texas, Governor Rick Perry signed into law a high-profile public education bill on June 10th that overhauls graduation requirements and reduces high-stakes standardized testing.

After months of lengthy committee hearings and contentious behind-the-scenes negotiations, Perry signed House Bill 5 – what many lawmakers hailed as one of the 83rd Texas Legislature’s most important bills. Authored by House Public Education Chairman Jimmie Don Aycocock (R-Killeen), the conference committee report passed both chambers unanimously.

After months of lengthy committee hearings and contentious behind-the-scenes negotiations, Perry signed House Bill 5 – what many lawmakers hailed as one of the 83rd Texas Legislature’s most important bills.

Along side Aycocock and Senate Education Chairman Dan Patrick (R-Houston) at the bill signing ceremony, Perry said the measure reflected an “appropriate balance between a need for rigorous academics and flexibility”. He added, “Texas refuses to dilute our academic standards in any way because they are working.”

Texas Education Commissioner Michael Williams said the legislation would help move Texas toward becoming a national leader in career and technology education (CTE).

Applauding Gov. Perry and the legislature, ABC of Texas President Jon Fisher said, “HB 5 provides academic rigor with flexibility to prepare our students for post secondary success.” Fisher said that the law “will insure that more young Texans are ready and qualified to step into demanding, productive and prosperous careers across Texas.”

Graduation Plans

Starting with the 2014-15 school year, high school students will take a “foundation” curriculum of 22 credits, including four English credits; three credits each in science, social studies and math; two foreign language credits; one fine arts and one P.E. credit; and five elective credits.

The law allows students to earn an additional “endorsement” in one of five areas: STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), Business and Industry, Public Services, Arts and Humanities, and Multidisciplinary Studies. Each endorsement will require students to earn a total of 26 credits, which includes an additional flexible math credit, flexible science credit and two additional electives.

All students must select an endorsement but may opt for only completing the foundation plan after grade 10 with parental consent. The law requires all students to have a personal graduation plan developed with their parents and local educators that promotes college and workforce readiness. In addition, the State Board of Education (SBOE) must approve at least six advanced CTE courses by September of 2014 to count as a 4th year math credit.

HB 5 allows local school districts to partner with community colleges and industry to develop rigorous courses that address workforce needs, provide technical training and count towards math and science credits for graduation. School districts are directed to partner with higher education to provide developmental education courses during the senior year in math and English for college-bound students not demonstrating college readiness at the end of 11th grade.

The bill maintains a “distinguished” diploma for students. To earn the distinguished level, students must complete the requirements of the foundation program, an endorsement and earn an Algebra II credit. Students completing the distinguished level are eligible for college admission under the Top 10% automatic admissions provision. All high school graduates, regardless of diploma level, will now be eligible to: 1) apply for admission to Texas public four-year universities, and 2) receive a TEXAS Grant.

Assessments

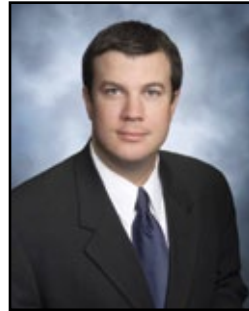
HB 5 reduces the number of required end-of-course assessments from fifteen to five. Students will now meet their graduation assessment requirement by passing English Language Arts (ELA) I, ELA II, Algebra I, biology and US History. The ELA tests are combined into one assessment instead of separate reading and writing tests. School districts are allowed (at their discretion) to administer English III and Algebra II assessments for diagnostic purposes only.

Also eliminated, the requirement that end-of-course assessments determine fifteen percent of a student’s course grade. Clear graduation requirements are established for students and parents by eliminating the cumulative score requirement. HB 5 provides for transparency by requiring the STAAR exams to be released to the public, and allows satisfactory performance on Advanced Placement exams, SAT and ACT exams to satisfy graduation requirements. Under HB 5, testing vendors (retained counsel or employees) may not serve on any TEA panel or advisory committee (either formal or informal), and cannot participate in SBOE elections, or donate to candidates.

Accountability

Under the new law, school districts will get an A through F rating, while campuses will remain under the existing exemplary, recognized, acceptable and unacceptable labels. And schools are evaluated on more measures than just state standardized assessments by requiring at least three additional indicators of academic performance, like: percentage of students graduating with endorsements or distinguished level of performance; number of students earning college credit; and number of students earning workforce certificates.

HB 5 establishes a three-category rating system that evaluates schools on academic performance, financial performance and community and student engagement. And TEA is directed to release all three ratings at the same time to provide a clearer understanding of overall school performance. Local communities are allowed to engage in the accountability process by requiring districts to set goals and evaluate performance locally in addition to state ratings.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

During the 83rd Texas Legislature, Mike Meroney (www.MeroneyPublicAffairs.com) worked with Jobs for Texas – a broad-based business coalition of 22 industry trade organizations representing more than 300,000 Texas employers and over six million Texas jobs. The coalition’s mission was to advocate for meaningful education reforms that allow students to explore their individual talents and interests as they prepare for higher education and the workforce. The group supported the development of rigorous courses, programs and graduation plans that reflect the Texas economy and will keep all students engaged in school.

