

# Texas MERIT SHOP Journal

May 2019

*Defending the Rights of  
Merit Shop Contractors*

TEXAS SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

## *Dennis Bonnen*

Representing the Texas House District 25, Dennis Bonnen discusses his priorities in the 86th Legislative Session

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# LETTER from the Chairman



WESTCOTT

Well, the 86th Legislative Session is off and running at a breakneck pace. There are more construction related bills in place this session than I can ever recall from previous years. ABC of Texas President, Jon Fisher and the Legislative Review Task Force have been hard at work reviewing these bills and making recommendations for positions and possible witnesses.

Several members have attended committee meetings and hearings, and testified on certain bills where needed. Important issues such as design defects, right to repair, lien law, neutrality in state government contracting, contingent attorneys for local governmental entities, and many more have the potential to make it to the floor of the house or senate.

Thank you to Darlene East, Jack Baxley, Scott Lewis, Bob Parker, Lawrence Wilcox, Steven Schultz and our Executive Committee for all of their support in these efforts.

We also have tremendous support and helpful coordination from our friends at AGC-TBB and TCA. A unified voice only strengthens our overall position on these important matters.

On another note, our executive committee is hard at work on a transition plan to replace Jon Fisher's position when he retires at the end of this year. I am doing my best to glean as much knowledge from Jon as I can before this happens, and I encourage each of you to do the same. I'll say this - there are very few men that have the experience, background and wherewithal to be out front, all day, every day, representing our industry, and I am proud to call Jon both a mentor and a friend. His hard work and dedication to ABC over the last 11 years will be hard to match. Please join me in thanking Jon Fisher for his near-decade of steadfast commitment and dedication to ABC. Jon, we wish you and your family much happiness in this next chapter - much deserved. 🍀

**Ben Westcott**

2017 - 2019 ABC of Texas Chairman

Andrews Myers, P.C.

# LETTER from the President



FISHER

Dear ABC Members –

By the time you receive this issue of Texas Merit Shop Journal, the regular session of the 86th Texas Legislature will be in its last month.

Later in this issue is an article I penned dealing with our priorities as selected by the Board in April of last year. Of course, several weeks have passed since that was written. If you are interested in any of those bills, please go to <https://capitol.texas.gov/> which is Texas Legislature Online.

On another note, this is my last Legislative Session as your President. I certainly hope we end up with some big wins. I am working hard to do my part to make that happen.

Current plans are for me to remain on to help with the transition through December. Board willing, I may even facilitate the development of your next Strategic Plan in November of this year.

This job is not like a lot of association president jobs. It does not involve managing staff. It does involve a lot of administrative functions including financial and meeting coordination. Normally, that is delegated.

A one-person shop is not appealing to everyone, but there are plenty of people out there that would do well in this environment. The Board just has to find the right one.

I do not envy them in this endeavor, but I am resolute to be as helpful as they will let me be!

Hopefully, all of you are receiving and reading my Friday Legislative Updates. If you are not, please contact your chapter to find out how to get on the VoterVOICE list.

I want to thank and acknowledge ABC of Texas members that have stepped up and testified on bills so far this session including Ben Wescott of Andrews Myers, Gary Roden of TDIndustries, David Smith of TDIndustries (now with Austin Commercial) and Mike Weaver of Weaver and Jacobs. If I missed anyone, I apologize—it is a little hectic!

Depending on how quickly the Board is able to select my replacement, this may be my last letter to ABC of Texas members. If it is, I want each of you to know how much of a pleasure and an honor it has been to serve as your President the last 11 years. Yes, I am looking forward to retirement, but I will miss the great friends I have made in this job! 🇺🇸

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Fisher', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**Jon Fisher**  
ABC of Texas  
President



# 2019 Legislative Priorities for ABC of Texas

BY JON FISHER

By the time you get this magazine, everything in this article will likely have changed. Because we are in the busiest part of the 86th Texas Legislature, there is no way to be able to provide updated information in this venue. However, it's a good way to see what issues your association is working on the hardest.

