



# Texas MERIT+SHOP Journal

January 2013

*Defending the Rights of Merit Shop Contractors*

ABC Members  
Answer the Call  
to Serve Texas  
Constituents

ABC of Texas  
Priority Issues

One on One with  
State Senator  
Dan Patrick

Workforce  
Initiative Effort  
Picks Up Steam

ABC Member is  
Texas Governor  
For A Day

Chapter Updates

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



[www.abctexas.org](http://www.abctexas.org)



**State Senator Dan Patrick  
Discusses His Recent  
Appointment as  
Chairman of the Senate  
Committee on Education**



[www.repcon.com](http://www.repcon.com)



**TURNAROUNDS** are our **BUSINESS.**

**QUALITY SERVICE** is our **PRODUCT.**

**SAFETY** is our **WAY OF LIFE.**



### LOCATIONS

**Corpus Christi, Texas**  
P. O. Box 9316  
Corpus Christi, Texas 78469  
(361) 289-6342

**Houston, Texas**  
1733 Center Street  
Deer Park, Texas 77536  
(281) 542-9590

**Beaumont, Texas**  
P. O. Box 20120  
Beaumont, Texas 77720  
(409) 861-2323

**Baton Rouge, LA**  
P. O. Box 2000  
Prairieville, LA 70769  
(225) 673-8713



**Serving Industry since 1983**

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





**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**

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

**TEXAS GULF COAST CHAPTER**

Terry McAlister, President  
 PO Drawer 2650  
 Freeport, Texas 77542  
 ph (979)233-1616  
 www.abctxgulfoast.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, Russell Hamley, Steven Schultz, Mike Holland  
 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 ABC of Texas Priority Issues**

ABC President, Jon Fisher, discusses the ABC of Texas Priority Issues as the Association heads into the next legislative session.

**8 ABC of Texas Members Answer the Call to Serve**

“Get Into Politics, or Get Out of Business,” is not just a motto for members of ABC. Several members have taken their involvement in the political process to another level by holding political office. In this issue, eight such members share their thoughts and experience related to public service.

**11 The A-B-C’s of Associated Builders and Contractors**

Learn why Associated Builders and Contractors is one of the strongest contractor trade associations in the nation.

**12 One-on-One with Texas Senator Dan Patrick**

Senator Dan Patrick sits down with Texas Merit Shop Journal to discuss his Chairmanship of the Senate Committee on Education and the most important issues for Texas going into the next session.

**14 ABC Member Serves as Governor For A Day**

ABC Member and State Senator, Mike Jackson, had the honor of serving as Governor for a Day—a first for an ABC of Texas Member. Learn about his background in the industry and his service to the State of Texas.

**16 Construction Career Collaborative Promotes Industry as Career Choice**

Some dedicated contractors have come together in the Houston area to try and solve the age old dilemma of the construction workforce shortage. Learn about the steps they are taking to make Construction a top career choice.

**17 ABC Chapter Initiatives Around the State**

Learn about ABC Chapter Initiatives in your area.

**INDEX OF ADVERTISERS**

ABC South Texas .....	7	ISC Constructors .....	5
Debra B. Norris .....	13	Marek Brothers Systems, Inc. ....	15
Infinity Construction Services, LP .....	7	Repcon, Inc. ....	2

## 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 Pieprzyc**  
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,**

We're doing something different in this issue for the first time—highlighting the eight ABC members serving in the 83rd Texas Legislature. I hope you are as proud as I am that we have so many members willing to serve the State of Texas.

Certainly, if these members are willing to take 140 days out of their lives to serve us every two years (and sometimes much more), we can each take a day and a half to travel to Austin for our ABC of Texas Legislative Day on March 6, 2013. The event will be at the Doubletree Guest Suites on 15th Street in Austin.

Remember, our motto is "Get Into Politics or Get Out of Business!"

We will have rooms available for the night of March 5th since the breakfast begins at 7:00 a.m. the following day. The purpose of the early start is to allow members to visit the Capitol before the House and Senate convene (usually at 10:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. respectively). There will likely be some event the night before for those who elect to spend the night. The deadline for our promotional rate at the Doubletree is February 12th. Please see your chapter for details on how to secure the ABC rate at the hotel.

As a change of pace, we're doing something different this year—having a joint Legislative Reception the first week in February. Some of the groups who are participating include AGC-TBB, TCA, Texas Association of Builders (home builders) and possibly one other. Your chapter will have more details as we finalize this event.

There is a lot going on in Austin as the Texas Legislature gets ready to meet. The Board has endorsed a new legislative review process recommended by a Legislative Review Task Force that worked over the last year. We're trying to get higher quality, more timely feedback from our chapters so we can be more effective and timely in our advocacy. We also created a PAC Task Force whose recommendations were also adopted by the Board. That will be implemented beginning late 2013 and early 2014.

I look forward to seeing you in Austin on March 6th.

Michael A. Gremillion  
2012 ABC of Texas Chairman  
Vice President – Houston Office  
ISC Constructors, LLC

Learn more about ABC of Texas, visit our website at [www.abctexas.org](http://www.abctexas.org).



## Letter From the President



FISHER

**Dear ABC of Texas Member,**

By the time you receive this issue, I will have been your State President for four and a half years. I hope you've noticed our successes. The State Board has guided our direction in becoming more noticeable around state government and more active in working with other groups.

We've now got the capability to successfully manage our own legislative program without being completely reactive to that of others. We've become a significant player in joint construction industry efforts as well as joint business community efforts. We've tripled the size of our political action committee and made significant progress in coordinating contributions among chapters and state.

Of course, we can always improve. Your State Board created two task forces as a result of the last Strategic Plan and those task forces have made recommendations to improve our processes going forward.

The PAC Task Force, led by GPaul Holliman of TEXO, has made recommendations which have been adopted by the State Board to improve coordination and recognition of ABC PAC beginning in the next election cycle.

The Legislative Review Task Force, led by Ben Westcott of the Greater Houston Chapter, has made recommendations, also adopted by the State Board, which are now being implemented. We will see if these process changes improve our ability to better react to legislation proposed by others that affects ABC members.