INDUSTRIAL INSTRUMENTATION AND ELECTRICAL SERVICES

The Value of High Standards

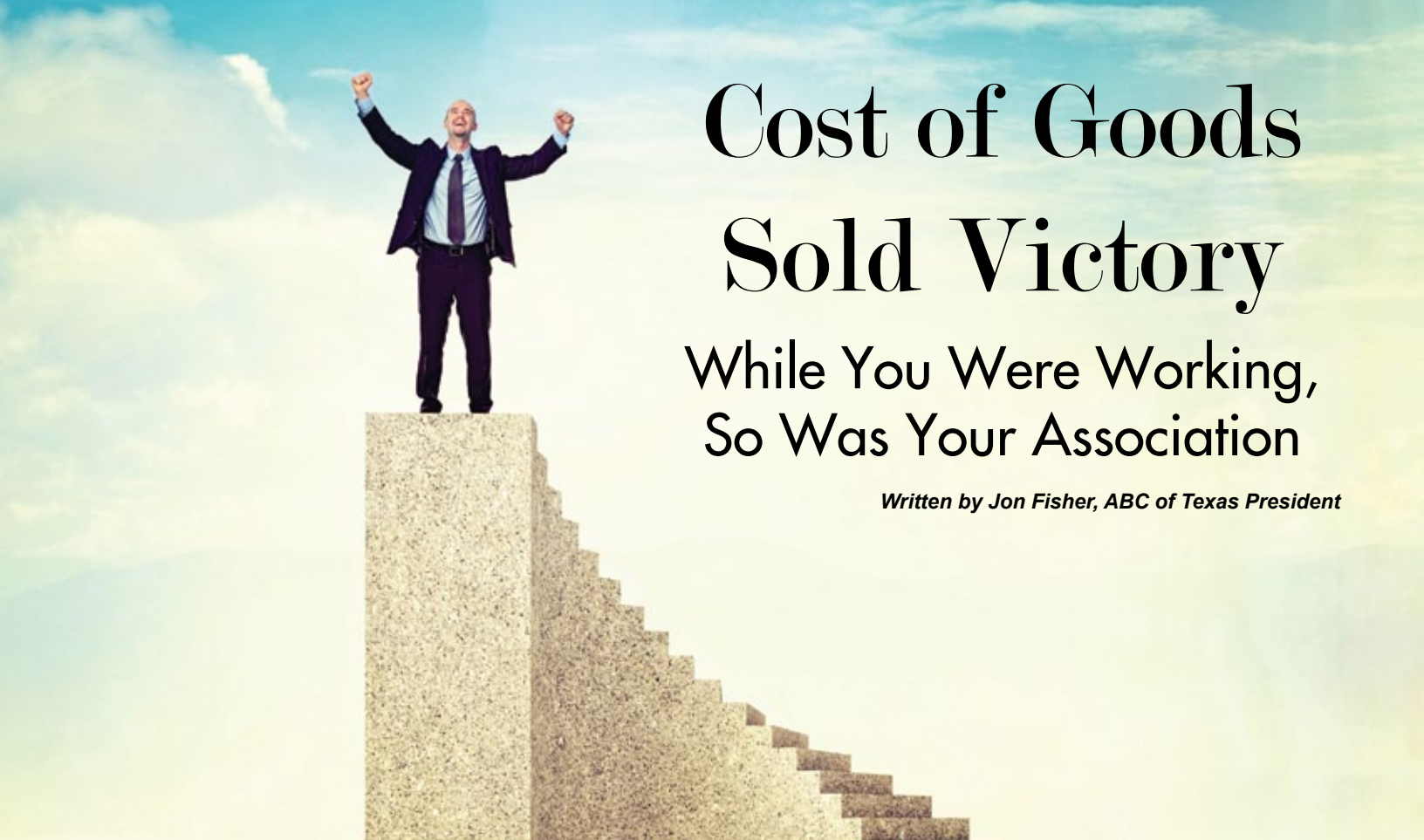
Our clients are demanding and their standards are high. So are ours, because high standards attract the best people, and high standards challenge them to learn and grow.

That's why so many of the world's leading industrial facilities count on ISC, where NCCER-certified men and women set high standards of their own, and constantly challenge themselves to get even better.

If that sounds good to you, call ISC -- whether you're planning a job or looking for one.

420 Dickinson Ave.
League City, TX 77573
281-338-2000

6350 Walden Road
Beaumont, TX 77707
409-842-3500
www.iscgrp.com



Cost of Goods Sold Victory

While You Were Working, So Was Your Association

Written by Jon Fisher, ABC of Texas President

While you were working at your job the last two years, ABC of Texas was working to let your company keep the money it had already earned. Virtually all construction companies had been dutifully paying their franchise taxes (margins tax) based on generally accepted accounting principles and industry practices including IRS rules. Then in the spring of 2011, it was brought to our attention that the Comptroller's auditors were disallowing "indirect" or supervisory labor when calculating cost of goods sold.

ABC of Texas, Associated General Contractors—Texas Building Branch (AGC-TBB), and the Texas Construction Association (TCA) participated in a March 2011, meeting with high ranking members of the Comptroller's staff. In that meeting, we were assured that the agency welcomed existing industry practice in dealing industry by industry on making sure the tax was properly implemented. Then, five months later we were told by letter to the Vice President and General Counsel of AGC-TBB that only labor that made a "physical change" to the property would be allowed in cost of goods sold. Of course, we were very concerned about that interpretation. And, since audits can capture taxes owed four years back, this was a big deal!

The staff was basing this interpretation on the fact that the statute allowed "direct costs" to be calculated as costs of goods sold. Since "labor" was included as a direct cost, the Comptroller's staff argued that direct costs only included "direct" labor. We argued that all labor on the job was a "direct cost."

Those three construction industry associations, along with the Texas Association of Builders (TAB, which represents homebuilders), met and decided to employ one of the best tax consultants in the business—Ryan LLC, specifically Karey Barton. Both Adina Christian and Karey Barton from Ryan agreed to represent us through a meeting with Comptroller Susan Combs to try to plead our case. Their job was to get us ready for the meeting so we could make the best arguments possible. Bob Parker of Repon (a member of the Texas Coastal Bend Chapter and an ABC of Texas Board member) and your State President represented ABC of Texas.

At that meeting, Comptroller Combs instructed the group and the staff to find common ground and come back with an agreement on what the law said. That was much easier said than done.

Following that meeting, the group of associations agreed to retain Ryan through the 83rd Texas Legislature in case we needed to pursue legislation. The ABC of Texas Board agreed to a special assessment to fund this effort since the cost of failure would be significant for our contractor members. In the meantime, ABC of Texas secured a grant from ABC National's Free Enterprise Alliance with the help of April Brown and Chris Singerling of the ABC National staff. Our application was considered strong since we were asking for one-half of our obligation to a four association effort. This grant allowed ABC of Texas to half the special assessments to the chapters.

