

*Texas* Named 2008 Most Innovative Magazine  
by Associated Builders & Contractors

# MERIT+SHOP

Journal

April 2009

The Honorable  
Joe Straus Talks  
About His New  
Role as Texas  
House of  
Representatives'  
Speaker and  
Goals for this  
Session

**Also In This Issue:**

*Changes in Committee  
Structure: How it Affects ABC  
Members*

*Implications of Newly  
Introduced Legislation*

*ABC Speaks Up at  
Legislative Day*





*Turnarounds and revamps with special emphasis on HF Alky Units.*



*Complete critical project execution.*



*Rapid response to your piping needs for turnarounds and grass roots projects.*

*RepconStrickland*

*companies*

*support the*

*Associated Builders and*

*Contractors of Texas*

*“Get Into Politics  
or  
Get Out of Business”*



*Turnaround/revamp services for the Caribbean and surrounding areas.*

**Diamond Refractory Services**

*Answering your erosion, temperature and corrosion resistance operational demands.*

**TIGER TOWER SERVICES**



*Expert response to your-turnaround, single tower or critical emergency needs.*



*Premier welding services unlike any other.*



**REPCONSTRICKLAND**

*A group of independent specialty companies serving the energy industries.*

**Toll free: 1-800-478-6206 • [www.repconstrickland.com](http://www.repconstrickland.com)**

**1605 South Battleground Road, La Porte, TX 77571, Phone: 281-478-6200, Fax: 281-478-6206**

*Continually Improving, Re-defining And Expanding Our Services For Industry.*



# Texas MERIT SHOP Journal

Defending the Rights of Merit Shop Contractors

## 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  
10408 Gulfdale  
San Antonio, Texas 78216  
ph (210)342-1994  
www.abcsouthtexas.org

### SOUTHEAST TEXAS CHAPTER

John Bernard, President  
PO Box 1566  
Nederland, Texas 77627-1566  
ph (409)724-7886  
www.abcssetx.org

### TEXAS COASTAL BEND CHAPTER

John Taylor, 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

### TEXO CHAPTER

Raleigh Roussell, President  
11101 Stemmons Freeway  
Dallas, Texas 75229  
ph (972)647-0697

### REGION 3 REPRESENTATIVE

April Brown, Regional Political Mgr.  
2904 Windsor Rd., Ste. B  
Austin, Texas 78703  
ph (512)517-5661

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  
Assistant Editor: Meghan Stephens  
Account Manager: Janice Peters  
Contributing Writers: Jon Fisher, Mike  
Toomey, Meghan Stephens  
Graphic Design: Jennifer Woodruff



## 5 Changes in Texas Senate and House Committee Structures: How it Affects ABC Members

ABC of Texas President, Jon Fisher, reviews changes in committee structures as well as new subcommittees, and how these new structures will challenge ABC to educate the new appointees about issues important to the merit shop contractor.

## 6 Implications of Newly Introduced Legislation

Discover which recently introduced bills could have far reaching implications for members of ABC and the construction industry at large in Texas.

## 7 Updated ABC Legislative Priorities

ABC of Texas has been hard at work on eight legislative issues this session in an effort to either support or oppose each. Learn about the issues and the current status of each.

## 9 Political Action Does Not End with Your PAC

Learn about several ways you can make an impact in the political process and what you can do today to start making a difference.

## 10 One on One with Speaker Joe Straus

Texas Merit Shop Journal sits down with Speaker Joe Straus to discuss his new post as Texas' Speaker of the House. Speaker Straus talks about his goals, this sessions major initiatives and his experiences to date as Speaker of the House.

## 12 ABC Speaks Up at Texas Legislative Day

ABC Members from around the state recently converged on the State Capitol to meet with their Representatives and lawmakers. Learn why members, both first time attendees and seasoned activists, find Legislative Day educational and empowering.

## 14 Initiatives Around the State

Learn about ABC Chapter Initiatives in your area.