In this issue, we offered an opportunity for ABC members serving in the Texas Legislature to share with fellow members their motivation for seeking public office as well as their individual priorities for the 83rd Texas Legislature.

I want to join your State Board Chair, Mike Gremillion, in encouraging you to assist in our advocacy efforts by attending our Legislative Day on March 6, 2013. Details, including hotel arrangements, are available at your local chapter office.

We've got a full plate of issues to pursue in the upcoming Texas Legislature. I cover those briefly in this magazine.

Last, but certainly not least, ABC recently had a member serve as Governor. State Senator Mike Jackson, whose father was state chairman of ABC of Texas in the 1970's, was Governor for a Day on December 1, 2012. The Senate President Pro Tempore, who is elected by his fellow members, traditionally becomes Governor for

a Day when both the Governor and Lieutenant Governor leave the state on the same day.

Congratulations, Governor Jackson! This is likely a first for ABC since I have not found where another ABC member has ever served as Governor of Texas.

Of course, we expect more from Mike Jackson in the future as he returns to his business, Force Corporation, an active ABC member. Mike, thank you for your service!

As always, ABC of Texas is here to serve the interests of the construction industry in Texas by advocating free enterprise and the merit shop philosophy. Let me know what we can do better.

Sincerely,

Jon Fisher  
ABC of Texas  
President

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



# ABC of Texas



# Issues

**A**BC of Texas is entering the next session with a long list of priority issues, many of which have been on our list before. The purpose of this article is to outline those issues chosen by your ABC of Texas Board for us to work on in the 83rd Texas Legislature which begins on January 8 and ends on May 27 of next year.

## **Tax Issues**

We have been working with the Comptroller's office to resolve some confusion over cost of goods sold for purposes of the franchise tax (margins tax). Hopefully, by the time you receive this publication, we will have resolved those issues. In any regard, we anticipate the Legislature taking a hard look at the margins tax to ensure it is as fair as possible. There may be other tax issues as well. To help with taxes, ABC of Texas and your local chapters have retained the best tax consultants available—Ryan Co.—to assist us through the session. We are working with AGC-TBB, TCA and the Texas Association of Builders (home builders) on this Tax Advocacy Project.

We need an education system that serves 100% of the students and prepares all who are able for post-secondary education whether it be college or a career path that involves technical training.

## **Workforce/Education**

It appears this may be the session we finally make real headway in trying to address dropout rates caused by students questioning the relevance of their high school education. We need an education system that serves 100% of the students and prepares all who are able for post-secondary education whether it be college or a career path that involves technical training. We have to develop more flexibility in the curriculum while continuing to provide accountability and rigor. ABC of Texas is a member of the Jobs for Texas coalition which is promoting these principles.

## **Immigration**

There continues to be concern at the state level that our current immigration system is broken. Yet, there is very little states can do. That frustration frequently manifests itself in initiatives that could inadvertently punish employers who are trying to follow the law and become victims of fraud. Immigration is a federal responsibility, and we remain hopeful that the U.S. Congress has the resolve to enact a comprehensive plan that addresses the outstanding issues to take pressure off state governments who act in frustration over federal inaction. ABC of Texas is a member of Texas Employers for Immigration Reform.

## **Statutory Employer**

We remain convinced that it is fundamentally unfair for injured workers covered by workers' compensation to be able to sue third parties (who may be contractually indemnified by the injured worker's employer) when the worker collects workers' compensation without regard to contributory negligence. We believe that if an owner requires all workers on a job site to be covered by workers' compensation, he should be the "statutory employer" and workers' compensation should be the sole remedy.

## **Retainage/Trust Funds**

Currently, it is almost the uniform practice for financial institutions to fund everything for a commercial project except the amount of the retainage. Since funds have not been retained by the owner of the project, but instead withheld by the financial institution, the owner is not complying with the retainage requirements of law and the funds are not available to those who earned them in case of foreclosure by the financial institution. ABC of Texas is working with other construction industry groups such as TCA and AGC-TBB to attempt to remedy this situation.

## **CIP Standards**

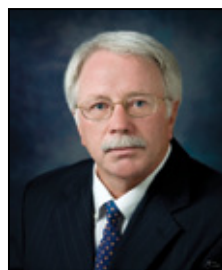
There continues to be interest in creating some statutory standards for consolidated insurance programs. ABC of Texas has worked with the TCA the last two sessions on this issue.

The ABC of Texas Board also wants to search for opportunities to address State Breach of Contract and Lien Law Reform. As you may be aware, the state is the only entity in Texas that is exempt from following its own contracts. Other governmental units like school boards, cities and counties must comply with contracts. It is impossible to fix costs when one side can breach a contract at will. Our state Lien Law is so complicated and complex, with almost every section referencing another section ad infinitum, that it is very easy for even experienced attorneys to become confused. We want to try to simplify the law and remove unnecessary tripwires.

Of course, there will be other issues where ABC of Texas will have to become involved. Among those are legislation dealing with Cooperative Purchasing Networks (whose members are able to avoid public scrutiny on projects that have been bid through the coop), Lender Notice (requiring lenders to give notice when they find an owner in default or are about to foreclose so the contractor does not incur more costs without remedy), Statute of Repose (an attempt to provide for a declining percentage of responsibility over a 10 year period), and Worker Misclassification

(an attempt to prevent certain employers from using employees as contractors and engaging in unfair competition with legitimate employers).

As you can see, ABC of Texas has an ambitious list of issues to work on during the 83rd Texas Legislature. As always, our success will depend on hard work and taking advantage of opportunities that present themselves.



**FISHER**

**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.



is proud to present our 2012  
**Platinum Partners**



Cokinos, 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 Cokinos, Bosien & Young to help develop the right solutions to your legal challenges.

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



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.