After over a year of meetings, we were finally told that a proposed rule would be going to a Comptroller's Taxpayer Advisory Group. When we saw that proposal, we were stunned. Even though the proposal did single out the construction industry for special treatment, we were only getting the first line of supervision—those who directly supervised those who made a physical change.

The stakes were getting higher since this was the last step before the rule was to be proposed.

We were able to make one more round of arguments for our position through this process. Each group submitted its own comments based on the perspectives of its membership, and our consultants made a strong legal argument based on the structure of the statute and the fact that direct costs specifically included some items that could not be modified by the word "direct" without resulting in an absurd result.

Apparently, that latter argument struck home. After all comments were digested, we were called to a new meeting where we were told the staff was impressed by the arguments and had changed its perspective to align with the construction industry position.

After almost two years of work, the construction industry was finally told that all its labor attributed to the project, unless specifically excluded by statute, would be included in costs of goods sold.

This one change in interpretation saved construction companies at least an estimated 25-40% increase in franchise taxes each year for the past four years (plus penalty and interest) although some estimated it could double their franchise taxes. This saved our industry literally tens of millions of dollars if not more.

This one change in interpretation saved construction companies at least an estimated 25-40% increase in franchise taxes each year for the past four years (plus penalty and interest) although some estimated it could double their franchise taxes. This saved our industry literally tens of millions of dollars if not more. If you want to know the effect on your company, back out 96 percent of all supervisory labor from cost of goods sold and only include 100 percent of the labor that makes a physical change. The percentage increase will vary company to company, but it is a large number.

The final rule was published May 31, 2013 and became effective June 5. Franchise tax audits that had been put on hold should

likely resume in late July once the auditors become re-trained on the new rule.

It is important to note that without Comptroller Susan Combs' intervention and insistence on following the statute, we would not have been successful.

Of course, we were helped by the fact that companies had been paying taxes all along on our reading of the statute. Thus, this had no negative fiscal implications for the state. Had there been confusion in our industry, and some overpaid, we could have been facing a more difficult situation.

This underscores the importance of companies communicating with their respective trade associations at the first sign of trouble—not after a negative ruling, which is harder to reverse.

Our industry should be grateful to the Comptroller for her patience in insisting that the staff work with industry to ensure the agency was interpreting the law correctly.

Every single construction company should thank the ABC of Texas Board and their respective ABC Chapters for choosing to pursue and fund this effort, which demonstrates the high value in association membership. Of course, ABC of Texas did not do this alone. Our partners—AGC-TBB, TCA and TAB (homebuilders)—and our consultants created the critical mass necessary to get this done.

Another lesson to be learned is to not undervalue the importance of a united industry in seeking to prevent an unreasonable outcome from government. This is not something that any one group could have done alone or without consultants who knew the law and the venue. Leaving the resolution of this issue up to individual companies would not have yielded a positive result. But, the most important lesson from this activity is that it takes financial resources to be able to act when the stakes are high—especially since it took the combined resources of four associations.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

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.



One on One With...

STATE REPRESENTATIVE CECIL BELL, JR.

Cecil Bell, Jr. is a sixth generation Texan whose family has been in the State of Texas since 1852. The oldest of three siblings, Cecil was born in Rosenberg but raised all across Texas.

A 2009 Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Finalist for the Southwest Region, Cecil serves as the CEO of six active enterprises, providing clients with a variety of services and creating jobs for Texans.

Cecil's support for the future of our community and willingness to volunteer his personal time and resources can be seen in his community service. Cecil remains Chairman of the Montgomery County Pct. 5 TCLEOSE Training Facility and has served as the Chairman of the Greater Magnolia Economic Development Partnership and President of the Magnolia ISD School Board of Trustees. He is a charter member of the local rotary who also supports his local FFA, youth clubs, area churches and community organizations. He is also a Life Member of the NRA and the TSRA.

Cecil's cow/calf ranching operations, located in Leon and Freestone Counties, demonstrate his personal commitment to his Texas heritage and to agriculture in Texas.

Cecil met his high school sweetheart and now-wife, Jo Ann, at the 1979 National Meeting of the Beta Club Honor Society. The Bells moved to Magnolia in 1993. He and Jo Ann have two boys. Cecil "Trey" Bell, III is a 2010 graduate of Magnolia West High School and Charlie is a freshman at Tarleton State University. The Bell family attends the Magnolia Church of Christ, where Cecil served many years as a Deacon.

Please describe your business background.

I currently own six businesses, three of which are construction companies. In fact, I still own my first business, which I started in 1983, B-5 Construction. A quick look at them -- B-5 specializes in the construction of water and wastewater treatment facilities. Tejas Underground Utilities, LLC installs underground water, sanitary sewer, storm sewer and other "wet" utilities for commercial, industrial, municipal and multifamily venues. I also have an equipment rental company, a real estate development company and a company which provides compliance and maintenance services to a wide variety of entities (i.e. hospitals, major universities, MUDs, public schools, apartment complexes and commercial developments) which have permitted storm water facilities like retention ponds and other storm water features.

What is your view of the free enterprise system?

My view of the free enterprise system is the same as that of my great, great, great grandfather who arrived in Texas in 1852. The free enterprise system is private businesses making a profit in an environment where government regulations are least restrictive and where the burden of taxation is limited. Quotably, "keep government out of the way of Texas businesses." We all know that the U.S. Constitution guarantees our individual rights, liberties and freedoms as American citizens. Consider this: without capitalism and the free enterprise system, American citizens would not possess the economic opportunity to be free.

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

The 83rd Regular Session passed a number of bills which bode well for the future of Texas. H.B. 5 provides the career and technology interface necessary to establish relevancy in learning for Texas students so they will take ownership in their education. This allows Texas to retain its economic energy by ensuring that Texas dollars go to Texas homes instead of continuing the current trend of expanding the outsourcing of skilled labor in Texas. The multiple efforts to reduce accounting diversions and the dependency on dedicated fund balances to certify the budget move Texas in the right direction towards transparency. Establishing the funding for the Texas water plan is also critical to maintaining Texas' prominence as "the place to be in business." However, the limited manner in which transportation was addressed remains a major concern. Three of the four is a great batting average but it leaves legislators and Texans with no ground for complacency.