If you want to see updated status on any bills mentioned in this article, go to Texas Legislature Online -- <https://capitol.texas.gov/>

## **CONSISTENT EMPLOYMENT REGULATION**

HB 1654 by Rep. Craig Goldman and SB 15 by Senator Brandon Creighton were introduced to fulfill the goals of 17 associations that had also formed a public relations effort called Alliance for Securing and Strengthening the Economy of Texas (ASSET; website [assettexas.com](http://assettexas.com)). If you are on social media, please follow them on Facebook and Twitter. The purpose of this effort and the legislation is to prevent the patchwork of ordinances beginning to be enacted that deal with employment practices which are better left to the private sector or to the state or federal government if regulation is needed. The Senate Bill had a committee substitute narrowing the scope of the bill in an attempt to draw fire away from the bill. That seemed not to have worked because the bill began to draw so much undeserved fire from high tech companies and inclusivity groups that it was poisoned beyond rehabilitation. We still believe that SB 15 does not do what its critics say, but that battle has been lost. So, in an attempt to mitigate concerns, Senator Creighton introduced SB 2485 (preemption of employment benefit regulation), SB 2486 (preemption

of scheduling regulation), SB 2487 (preemption of leave regulation) and SB 2488 (preemption of regulating use of criminal history). All four bills were immediately referred to the Senate State Affairs Committee, heard in committee and reported favorably within a week. In a move to further mitigate opposition, the Senate author prepared a substitute for SB 2485 which took the word "regulates" and substituted the word "mandates" when preempting local ordinances dealing with employment benefits. SB 2485 & SB 2487 were both passed by the Senate 18-12 on April 11. SB 2486 & SB 2488 were passed by the Senate on April 17 by a vote of 19-12. All four bills were quickly referred to the House Committee on State Affairs. After a marathon hearing on May 1 with more than 300 people lining up to testify, the House committee reported HB 2486 with a non-discrimination ordinance exemption added by a vote of 10-2. The other bills should be reported shortly.

## **DESIGN DEFECTS**

HB 2901 by Rep. Jeff Leach was reported from the House Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence Committee on April 10. The Texas Civil Justice League offered a compromise that restricts the effect to public buildings and public works and includes a standard of care for engineers and architects.

## **E-VERIFY (SAFE HARBOR)**

There are two bills essentially mandating the use of E-Verify. One, SB 197 by Senator Charles Schwertner deals with state contractors and has the language we provided the author for both false positives and false negatives. The other, SB 2288 by Senator Pat Fallon,



deals with revoking licenses and it has reasonable false positive language, but does not deal with false negatives. The false negative language has been provided and we have received assurances that if the bill moves, it will be added. Of course, the latter is more Draconian, and we have reason to believe it will not pass.

#### **LIEN LAW MODERNIZATION**

HB 589 was filed by Rep. Joe Deshotel and Rep. Jeff Leach. This is the bill we have been working on since 2012. However, the Texas Association of Builders (homebuilders) had a competing bill filed by Rep. Dustin Burrows (HB 3498). The TAB is part of a group of stakeholders that has taken a "blood oath" to oppose HB 589 so long as anyone in their group opposes the bill including banks, title companies, owners, etc. (regardless of whether they are working in good faith). We have had a meeting with a broad group of stakeholders to see if we could reach agreement on elements of HB 3498. It appears the only path to getting something is likely HB 3489. We may be faced with the hard decision of getting nothing or getting much less than we want. There does appear to be some consensus on parts of HB 3489, but time is our enemy.

#### **NEUTRALITY IN STATE GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING**

HB 985 by Rep. Tan Parker & SB 473 by Senator Kelly Hancock appears to be in good shape. HB 985 was voted out of committee in late March (earlier than ever before). We have never been able to move this bill in March before. The bill passed the House on April 30—another first. HB 985 was heard in Senate committee on May 7.

#### **RIGHT TO REPAIR**

HB 1999 by Rep. Jeff Leach was reported by the House Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence Committee on April 10. It passed the House on April 25. Related bills dealing with contingency fee contracts, HB 1734 by Rep. Justin Holland and HB 2826 by Rep. Greg Bonnen, are also in the mix. HB 1734 passed the House on April 24 and is in the Senate Committee on Education (this bill cleans up a current statute dealing with contingency fees for school districts). HB 2826, which is a broad contingency fee bill, passed the House on May 2.