## INDEX OF ADVERTISERS

Alpha Building Corporation .....	P7	Morrison Supply Co.....	P13
Industrial Specialty Contractors.....	P11	ReconStrickland.....	P2
Marek Brothers Systems, Inc.....	P11	SpawGlass Construction .....	P9

## 2009 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### **Roger Berry - Chairman**

SpawGlass Construction Corp.  
Chapter: Greater Houston

### **Andy Koebel - Vice Chairman**

Kunz Construction Co., Inc.  
Chapter: South Texas

### **Christina Stone - Treasurer**

Gaughan, Stone & Thiagarajan  
Chapter: Greater Houston

### **Lawrence Wilcox - Secretary**

Large & Sons Foundation Drilling  
Chapter: Texas Coastal Bend

### **Kathleen Acock**

Alpha Building Corp.  
Chapter: South Texas

### **Harley Blackburn**

Browning Construction Co.  
Chapter: Central Texas

### **Buck Blevins**

Infinity Construction Services  
Chapter: Texas Gulf Coast

### **Lisa Budnick Cobler**

Tri-Construction Co.  
Chapter: Texas Gulf Coast

### **James Fair**

Williams Scotsman  
Chapter: TEXO

### **Mike Gremillion**

Industrial Specialty Contractors LLC  
Chapter: Greater Houston

### **GPaul Holliman**

Holliman Consulting Group  
Chapter: TEXO

### **Bob Parker**

Repon, Inc.  
Chapter: Texas Coastal Bend

### **Tony Pieprzyca**

Hart Company  
Chapter: South Texas

### **Mark Roach**

Dealers Electrical Supply  
Chapter: Texas Coastal Bend

### **Chuck Swallow**

TDIndustries  
Chapter: Central Texas

### **Todd Traugott**

Don Krueger Construction Co.  
Chapter: Texas Mid Coast

### **Jim Ulmer**

Rogers O'Brien Construction Co.  
Chapter: Central Texas

### **Mike Weaver**

Weaver and Jacobs Constructors, Inc.  
Chapter: Texas Mid Coast

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



**BERRY**

## **Dear Reader,**

There has never been a more important time to be involved with your Political Action Committee than now. Changes in leadership, committee structures and newly introduced legislation create a volatile environment for the merit shop construction industry, not only on a National level but local levels as well. It is time to take action and demonstrate that our rights and freedoms are not negotiable.

There are many ways in which an ABC member can get involved in the political process. Whether you are a seasoned political aficionado or a novice, ABC offers many levels of involvement. I encourage you to make a commitment today and do your part to

save the free enterprise system.

On the most basic level, you can become an individual member of the ABC PAC, or as a corporation you can contribute to the Free Enterprise Alliance (FEA). Your contribution and membership in the PAC will help support candidates who value and protect your rights as a hard-working construction professional who wants equal and fair opportunities for work based on merit. The FEA, ABC's issue advocacy arm, cannot directly support candidates, however, the FEA can support specific issues such as the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA). Member support allows the Free Enterprise Alliance to continue responding quickly to issues critical to ABC and your business. Whether it's a large scale education campaign or the need to mobilize on-the-ground teams to dispel false information, FEA support today will help protect the way we work tomorrow.

A secondary level of involvement is being an outspoken representative of the merit shop philosophy by meeting with your local, state and national law makers. Our representatives are eager to hear your opinion and appreciate the time you take to write, email or personally visit with them to convey your feelings on issues vital to our industry. Don't be intimidated, each representative and lawmaker is a public servant and should work for your best interest.

Lastly, join your local ABC Chapter's Political Action or Legal Issues committee. These groups will help you stay on top of legislation or court cases that directly impact your business and right to work. The committees are filled with members who are all interested in working towards a common goal. Remember, by working in groups and committees you have a stronger impact on legislators. I urge you to contact your local Chapter to determine what opportunities may work best for you. You are also welcome to contact our ABC State President, Jon Fisher, should you have any questions about the legislative process. The ABC PAC motto of "get into politics, or get out of business," has never been more appropriate than it is today, so please do your part and get involved in the process.