You are one of 8 ABC members serving in the Texas Legislature this session. But, unlike most of those legislators, you were not an ABC member before you were elected. What made you decide to join ABC?

It didn't take me long to recognize the strength of membership in ABC. As a member of the legislature it is readily apparent that ABC does a great job of representing the construction trades in

the Capitol. As the newest contractor in the legislature, I may not have started out as an ABC member but "I got there as quick as I could."

The national economy has still not recovered sufficiently from the recent recession. What is your view of our state's economy?

The current state of the Texas economy is healthy. We have benefited from a booming energy sector which has the stabilizing market width from shale production to CO2 enhanced oil recovery. Another sign of a healthy economy is a housing market that is building at a strong pace (which cannot keep up with the enormous growth in population). Some of the lurking dangers to our economy include potential downsizing by employers to avoid the mandates of the Patient Protection and Affordable Healthcare Act and the resultant reduction in individual income.

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

After the Tri-County / Riley Road fire in Magnolia, one of my legislative goals was to pass a bill protecting Texans who offer their assistance during times of emergency from undue liability. I authored H.B. 487, which allows Texans to volunteer their resources during times of man-made or natural disaster while providing liability protection to those volunteers as long as they are working under the direction of the county, municipality, emergency management coordinator or volunteer fire department. This bill, which has been signed by the governor, lets Texans participate in the defense of their communities and their state without undue liability. An added bonus is this bill also saves enormous dollars in economic loss during events like fires, hurricanes, tornadoes and other disasters. Another priority was to provide the career and technology opportunities necessary to empower all Texas students to be able to go to work, or if they want, to college straight out of high school. To get that "work ready" interface without spending billions more on education and waiting years for access, I filed H.B. 842, which allows public schools to partner with local community colleges to establish distinguished career and technology graduation plans for Texas students as soon as the fall of 2013. These two bills have enormous potential for statewide impact and join a number of my bills on the governor's desk. Successes aside, every session has its next session priorities for bills which met their demise in committee. This session's dead bills list included a bill to address and fix concerns with the Texas Call Before You Dig statute, also referred to as 8-1-1, where contractors and subcontractors who comply with the statutory requirement to have excavation sites located are (under status quo) sued by facility operators who fail to comply with the statute. Also on that list is lender notice legislation, which would have required lenders to notify contractors when the funding for a project was going to be stopped.

Commercial Interior Specialists

Helping General Contractors meet today's challenges with a trained and qualified workforce.



Setting the standard for workforce development in the commercial construction industry:

- On the Job Standardized Training
- NCCER Journeymen Certification Program
- Career Pathways
- English on the Jobsite Initiative



2115 Judlway Drive
Houston, Texas 77018
713-681-2626
www.marekbros.com



is proud to present our 2013
Platinum Partners



10999 West IH-10, Suite 370
San Antonio, TX 78230
(210) 293-8700 • Fax: (210) 699-1902
www.cbylaw.com

Cokinios, Bosien & Young have been members of the ABC South Texas Chapter since 2006.

Whether engaging in business formation, commercial transactions, or complex litigation, our clients look to us again and again for sound counsel, guidance and dependable advice. The depth of legal and business experience of our attorneys combined with the efficient and personal touch that only a mid-size law firm can provide enables Cokinios, Bosien & Young to help develop the right solutions to your legal challenges.



San Antonio - (210) 494-1638
Houston - (713) 898-9708
Dallas / Ft. Worth - (817) 204-0770
www.joeris.com
twitter.com/joerisgc

Joeris General Contractors, Ltd. has been a member of the ABC South Texas Chapter since 1998.

An ABC Accredited Quality Contractor (AQC), Joeris is simply one of the best commercial general contractors in Texas. With over 45 years experience and more than \$3 Billion in construction, Joeris provides our clients with the most experienced and professional team. Client satisfaction has resulted in a 95% client retention rate and numerous awards. We are an employee-owned firm committed to our clients, our families and our communities. Our mission is to produce construction excellence on every project while providing a family-first workplace.

ABC South Texas Chapter • 814 Arion Parkway, Ste. 204 • San Antonio, Texas 78216
Office (210) 342-1994 • Fax (210) 342-5385

WHAT HAPPENED IN AUSTIN THIS YEAR?

Written by Jon Fisher, ABC of Texas President



I've been around the Texas Legislature since 1971, so one would think I would find some similarity in legislative sessions. Well, I haven't yet. Each session has its own personality and its own successes and failures.

This last session will be remembered by those of us advocating your interests as the session we turned our educational system into one that serves all the students and prepares Texans for success. This was no small feat, and it took the combined efforts of 22 business trade associations as well as citizens that were fed up with the testing regimen that had many schools "teaching to the test." Another article in this issue covers what is contained in

This last session will be remembered by those of us advocating your interests as the session we turned our educational system into one that serves all the students and prepares Texans for success. This was no small feat, and it took the combined efforts of 22 business trade associations as well as citizens that were fed up with the testing regimen that had many schools "teaching to the test."

HB 5 (the public education curriculum, testing and accountability bill).

ABC of Texas started the session with 4 high priority, 4 priority and 2 secondary priority issues. We had also identified 4 other issues in which we would become involved. This article will briefly comment on each of those issues. Bear in mind that these issues are not an exclusive list. ABC of Texas was also involved in supporting the initiatives of others when merited and opposing those initiatives we believe to be bad for our industry or free enterprise in general.