#### **STATUTE OF REPOSE**

HB 1737 by Rep. Justin Holland was heard in committee March 11. It was reported from committee April 15 as a substitute taking the current 10 years statute of repose to 7 years. A substitute is circulating taking the statute of repose to 7 years from the current 10. 📌





BY: RUSSELL HAMLEY

I have heard this cliché, “get into politics or get out of business” around ABC circles for as long as I have worked for the association, and even own several buttons to wear at political action events and on Legislative Days. It sounds good and has a nice ring to it, but what does it really mean to the ABC member?

We recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of the ABC Greater Houston chapter. In preparation for the event, I dug back into the archives and reviewed the history of the Merit Shop in Texas. I looked at pictures, read old magazines, newsletters, correspondences and the original founding chapter documents. As you might imagine, life and the construction industry were much different 50 years ago.

ABC of Texas started when the AFL-CIO Building Trades union was quoted in the Engineering News Record as targeting Brown & Root and vowing to put them out of business because they were working in open shops in Texas. Shortly thereafter, Brown & Root found a small regional association (ABC) to help them fight for their right to work. And fight they did.

ABC of Texas was founded in 1969 and became the ABC Greater Houston Chapter. Many contractors realized the only way to survive the union assaults was to join ABC, roll up their sleeves and join the battles. Open shop workers were threatened, forced to cross picket lines to get to work, and were physically abused, causing injuries and even death. The unions had no remorse in using physical force and intimidation to hold onto their market share. Usually when a dispute turns ugly, the side that resorts to violence is on the wrong side of fairness.

Merit Shop contractors, with the aid and support from ABC, resisted fighting back using physical force. All they were seeking was fairness that the USA Constitution allowed them. ABC contractors fought back in the court room where the law was on their side and on the political houses when the laws needed to be changed. The laws that forced compulsory union membership were challenged and in most cases were decided in favor of

the Merit Shop. One particular case was appealed all the way to the United States Supreme Court where the Merit Shop prevailed.

But certain laws favoring union dominance were in place when the unions controlled the legislative process. ABC formed political action committees and grass roots organizations to change those unfair laws and win the right to compete. The two step process of getting the right people elected and then educating all the elected officials with information to help them decide what laws are unfair and should be replaced to help the communities they represent.

This is how getting involved in politics can save your company. While you may not feel threatened at the moment, the other side is constantly working to change laws to their advantage. Their work will pay off if the Merit Shop is not diligent. All open shop contractors need to be spending time, money and energy on the political arena if they want to keep their business. Political policies can change drastically in the next election and you need to be proactive to make sure the Texas miracle continues. 🇺🇸



### **Russell Hamley**

*With over 17 years of experience in the construction industry, including serving as a project manager for high-rise commercial construction, Hamley joined the Houston Chapter of Associated Builders and Contractors in 1996 as the Chapter President. His responsibilities include overseeing operation policies and procedures, fundraising for*

*educational foundations, and working closely with local companies to promote free enterprise and the merit shop philosophy.*





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ALLIANCE**



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The Free Enterprise Alliance was founded by the Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc. (ABC) to advocate for the voice of small business as well as open and fair competition in the construction industry. Since its inception, it has fought for these goals through research, education, outreach, as well as TV, radio and digital campaigns across the country.

At the heart of the Free Enterprise Alliance's mission is the belief that while we need government for common sense regulations, the scales have tipped too far in favor of government intrusion and its advocates. The Free Enterprise Alliance believes small business and entrepreneurs—not union bosses and federal bureaucrats—grow jobs and our economy.

The Free Enterprise Alliance is not a 527, 501(c)(4) or other tax exempt political entity—it is simply a checking account at ABC National, a 501(c)(6), and therefore NOT required to disclose its donors with the Federal Election Commission.

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ONE-ON-ONE

TEXAS SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

**Dennis Bonnen**

A native of Houston, Bonnen resides in Angleton, the county seat of Brazoria County in southeastern Texas. A graduate of St. Edward's University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science, Bonnen received the "Alumni Achievement Award" in 2001.

Bonnen is the chief executive officer of Heritage Bank in Pearland. He is a charter member of the Brazoria Heritage Foundation and the Angleton Exchange Club, and is also a member of the Pearland Exchange Club. He sits on the Levi Jordan Plantation Historical Society. He is a lifetime member of the Brazoria County Fair Association and a long-term supporter and advisory board member of the Boy Scouts of America, the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, and Junior Achievement. He is a member of the Chamber of Commerce organizations in the various cities in his House district.

