

Texas **MERIT** **SHOP** **Journal**

**Attorney General Greg Abbott
Discusses His Priorities,
View's of the State Economy,
and How the Office of
Attorney General Impacts the
Business Climate in Texas**

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

2010 Texas Primary Election Recap

**Michelle Seward Davis Discusses
Her Experiences as the National ABC
Political Action Committee Chair**

**The Power of Three:
Palin, Perry and Patrick**

ABC Chapter Initiatives



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Texas
MERIT SHOP
Journal

Defending the Rights of Merit Shop Contractors

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KOEBEL

Letter From the Chairman

Well, we are off and running through the primary elections and on to the 2010 general elections all across the country. Texas has weathered the storm so far and there are signs of an increase in business activity, but the competition is fierce. Mike Toomey and Jon Fisher will further address the elections in this issue, and I will move on to the work of ABC Texas.

Our next Board meeting is scheduled for mid-April, at which time we will set the date for our statewide Legislative Day for February 2011, where hundreds of construction men and women will travel to Austin to visit their Senators and Representatives to discuss current issues that are important to ABC of Texas. Getting to know your legislator is the best way to help them understand how proposed legislation will affect our businesses, either positively or negatively. This is the primary way citizens can help shape policy. Each of us has the duty to our industry to participate in the process. At that same Board meeting, we will be setting our Legislative Priorities for 2011.

In addition to affecting legislation, we each participate in the election of the officials that run our government at the national, state and local levels. ABC of Texas focuses on the state level. Members have been helping with the election or re-election of various candidates that share the free enterprise philosophy. They help put up signs, walk door-to-door, host or participate in fund raising, vote, and contribute to our State Political Action Committee. We appreciate those chapters that have met their PAC allocations and look forward to the remaining chapters participating so we can have a greater impact this year than ever before. ABC of Texas is committed to making a difference for all of its members.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy Koebel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Andy Koebel
Kunz Construction Co., Inc.
2009-2011 ABC of Texas Chairman
For more information about ABC of Texas visit www.abctexas.org.

CORRECTION:

The article "Race for the Governor's Mansion", featured in the January issue of *Texas Merit Shop Journal*, credited the incorrect author. The author of "Race for the Governor's Mansion" was Mike Toomey, ABC of Texas Lobbyist.



FISHER

Letter from the President

This is the first time I've worked for ABC through the primary election season. We're building our state PAC and participating in elections to the benefit of Texas and ABC interests.

When you receive this issue, the Primary runoffs will have either ended, or be just around the corner. There are several races to watch. At the top of the Republican Primary ballot will be a race for an open Supreme Court seat between Rick Green of Dripping Springs and Debra Lehrmann of Colleyville. Since about 63% of those voting in the Republican Primary voted for neither of these candidates, this race should be a toss-up. In fact, the top four vote-getters were separated by less than 1%. No candidate even got 20% of the vote. Rick Green is the candidate closest to those who vote habitually in Republican Primary Runoffs (endorsed by Chuck Norris and Zig Ziglar), and Debra Lehrmann will probably get substantial support from the legal community since she is the only remaining candidate with any judicial experience (22 years as a district judge).

There are several House primary runoffs to watch—incumbent Republican Fred Brown and Buddy Winn in Bryan/College Station; Republican contractor Paul Workman and attorney Holly Turner in southwest Travis County; John Gordon and Larry Gonzales (Republican Primary) for the right to oppose Democratic incumbent Diana Maldonado in November; Mabrie Jackson and Van Taylor (Republican Primary) in Plano; incumbent Republican Delwin Jones and Charles Perry in Lubbock; Mark Griffin and John Frullo (Republican Primary) in Lubbock; Dan Huberty and Susan Curling (Republican Primary) in Houston; Jack O'Connor and Dianne Williams (Republican Primary) in Houston for the right to oppose Democratic incumbent Hubert Vo in November; and incumbent Democrat Norma Chavez and Naomi Gonzalez in El Paso.

Switching gears, at the next Board meeting, we will begin the process of deliberating some changes I will propose to our bylaws to improve efficiency and effectiveness looking toward the next Legislative session. None of these will take away from our strength as a bottom-up organization, but my intention is to minimize the time our chapters have to spend on the obvious and focus our resources on the legislation that will benefit most from membership input since the Board sets the priorities and many positions are pre-established.

By the time you get this, we should have commented on changes to the electrical apprenticeship program mandated by SB 470 from last session. ABC of Texas successfully amended this bill to make sure our NCCER programs at all our Chapters were covered.

Remember, I am more than willing to attend local chapter functions to enhance our communications about state issues and elections as well as continue to get to know our members better.

Jon Fisher
ABC of Texas
President

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Michelle Seward Davis, ABC National PAC Chair, Discusses Her Experiences with the Political Action Committee

of Trustees work with the Regional Vice Chairs and chapter leadership to promote political involvement and assist in raising PAC funds. The PAC Trustees also work with one non-voting Regional PAC Chair in each region who assists with specific chapter programs and fund raising events.

Individual Chapters submit their contribution requests to National Staff for current members of congress or those seeking office. National Staff, in turn, researches their voting record on ABC issues to ensure they are a qualified candidate. All fifteen of the trustees must approve the donation request, which further ensures that we remain a principled PAC.

Who can contribute or support the ABC PAC?