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

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

*A Legacy of Performance*



**The Infinity Group**

*Quality With Integrity*

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

2301 S. Battleground Rd.  
La Porte, Texas 77571  
(281) 478-4828

14401 Highway 73  
Prairieville, Louisiana 70769  
(225) 677-7947

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



# *ABC of Texas Members*

## *Answer The Call To Serve*

**A**ssociated Builders and Contractors (ABC) has long extolled the virtues of political involvement. With slogans like, “Get Into Politics, or Get Out of Business”, many members take an active role in the political process. Joining the ABC Political Action Committee, supporting various chapter political events, and attendance at state and national legislative days are just a few ways members become involved. However, some members have taken involvement to another level by actually holding political office. ABC is proud to have a great number of members who have stepped forward to serve the community as well as the industry. The following individuals are active members of chapters within ABC of Texas and also hold political office. They recently sat down with Texas Merit Shop Journal to share stories about why they ran for and hold their current office.



**HUNTER**

**Todd Hunter**  
**Texas State Representative**  
**District 32**  
**Texas Coastal Bend Chapter**

“I have served two times in the Texas House of Representatives. I served from 1989-1997 for my first term of service. I then ran again in 2008 and I am currently serving as a State Representative since 2009. I decided to run for office

and serve in the Texas Legislature to promote business, economic development, and make sure that Texas had good liability reforms. I wanted to make sure that small, medium and large businesses were being helped by laws that were based on common sense and business sense.

During the 2013 Texas Legislative session, I believe some of the major issues will involve the budget, water issues, and fiscal issues. I want to make sure that business is given an incentive to develop in Texas. I will be very interested to make sure that economic development issues are promoted and liability protection issues are preserved. I will also be looking at developing travel/tourism opportunities in the South Texas area such as development of the Cruise Ship Industry. Overall, my top priorities are to make sure that common sense laws are passed and pro-business legislation is developed.”



**LEACH**

**Jeff Leach**  
**State Representative**  
**District 67**  
**TEXO Chapter**

“I decided to run for office in response to a strong call on my life to public service - a call I’ve felt since I was a young boy growing up in Plano, Texas. After a long and difficult campaign, I realize the real work is still ahead of me. As the newly elected State Representative

for District 67, I am mindful of the tremendous blessing and immense responsibility I have to be an effective advocate for my constituents and their families in the Texas Legislature.

Although Texas is the best state in the United States in which to live, raise a family and run a business, our State is facing great challenges on the immediate horizon with respect to public and higher education, natural resources, transportation and infrastructure, immigration, lawsuit reform, and many other issues. As we seek to meet the needs of our rapidly growing state, I am committed to doing so with common sense, conservative, free-market and family focused ideas and solutions.

With every challenge presents a new opportunity to keep Texas strong and to make her stronger. In that regard, I am ready for the work ahead and look forward with great anticipation to both the challenges and opportunities we will tackle in the 83rd Texas Legislature!”



**DAVIS**

**John Davis**  
**Texas State Representative**  
**District 129**  
**Greater Houston Chapter**

“My initial interest in running for the Texas Legislature comes from my interest in serving people, and from a desire to put myself in situations where I am forced to learn. Running for public office requires you to be able to explain what you believe and why you believe it. If you cannot



justify or explain your reasoning, it may be time to reevaluate your beliefs or positions.

After running my roofing and sheet metal company for about 12 years I had some extra time on my hands, so I decided to take the ABC bus trip to Austin and talk to the legislators about the issues facing our businesses. After the trip, I realized that “those people” in Austin have a big impact on my business. I figured that those guys were not any smarter than me, and I began to look for an opportunity to run for office.

My priority for the next session is to focus on career and technical education. We must make high school relevant for kids and put an end to high drop-out rates in our public schools. At the same time, we need to work on developing a pipeline for high-paying skilled workers that industry actually has a demand for.”



**BONNEN**

**Dennis Bonnen**  
**State Representative**  
**District 25**  
**Texas Gulf Coast Chapter**

“From a very early age, the importance of serving our community was instilled into the hearts and minds of all the children of the Bonnen family. My brothers, sister, and I watched our father serve as an attorney and municipal judge in the small community of Angleton,

Texas. Our mother served through numerous civic organizations for many years there as well. These weren’t glamorous high profile positions - these were humble community servants. My desire to seek elected office was a direct result of learning the value of service at home. Now, my brother, Dr. Greg Bonnen, will be joining me in the Texas Legislature this January.

In the coming session, as Chairman of the Sunset Advisory Commission, I am focusing primarily on legislation surrounding the Sunset recommendations to improve efficiency within our state agencies. My greatest education priorities include a reduction in state testing, the elimination of unfunded state mandates, and a greater emphasis on vocational and technical training in our high schools. I will also be working to find a funding solution that adequately supports our state’s water and transportation needs so that Texas’ economy remains strong and our business climate continues to attract jobs and investment to this great state.”



**WORKMAN**

**Paul Workman**  
**State Representative**  
**District 47**  
**TEXO Chapter**

“I am often asked, ‘Why did you run for office?’ The readers of Texas Merit Shop Journal may be aware that I have spent my entire adult life in the construction industry. I have seen firsthand what happens to honest, hardworking people when government strays too far from its intended purpose. Although Texas had been a leader in maintaining a healthy business climate, I decided that more needed to be done. I decided to run to help make sure Texas was the best place in the nation to own a business.

Texas has always championed free enterprise and has always been a home for economic liberty. By keeping taxes low and maintaining a predictable regulatory climate and fair tort laws, Texas has made itself the envy of the nation for economic stability and job growth. While some called for more spending and tax increases as a means to fix our state’s economic woes, I ran with a simple message: Keep Texas working.

I will continue the fight to protect Texas’ competitive advantage by working toward vocational and career-based education in our public schools. Texas must meet the demands of its students for their sake, and for the sake of Texas.”



**RITTER**

**Allan B. Ritter**  
**State Representative**  
**District 21**  
**Southeast Texas Chapter**

“As long as I can remember, my family has been involved in our community, so when my predecessor decided not to seek re-election, I decided that I would try to do my part and run for office to serve Southeast Texas. I am honored that the people of District 21 have allowed me to represent our area since 1998.