In 2009, the Houston Business Journal honored Bonnen with one of its inaugural "40 Under 40" awards, which recognize the top young business professionals in the Houston area. He is the honorary chairman of the "Count on Us" campaign at Brazosport College, a community college in his district.

**You've been featured in this magazine before (in 2013), but something has changed—you are now Speaker of the Texas House. Can you share with us some of the challenges of your new position?**

**SPEAKER BONNEN:** "When we last visited a few years back, you asked a very similar question about the challenges I faced in my role as Speaker Pro Tempore. I can say that my challenges – or as I prefer looking at them, my opportunities – as Speaker of the House are very similar to what we discussed back then. The House of Representatives is made up of 150 members of diverse backgrounds, communities, regions, and perspectives. While we all work toward making our state stronger, we don't always agree on the path. As Speaker of the House, I've made fostering the spirit of collaboration my number one job. It's my job as Speaker to make sure all sides of an issue have a chance to be heard. I want to bring passionate people to the table and then keep them in the room until we find a solution. That process requires a lot of tough conversations with a little give and take. We have the opportunity this legislative session to move the needle on many important fronts if we treat one another with mutual respect and understanding, and stay focused on the lives we affect with every vote we take."

**As a longtime member of ABC's Texas Gulf Coast Chapter and probably the only ABC member to ever be elected Speaker of the House, can you give some advice to ABC members on how they can more effectively impact public policy?**

**SPEAKER BONNEN:** "Effectively being part of the public policy process really comes down to being fully informed. First, be informed on the issues that are important to you. Too many times, people are relying solely on social media to keep up with a variety of issues. Social media is certainly quick and of value, but major policy can't be whittled down to one or two short sentences. So I encourage folks to go beyond that tweet or Facebook post to find out what's really going on. The more you know about an issue, the better equipped you are to affect change. Second, be informed on who is making the decision. If it's a topic on the local level, know who represents you on the city council or school board or county commissioners court. Know the names of your state representative and

state senator, as well as your congressman. Too many times, people will know an issue, but aren't sure who they should be sharing their thoughts with. It's important to know who will ultimately make the decision on an issue important to you. Finally, be informed on the process. In addition to knowing who will make the decision, know how that decision will be made. Are their hearings you can participate in? Is there an opportunity to provide comment to let your views known? Is there someone you can contact by email or phone to share your thoughts? Effective engagement comes down to being informed and knowing how to be part of the process.

**What are your priorities for the 86th Legislative Session?**

**SPEAKER BONNEN:** "After announcing my intention to run for Speaker late last year, I tried to visit as many of my House colleagues in their legislative districts as possible. I traveled from West Texas to East Texas and from the Panhandle to the Rio Grande Valley to get an up-close look at the issues that matter most to each of them – and more importantly to the people in their districts. In many conversations along the way, I would be asked, "What is your agenda for the House?" I would usually laugh. Then I would tell them that's the beauty of being the Speaker. The agenda is up to the members of the House of Representatives. Each member is the voice of his or her constituents. The legislative agenda of this session has been determined by the members of the House. The two issues that continually came up were school finance and property tax reform. I have been proud to join with Gov. Abbott, and Lt. Gov. Patrick in agreement that these should be priority issues this session. I recognize that these are complicated issues – and the legislative session so far has proved me right – but they are issues that can no longer wait."

**We know it is early in your tenure as Speaker, but looking forward, what would you want to be your legacy?**

**SPEAKER BONNEN:** "Anyone who knows me knows I don't think in terms of things like a legacy. I'm no different from the other 149 members who are part of the Texas House. We come here to represent our districts the best way we know how and to be the voice of the people who sent us to Austin. Beyond that, I want to live up to the words my father always told me, 'Leave it better than you found it.' That was my dad's advice to me on the day I was first sworn in to the Texas House, and it would likely have been his advice to me on January 8, 2019, the day I was elected Speaker of the House. They are the words I shared with my fellow members on opening day. Let's be sure that when we adjourn at the end of this legislative session, we leave this House and our state better than we found them."