Only an individual (or immediate family members) in the “restricted class” of an ABC member company whose company has given prior authorization is eligible to contribute to ABC PAC.

The “restricted class” of a member company is defined as “the company’s executive and administrative personnel or their families.” Executive and administrative personnel are paid on a salary and have policy-making, managerial, professional, or supervisory responsibilities.

Before an individual in the “restricted class” can be asked to contribute to ABC PAC, his or her company’s ABC primary contact must have completed an ABC PAC Prior Authorization Form. While this may seem confusing or frustrating for the Chapter Presidents, we must follow the regulations of the Federal Election Commission (FEC).

How did you come to be the chair of the National ABC PAC, especially at such a young age?

I served as a National PAC Trustee from 2006 through 2008. During 2008, I was asked if I would consider being the Chairman by the current Chair at the time, Gary Roden, and National Staff members. I struggled with the decision due to the time commitment. At that time, I was also serving as the Chairman of the South Texas Chapter and, in the end, my love for politics and conservative values was the louder voice - along with the support of my husband and coworkers.

I really never considered my age as a factor, just as I don’t think twice about being a female in male-dominated industry. Being asked to serve as a Trustee and as the Chairman was an honor, and I have strived to raise the bar each year.

How did you become so interested in politics?

Michelle Seward Davis, CFO for Joeris General Contractors, Ltd., and current ABC National PAC Chair, recently sat down with Texas Merit Shop Journal to discuss her experience with the ABC PAC and her passion for the political process.

What is the ABC PAC, and how is it operating in this election cycle as compared to previous election cycles?

ABC’s PAC is your voice in elective politics at the National level. PAC members’ donations are combined with others to jointly support candidates. This provides a unified and powerful voice for the Merit Shop agenda. It is also an opportunity to participate in one of the largest pro-business PACs in the nation. We are off to a great start for 2010. At the end of February, we raised a little over \$300,000. The current administration is our best fund raising tool.

How is it structured? How are contribution decisions made?


ABC PAC is governed by fifteen board members who are appointed by the ABC Chair. The board members serve a three year term and are chosen by region. The PAC Board

My father helped start the Montgomery County Republican Party during a time when Texas was predominately democratic. My first political event was the inauguration of Bill Clements, Texas' first GOP Governor since Reconstruction. Granted, I was only five at the time, but it struck a chord. From there, I delivered Reagan pamphlets and sample ballots around the neighborhood on my bike. Of course, having Jimmy Carter as President during one's formidable years will make even the youngest person turn to conservative politics.


Tell us about the challenge you made to the ABC PAC Trustees in February?

Raise \$3 million dollars by the end of this year and you will see. Hint: hair clippers, razor and G.I. Jane.

Michelle Seward Davis is the National ABC PAC Chair. She is the CFO for Joeris General Contractors, Ltd. She was ABC South Texas Chapter Chair in 2008, and has served chair of the chapter's Membership Committee Chair, PAC, and Programs Committee, as well as being an active member of the chapter's Government Affairs Committee.




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ABC Voices are Heard in DC and Austin...is Yours?

By GPaul Holliman
President/CEO
Holliman Consulting Group

Two events to include on your calendar for 2010 and 2011 should be the 2010 National ABC Legislative Conference and the 2011 State of Texas Legislative Conference. This issue is focused on the upcoming National ABC Legislative Conference June 15 – 17, 2010 in Washington, DC. Information for the State of Texas Legislative Conference will be shared in a future issue of Texas Merit Shop Journal.

Would you like to share your thoughts concerning taxes and legislation with elected officials in DC? Wonder what new legislation is about to be voted on that could change your life or business? Wonder how to be involved but do not know what to do?

Here is the answer to all of the above questions: Attend the ABC Legislative Conference! It is that simple. I was invited to attend this conference several years ago. After some hesitation and concern about being astute enough on political issues, I decided to attend. That was a great decision, from which I continue to benefit year after year.

As an individual who cherishes Merit Shop and free enterprise, and as a small business owner, this Conference is the best way to meet with your Representatives and Senators. It allows one to network and enjoy the experiences of other ABC members from around the country. What a fun experience it has been to have the rare occasion for our group to get a private evening tour of the Capital with one of our Representatives in Congress. Experiences like that are unforgettable.

I enjoy going to DC to share thoughts with those who create and vote on bills that shape our future. I have found that the erudite ABC staff is very helpful in preparing the participants with knowledge and facts of legislation concerning our industry. For example, they easily explain the purpose of what an innocently

named bill, The “Employee Free Choice Act” (aka “EFCA” or “Card Check”) is actually going to do to our businesses and industry if we do not get involved. Among other things, this bill would take away a worker’s right to a federally supervised private (secret) ballot when deciding whether or not to join a union. The current processes of private ballot would be replaced with a process called “card check”, which allows a union to organize if a majority of workers simply sign a card. Basically, these “cards” become public to employers, the union organizers, and coworkers. While this is just one aspect of a very dangerous bill which seems to be in contradiction of protecting individual liberty and the sound principles of our constitution, it is just one example why ABC members need to be involved in the political process to know the facts and consequences. This is just one example of what Congress is trying to do to your business or employer.

“As an individual who cherishes merit shop and free enterprise, and as a small business owner, the Legislative Conference is the best way to meet with your Representatives and Senators. It allows one to network and enjoy the experiences of other ABC members from around the country.”