Next Session, we will be debating important issues like public education and the budget. As chairman of the House Committee

*(Continued on page 10)*

on Natural Resources, our committee will be focused on developing policies that will help ensure Texas has enough water in the coming decades. Making sure that we have available water supplies should be a priority. We have a State Water Plan that provides us the roadmap to know the projects and estimated costs required to meet those demands —but it has never been properly funded. Texas’ recent droughts and its growing population have made it crucial that we act now to adequately invest in our water infrastructure. I look forward to working with my colleagues to try to find solutions to these issues.”



**HERRERO**

**Abel Herrero**  
**Texas State Representative**  
**District 34**

**Texas Coastal Bend Chapter**

“Having been raised by a single parent, I understand the sacrifices that families make on a daily basis in search of a better tomorrow. I can remember my mom having to work two jobs to help put food on the table. One of those jobs was working

as an elevator operator in the same building where I would later begin my law career. As I walked into the building, I was not thinking of what my future would hold for me as an attorney but the sacrifices that my mom made to help me get to that position. Knowing that families work hard to provide better opportunities for their children, and knowing that public education improves people’s chances of a better tomorrow, I sought public office to do my part to ensure opportunities remain available for those who seek to earn a better living and way of life. As such, public education will remain a priority for me in this coming session. An education not only empowers an individual but helps supply the growing demand for an educated workforce. With an educated workforce, we are better able to address the infrastructure needs of a growing state economy.”



**BELL, JR.**

**Cecil Bell, Jr.**  
**Texas State Representative**  
**District 3**

**Greater Houston Chapter**

My motivation for seeking office includes protecting Texas values and defending capitalism and the free enterprise system. All future generations of Texans must be ensured the opportunities that we’ve enjoyed. Our quality of life could not be achieved or maintained

without a strong business climate, and that climate could not be accomplished without organizations like ABC. ABC is the voice for merit shop contractors in the State of Texas and we, as an industry, must have that voice in the State Legislature. One of the major challenges facing our State and our businesses is our aging, shrinking skilled workforce. Maintaining an adequate skilled workforce is necessary to sustain our economy. Strengthening the career and technology opportunities available to students of Texas public schools must be part of the solution to providing an adequate skilled workforce. Relevancy in learning and ownership in education benefits Texas students, pushing the academic standard higher and providing distinguished opportunities by expanding the dual credit and industry accredited trade certifications available in High Schools to include the career and technology opportunities found in our community colleges. A capable and energized student population is key to the long-term success in our State and our businesses, and the means to retain our economic prosperity by employing Texans as our skilled labor force. GOD BLESS TEXAS!”

# THANK YOU

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

**Friends of ABC of Texas**  
(as of December 11, 2012)

- ISC Constructors, LLC**
- Repcon, Inc.**
- Andrews Myers, P.C.**
- Cajun Constructors**
- Rogers-O'Brien**
- Infinity Construction Services**
- Weaver and Jacobs Constructors**
- Large & Sons Foundation Drilling**

**In return for their generous contributions, Friends of ABC of Texas receive:**

- *Acknowledgement in Texas Merit Shop Journal*
- *Listing on ABC of Texas Website*
- *Acknowledgement at Legislative Day*

Learn how you can become a Friend of ABC of Texas, contact Jon Fisher at (512)470-5756.





# The ABC's of

# Associated Builders and Contractors


**A**ssociated Builders & Contractors is a professional business association that serves the construction industry through Advocacy, Business development opportunities, and Construction education. Business associations are formed because of a common bond. With ABC, that common bond is the strong belief in the American Free Enterprise system, upholding the “Merit Shop” philosophy where all participants – employees, partners and employers – advance, receive work and pay based on their merits.

Nationally, ABC is a federation of 74 independent chapters across the country comprised of 23,000 members. In Texas, seven chapters have joined together to form ABC of Texas. The mission of ABC of Texas is to advocate for Free Enterprise and the Merit Shop philosophy by promoting legislation and judicial decisions and interacting with public entities that affect the construction industry. ABC of Texas President Jon Fisher works diligently with legislators, their staffs and various state agencies to assist and educate them on the impact their decisions, legislation, regulations and rules will have on the construction industry – both positive and negative.

ABC is the industry leader in construction education with a special emphasis on safety. ABC chapters offer the most comprehensive education program in Texas, from entry level new hires to upper management training...


ABC is the industry leader in construction education with a special emphasis on safety. ABC chapters offer the most comprehensive education program in Texas, from entry level new hires to upper management training, from task-specific classes to four year apprenticeship programs. This wide variety of training helps ensure that there is a skilled workforce at all levels to meet the needs of a growing industry. This value proposition helps ABC members win construction related work and deliver that work safely, ethically and profitably for the betterment of the communities in which they live and work.

ABC members build projects all across Texas, from the petrochemical refineries in southeast Texas and the largest stadiums and multi-use complexes in major urban areas to the stores, schools, restaurants, offices and hospitals in every town and city. ABC members are utilizing the safety training, education and exchange of best practices and experiences to build a better living and work environment for everyone here in Texas. The hundreds of thousands of employees working for those ABC members are productive taxpayers that take great pride in building the best projects across the state. They take advantage of the educational and business development programs that ABC offers. This manifests itself into a better place to live and work.



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**  
Russell Hamley is President of the Greater Houston Chapter of Associated Builders and Contractors. Russell has been with ABC since 1996. Prior to ABC, he spent two years at AGC and 17 years in the construction industry working with several contractors and developers, including Hines and Century Development. In addition, Russell has been elected to three terms as the Mayor of Jersey Village.

**HAMLEY**



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**  
Steven Schultz is the ABC South Texas Chapter President, and has been for past 17 years. Prior to coming to ABC, he was with the Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce for 16 years. He graduated from Trinity University with a BS in Business Administration in 1978. You can reach Steven at [steve@abcsouthtexas.org](mailto:steve@abcsouthtexas.org).