**Is there anything else you want to share with ABC of Texas members?**

**SPEAKER BONNEN:** I've always been proud to be a member of ABC's Texas Gulf Coast Chapter. Like those across our state, the Gulf Coast Chapter is made up of hardworking men and women who help keep our economy strong. It goes without saying that the construction industry continues to be critically important in every region of Texas. It continues to serve as an accurate barometer on our state economy. Right now, our economy is doing extremely well, in many ways outperforming the rest of the nation. For that reason, maintaining those policies that promote our free enterprise system and reinforces a strong business climate in Texas has been and will remain a priority in my role as Speaker of the House. 📍





Senator Ted Cruz visited ABC Greater Houston member, SpawGlass' site to discuss his education bill.



## GREATER HOUSTON CHAPTER

The ABC Greater Houston Chapter and its training affiliate, Construction & Maintenance Education Foundation (CMEF), are gearing up for the warm summer months ahead.

This past February, ABC Houston hosted its annual Texas Hold 'Em Tournament and raised funds for the ABC Scholarship Foundation, which is awarded to college students who are pursuing a career in the construction field. The March Spring Golf Tournament also raised funds for the Scholarship Foundation and allowed members to have a fun day on the greens.

In March, several staff members from the Houston chapter attended Legislative Day in Austin. Several attended the Young Professionals session and met with state representatives on lien law modernization and other issues.

Also in March, several representatives of the Houston chapter traveled to Long Beach, California for the National Convention where the chapter and its member companies received great recognition. Alvaro Torres, sponsored by Performance Contractors, won the gold medal for structural welding in the National Craft Championships, and MAREK won the Contractor of the Year award from ABC National. Additionally, Clemon Prevost with Fluor, won the Craft Instructor of the Year award.

In April, the chapter celebrated its 50th Anniversary and several elected officials, including Mayor of Houston, Sylvester Turner, attended. The chapter discussed the accomplishments it has made throughout the years and is looking forward to another fifty years of working with merit shop contractors to promote the open shop philosophy for the construction industry.

## CENTRAL TEXAS CHAPTER

The ABC Central Chapter began 2019 by adding 9 new

members in January! The chapter is currently on track to grow membership by 30% over last year with an 88% retention rate.

DPR Construction hosted the January Coffee & Contractors Breakfast, and in March the chapter featured Flintco Construction as host. The Coffee & Contractors events continue to bring multitudes of members into the office to network with other sub and supplier members and learn from local GC members about their company culture, bid list, and upcoming projects.

In February, ABC CTX launched a new event, the ABC Leadership Conference – Culture Matters, a half day leadership/culture forum featuring Greg Savage from JMJ Associates as the keynote speaker who delivered a thought-provoking presentation on leading with culture. The forum also featured a Diversity and Inclusion panel made up of members from Ryan Companies, DPR Construction, and Yolanda Strey from Texas Facilities Commission 20th, followed by a presentation from Shelly Masters, Cokinos|Young, on why culture is important in avoiding legal and HR pitfalls.

The chapter was well-represented at the ABC of Texas



The Central Texas chapter was well-represented at the ABC of Texas Legislative Day events February 5th and 6th.

*(Continued on Page 12)*



South Texas Chapter

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South Texas Chapter

Legislative Days events February 5th and 6th. Several members of the Emerging Leaders Group participated in the Young Professionals Seminar and many more attended the PAC dinner and Legislative Day breakfast and Capitol visits the next day.

Several members of the ABC CTX Workforce Development Outreach group visited Rockdale and Bartlett High Schools to promote Careers in Construction to the students in the Construction Tech programs at each school.

The chapter is gearing up for its annual Chili/BBQ Cook Off, with a full slate of member teams who will compete in chili, ribs, chicken, beans and dessert categories. This is a fun event that is open to member employees to come sample great BBQ, network with other members, and vote on their favorite chili. Proceeds from the event go to support the chapter's OSHA Partnership programming.

## **SOUTH TEXAS CHAPTER**

The 2019 priorities for the South Texas Chapter are Membership, PAC and Workforce Development. Earlier this year, a board competition was set up for membership retention and recruitment, where the chapter staff selected board members to participate on their teams. Member companies were divided between the three teams and the team who got the most members to renew membership by April 30 was declared the first trimester winner. The chapter board will now focus on

new member recruitment for the second trimester, and the third trimester will be over all dollars raised for the year. This campaign has resulted in some great board competition and team building.