Major issues to be included in the 2010 Legislative Conference will include EFCA, Healthcare Reform, Jobs Bill, Cap and Trade, Estate Tax, Project Labor Agreements (PLA’s) and other hot issues including High Road Contracting. Other agenda discussions include the Midterm elections for the 435 House Seats, 36 Senate seats, and 37 Gubernatorial Seats in the November 2010 election. You have now officially been invited. Register at www.abc.org and join us for a fun adventure in DC.

The Power of Three: Palin, Perry, & Patrick

By Rhonda Mitchell, ABC PAC Trustee
Aggregate Technologies Inc.



Even the Super Bowl couldn't deter Perry fans from coming out to support the Governor in his bid for re-election.



Alaskan Governor Sarah Palin was on hand to offer her support of the Rick Perry for Texas Governor Campaign.

The afternoon of Super Bowl Sunday usually passes with frantic, last-minute trips to the grocery store and preparing snacks for the game (or maybe just the commercials). Regardless of why you watch, everyone knows when the Sunday of Sundays comes around. This Super Bowl Sunday, I joined a couple thousand of my fellow Rick Perry supporting friends and headed to the Berry Center for a one-of-a-kind pre-game party.

"Super Sunday with Sarah" amassed a huge turnout! The lines of people waiting to get in the door wound their way completely around the building. After braving the elements, we whisked through security and into the VIP area. We received VIP tickets for ABC's endorsement of Governor Rick Perry. I was joined by fellow members Ronnie Wills of Aggregate Technologies Inc., Mark Williams of Foster Wheeler USA Corp., Allen Roberts of Mobil Steel International Inc., Roger Berry, Michael Emmons, and John English of SpawGlass Inc., Matt Daniel of Skanska USA Building, and Pat McDavid of Turner Industries Group. Representing the ABC staff were ABC of Texas President Jon Fisher and Greater Houston's Government Affairs Coordinator Chelsea Sanders. Upon finding a place near the stage and official entrance of the Governors, we waited for the guests of honor to arrive.

Governor Rick Perry chose Senator Dan Patrick, Texas' "Most Conservative" Senator, to introduce the guests of honor. As Senator

of Harris County/District 7, he set the scene for how Governor Rick Perry would continue cultivating Houston's unique business culture. For the National Anthem, adopted Texan Ted Nugent

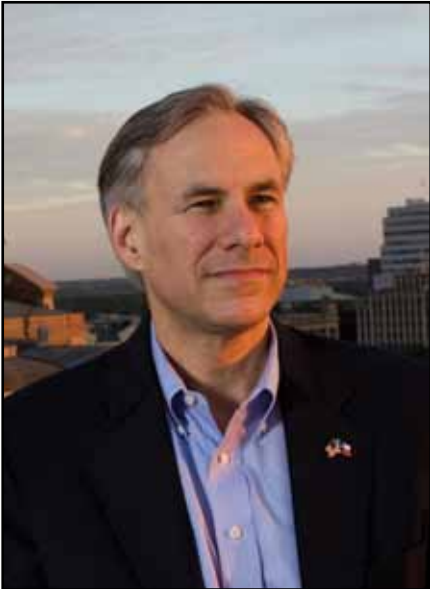


Legendary guitarist and adopted Texan Ted Nugent performed the National Anthem to a packed house at the Berry Center.

performed his own version via his electric guitar and plenty of volume. Finally, Governors Sarah Palin and Rick Perry entered through the middle of the crowd and took the stage. To no one's surprise, Rick Perry's hair looked great, and it could be argued that it looked better than Sarah Palin's signature hairstyle. Now for the politics. Governor Perry first reinforced his message that Washington needs to "Stop Messing with Texas". Governor Sarah Palin agreed, and added that Texas was doing just fine; in fact Texas is in better economic shape than the other 49 states. Sarah Palin continued

to commend Governor Perry's record of fiscal responsibility and demonstrated Texan leadership. The event really had the power of three: Patrick, Perry, and Palin.

As the event came to a close, the speakers graciously thanked everyone who spent their pre-game at "Super Sunday with Sarah". Now, if only they'd have an event like this for March Madness!



One on One With...

ATTORNEY GENERAL GREG ABBOTT

Attorney General Greg Abbott was reelected as the 50th Attorney General of Texas on November 7, 2006. Prior to his election as attorney general, Greg Abbott served as a Justice on the Texas Supreme Court and as a State District Judge in Harris County. As the state's chief law enforcement official, Attorney General Abbott has made protecting families and values the focus of his administration. Shortly after taking office, Attorney General Abbott established a Cyber Crimes Unit to arrest criminals who use the Internet to prey upon children and a Fugitive Unit to arrest convicted sex offenders who violate their parole. Together, these two units have arrested more than 1,000 sexual predators. General Abbott has also collected more than \$15 billion in child support for Texas children. Shortly after graduating from law school, he was partially paralyzed by a falling tree while jogging. He and his wife, Cecilia, a former school teacher and principal, have been married for 28 years. They live in Austin with their daughter, Audrey.

What are your priorities as Attorney General?