**SCHULTZ**



## *One on One With...*

### **STATE SENATOR DAN PATRICK**

*Dan Patrick is a strong fiscal and social conservative who has led the charge on important legislation like small business tax cuts and the sonogram bill. Since arriving in the Senate in 2007 he has learned to build coalitions to pass over 100 pieces of legislation and has become a key ally to others. In his three sessions, Dan has not missed one day on the Senate floor and has only missed 6 of more than 13,000 votes. Some of the legislation he passed, of which he is most proud, is placing "In God We Trust" permanently in the Senate chamber for the first time in history and passing a \$170 million tax cut for small businesses. In 2011, Senator Patrick finally passed the Sonogram Bill to protect women and the unborn.*

*As Senator, he has been recognized as Legislator of the Year by law enforcement groups, been consistently ranked as the leading conservative in the Senate, was honored to receive the Texas Association of Business' top award twice, and was named the third most influential Republican in Texas by the Austin American Statesman.*

*Dan is the Chairman of the Senate Education Committee and serves on a total of 12 committees and sub committees, including some of the most important in the Senate including Finance, Sunset, Health and Human Services, and Criminal Justice.*

*Dan has been married to Jan, a former school teacher, for 38 years. Their son Ryan is a Harris County Criminal Court District Judge. Their daughter Shane is a registered nurse. In 2010, Dan and Jan were blessed with their first grandchild Zachary Colton Patrick.*

*Dan hosts a daily afternoon talk show on KSEV AM 700 in Houston and has raised over \$16 million for children with disabilities through his radio station over the years. Dan has also written a best-selling book, produced an award winning movie, plays piano and guitar, and paints in his spare time – which isn't much since being elected in 2006.*

#### **Q: Please describe your business background?**

**A:** I am a long-time small business man who understands what it means to sign the front as well as the back of paychecks. Since 1992, I have owned a radio station and served as a talk show host. I have grown KSEV 700 AM from a small station in Tomball to a leading source of news and commentary in one of the largest media markets in the country. Working through the struggles of owning and operating my own business gives me a very important perspective on public policy.

#### **Q: What is your view of the free enterprise system?**

**A:** The free enterprise system is what makes our country, and more importantly our state, such a leader in our world. I have often said that the world relies on the United States of America for stability but the United States relies on the State of Texas for its strength. If we fail to preserve our economic strength, then the world will feel the instability. The free enterprise system is the exercise of freedom and, as Thomas Paine said, "Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom, must, like men, undergo the fatigue of supporting it." This is my job as a state senator.

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

**A:** Last session, the budget was truly the focus. The economic downturn coupled with growing federal mandates made the process even more difficult than normal. The Senate refused to succumb to the pressure of increased taxes and raiding the rainy day fund. As a result, the state's economy is outpacing the rest of the country and we have met the obligations of state government. Although spending cuts had to be made, we have turned the corner and we are stronger than ever.

#### **Q: You have recently been appointed Chairman of the Senate Committee on Education. What do you see as the most important issues for the Committee to address next session? Do you see a need for more flexibility to allow students the option to pursue career and technology education?**

**A:** Our state is engaged in a discussion about what education should look like and how schools should prepare students for the 21st century workplace. I will lead our committee in addressing accountability issues, how to best measure what students are





NORRIS

## Attorney Debra Norris Recognized as a Top Houston Lawyer and Top Professional by “H Texas Magazine”

Debra Norris of the law firm of Debra B. Norris, P.C., was recognized as a Top Houston Lawyer and as a Top Houston Professional in the July and October 2012 issues of “H Texas Magazine.” The magazine makes its annual selections based on rigorous background checks and recommendations from clients and colleagues.

Debra’s practice is primarily concentrated in construction law, representing owners, suppliers, contractors, subcontractors, and design professionals in the construction industry. An electrical engineer, Debra spent ten years building plants for the oil, gas, and chemical industries. Debra earned a B.S. in Electrical Engineering, *magna cum laude*, from Louisiana Tech University and a B.A. in Physics, *cum laude*, from Centenary College in 1984. She obtained her J.D. from the University of Texas School of Law in 1998, receiving the Dean’s Achievement Award in Evidence.



# DebraBNorris.com

Attorney at Law

In addition to her law practice, Debra taught construction law as an adjunct professor in the graduate school of engineering and the construction management program at the University of Houston for five years. In April 2009, Ms. Norris was recognized by CNN Airport TV Network on the America’s Premier Lawyers Series.

You can reach Debra at 713.858.0359 or email [dbn@DebraNorris.com](mailto:dbn@DebraNorris.com).

learning and give families a simplified look at how their child’s school is doing. I believe if schools are not performing well we have a responsibility to ensure they are restructured and the leadership is replaced quickly. As a state, we have allowed too many failing schools to remain open for too long.

We also need to expand the range of options parents have in choosing the best school for their child including traditional public schools, charters, virtual programs, or a blend. No two students learn the same and students should not be held captive to a school by a zip code. Likewise, we need to address our graduation plans and broaden the opportunities students have in taking a variety of rigorous, applicable courses to satisfy their graduation requirements. That is why I have asked the State Board of Education to increase the number of approved Career and Technical courses that students can take for credit. We must improve our career and technical education courses and allow districts to offer the courses that meet the needs of their community.

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

A: Last session, my priorities were to maintain the small business franchise tax exemption, passage of the sonogram bill as well as passing a budget without raising taxes. Although it took multiple sessions and years of work, each of these goals were accomplished. I look forward to achieving the same level of success on the important issues of education reform and workforce development this coming session.

# ABC Member Is Governor Of Texas For A Day

Written By Jon Fisher, ABC of Texas President

**A**n individual with a long family history of ABC membership became the only ABC member ever to serve as Governor of Texas! State Senator Mike Jackson, President of Force Corporation, served as Governor of Texas on December 1, 2012.

The Senate elects a President Pro Tempore each session and each interim. Mike was elected by his fellow Senators on May 20, 2011, to become the 263rd President Pro Tempore of the Senate. Since that person is third in line for the Governorship, it is traditional that the Governor and Lieutenant Governor leave the state for one day to allow the President Pro Tempore to be Governor for a Day.

This is of great significance to ABC since not only is Mike Jackson's company a member of ABC's Greater Houston Chapter, but his father, Jack Jackson, served as President (now, Chair) of ABC of Texas in 1987.