Roger Berry

SpawGlass Construction Corp.

2009 ABC of Texas Chairman

For information about ABC of Texas visit [www.abctexas.org](http://www.abctexas.org)

# Changes in Texas Senate and House Committee Structures: How it Affects ABC Members

By Jon Fisher, ABC of Texas President



Since Senate leadership did not change, structural committee changes in the Senate were minimal—but there were some. Most notably, Senator Tommy Williams of The Woodlands was made chair of the Committee on Administration, replacing former Senator Kim Brimer who was defeated in November. Also of note was the creation (or re-creation) of the Senate Committee on Economic Development which is chaired by Senator Chris Harris of Arlington.

Two former subcommittees were given full committee status (which also means the appointment of a new vice chair since subcommittees only have chairs)—Agriculture and Rural Affairs (formerly a subcommittee of the Committee on Natural Resources) and Higher Education (formerly a subcommittee of the Committee on Education). The former Subcommittee Chairs, Senators Craig Estes of Wichita Falls and Judith Zaffirini of Laredo, both received promotions to full committee chair with these changes. Senator Carlos Uresti of San Antonio was made Vice Chair of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Affairs, and Senator Dan Patrick of Houston became Vice Chair of the Committee on Higher Education.

And, last, but of significance, was the creation of a new subcommittee within the Committee on Intergovernmental Relations. The new Subcommittee on Flooding and Evacuation will be chaired by Senator Mario Gallegos of Houston.

Summing it up, last session the Senate had 15 committees with 5 Democratic chairs and 10 Republican chairs. This session, the Senate has 18 committees with 6 Democratic chairs and 12 Republican chairs.

The House is a different matter altogether. The House went from 40 committees with Democrats chairing 9 and Republicans chairing 31 to 34 committees with Democrats chairing 15 and Republicans chairing 19.

Of the 34 committee chairs, only 6 were chairing committees last session—and only 4 retained the chair of their former committee. Only one member of the critical House Committee on Calendars (which sets bills for consideration by the full House) served on that committee last session. No members of the House Committee on Environmental Regulation served on that committee last session, although the Vice Chair, Rep. Warren Chisum of Pampa has previously served as both Chair and Vice Chair of the committee.

All who have studied the appointments believe that new House Speaker Joe Straus of San Antonio did a very good job of balancing

appointments consistent with rewarding his early supporters. For example, on most committees with Democratic chairs, the committee is composed of a majority of Republicans—particularly those committees critical to business interests.

One major source of comfort to the business community is the make-up of the House Committee on Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence. This 11-member committee, chaired by ABC Coastal Bend Chapter member Rep. Todd Hunter, has 8 Republican members.

Other committees where bills of interest to ABC members get referred are the Committees on Business and Industry; Licensing and Administrative Procedures; Technology, Economic Development and Workforce; and State Affairs. Both Licensing and Administrative Procedures and State Affairs are chaired by Republicans (Rep. Edmund Kuempel of Seguin and Rep. Burt Solomons of Carrollton) and have Republican majorities on the committee. The chair of the Committee on Business and Industry is Rep. Joe Deshotel of Beaumont. That 11-member committee has 6 Republican members. The chair of the Committee on Technology, Economic Development and Workforce is Rep. Mark Strama of Austin. That 9-member committee has 6 Republicans and ABC member Rep. Allan Ritter of Nederland.

Business was treated well in the appointment of House committees. But, with the many changes, the challenge is one of educating the new appointees to the issues faced in that particular committee.- **JF**

# Implications of Newly Introduced Legislation

By Jon Fisher, ABC of Texas President



There are a variety of bills introduced thus far that could have implications for members of ABC of Texas. Bills on topics such as illegal immigration, employee leave mandates, preference in construction bids, and model building codes have been occupying the local Chapters' legislative committees in attempting to arrive at positions. Those topics are certainly not the exclusive sources of issues, but seem to cover a good bit of the bills being reviewed thus far.