Throughout my tenure as Attorney General, protecting Texans has been my top priority. First, we established a Cyber Crimes Unit to arrest criminals who use the Internet to prey upon children. Then, we established a Fugitive Unit to track down and arrest sex offenders who violate their parole. Our Medicaid Fraud Control Unit protects the safety of residents in long-term care facilities throughout Texas. We have also worked hard to protect Texans' individual, constitutionally guaranteed liberties, such as the right to keep and bear arms and the right to acknowledge God in the public square. The most prominent examples were our efforts to defend the Ten Commandments monument on the Texas Capitol grounds and young Texans' right to pledge their allegiance to one nation, under God, before school each morning. Most recently, we've focused on an overreaching federal government. Texas is leading a national fight against federal legislation that would require each American to purchase health care insurance. We have also filed a lawsuit in federal court challenging the Environmental Protection Agency's decision to regulate greenhouse gas emissions.

What are some of your accomplishments as Attorney General?

Our Medicaid Fraud divisions have recovered more than \$400 million in taxpayer dollars that were lost to waste, fraud and abuse. Our Fugitive Unit has arrested more than 1,000 child sex offenders. And our Child Support Division has collected more than \$15 billion to ensure that Texas parents can put food on the table, clothes on their kids' backs, and a roof over their heads. (It's worth noting that collecting child support helps taxpayers, too. The money we collect in child support helps ensure that parents—not taxpayers—pay to support their kids.)

What is your view of our state's economy, in light of the nation's difficult economic situation?

Texas has weathered these tough economic times better than other states because in the Lone Star State, we believe in free enterprise, free markets and hard work. We have wisely refused to impose an income tax. Our regulatory structure is more predictable and reasonable. We have retained the right-to-work laws that prevent the union abuses seen in other states. And we have reformed the civil justice system by enacting tort reform laws. As a result, Texas is home to

more Fortune 500 companies than any other state and people continue to move here. Americans go where the opportunities are, and the opportunities are here in Texas.

How does the Office of the Attorney General impact the business climate of Texas?

Last summer, we fought back when the new federally controlled General Motors tried to force Texas dealerships to ignore Texas law, waive legal protections and make certain business decisions. We have also worked hard to defend the constitutionality of Texas tort reform laws, which have capped runaway pain-and-suffering damage cases and helped breathe new life into the Texas economy. And we've been proactive, enforcing right-to-work laws that protect Texas workers from compulsory union membership. In Texas, workers have the freedom to choose not to join a labor union, and when union bosses tried to ignore those protections we took legal action against them.

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Associated Builders and Contractors, 4250 North Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA 22203





ABC Central Texas Receives Grant to Provide Roller/ Compactor Equipment Safety Training

J. Eric Stephan, Program Manager
ABC Central Texas Chapter

that could place anyone in danger. The employees will gain a greater insight into what causes equipment accidents and how to prevent the accidents.

One of the missions of the Associated Builders and Contractors' 79 chapters in the United States and eight chapters in Texas is safety, training and education. ABC Central Texas Chapter has embraced this mission in many ways.

On April 1, 2008, Federal OSHA added ten Regional Education Centers throughout the United States. Since May of 2008, ABC Central Texas Chapter has been sponsoring OSHA Safety and Environmental courses in conjunction with the University of Texas at Arlington's Region VI OSHA Education Center. ABC Central Texas currently has 57 courses scheduled for 2010, more than one per week. These courses are in addition to the Craft Apprenticeship, Management and Safety courses that have been part of our calendar since the Central Texas Chapter was founded in 1976.

As part of our mission to promote safety, training and education, ABC Central Texas applied for and received one of 30 (out of the 300 applications received) OSHA Susan Harwood Grants. Our grant involves going to various cities throughout the State of Texas and conducting six hour training sessions on Roller/Compactor Equipment Safety, with an emphasis on roll-over accident prevention.

The training is designed for both the equipment operator and his or her supervisor. The training sessions are presented live in the classroom and use statistics and case studies of previous accidents to build from these unfortunate incidents and develop a better sense of what types of situations could cause harm to the operator or others.

By training both the employee and supervisor, the supervisor will have a better knowledge of the hazards faced by the operator and will be less prone to ask the operator to perform a task or function

The grant training will be presented in English in some cities, and in Spanish in other cities. The schedule of cities offers an opportunity for training in areas that traditionally have not received grant funding in the past. The cities selected range from Corpus Christi, Tyler, Longview, Austin, McAllen, Brownsville and Harlingen to Houston and Dallas. The schedule of cities and 2010 training dates are shown in the table below. The calendar for 2011 will be published at a later date.

If you or your organization would like to host one of these grant training sessions at your facility, please call Janie Good at (512)719-5263 to discuss the grant requirements and other details.

GRANT TRAINING SESSION DATES:

<u>Date</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>Language</u>
4/8/2010	McAllen	Spanish
4/13/2010	Beaumont	English
5/10/2010	Houston	English
5/18/2010	Amarillo	English
7/20/2010	Killeen	English
8/17/2010	San Angelo	Spanish
9/22/2010	Sweetwater	English
9/23/2010	Sweetwater	Spanish
10/19/2010	Texarkana	English
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Board Certified in Labor and Employment Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization, **Anthony (Tony) G. Stergio** has extensive experience in the defense of State and Federal employment discrimination claims, wage and hour compliance, noncompetition agreements and employment policy design and review. He also counsels clients regarding developments in various areas of State and Federal employment law.

Although Tony’s primary area of practice is employment law, he has substantial experience in commercial arbitration as well as commercial litigation in State and Federal Courts.