There is also an accountability spreadsheet developed for the board tracking board meeting attendance, event attendance, company representation at events, PAC support and of course member recruitment. This effort is designed to increase overall attendance at events, but board member visibility.

For ABC-PAC a reception is being planned for early summer. Based on feedback, the chapter should have no problem meeting its 2019 goal.

Workforce Development is looking at expanding contractor interaction with area school districts. This will include representation on CTE Advisory Boards, offering construction site visits, providing guest speakers, and working with instructors to enhance the class experience. The chapter is also working with a number of high schools to implement a pre-apprenticeship program and intern programs for high school students. Meetings have been held with Goodwill Industries in developing a second chance program for the soon-to-be-released population.

Chapter representatives took part in the annual Ag Mechanics Show held during the San Antonio Stock Show



and Rodeo. This two-day event showcased projects completed by students from all across Texas – from rebuilt tractors, ranch gates, cattle pens and farming implements to fancy deer blinds, outdoor dining set ups, and fully equipped barbeque rigs.

On the fun side of life, the chapter modified a couple of events, added a new event, and expanded an existing event. In February the first annual Texas Hold 'Em tournament had 100 die hard players and an incredible ending. In March, there was the annual Chili Cook off with 29 teams featuring some outstanding chili. In April, the annual Spring Golf Tournament and Annual Casino Mixer were combined. This year it was a four man, nine hole scramble, followed by a casino mixer. Over 22 teams competed with first and second place winners on the front nine and back nine. This shorter format allowed everyone to join those not interested in golf at one of the casino game tables.



Southeast Texas Chapter

### **SOUTHEAST TEXAS CHAPTER**

The Southeast Texas Chapter's first 2019 membership event, the annual Spring Shutdown Golf Tournament, was held on Friday, March 22 and was another huge success! The weather was an absolutely gorgeous spring day, perfect for being out on the course. The event was held at a new location, The Country Club of Texas in Beaumont, and the staff was very accommodating.

The chapter's Suppliers and Associates Committee did an excellent job planning, working and putting the Golf Tournament together. As in years' past, there was an overwhelming response to this golf tournament (36 teams and 18 hole-sponsors sold out in less than 1-day). There was an abundance of food and beverages on the course for everyone to enjoy. The chapter's membership's continued support, generosity and volunteerism of events is always appreciated!

### **TEXO CHAPTER**

2019 is off to a strong start for TEXO and its members, and was kicked off with the Board of Directors' annual

strategic planning meeting. Among reports of the positive standing of the chapter, the directors looked ahead to the next five years—conducting an analysis of the chapter and discussing tactics for both member and non-member engagement, as well as the TEXO PAC and Advocacy Fund.

On January 24, TEXO partnered with the AIA Dallas chapter to present the 2019 Economic Update at the Dallas Arboretum. The event featured a panel discussion focusing on retail and entertainment development, followed by an engaging and enlightening presentation by Anirban Basu, ABC chief economist and chairman & CEO of Sage Policy Group, Inc. Basu gave the 200-strong group of architects and contractors his predictions for slowed but continued economic growth throughout 2019.

The TEXO Foundation held the 2019 TEXO/ASC Region 5 Student Competition on February 24 and 25, hosting around 200 students on 28 teams competing in the Commercial Building, Design-Build, Design-Build International, and Heavy Civil categories. This year featured a popular new addition to the event: the Improv Speech Contest, which consisted of students speaking for one to two minutes on a subject they were presented with when they entered the room.

With the Texas Legislature currently in session, Jack Baxley, TEXO's vice president of governmental affairs, led over 50 members of the Young Constructors Council on a trip to Austin on February 25 and 26. Joined by a number of TEXO staff and board members, these emerging leaders met with their representatives and senators, learned about their role in the legislative process, and familiarized themselves with key issues the construction industry is facing.

Other significant happenings at TEXO this quarter include opening a third permanent location for Safety First classes at Collin College – Central Park Campus in McKinney beginning in April and the announcement of the 2019 Distinguished Building Awards winners, who will be eligible for the ABC Excellence in Construction Awards.

As the year progresses, TEXO and its members look forward to several exciting events coming up, as well as the implementation and growth of new and existing initiatives, all aimed at unifying, advocating for, and advancing the construction industry in North and East Texas.