And, the plaintiff attorneys seem to think this is the session for them to go on the offensive with the filing of bills on "phantom damages," the Entergy decision, asbestos causation, "Qui Tam," pre-dispute arbitration contracts, antitrust, and emergency room protections. All of those bills either directly or indirectly cause problems for ABC of Texas. If you wonder why "Qui Tam" is an issue, just "google" "Qui Tam lawyers." I think we all understand that our improving access to emergency room care is an issue benefiting all Texans.

Among the bills filed dealing with illegal immigration are bills that would revoke business licenses for those employing illegal aliens (HB 48) as well as a comprehensive immigration bill with employer sanctions (HB 266).

A local preference bill (SB 447) was already heard in the Senate Intergovernmental Relations Committee. While ABC of Texas registered opposition to the bill, we were unable to secure a witness to testify.

ABC of Texas is also participating with other employer groups to support flexibility in the public education system to provide more opportunities for Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses in our high schools. That bill, HB 2471 by Jim Keffer of Eastland, would provide more opportunities for CTE courses to be used toward graduation and encourage the Texas Education Agency to align more CTE courses with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skill requirements. Both education committee chairs—Senator Florence Shapiro of Plano (Chair, Senate Committee on Education)

and Rep. Rob Eissler of The Woodlands—have announced support for expanded availability of CTE in the secondary schools. The Keffer bill builds on what Senator Shapiro and Rep. Eissler propose. ABC of Texas has joined the Texas Employers for an Educated Workforce along with the Texas Association of Manufacturers, Texas Chemical Council, the Texas Oil and Gas Association, the Association of Electric Companies of Texas, Associated General Contractors-Texas Building Branch and others. ABC of Texas was represented at a press conference held on March 5 touting HB 2471. ABC of Texas also received credit for co-authorship of an Op-Ed piece printed in the Austin American-Statesman newspaper on Friday, March 6. **-JF**

See [http://www.statesman.com/opinion/content/editorial/stories/03/06/0306bellsnyder\\_edit.html](http://www.statesman.com/opinion/content/editorial/stories/03/06/0306bellsnyder_edit.html)



# Updated ABC Legislative Priorities

By Jon Fisher, ABC of Texas President

ABC has bills introduced on Alternative Delivery Systems (SB 1110 by Senator Mike Jackson of La Porte and HB 2106 by Rep. Charlie Geren of River Oaks), Trust Funds (HB 1513 by Rep. Wayne Smith of Baytown and SB 1137 by Senator Jackson), and Prevailing Wage (HB 1042 by Rep. Tan Parker of Flower Mound). As of the deadline for this publication, the only bills referred to committee were HB 1042—Prevailing Wage Repeal (Technology, Economic Development and Workforce) and HB 1513—Trust Funds (Business and Industry).

The Indemnification bill referenced above is SB 555 by Senator Robert Duncan of Lubbock and HB 818 by Rep. Craig Eiland of Texas City. It has been referred to the Senate Committee on State Affairs and the House Committee on Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence. - *JF*

The Board of Directors of ABC of Texas prepared a list of eight legislative priorities for this session. Those were Immigration, Contractor Licensing, Alternative Delivery Systems, Indemnification/Workers' Compensation/Third Party Liability, Contingent Pay, Trust Funds, Prevailing Wage, and Trades Legislation.

ABC of Texas was unable to reach agreement with the Associated General Contractors-Texas Building Branch (AGC-TBB) and the Texas Construction Association (TCA) on changes to the Contingent Pay law, therefore the Board voted in January to

***“ABC of Texas was unable to reach agreement with the Associated General Contractors-Texas Building Branch (AGC-TBB) and the Texas Construction Association (TCA) on changes to the Contingent Pay law, therefore the Board voted in January to delete that priority.”***

delete that priority.