Tony graduated from the University of Kansas School of Law and received his undergraduate degree from the University of Connecticut where he graduated magna cum laude.

ABOUT THE FIRM

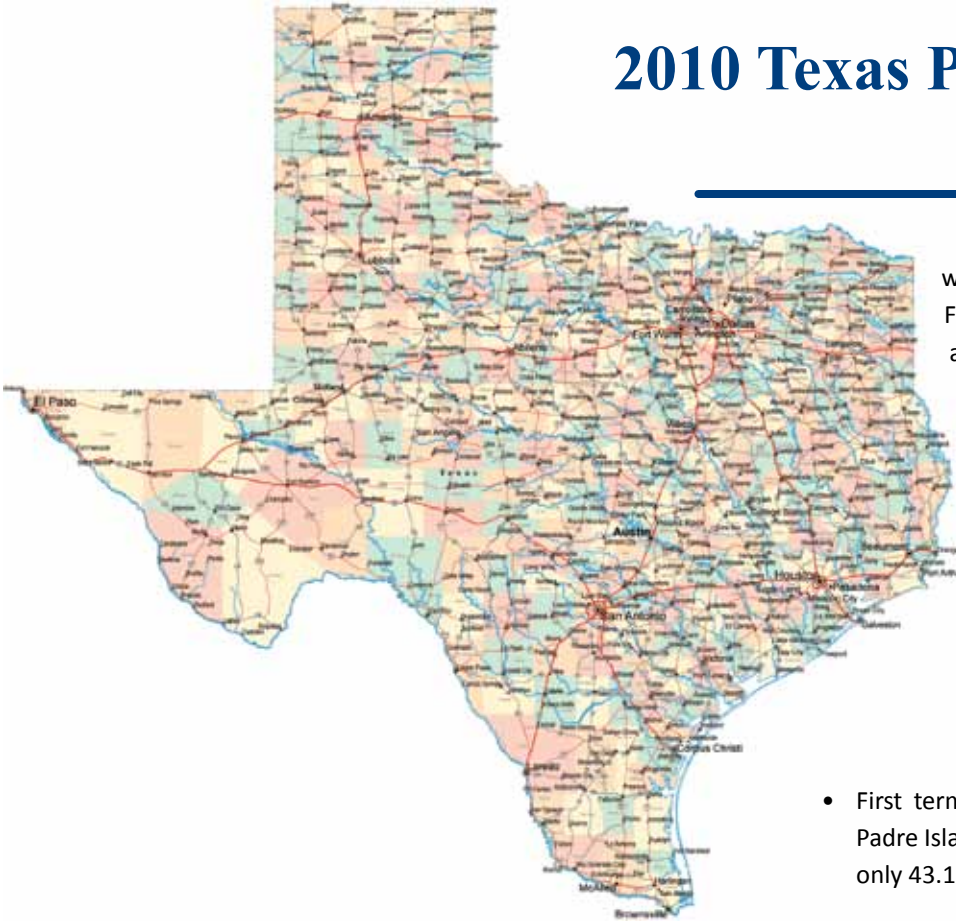
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2010 Texas Primary Elections

By Mike Toomey, ABC of Texas Lobbyist



won election as a Republican with 61% of the vote). Five incumbents were defeated in the primary and another 3 incumbents are involved in run-offs.

The five defeated incumbents were:

- House Public Safety Chairman Tommy Merritt (R-Longview) was defeated by Longview tree farmer David Simpson by a margin of 53 to 47%.
 - Incumbent State Representative Dora Olivo (D-Missouri City) was defeated by Ronald Reynolds.
 - First term State Representative Tara Rios Ybarra (D-South Padre Island) lost to Kingsville businessman J.M. Lozano with only 43.10% of the vote.
 - State Representative Betty Brown (R-Terrell), who consistently has had tough general election races, lost her primary to a former staffer, Lance Gooden.
 - State Representative Al Edwards (D-Houston) lost his Democratic Primary in a rematch to former State Representative Borris Miles by a mere 11 votes.
- Runoffs will occur in the following incumbent races:
- Representative Delwin Jones (R-Lubbock) will be in a runoff with Lubbock CPA Charles Perry.
 - Representative Fred Brown (R-Bryan) will be in a runoff with former Brazos County Tax-Assessor Collector Buddy Winn.
 - Representative Norma Chavez (D-El Paso) will be in a runoff with El Paso attorney Naomi Gonzalez.

On March 2nd, Texas Independence Day, Texans went to the polls to vote in the primaries. In the Republican Primary, there were 1,476,411 voters; in the Democratic Primary there were 677,106 voters.

The big story was the contested Republican Primary Governor's race with Texas Governor Rick Perry facing what was perceived as a real threat in longtime U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison. Debra Medina's entry in the race made a runoff likely.

Governor Rick Perry got 51.11% of the vote. This means he will be the Republican nominee in November without a run-off. It's a huge win for Governor Perry, who won over second-place Hutchison by over 20%.

Governor Perry will face the Democratic Gubernatorial Primary winner Bill White, the former Mayor of Houston, in November's General Election.

Texas House of Representatives

Seventy incumbents in the Texas House— 31 Democrats and 39 Republicans — drew no opponent in either the primary or general elections. The majority of the uncontested primaries came on the Democratic side. The House currently has 77 Republicans and 73 Democrats. (This is the number after Chuck Hopson of Jacksonville switched to the Republican Party. Coincidentally, Hopson easily

“Governor Rick Perry got 51.11% of the vote. This means he will be the Republican nominee in November without a run-off. It's a huge win for Governor Perry, who won over second-place Hutchison by over 20%.”