*State Senator Mike Jackson, President of Force Corporation, served as Governor of Texas on December 1, 2012.*

Mike Jackson is retiring from the Texas Senate after serving there since 1999. Prior to that, he served in the Texas House of Representatives from 1989 until 1999. Last session, Mike chaired the Senate Economic Development Committee and served on the Senate State Affairs, Business and Commerce, Natural Resources and Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committees.

Mike is one of only three legislators to win the ABC of Texas Free Enterprise Champion Award both sessions the award was presented.



Mike was honored December 1st with a ceremony in the Senate Chamber where hundreds of friends, family and colleagues gathered to thank him for his years as a lawmaker. Both the Greater Houston Chapter of ABC and ABC of Texas helped sponsor a reception the evening before the event.

In his Inaugural Address, Governor Jackson thanked his wife, Vickie, and his children, Vic and Michelle, for their love and support over his 23 years of public service. Drawing from his long experience in public office, Jackson offered advice to his fellow Senators, "First, remember that you are elected to represent almost 800,000 people. The seats that we occupy aren't ours, we borrow them from the people for a short amount of time."

Senator, I mean Governor Jackson has been one of the best advocates for the business community in the Texas Legislature over the last two decades. I have had the distinct pleasure of working with him in at least two capacities over that time and I have always been impressed by his well-grounded sense of what he was elected to do. I consider him a friend and an ally as do all ABC of Texas members, and we look forward to calling on him as a member of ABC to help us in the future. - JF



*Mike Jackson was honored December 1st with a ceremony in the Senate Chamber where hundreds of friends, family and colleagues gathered to thank him for his years as a lawmaker.*



# A Leader in Workforce Development

We believe providing our customers with a highly skilled, productive workforce can be as simple as setting expectations and providing opportunities.



*"Being selected for the OJT Helper Program has truly set me on a career path. I am learning more things at a quicker rate. I can now see myself becoming a foreman at a future date."*

*Alejandro Robles, OJT Helper Trainee*



*Marek Employees participate in English as a Second Language (ESL) at the Harris County Department of Adult Education.*

## Workforce Programs include:

- Comprehensive Benefits Package
- Customized Career Paths
- Workplace Literacy Programs
- Productivity and Employability Skills Training

## OJT Helper Training Program:

- 12 Month Fast Track On the Job Training
- 433 Hours of One on One Hands on Training with a Personal Coach in 29 Tasks Deemed Critical to the Trade
- 41 Hours of Specialized Lab Instruction includes : Power Tool Safety, Knowledge of Materials, Drywall Installation, and More.



**NCCER Mechanic Assessment and Certification Program**

## Marek Craft Professional Program:

- Marek's elite group of craft professionals with a proven record of performance
- Certification in 7 key craft areas



Proud Supporters of  
Construction Careers Collaborative (C3)

Creating a Sustainable Workforce:  
An Initiative of the Houston  
Construction Industry



**Commercial Interior Specialists**

[www.marekbros.com](http://www.marekbros.com)

Houston

713-681-2626

Austin

512-312-2756

Atlanta

770-973-2218

Dallas/Ft. Worth

972-393-4343/817-740-8624

San Antonio

210-657-4437

Harlingen

956-412-9339



# Construction Career Collaborative Works to Promote Industry as a Career Choice



In December 2009 a group of contractors held initial meetings to discuss the development of a craft workforce that will be needed for the commercial construction industry to effectively perform future work in the Greater Houston area. Since then, seven task forces and more than 50 volunteers have worked diligently on this challenging task. As with many things that are difficult but worth the result, it is necessary to look back at the history of our efforts in order to realize the extent of success we have already had to date.

As this Construction Career Collaborative (C3) gains traction, three levels of implementation have been planned in order to meet industry goals – Competent (current), Qualified, and Skilled (future).

First, the long term vision for creating a sustainable craft workforce has been established. Three groups of participants – Owners, Contractors, and Specialty Contractors – have committed to three principles – competitive wages and benefits, safety training, and craft training – as absolutely necessary to attract, train, and retain a verifiably qualified workforce. As this Construction Career Collaborative (C3) gains traction, three levels of implementation have been planned in order to meet industry goals – Competent (current), Qualified, and Skilled (future). Two owners, Texas Children’s Hospital and MD Anderson, have embraced the C3 concept and are performing beta projects using C3 principles. These beta projects will involve four contractors, numerous specialty contractors, and hundreds of craft workers. The beta projects will allow C3 principles to be codified in processes for verification of payment by the hour, verifiable data collection of the safety training of craft workers that can be relied upon by the entire industry, and a better understanding of the state of craft training as each contractor completes a craft training assessment.

Data collection and verification partner, Safety Council Texas City, has joined the effort to ensure the industry has reliable information collected by a credible third party. The C3-5, a five hour safety course has been developed to provide craft workers with specific commercial industry safety training and the online version is being launched.

The C3 website ([www.constructioncareercollaborative.org](http://www.constructioncareercollaborative.org)) is up and running, providing the industry and community real solutions to the issue of a sustainable craft workforce.

An interim Executive Director has been appointed, and a formal business structure is being finalized. The executive committee is in place and three key owner representatives have agreed to serve on the board of directors. The list of potential owners interested in the C3 concept is growing, along with inquiries from the entire construction community. Strategic alliances are being developed to promote and support the key principles of C3, and the development of a craft training network.

Most important, C3 has laid the foundation for industry craft workers who are necessary to build upcoming projects. Owners, contractors, and specialty contractors are partnering with craft workers to express true appreciation for their commitment to producing quality projects in an efficient manner. Thanks to all who have helped create, support, and execute the mission of the Construction Career Collaborative.



**HOLLAND**

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

Mike Holland is the Houston Division President of Marek Brothers Systems, Inc, and a 41 year veteran of the construction industry. He is a member of the ABC Greater Houston Board, the past president of ASA Houston, a member of the AGC Leadership Forum, and an executive committee member of the Construction Career Collaborative (C3). Email [mikeholland@marekbros.com](mailto:mikeholland@marekbros.com) to contact Mike.