Margins Tax/COGS/Other Tax Issues—We were getting ready for a massive effort trying to pass legislation to clarify what we believed the statute already said—that all labor attributable to a project was a direct cost—when the Comptroller's staff finally agreed with our position. Thus, what we anticipated to be the biggest impact issue on our membership was taken off the table because it was resolved. We cannot over-emphasize how hard a legislative solution would have been because it would have most likely been weighed down with an assertion of huge fiscal implications to the state (even though our industry had been paying taxes according to what we thought the law said). Getting the issue resolved by rule did one other thing—it made the clarification retroactive which a statutory change could not have accomplished.

Open Competition and Efficiency in State Government Contracting—This is ABC National's high priority item for states.

Unfortunately for this issue (but fortunately for the success of Texas), our Texas Senate cannot bring up bills in Regular Session without a two-thirds vote to suspend the rules. Since this is a very polarizing issue (in the House, all Republicans voted “aye” and all Democrats voted “nay”), it is easy to see why a Senate with 19 Republicans and 12 Democrats would be a challenge when one needs 21 votes to bring up a bill. What works to help force bipartisanship condemns issues that break down along party lines. But, we never got a chance to see if we could forge a bipartisan effort in the Senate because HB 1548 was referred to a committee with a Democratic Chair who refused to let the bill come to a vote. We did get a hearing, though.

Workforce/Education—Mentioned above.

Immigration—No serious threats.

Statutory Employer—This issue will not be ripe until large owners decide to make an effort. Owners have to become convinced that contractors must price their work to cover the exposure to third party employee lawsuits which the contractors generally indemnify the owner against.

Retainage/Trust Funds—After some delay in House committee, HB 3316 was placed on the House Calendar in time to be considered. Unfortunately, it died from a point of order. The bill analysis was defective. This issue will come up again when we discuss lien law reform.

PAC Solicitation—The author of this bill in the House dropped the effort and signed on as a co-author to HB 1548 (Open Competition and Efficiency in State Government Contracting).

CIP Standards—The Texas Department of Insurance is in the process of proposing some rules on consolidated insurance programs (CIPs) so construction groups decided to wait until next session to see what needs to be done.

State Breach of Contract— SUCCESS! Finally! This issue has been on the front-burner for construction industry groups for some time. We had been successful in the past dealing with all levels of government except state government (which includes universities). Texas Governor Rick Perry signed the bill on June 14. It is not all we wanted, but it is significant and will give us something to work on in the future.

Lien Law Reform—Although a bill was introduced, all construction industry groups agreed there was not enough time to work with other stakeholders to reach a consensus on how to proceed. But, we now have a starting point, and associations will begin working on the issue this summer.

Cooperative Purchasing Networks—These entities have been engaging in procuring construction services for their members. It was discovered last session that at least one of the coops used a manufacturer of roofing materials to write the specifications for their bidding process. ABC of Texas supported legislation to provide that coops could not award contracts for roofing services

or materials to anyone who consulted with the coop including helping prepare the specifications. Although the Senate bill passed the Senate, both the House and Senate bills were so late getting out of House committee that they did not make the House Calendar.

Lender Notice—Both House and Senate bills were heard on the same day rather late in the process. Many on the committees remarked that were there more time this issue might have been addressed. The lenders took a beating in committee over why they couldn’t just notify the general contractor when they were no longer funding the project. This issue will come up again in our efforts on Lien Law Reform.

Statute of Repose—No legislation was introduced this session.

Worker Misclassification—Considerable effort was spent trying to come up with a workable bill. Most importantly, we did not want to lose the ability to use independent contractors when we were complying with the current IRS and Unemployment Insurance requirements. Labor had a bill that was unworkable because it changed the standard for determination of employee versus contractor. Once we got past that issue, ABC of Texas’ concerns were two-fold—we wanted to make sure that contractors were not responsible for someone else’s misclassification, and we wanted to make sure that those who believed they were properly classifying employees and contractors were not subject to high penalties if they committed an innocent mistake (or the agency made an arbitrary ruling). ABC of Texas worked with the Texas Construction Association and others to come up with an alternative that ABC of Texas could support. The Senate bill died in committee and the House bill did not get set on the House Calendar.

It is important to note that while our successes are few in number, they were significant. The pre-session success on the cost of goods sold under the Franchise Tax was huge—tens of millions of dollars in savings if not more. The success on public education curriculum was huge—our students and our industry will both be better served by flexibility in curriculum. And, we finally made progress on State Breach of Contract, something that will likely save state government money in the long run by increased competition and more certainty for contractors. And, last, but certainly not least, the state has provided a mechanism, if approved by the voters, to help secure our long term water resource needs—something that is critical for the future of Texas.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

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. I became involved with the ABC of Greater Houston Chapter in 1996. I started attending the ABC of Texas Legislative day event in 1997. I quickly learned how important it

Gremillion Discusses His Involvement In ABC of Texas As His Chairmanship Draws To An End

I became involved with the ABC of Greater Houston Chapter in 1996, and very soon after joining I attended the ABC of Texas Legislative day event in 1997. I quickly learned how important it was to visit the State Representatives and Senators face-to-face to present our issues. Although I knew it was important for the construction industry as a whole it seem like none of the issues we were discussing really effected my business. That all changed in 2003 when the Electrical Licensing law was passed. I am employed by an industrial Electrical and Instrumentation Contractor. This motivated me to get involved with ABC of Texas and become more aware of what was going on in Austin. I was elected chairmen of the Board of ABC of Texas in 2011 to serve through the 2013 legislative cycle.

Since I am the outgoing Chair, I wanted to share some of my experience during my tenure with ABC of Texas. One of the first meetings I attended at the state level was a planning conference in August of 2006. At the time we had a very powerful lobbyist, we were a defensive organization that was effective in killing bad bills and had a very small PAC. It was at this planning session that we had a vision to become the organization we are today. To move to the next level we felt that we needed to have the ability pass legislation, be a recognized force in Austin—known by all legislators, have a major PAC, and be sought after as a key endorsement. Today we are this organization and more.

One of the first meetings I attended at the state level was a planning conference in August of 2006. At the time we had a very powerful lobbyist, we were a defensive organization that was effective in killing bad bills and had a very small PAC. It was at this planning session that we had a vision to become the organization we are today.