More Runoffs – Open Seats

In the open Republican Primary to replace House Calendars Chair Brian McCall, former Plano City Council member Mabrie Jackson will face Plano businessman Van Taylor in the runoff.

In the race to face Democrat Diana Maldonado in the fall, Round Rock businessman Larry Gonzales will face Round Rock engineer John Gordon.

In the race to replace Carl Isett (R-Lubbock), a Republican runoff will occur between Lubbock printer John Frullo and Lubbock businessman Mark Griffin. The winner will face Democrat Carol Morgan.

In the Republican Primary in southwest Travis County, Paul Workman and Holly White Turner will face off to see who will take on Valinda Bolton (D-Austin) in November.

Other races of interest:

In the race to replace Kino Flores (D-Mission), Mission attorney Sergio Munoz, Jr. got 58.13% of the vote to defeat Sandra Rodriguez.

In the race to replace Dan Gattis (R-Georgetown), Dr. Charles Schwertner of Georgetown received 54% of the vote in a four-way primary.

Incumbent Republicans Sid Miller (R-Stephenville), Myra Crownover (R-Denton), Burt Solomons (R-Carrollton), Kelly Hancock (R-North Richland Hills), Dan Flynn (R-Van), Rob Eissler (R-The Woodlands), Edmund Kuempel (R-Seguín) and John Davis (R-Pasadena) all won their primaries.

Incumbent Democrat Patrick Rose beat his primary challenger with almost 80% of the vote. He will face a general election opponent, Jason Isaac of Dripping Springs.

State Representative Vicki Truitt (R-Keller) defeated three challengers without a run-off.

Representative Todd Smith handily won a hotly contested Republican Primary challenge with 59% of the vote. He faces consultant John Schleeter in the general election in a 60%-plus

Republican district.

In 48 House races, the incumbent went uncontested in the primary but has a general election opponent.

Texas Senate

Sixteen of the 31 members of the Texas Senate are up for election this year. In reality only three Senators had primary election contests: Robert Deuell (R-Greenville); Steve Ogden (R-Bryan); and Carlos Uresti (D-San Antonio). All three won their primary contests.

The other contested races occurred in retiring Senator Eliot Shapleigh's seat in El Paso, where County Attorney Jose Rodriguez won nearly 70% of the vote to win. More complicated is the Averitt seat. Senator Kip Averitt (R-Waco) withdrew from his re-election after the filing deadline. He was still on the ballot and beat his primary opponent Darren Yancy - without campaigning and with 60% of the vote. Averitt is expected to resign soon. Now, the Republican county chairs in the ten counties in the district will appoint a replacement for Averitt for the general election ballot; the ten Democratic county chairs will also be allowed to appoint a candidate for the November general election. Stay tuned for more on that seat.

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CHAPTER INITIATIVES AROUND THE STATE



ABC Greater Houston presents Chairman Rob Eissler, running for re-election to House District Seat 15, a PAC endorsement check. Pictured are (from left to right) Chelsea Sanders, ABC Greater Houston Political Affairs Coordinator; Russell Hamley, ABC Greater Houston President; Matt Villere with Performance Contractors; Chairman Rob Eissler; and Wayne Navarro, ABC Greater Houston Chair.



The annual ABC South Texas Chili Cook-off, held at the Live Oak Civic Center this past March, saw 26 teams vying for top chapter chili honors. A surprise entry this year was the South Texas Chapter staff's "Staff Infection Chili". This year's top winner was Frost National Bank's "Collateral Chili".

GREATER HOUSTON PAC UPDATE

ABC of Greater Houston's Political Action Committee (PAC) remains committed to identifying and endorsing political candidates who proudly represent Free Enterprise and Merit Shop ideals. To meet this goal, the PAC assesses all candidates for political office and screens them to ascertain their political principles. PAC holds various fund raisers to collect funds which are appropriated to carefully selected national, state, and city policy makers. These contributions allow candidates to maintain and enhance the business environment. It's no secret that Texas is in the best economic shape of all the United States. With the recent taxing and anti-business legislation, many companies moved their businesses to Houston specifically. With this growth capital, Texas will require public officials who can make the right choices for Houston's distinctive economy. The PAC's efforts directly support and affect the Houston business climate enjoyed by so many already.

Since the beginning of the New Year, the PAC spotlighted the March 2, 2010 Primary as a priority. Throughout February PAC endorsed seventeen individuals seeking public office. Following election night's results of 76% of ABC PAC endorsed candidates successfully elected to be on the November ballot. These include Senator Hegar, Senator Huffman, Senator Jackson, Senator Ogden, Senator Patrick, Representative Callegari, Representative Davis, Representative Eissler, Representative Kleinschmidt, Representative Legler, Representative Smith,

Representative Thompson and Representative Zerwas. Another 18% of PAC endorsed candidates will participate in the April 13, 2010 Primary Runoff. Representative Brown, Dianne Williams, and Paul Workman will all be on that ballot. Lastly, 6% of PAC endorsed candidates did not make it to the November ballot. Representative Edwards fell to his opponent by only eleven vote margin in his District. His primary opponent was none other than former Representative Miles, who previously held Edwards' seat. Looking forward to the General Election, the PAC will assess all candidates once more and identify federal elections to support via grass roots involvement.