Of course, ABC is playing defense on Immigration, Contractor Licensing (no bill as of the deadline for this article), Indemnification/Workers' Compensation/Third Party (although ABC is also supporting an Indemnification bill negotiated by the Texas Civil Justice League with both AGC-TBB and TCA), and Trades Legislation.



**40 ALPHA**  
BUILDING CORPORATION  
First Choice For Facilities Renovation & Construction  
1969 - 2009

*Celebrating 4 Decades of Construction Excellence*

Alpha Building Corporation began business in 1969, organized by people who instilled the practical logic that continues today: the client must come first, be served honestly, promptly, and with responsibility.

As the Job Order Contractor for seventeen universities, three cities and two school districts, we know that the construction services we perform are small contributions to their great achievements.

JOC, CMatRisk or Design/Build - Alpha is your first choice for facilities renovation and construction.

Corporate Headquarters: 24850 Blanco Rd., San Antonio, TX 78260  
210-491-9925 www.alphabuilding.com

# INNOVATIVE, AFFORDABLE HEALTH INSURANCE

## AS EASY AS A...B...C!



AS A MEMBER OF ABC, you have access to an exclusive health insurance program with medical and prescription drug coverage in one convenient plan – that fits your budget.

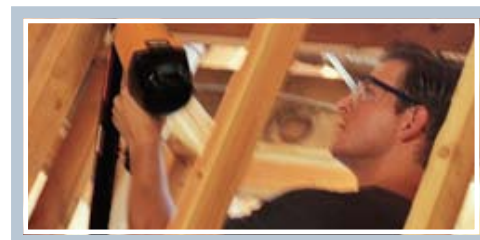
### Exclusive Program Advantages

**SMART, FLEXIBLE PLAN CHOICES**, including traditional PPO and consumer-directed plans to achieve the right balance of cost and benefits.

**COST-SAVING, CONSUMER-DIRECTED OPTIONS**, such as health savings accounts (HSAs), offer tax advantages and premium savings when paired with a higher-deductible plan.

**PHARMACY BENEFITS THROUGH WELLPOINT**, with more than 61,000 network pharmacies nationwide, include copay options, mail order and specialty drug services.

**EXCLUSIVE BENEFITS THROUGH YOUR ASSOCIATION** means you join together with other participating ABC member employers nationwide for more buying power.



**Contact ABC MeritChoice today to learn how you can take advantage of this exclusive plan.**

p: 800.621.2993, ext. 2050  
e: MeritChoice@abc.org



### SOLID EXPERIENCE THROUGH TRUSTMARK

Trustmark has nearly 100 years experience in the insurance industry and more than 50 years as a leader serving associations and other affiliated organizations.

**Trustmark** **Trustmark**  
LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY INSURANCE COMPANY

Products are underwritten and administered by Trustmark Life Insurance Company or Trustmark Insurance Company.  
400 Field Drive • Lake Forest, IL 60045

N353-264abc (10-08)





# Political Action Does not End with Your PAC

By Jon Fisher, ABC of Texas President

their office and say you want an opportunity to better explain your business and to get to know the individual legislator. Most of the time, they will be happy to accept your invitation. Be sure to let the legislator do as much of the talking as possible. If you wonder how to get this to happen, ask them what they will be working on next session. Most of the time, these conversations will give you valuable insights into the priorities of that legislator—you may even find some common ground. Any “face time” you get with a member of the state legislature takes us a long way toward obtaining the tools to be effective in the legislative process.

Whether you help in a campaign, or simply build a relationship, don't forget the next important thing to do—tell your Local Chapter President so he can pass that information on to the State Chapter, or email [jon@abctexas.org](mailto:jon@abctexas.org).

If you have any questions about how to get more involved, or want to share a success story, feel free to call Jon Fisher at (512)470-5756. - JF

**M**any people think their opportunities to have an effect on the political process ends with giving to a political action committee. Nothing could be further from the truth!