Part of the outcome of the planning conference was to hire a full time staff person. One of the most memorable experiences for me was participating on the search committee that would eventually hire our current President Jon Fisher. With Jon on board we began to make progress quickly. We have in place a strategic plan with objectives for the present and the future. In 2009, an ABC of Texas managed bill was passed. Since then we have gone on to write and get other bills passed. Our PAC has grown exponentially. When Jon Fisher is in the room everyone knows ABC of Texas is there.



I am very proud to be a part of the accomplishments achieved by ABC of Texas. We have fulfilled our objective of getting ABC a higher profile and establishing relationships/working with other like-minded associations to advance business and construction industry interests. We are sought after as a key endorsement. Just this past session we were contacted by representatives and senators to get our position/help on certain bills. We have been contacted by state wide elected officials asking for help and support on issues. We keep our members informed during the session with legislative update emails. We have improved our internal process for reviewing bills and taking a position on the bills.

And back to why I became involved in ABC of Texas. Although we still have an electrical licensing law in effect, ABC of Texas has two of its board members on the advisory board. I am one of them.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Michael A. Gremillion is employed by ISC Constructors, LLC as Vice President – Houston Office. He has been employed by ISC for 24 years and in the construction industry for 33 years. A native of Baton Rouge, LA, Michael and his family moved to the Houston area in 1995. He is a past chair of the ABC Greater Houston Chapter, twice past chair of ABC Greater Houston's training affiliate CMEF and current chair of ABC of Texas.

ABC INITIATIVES AROUND THE STATE



The Texas Mid Coast Chapter makes great progress in the building of their new offices/training facility. The new building is slated for a 2013 third Quarter completion.



The Texas Coastal Bend Chapter recently held the 25th Annual ABC Golf Classic where 41 teams competed for top golf honors. The money raised from the tournament benefits the Craft Training Center and the Chapter's PAC.

TEXAS MID COAST CHAPTER

From bare land, to frame work in only two weeks! The ABC Texas Mid Coast Chapter and it's members are very excited about the progress of the new building. Thirty years in the making, the new 2,500 square foot building will be home to the Chapter offices, as well as the training and education programs. The most special thing about the new building is that it is being built by members. The Chapter has had an amazing response from members through product and labor and it is because of their generosity that the Chapter hopes to be in the new offices by the third quarter of 2013.

In the meantime, training and education continue. The Spring 2013 CSST class completed in June. The Chapter will start another class in the Fall.

Also on June 21st and 22nd, the Chapter hosted the 21st Annual Fishing Tournament in Port O'Connor, Texas.

The Mid Coast area continues to realize an increase in building projects, which creates a busier Chapter Plans Room. The volume printing and binding services have increased exponentially. With the increased activity in the oil and gas sector, demand for increased safety training has also risen.

The Mid Coast Chapter is also pleased that a new manufacturing facility, a tier company supporting Caterpillar functions, has been announced and they are looking forward to positive interaction with the members.

Workforce continues to be a challenge. The Chapter is working with the Golden Crescent Workforce group on the Target/Demand Occupations efforts.

TEXAS COASTAL BEND CHAPTER

As the long hot summer days kick into gear, ABC Texas Coastal Bend Chapter continues to strive to be the voice of the construction Industry promoting the free enterprise system.

During the past months, the Chapter has had the opportunity to host several events and networking opportunities comprised of the Monthly First Wednesday Mixers and the 25th Annual ABC Golf Classic. The monthly mixers are always a great way to meet and mingle with members and an excellent sponsorship opportunity. The Chapter would like to thank Johnny Davidson with J.M. Davidson Inc. for sponsoring the April Mixer; Jonna Davidson with Analytical Testing of Texas, the May Mixer Sponsor; and Jon Garrett with Garrett Construction, the June Mixer Sponsor.

The Texas Coastal Bend's 25th Annual Golf Classic was held May 13th. With 41 teams this year, it was without a doubt another great success. Money raised at the event helped support the Craft Training Center of the Coastal Bend with scholarships to the students as well as contributions to the Texas Coastal Bend Political Action Committee. The Chapter would like to extend a huge thank you to the Golf Committee Chairman Mike Blundell and Leslie Hughes with Repcon, Inc., the rest of the committee, and all of the volunteers and sponsors. Without each of them, it wouldn't be the exciting event that members look forward to each year. Congratulations go to the winning first place team—Fishbone Safety comprised of Alisha Nash, Derek Chance, Jesse Johnson & Jay Johnson.

The Craft Training Center of the Coastal Bend continued to witness overwhelming attendance while hosting the 65th Annual SkillsUSA State Championship during the first weekend of April. SkillsUSA is a construction trades competition where students

(Continued on page 16)

ABC INITIATIVES AROUND THE STATE



During the recent ABC National Legislative Conference, TEXO was presented with the Grassroots Chapter Recognition Gold Award and the Joe M. Rogers Award for Advocacy and Governmental Affairs Program Participation. (Pictured are GPaul Holliman, Holliman Construction Consulting Group; Greg Hoberock, National ABC Board Chairman; Jack Baxley, TEXO; and Phil Hoppman, Big D Metalworks)

from high schools and colleges across the state compete in welding, wiring, masonry, industrial motor control, and plumbing crafts. “These young craft professionals are amazing,” said Dr. Anne J. Matula, president of the Craft Training Center. “Their skills and accomplishments seem to get better every year, making them very highly employable. Our employer volunteers and supporters would love to get these students on their payrolls.”

The Contractor Safety Council of the Coastal Bend hosted the South Texas Industrial Industry Safety Excellence Awards Program and Banquet on June 4th. The awards banquet is held annually to recognize the outstanding achievements of contractors and owners working in the South Texas Area. ABC Texas Coastal Bend takes this opportunity to recognize the members who earned the Safety Training & Evaluation Process (STEP) Awards for their dedication to maintain a safe work environment for its employees. This year’s Gold recipients were, Bay LTD, Rabalais I & E Constructors, TICO Insulation Co., Turner Industries Group and Large & Sons Foundation Drilling. The Diamond recipients were Brock Services, Ltd., and Repcon, Inc. Congratulations to all.