The 2010 Congressional Session will hold special challenges with the estimated \$12-15 billion dollar deficit and re-districting occupying most of the legislative agenda. To date, the Legal Issues Committee continues to explore potential items of concern. They have identified certain legislation that could be tweaked and refined for optimal business and legal efficiency. However, the feasibility and specific portions still need to be examined. There is no intent to draft new legislation currently with the aforementioned budget and re-districting agenda items. We eagerly await the November elections to help guide what might be possible for the next session and its legislative aspirations.

SOUTH TEXAS UPDATE

Once again, the South Texas Chapter began the year by surpassing their ABC PAC goal. Following the tried and true phone call blitz,

CHAPTER INITIATIVES AROUND THE STATE

over \$45,000 was raised in less than two hours. Of course, it helps when you have a passionate, persuasive and political board member (and former chapter chair), who also happens to be the ABC National PAC Chair – Michelle Seward Davis (Joeris General Contractors, Ltd.). But she didn't do it alone, as the Executive Committee and a couple of board members gathered at the chapter offices to help in this important effort. It also helps when some of the shenanigans are taking place in Washington, DC about the same time.

The chapter's first two events for 2010 were also major successes. The "Contractor In A Box" membership mixer drew over 350 members and guests to the Oak Hills Country Club, with Koontz-McCombs General Contractors taking top honors. The annual Chili Cook-off, held at the Live Oak Civic Center this past March saw 26 teams vying for top chapter chili honors. A surprise entry this year was the South Texas Chapter staff's "Staff Infection Chili". This year's top winner was Frost National Bank's "Collateral Chili".

Apprenticeship enrollment has increased for the first time in over four years. This increased interest has resulted in the offering of the NCCER Core Curriculum in the Spring so more companies can enroll their employees to take advantage of this training program. The downside is figuring out where we will be holding the craft specific classes starting in September when we are already bursting at the seams. A monthly "green training" class will start later this month, designed for smaller general contractors and subcontractors who may not be aware of how they can help projects achieve LEED status and their role in the "green environment."

Various chapter members really got involved in politics during the March primaries by helping staff phone banks, putting up campaign signs, providing campaign advice, helping Get Out The Vote, and of course, making contributions. Attention now turns to the November general elections, especially in three congressional races. Viable candidates have a shot at unseating three congressmen who have a zero percent voting record on ABC issues. These will be a challenge but they are winnable. There is also the \$535 million bond election in May for the Northside ISD, which is on every contractor's mind given the current state of the economy.

TEXO UPDATE

TEXO is off to an excellent start for 2010. In January, TEXO held its annual Economic Forum, a partnership with AIA. Over 250 members attended and heard from Kermit Baker, Chief Economist, AIA; Ken Simonson, Chief Economist, AGC; and Cliff Brewis, McGraw-Hill.

In February, the Chapter hosted the 15th Annual ASC/TEXO Student Competition. This year, 27 teams from 13 universities participated from Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana and for the first time an international team from Dublin, Ireland. Competitions were held in three (3) divisions, Design/Build, Heavy/Civil and Commercial Building. 189 students competed for two days in TEXO's Conference Center. The Awards Dinner on Monday night attracted over 300 people. During the Competition TEXO's Education and Research Foundation awarded \$18,500 in scholarships to ten students and \$50,000 in grants to five universities.

During the normal course of activities over the first two months of 2010, the following has occurred:

- Two Women's Forums involving 170 members
- Three Safety/Superintendent Forums involving 360 members
- Two Lien Construction Forums involving 150 members
- Two Young Constructors Council involving 120 members

The Chapter has also launched its annual "Basics Course for Small and Minority Owned Businesses." This class has 35 people participating in the nine week program. Also started was the next group of minority firms who are participating in TEXO's Incubator Program. Six new companies are involved this time.

Planning is underway for a very active Spring which will include a Bass Tournament, a Poker Run, and TEXO's annual Building Awards.

TEXAS GULF COAST

Cody Barnard, a Texas Gulf Coast Chapter Millwright and employee of long-time member McGill Maintenance Services, Ltd., scored a gold medal at the ABC National Craft Championship this year in San Diego, CA. ABC National reported that a field of 97 craft professionals competed in 11 craft competitions representing ten trades during this year's contest. Since the 1996 competitions, the

(Continued on page 18)

CHAPTER INITIATIVES AROUND THE STATE



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BC National Chairman Jim Elmer installed the 2010 Chapter Officers and Board of Directors, presented recognition awards to the 2009 Committee Chairs and outstanding chapter volunteers, welcomed new members, and addressed the audience during the January ABC Texas Coastal Bend Membership Luncheon.

Texas Gulf Coast Chapter has brought home a total of eleven gold medals, 6 of which have been for millwrights.

The National Craft Championship was developed in 1987 to help celebrate and recognize craft training in construction careers. This chapter believes that the competition enhances the commitment of our area for training and the important role that craft skills training plays in the construction industry.

Cody has been in the MSTI Craft Training program at Brazosport College for two years. He hopes to complete his Machine Technology/Millwright Certificate and Associate of Applied Science degree this year. As the winner of a gold medal and recognition as the nation's top millwright apprentice, Cody received monetary prizes and tools from ABC National and Hilti Tools as well as monetary gifts from this chapter and McGill Maintenance. He was honored at the chapter's membership event and luncheon on March 17.