### **COASTAL BEND CHAPTER**

No time to rest as ABC of the Texas Coastal Bend Chapter continues to bring interesting topics to members at the General Membership Luncheons. In January the chapter was given the opportunity to have the Chairman of the ABC National Board, Tony Rader, give a presentation on issues ABC members face and what they have planned to focus on for the 2019 Legislative session. He also installed the 2019 Board of Directors.



In February, ABC TCB participated in the ABC Legislative Day in Austin with over 18 members (8 were Young Professionals) visiting with the area's state representatives. While there, the chapter was able to discuss the industry issues and help shed light on how legislation directly affects so many ABC members who have boots on the ground.

In March, the chapter hosted their 6th Annual BBQ Cook off. Randy Larson with Larson Plumbing and Utility, took the reins with this event. With nearly 30 team entries and over \$6,000 in award payouts, it was certainly a fun time for all!



The Craft Training Center of the Coastal Bend is working to get summer enrollment started, which includes their summer camp for 7th and 8th graders. The students are given basic hands-on training in electrical, fall protection, reading blue prints, welding, pipefitting, instrumentation and so much more. It's a 2-week session for 5 hours a day and really gets them excited about opportunities in the workforce they didn't know existed.

The Craft Training Center is also gearing up for the 71st Annual SkillsUSA State Championship this month. SkillsUSA is a construction trade's competition where students from high schools and colleges across the state compete in welding, wiring, masonry, industrial motor control, and plumbing crafts. The students that participate in the competition are the top performers in their areas and are ideal candidates for the workforce.



### TEXAS MID COAST CHAPTER

The ABC Texas Mid Coast Chapter is in recruiting mode for the upcoming school year for the Mid Coast Construction Academy (MCA). The program offers pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships for plumbers and electricians and so far, it appears that the MCA will receive double the number of applicants seeking a seat in the classes that began in August 2019. Much of the success of the program can be attributed to: student peer recruitment, career fair participation, school presentations and employer recruitment.



**The Mid Coast Construction Academy (MCA) offers pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships for plumbers and electricians**

School superintendents, principals, counselors and career and technical education (CTE) professionals toured the MCA facility and had breakfast with the students on February 6. The MCA also sponsored a luncheon for the same group to learn more about the MCA program structure and how participation can assist with CTE funding and improving school ratings through the Texas Education Agency.

Numerous field trips have been coordinated so that students can learn about the real-world application of their trades.

Employers in the area visited the MCA to preview the work and portfolios of the high school students and visit





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with them about future employment. Guest speakers have visited the MCA to see the student’s work stations, offer feedback, offer summer job opportunities and educate on topics such as intrapreneurship, personal journeys to becoming professions, how the trades have impacted lives and supported families, and workplace communication.

The mission of the MCA is to promote and educate students and jobseekers about the construction industry and develop skilled labor. The MCA will prepare students with career- ready job skills to enter the workforce with confidence. This workforce development initiative will promote regional job growth in Bee, Calhoun, DeWitt, Goliad, Jackson, Lavaca, Refugio and Victoria Counties. The benefits of MCA are vast, including contribution to the economic development of the region, training of future taxpayers, and offering lucrative career opportunities to students (which promotes better self-esteem, discourages drug usage and high school dropout). For more information, please call 361-572-0299 or visit [www.mcaacademy.org](http://www.mcaacademy.org).

On April 2, another NCCER Construction Site Safety Technician class is scheduled to begin. Upon completion of this class, the students will earn certificates for Construction Site Safety Supervisor, Orientation & Technician, Safety Technology and Field Safety.

**GULF COAST CHAPTER**

ABC leads the way when it comes to offering safety training for the construction industry. From innovative and cutting edge topics to OSHA and client-required subject matter, ABC has you covered. Over twenty-five ABC Texas Gulf Coast member contractors were honored for their achievements in STEP (Safety Training Evaluation Process) clearly demonstrating that safety is a priority. In addition, ABC Texas Gulf Coast Chapter partners with affiliate Brazosport Safety Council to deliver site-specific training and certification programs such as Forklift and Aerial Work Platform Training in response to local industry owners’ needs. The programs include classroom instruction, hands-on training, and performance verification.