Lastly, the chapter is currently planning this year’s 19th Annual Fishing Tournament scheduled for July 12th & 13th at Marker 37 as well as the 12th Annual Skeet & Trap Shoot, set for September 13th & 14th at the Corpus Christi Pistol & Rifle Club.

TEXO CHAPTER

As we enter into the halfway point of 2013, TEXO is picking up the pace even more. A competition introduced earlier this year has members scrambling to win the coveted “TEXO Challenge Cup”. Members are accumulating points by participating in select premier Chapter events. In December, the member with the most

points will not only take home the Cup, but also the ultimate award, bragging rights for an entire year.

The AIA/TEXO Leadership Team hosted their Spring Forum in April “IPD...Fact vs. Myth on Texas’ First IPD Project”. Project collaborators discussed DFW’s first real IPD project, the Texas Health Harris Methodist Alliance Hospital and associated medical office building. This was one of the first projects in Texas to execute the AIA C191 agreement.

Beautiful weather resulted in a fun day of fishing and networking during TEXO’s Annual Spring Bass Tournament, April 5-6 at Lake Fork Marina. The father and son team of John and Will Carter representing MEDCO Construction captured a 10.89 pound bass and the events’ Big Bass prize.

Observing the success seen in several similar chapters across the country, TEXO has partnered with its members to create an HR Forum where local HR (Human Resource) leaders will share best practices and discuss hot topics as it relates to the construction industry. The Forum meets to engage in active conversation around HR strategies with the outcome to share best practices, provide assistance in creating business solutions as it relates to HR, and keep pulse of our current industry.

The spotlight was on safety in the month of May. The month of May gained national attention to TEXO and its members during the Construction Industry Safety Stand Down. For 1.5 hours on May 15th, over \$2 billion in commercial construction came to a halt in order for companies and employees to Stand-Down for Safety. This initiative has grown over the years and gained national attention. You can read more about the Construction Industry Safety Stand Down in the 2013 Summer Edition of the TEXO magazine.

On June 1st, 20 teams competed in TEXO’s 7th Annual Softball Tournament. The first crack of the bat was made at 8:00 am and ended with Turner Construction winning the tournament 19-13 against BR AEC’s. How do you compete with that? FORE!

On Monday, June 24 at Trophy Club Country Club, the TEXO Open Golf Tournament, sponsored by Acton, turned out to be a huge success. Over 220 golfers competed for valuable TEXO Challenge Cup points and industry bragging rights. Highlights of the day included the tournament’s first-ever “TEXO Advocacy Shoot-out” sponsored by Southwest Construction Services.

During the recent ABC National Legislative Conference, TEXO was presented two important awards. For outstanding Chapter performance TEXO was presented the Grassroots Chapter Recognition Gold Award and the Joe M. Rogers

ABC INITIATIVES AROUND THE STATE



Members of the Greater Houston Chapter visited with Senator Ted Cruz (pictured above). Members also visited with Senator John Cornyn and ten Congressional Members from the Houston area.



Over 300 construction industry members attended the annual Parking Lot Party hosted by the ABC South Texas Chapter, ASA, PHCC, ACCA, Virtual Builders Exchange and the Builders' Exchange of Texas this past May.

Award for Advocacy and Governmental Affairs Program Participation.

The Safety/Superintendents Forums continue to rank high in attendance with over 100 individuals each month. The Latino Safety/Superintendents Forum follows with approximately 75 each month. The Young Constructors Council and Women's Forum both remain very active and are well attended.

As the long, HOT summer comes into full effect the Chapter continues planning events, forums, classes and much more. Stay tuned!

GREATER HOUSTON CHAPTER

Once again, the Greater Houston chapter has embarked on an adventure to Washington, D.C. to exchange ideas with ABC members from around the nation while advocating for merit shop and free enterprise ideals with our elected officials. The conference began with ABC info sharing sessions for chapter staff, presidents, and chairmen on Tuesday, June 11th at the Capital Hilton. This was a great way for chapters to share their successes, hurdles, and strategies with each other as well as get updates and feedback from ABC's national staff. These sessions were productive and useful as different chapters are constantly creating new ways to improve chapter quality while also being faced with new obstacles that other chapters may have yet to encounter. By sharing these strategies and initiatives, others were able to utilize them in their chapters at home.

On Tuesday evening, chapter members and staff attended ABC's Free Enterprise Alliance Reception with guest speaker and Kentucky Senator, Rand Paul. The crowd cheered as Senator Paul discussed the importance of smart and frugal government

spending as well as the value of personal responsibility. The reception was followed by a Houston Chapter dinner at the "quintessential D.C. bar and grill", Old Ebbitt's. Freshman congressional member, Rep. Randy Weber, joined the chapter for a great meal, laughs, and dialogue. The following morning, the kick-off for meetings on Capitol Hill began with a breakfast where guest speakers, including Rep. Markwayne Mullin (R-Okla.), Rep. Andy Harris (R-Md.), and Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah), spoke on current legislation, and chapter awards were given for grassroots and PAC participation. The Greater Houston chapter was proud to receive two awards— a Silver Grassroots Participation Award and the Joe Rodgers Award.

The rest of the day and part of Thursday were spent visiting with our Houston-area Congressional members and our two Texas Senators- Ted Cruz and John Cornyn. The Congressional members visited by our chapter include: Ted Poe, Steve Stockman, Michael McCaul, John Culberson, Sheila Jackson-Lee, Al Green, Gene Green, Bill Flores, Kevin Brady, and Pete Olson. The priorities discussed in each meeting ranged from the usual Government Neutrality in Contracting to the hot topic of Immigration Reform. Each representative was receptive and open to our issues, leading to an over-all successful 2013 Legislative Conference for ABC of Greater Houston.