Congratulations are also in order for veteran Brazosport College instructor, Jim Slick, coordinator of the Machine Technology program at the college since 1998 and NCCER-certified instructor for Merit Shop Training, Inc. Craft Program. He is responsible for the millwright and machinist programs which utilize (in part) curriculum developed by the National Center for Construction Education and Research. Over the past 12 years, he has trained hundreds of local craftsmen and sent many to national competition. The Texas Gulf Coast Chapter now claims eleven gold medal winners in the ABC National Craft Competitions; six of those are millwrights from Mr. Slick's clearly outstanding program.

In addition to six gold medal winners, Mr. Slick can also boast of five other millwrights who have won silver or bronze medals at the competitions.

Texas Land Commissioner Entertains and Informs ABC/ACIT Membership at latest Joint Membership Event

Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson recently entertained over 130 ABC/ACIT members with tales of Texas history and the oldest state office in Texas. The Texas General Land Office was created by Sam Houston, the first President of the Republic of Texas, for the purpose of gathering land records for the newly formed nation. The first commissioner, John Borden (of Borden Milk fame), was directed to travel the countryside to collect every document related to Texas land, a territory that covered much more than the boundaries of Texas today. The documents, dating back to 1720, are a repository for the history of Texas land, including the tidelands of the Gulf of Mexico extending three miles out from the Texas coastline.

Commissioner Patterson also regaled the group with stories of Texas 'heroes' and past officials such as Ma and Pa Ferguson, former Governors of the state. The first female Governor of Texas, Miriam A. Ferguson, aka 'Ma' Ferguson ran on the campaign slogan 'Two Governors for the price of one!' after her husband was impeached and driven from office. Within these stories were historical facts about how Texas came to have rights to the tidelands in the Gulf waters off the Texas coast. Governor Allan Shivers, who opposed President Harry Truman's views on the ownership of the tidelands, came to office after the death of Beauford H. Jester, the only Governor of Texas to die in office.

CHAPTER INITIATIVES AROUND THE STATE

Due to a fateful train ride and untimely death of the Governor, then Lt. Governor Shivers came to power and secured the rights to the tidelands for the state of Texas. It is over these waters and many other miles of Texas land that now Commissioner Jerry Patterson has jurisdiction. ABC and ACIT were pleased to have the Commissioner at our joint meeting in February.

TEXAS COASTAL BEND CHAPTER

The Texas Coastal Bend Chapter is off to a strong start for 2010! The Chapter rang in the New Year maintaining a membership of over 200 companies and welcomed ABC National Chairman Jim Elmer to Corpus Christi. Jim installed the 2010 Chapter Officers and Board of Directors, presented recognition awards to the 2009 Committee Chairs and outstanding chapter volunteers, welcomed new members, and addressed the audience during the January Membership Luncheon. Elmer's message rang strong throughout his presentation; ABC members must "Get into politics or get out of business". Elmer emphasized the importance of having our ABC members involved facing the current 2010 political climate.

In late March, Corpus Christi Mayor Joe Adame will be the featured speaker when the chapter hosts the "State of the City". Mayor Adame will speak to ABC members about Corpus Christi business development and capital improvements in the Texas Coastal Bend region.

The Texas Coastal Bend Chapter continues to work with the Harbor Playhouse Community Theatre to expand its community involvement. The Harbor Playhouse is a local non-profit theatrical company whose city built facility is in dire need of repair. In response the Chapter will again host an IBCA sanctioned BBQ cook off, "Grillin' on the Playa" on July 23 and 24 at Whataburger Field's Parking Lot. The event proceeds will benefit the Harbor Playhouse for capital improvements. It should be noted that the chapter has also been selected to receive their Corporate Philanthropist of the Year Award.

TCB continues to offer management educational programs for its members. The "ABC Lunch Break" offers a wide variety of training: "Retirement, Roth Conversions & Taking Risk Again in Uncertain Times" and "Six Secrets to Sales Mastery" are just the first two of the year. Aside from Lunch Breaks, the chapter conducted two virtual plan room training sessions with Branndon Frail from the Virtual Builders' Exchange office in San Antonio. With three local Navy bases and a growing number of Corp of Engineering

www.abctexas.org

projects, the chapter is finalizing details on hosting a Construction Quality Management (CQM) course for contractors for the middle of the summer. In addition, the chapter is teaming up with the Central Texas Chapter to host a free training seminar on an OSHA funded Roller/Compactor Equipment Safety Course.

ABC / TCB awarded over \$9,000 in spring semester scholarships to students at Texas A&M – College Station and the Craft Training Center of the Coastal Bend. Craft Training Center's current 2010 enrollment for high school students attending day classes is 171 students with 230 students enrolled in the adult evening classes. The Craft Training Center also has two satellite locations that have students enrolled in Kingsville and in Alice.

Finally, the Texas Coastal Bend Chapter finished coordinating the first of three major events. This year, the casino event took the attendees back a couple of decades as we brought out the leg warmers and parachute pants to host the "Flash-back to the 80's Casino" on Friday, March 5th. The popular casino event drew over 300 attendees and with the help from a team of volunteers and sponsors, it was totally rad!



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