# ABC INITIATIVES AROUND THE STATE



*The ABC Texas Mid Coast Chapter will soon break ground on their new office building (pictured above). Thanks to the generosity of members, the Chapter expects to move in to the new facility in early 2013.*



*The ABC South Texas Chapter and other industry groups joined together to host the annual "Construct A Kids Christmas" gala and toy drive. Over 1,500 hundred toys were collected and over \$25,000 was raised for the foster children in the Bexar County region.*

## TEXAS MID COAST

The Texas Mid Coast Chapter Plans Room has been very busy with many active projects in the bidding process. The area is very fortunate in its continuation of growth, with more construction projects expected in 2013. The Chapter's volume printing and binding services have increased exponentially with more contractors and architects utilizing this cost and time saving service. With this added benefit for members and non-members, the Chapter is experiencing another non-dues revenue stream.

The Chapter will soon break ground on the new office building. Amazingly generous members are poised to begin the work and have a targeted move-in of early 2013. The new building will aid in the expansion of training and education programs, including training for the oil and gas sector. Mid Coast is pleased to have its first oil and gas company as a new member and anticipate more members from the oil and gas sector to join the association.

Texas Mid Coast has also just completed the second CSST class for the year and will be scheduling another in January 2013 to accommodate the growing waiting list.

The Women In ABC Committee is about to complete its first project – titled "Absolute Best Cookbook". This first edition will have more than 200 recipes and pre-sales have been great, adding another non-dues revenue stream for the Chapter. The WABC's Committee objective is to promote and support current and future women in our workforce. Proceeds from the cookbook sales are earmarked for scholarships for young women graduating from the area high schools who are entering construction or construction related fields at the community college, and towards the new building fund. This has been an exciting project and one that is receiving a great deal of attention. Cookbooks can be purchased for \$20 each, including tax, please contact the Texas Gulf Coast Chapter for more details.

The Texas Mid Coast Chapter is looking forward to a very busy 2013, which will begin with the Annual Banquet and Awards Ceremony on January 17th.

## SOUTH TEXAS

The South Texas Chapter's annual planning session resulted in numerous tasks all directed towards the 2013 strategic objective of achieving membership growth. Four board task forces were appointed to accomplish the tasks. These include:

- Events & Activities – all events will be either modified or eliminated, with the possibility of new events being added. During visits with members and event attendees over the past year it was determined the South Texas Chapter hosts outstanding events, however they are the same old events. So in order to generate excitement, increase attendance & profitability, and improve networking opportunities each event is being examined on how to improve them.
- Marketing Recruitment & Retention – all membership recruitment and retention materials will be reviewed, refined and redesigned, with an eye on individual target groups with specific messages.
- Marketing & Technology – with the rise in use of social media, how the chapter can better reach out to the younger industry members is the main focus. It was noted that event attendees are getting younger. The chapter's marketing efforts need to take this into account, with the understanding that "one size doesn't fit all."
- Past Chairs' Breakfast Club – former chapter chairs are a great resource that is currently underutilized. They can be a sounding board for the upcoming chapter chairs, as well as a group with a historical knowledge of the chapter. At the retreat the board identified chapter chairs through the year 2023. Having a leadership "support group" in place will help make the future chair's role easier.

The Future Leaders Task Force held their own strategic planning session in November, resulting in a consolidation of committees and a continued emphasis on professional development. Of course there will still be a few social events, and the group will continue working with the UTSA ABC Student Chapter.

Also, in November the chapter hosted a free membership mixer at the Tejas Steakhouse and Rodeo. Everyone had a great time as there was actually some cooler weather that evening!



# ABC INITIATIVES AROUND THE STATE



*The ABC Texas Gulf Coast Members and President present a PAC donation to US Congressman Randy Weber, newly elected to fill the Congressional District 14 seat vacated by Ron Paul.*



*TEXO's Annual Chili Cook-Off had nearly 40 corporate teams competing. This year's winner, Texas Air Systems, received overwhelming praise from the panel of judges.*

In December, ABC-South Texas Chapter and other industry groups joined together to host the annual "Construct A Kids Christmas" gala and toy drive. The gala included casino games, and live and silent auctions. Once again over 1,500 hundred toys were collected and over \$25,000 was raised for the foster children in the Bexar County region. Everyone is looking forward to a more prosperous (and profitable) 2013!

## TEXAS GULF COAST

October and November have been busy months for the Texas Gulf Coast Chapter. The Chapter has sponsored events for charity and workforce development, contributed to political races, received a new endorsement from NCCER for specialty training and held an annual Goal Planning retreat.

Merit Shop Training, Inc. (MSTI), the chapter's educational affiliate, held several events to promote workforce development. About 250 students and sponsors from six local high schools attended the ABC Construction Exhibition on November 1, 2012 at Brazosport College, a long-time training partner. Twenty-two contractor and industry companies sent over 70 employees to assist students with over 20 hands-on activities and answer questions about careers in construction. The following week, several of the same contractors and industry representatives provided a round-table discussion for area high school principals, counselors and craft instructors after a luncheon hosted by MSTI. As a result of this, some of these same contractors have already made, or are scheduled to make, presentations directly to students again with the purpose of promoting the industry and helping them understand how to get started. Additionally, MSTI held the annual Craft Championships to highlight training. A candidate was selected to participate in the ABC National Craft Championships in April of 2013. Finally, MSTI is proud to announce that they have received the NCCER Endorsement for Rigging/Signal Person and Mobile Crane after several months of preparation, planning and training.

In October, the chapter hosted its second Texas Hold'Em Poker Tournament for members and their friends. This time, the ladies showed the men how to 'really' play the game, taking first and second place! Monies raised from this event and from donations of food and toys at the recent Christmas social went toward

contributions to several food pantries in the area as well as to a local police department for their Blue Santa efforts. The Christmas Social sponsored by ABC, CSCB, and MSTI was a huge success this year with more attendees than ever despite a huge thunderstorm that moved through.