SOUTH TEXAS CHAPTER

Over 300 construction industry members attended the annual Parking Lot Party hosted by the ABC South Texas Chapter, ASA, PHCC, ACCA, Virtual Builders Exchange and the Builders' Exchange of Texas this past May. The relaxed informal gathering gave attendees the opportunity to mix, mingle, enjoy food and cold beverages, as well as pitch washers.

(Continued on page 18)

ABC INITIATIVES AROUND THE STATE



The Texas Gulf Coast Chapter once again 'brought home the bacon' from the ABC National Craft Championships held in Birmingham, Alabama. Waylon Jones, a young millwright with RPM Services, Inc. took the Silver Medal from a field of eight competitors.

The chapter has also been working with the City of San Antonio's Development Services Department, San Antonio Water System, City Public Works, and Bexar County to help improve the construction and development processes. These well established lines of communication have resulted in positive improvements. One of the latest improvements is the "Development Services Inspection Scheduler" app. Contractors are now able to schedule inspections from their mobile device—anytime, anywhere. The Development Services Department has also implemented a "Contractor Alert System" where an e-mail would be sent providing plan review results, permit issuance, inspection results, utility release, fees owed, and Certificate of Occupancy status. All of this is designed to help save time and money!

At the recent ABC National Legislative Conference, the South Texas Chapter was again presented with the Grassroots Chapter Recognition Silver Award, and for the first time, a Joe M. Rogers Award for exceeding PAC and FEA goals. Chapter Chair-elect presented U.S. Representative Lamar Smith with his Champion of the Merit Shop Eagle.

Over the last three months the chapter has conducted OSHA 10 and OSHA 30 Hour classes and an advanced Print Reading class, with requests for another OSHA 10 Hour Class, a Print Reading Class and a Project Management Class. These are all good indicators that construction activity is picking up in the South Texas market.

While still six months away the chapter is starting its 2014 planning process with board breakout sessions scheduled to be held over the summer prior to the October Board retreat. It is anticipated that the main focus will be on membership recruitment for 2014.

TEXAS GULF COAST CHAPTER

The Chapter "chowed down" on Bar-B-Que in March, but April brought the first ever Crawfish Boil to the chapter. For hungry Texas Gulf Coast members and guests it was a hot, spicy success! Approximately 100 members showed up on April 18th to indulge in the crusty crustaceans! This Mixer and Crawfish Boil was sponsored by the hardworking Supplier Member Committee, which sponsors events periodically to provide time for members to connect in a casual atmosphere. In addition to the delectable feast, twelve ABC Supplier members sponsored Table Top Displays and numerous door prizes were awarded to those in attendance.

April also was the month for the regular ABC Membership Event which brought another large crowd for lunch and a presentation on healthcare by Marc Pinney, Senior Benefits Consultant, Holmes Murphy. At the suggestion of ABC member Kenny Vernor, President of Vernor Material and Equipment Co., Inc., Pinney brought information to the membership on new healthcare laws and impacts that can be expected for both employers and employees. His presentation, 'Healthcare Reform: Shift, Share, or Influence Risk' pointed out that healthcare reform is not cost neutral for anyone.

April almost came to an end, but not before The Texas Gulf Coast Chapter once again 'brought home the bacon' from the ABC National Craft Championships held in Birmingham, Alabama. Waylon Jones, a young millwright with RPM Services, Inc. took the Silver Medal from a field of eight competitors. Waylon studied under Jim Slick, Coordinator for Machine Tools and Millwright with Brazosport College, our craft training partner. This is a program with many success stories as numerous craftsmen have brought home medals for the chapter, including six Gold in the millwright category! This program has actually produced 12 out of 17 overall medals for the Texas Gulf Coast Chapter since the first competition in the mid-90's.

Summer is here and that means fishing. The first weekend in June brought the 10th Annual ABC Texas Gulf Coast Chapter Inshore Fishing Tournament. This is one of the many events put on by the Public Relations Committee that helps raise money for local charities. Just around the corner is the 37th Annual Graduation Dinner and Ceremony for the ABC Craft Training Program. This chapter has a long-standing dedication to a highly skilled workforce and works in partnership with the local community college, Brazosport College and business and industry partners to sponsor and provide high quality training for our craftsmen. This year 85 craftsmen will graduate after finishing their required coursework. Hats off to them and their companies who support the training.

2014 **BizCon**[®]
Strategic Thinking for Construction Leaders

Maui * Hawaii
February 11-12 * Grand Wailea

Balance business with fun on the beautiful island of Maui.

As a construction leader, you will walk away with the forward thinking content you have grown accustomed to finding at BizCon.

- Take advantage of emerging markets and upcoming trends
- Transform your business by building a roadmap to success
- Be prepared to withstand marketplace challenges

ABC's Excellence in Construction Awards program will be held in conjunction with BizCon – so turn this destination meeting into a vacation you and your family will remember for years to come.



BizCon will be co-located with Merit Canada's International Open Shop Conference (IOSC), bringing together the most influential North American thought leaders in the construction industry.

Featured Speakers



Jason Jennings' information-packed and dynamic presentation will provide the roadmap for achieving long-lasting business success, helping you carry out the mission ahead of you.



Commander Kirk Lippold, USN (Ret.), author of "Front Burner: The Attack on the USS Cole," knows what it takes to create the foundation for successful leadership that prepares teams to rise to any challenge they may face.

Register Today: bizcon.abc.org



**ABC
Works
For You.**



Join The Industry Leader

Political Clout

**Business
Development
Opportunities**

**Training
Programs**

**Safety
Training**

Associated Builders and Contractors is a voice for members with state and federal agencies, on Capitol Hill and in state houses across America. Membership provides access to great insurance programs and to other business partnerships that save your firm money while increasing value for your employees.

Joining ABC provides access to top training and safety programs including access to ABC's national safety partnership with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Through ABC you can build and improve your business by networking with America's top contractors while connecting with top owners.

Isn't it time you joined the most exciting organization in the construction industry?

**Visit www.abc.org
To Join an ABC Chapter Near You!**