After hosting its biennial Construction Exhibition in partnership with Brazosport College, ABC and educational affiliate Merit Shop Training (MSTI) turned its attention to the ABC National Craft Championships in March 2019 held in Long Beach, California. Joseph Patterson of McGill Maintenance Partnership, Ltd. represented ABC, MSTI, and the exceptional training program at Brazosport College at the National Craft Championships in Long Beach, California. Joseph is the 23rd millwright competitor to compete nationally from this training program, and he did not disappoint as he brought home the Bronze Medal.

With safety training and workforce development being priority topics for legislators in the coming year, ABC Texas Gulf Coast is optimistic and enthusiastic with member Dennis Bonnen taking the role of Speaker of the House for the state of Texas. On legislative day, Speaker Bonnen took time out of his busy schedule to meet with Mark Monical, Terry McAlister and Buck Blevins of Texas Gulf Coast chapter over lunch to discuss priority issues for the construction industry with particular focus on the petrochemical industry in the Texas Gulf Coast region. ABC Young Professionals, such as Andrew Cone of Norrell Construction who is also an ABC Texas Gulf Coast board member, attended the event which included a PAC dinner and sessions focusing on the power of grass-roots advocacy and how to make an impact at the state and national levels. ABC Texas Gulf Coast appreciates Speaker Bonnen’s long-standing commitment to his local constituency. ABC is pleased to stand alongside of Speaker Bonnen; encouraged about the outlook for the future legislatively and how decisions made in Austin will impact the construction industry in Texas. ➡

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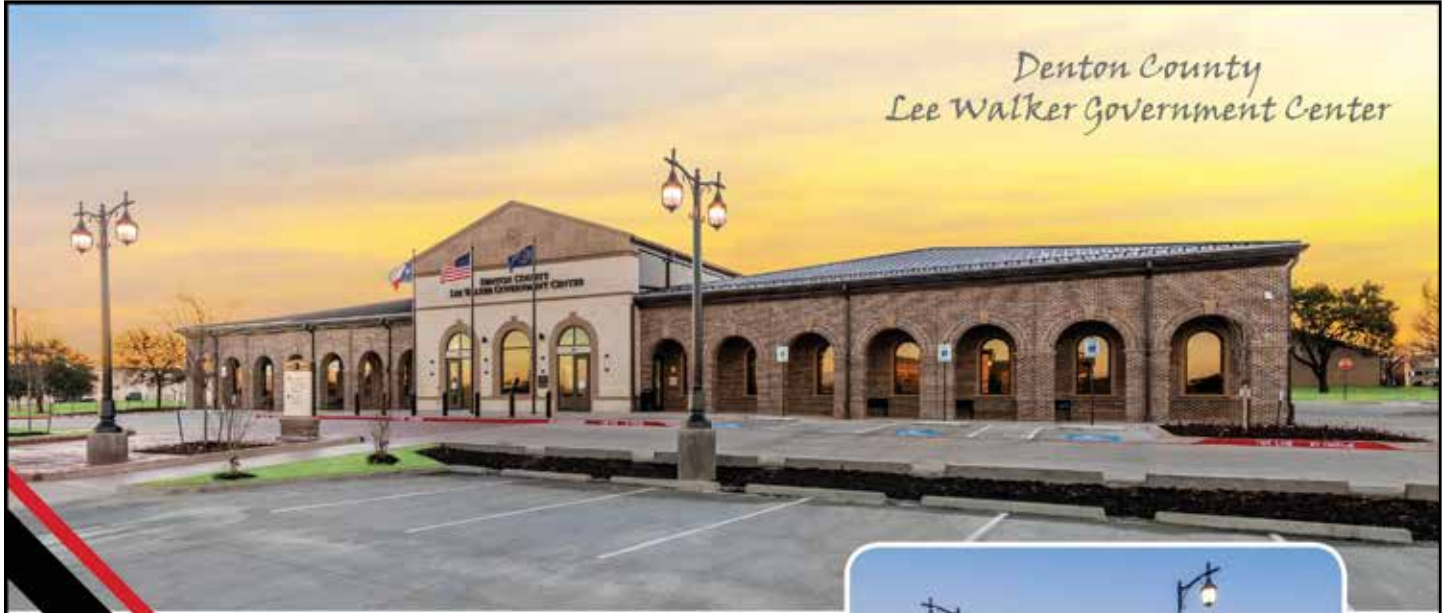
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