In September, the chapter presented and elected the slate of officers for 2013-2014. In November, the Chapter's new Chairman, Gerald Andrews (Victory Insurance), led the Board in Goal Planning for 2013. He complimented and thanked out-going Chairman Buck Blevins, Infinity Construction, for his efforts and accomplishments. A number of new members came in under his leadership and the Board had 100% of members making contributions to PAC. The Chapter is proud to say that local contributions helped fellow Texan Randy Weber (R) win the much contested Congressional District 14 seat vacated by Ron Paul. Congressman Weber will now be serving many ABC supporters in the United States House of Representatives.

## TEXO

2012 has been a very interesting year for TEXO. Much of the leadership's energy has been focused on finding the right replacement for Raleigh Roussell. Roussell is retiring after over 40 years of service to the North and East Texas construction industry. After much due diligence the Chapter has named Brad Brown to take over the helm of TEXO. Brown comes to the Association with 15 years of experience with Austin Commercial, a Dallas based national construction company. Brad spent seven years as head of ACLP's Human Resource Department and the final eight years as Director of Marketing and Business Development. He is well equipped to manage the Association's affairs and to develop the strategic vision for the future growth and leadership.

While the search was underway, the Chapter held several very successful events. The Young Constructors Council held their annual Washer Tournament which raised over \$15,000 for the Chapter's Foundation and involved over 84 participants. The Foundation's Fall Sporting Clay Shoot Tournament had 196 participants at the range and raised an additional \$25,000 to support college and university scholarships and grants. The Foundation also hosted the annual Educators' Conference involving the Region V Universities and Colleges. This year,

# ABC INITIATIVES AROUND THE STATE



*ABC Greater Houston's Young Professionals Committee hosted the annual Holiday Party at St. Arnold Brewing Company. Over 170 members enjoyed great food and many participated in the "tacky sweater" contest for a chance to win an iPad mini.*

the practical application of Lean Construction and BIM were explored.

The Chapter held a joint luncheon with CFMA to host U.S. Congressman, Dr. Michael Burgess. The well attended event helped educate members on many of the issues facing businessmen as the country moved towards the November Presidential election.

The Annual Chili Cook-Off had nearly 40 corporate teams competing. This year's winner, Texas Air Systems, received overwhelming praise from the panel of judges.

The big event of the year was the retirement party for Raleigh. 350 guests gathered to celebrate his service to the industry. A parade of members paid tribute to his accomplishments as well as offering interesting and funny tidbits and various stories.

Rounding out the year were two Holiday Open Houses at the Chapter's Fort Worth and Dallas locations. Aside from providing great networking opportunities, the events helped gather several truckloads of toys and gifts for the Lena Pope Home in Fort Worth and Children's Hospital in Dallas.

On the business side, the Chapter continued with a very successful Fall Industry Safety Stand-Down. This year's Stand-Down involved projects totaling over \$3 billion in value. Workers across North Texas took an hour to evaluate their work environment and to initiate the necessary safety procedures needed to insure an incident/accident free worksite.

Safety training continued monthly through TEXO's Safety/Superintendent Forums one held in English and another held for Latino workers. They average over 200 attendees each month.

Additional activities involve monthly meetings with AIA, a Women's Forum, monthly YCC meetings, continued involvement with CEFPI, and participation in National and State ABC and AGC meetings.

In all, the Chapter has in place its' new President/CEO, an active and productive staff and, a membership eager to learn and participate. The Chapter will also conduct strategic planning exercises at its January 29-30 Board Retreat.

## GREATER HOUSTON

The past several months have been an exciting and intense season for the Greater Houston Chapter, particularly in the political realm. Houston members have devoted much of their time and paychecks to aid in electing candidates who will advocate for the ABC philosophy of free enterprise. After 44 total endorsements (also including congressional and presidential candidates), Greater Houston calculated 37 wins and seven losses, leaving an 84 percent victory for ABC-endorsed candidates. Quickly following the election the Greater Houston Chapter had its Member Breakfast at the Sheraton Brookhollow with guest speaker Senator Dan Patrick. ABC members listened intently to Patrick as he talked about the outcome of the election, theories behind low voter turnout, vocational training in high schools, and plans for this upcoming legislative session.

Yet, while everyone thought the bulk of political rhetoric and screenings would end November 6th, one race proved otherwise. Several weeks prior to the election, Mario Gallegos, Democratic State Senator for Senate District 6, passed away after a long illness. With his name still on the ballot against Republican R.W. Bray, Democrats eagerly encouraged voters to still cast their ballot in favor of Mario Gallegos in order to maintain a Democratic representative. Their efforts succeeded as Gallegos ended up winning the seat, which defaulted into a Special Election called by Governor Perry scheduled to take place on January 26th. Two Democrats and one Republican are now dominating the race for the late senator's seat. In order to learn more about the candidates, the Greater Houston PAC invited them to the December meeting for a screening. R.W. Bray-R, and Carol Alvarado-D attended the meeting.

In the meantime, as our lawmakers map out their plans for the next session, ABC Greater Houston is setting goals and making plans for 2013 as well. Roughly 30 members along with the ABC staff gathered in October at the Tremont House in Galveston in order to discuss priorities and goals of the upcoming year. Participants discussed everything from events to legislative concerns to the wording of ABC's value proposition. During this time, the Greater Houston Chapter was privileged to have special guest and President of ABC National, Michael Bellaman, join us in these discussions and lend a unique and valuable perspective from the national level.

Lastly, the Greater Houston chapter wanted to finish 2012 with a bang. ABC members are some of the classiest people around, yet when it comes to a tacky sweater contest (and a brand new iPad Mini at stake), members can prove to be pretty, well, tacky. This year's Holiday Party, held at St. Arnold's Brewery was planned and executed by members of the Young Professionals Committee who were determined to put a fun, unique spin on the traditional event. The Paul Eason Band performed live as over 170 ABC members visited with their colleagues, took photos in the complementary photobooth, drank from the endless supply of St. Arnold's beer, snacked on Goode Company catering, and entered to win the drawing for two Yeti Coolers, an iPad mini and several other door prizes.

**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](http://www.abc.org)  
To Join an ABC Chapter Near You!**