Most candidates for public office need and value the help of volunteers. If you spend some time helping your candidates put up signs, working in their campaign headquarters, or creating opportunities for them to get in front of potential voters, they will remember it for a long time.

***“Most candidates for public office need and value the help of volunteers. If you spend some time helping your candidates put up signs, working in their campaign headquarters, or creating opportunities for them to get in front of potential voters, they will remember it for a long time.”***

In addition to helping candidates when running for office, it is also helpful to spend some time in between legislative sessions getting to know your state representative and state senator. If you simply take the time to invite the officeholder and their spouse to dinner with you and your spouse, you will be going a long way toward creating the types of relationships that bear big dividends during a legislative session. If you wonder how to do this, simply call up

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



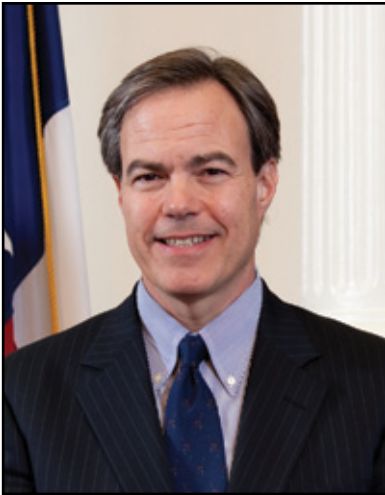
BUILDING SINCE 1953

**#1 BEST PLACE TO WORK 2008**

Houston Business Journal  
(Houston based company with 101-500 employees)

**GENERAL CONTRACTOR  
CONSTRUCTION MANAGER  
DESIGN/BUILD  
CIVIL CONSTRUCTION**

13800 West Road Houston, TX 77041 281-570-5300 [www.spawglass.com](http://www.spawglass.com)



## *One on One With...* **SPEAKER JOE STRAUS**

*The Honorable Joe Straus was elected as Speaker of the House, the chamber's presiding officer, by his peers at the commencement of the 81st Regular Legislative Session on January 13, 2009. During the 2007 legislative session Speaker Straus served on the Committee on Economic Development as Vice-Chairman, the Committee on Regulated Industries, and the Committee on Local and Consent Calendars. As a member of the Regulated Industries Committee, Speaker Straus chaired the Subcommittee on Energy Conservation and Efficiency, which developed a major bill that puts Texas on the cutting edge of energy efficiency. Speaker Straus also served on the Select Committee on Electric Generation Capacity and Environmental Effects, which studied the state's energy demand and expected growth for the next 50 years in order to develop long-term energy plans for Texas.*

*In the summer of 2007, Speaker Straus was presented the Texas Public Power Association's Public Official Award for leadership and contributions to public power. He was also given the Legislative Service Award by the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club for his work in the area of energy efficiency. Additionally, Speaker Straus received the Defender of the American Dream Award in 2008 from Americans for Prosperity for his record of commitment for protecting taxpayers. In 2008, Texas Monthly selected Speaker Straus as one of the 35 Texans who will shape the future of the state.*

*As a lifelong Republican, Speaker Straus has previously served on the Management Committee of the Bexar County Republican Party, as a precinct chairman, and on numerous campaign committees for federal, state, and local candidates. He served in the administration of President George H. W. Bush from 1989 through 1991 as deputy director of Business Liaison at the U.S. Department of Commerce and also in the Reagan administration as executive assistant to the Commissioner of Customs. In 1986, he was U.S. Representative Lamar Smith's campaign manager in Smith's first race for Congress.*

### ***Q. What were your expectations upon taking the job, given the circumstances surrounding your elevation?***

A: I think it is safe to say my elevation to the Speaker's post happened somewhat quickly and there were days when circumstances were changing rapidly. It was gratifying to see so many Members sign on to my effort to become Speaker. I am not really certain I had concrete, solid expectations when I assumed the helm of the House. What I can say is that I fully expected to work collaboratively with members and make every effort to create an environment whereby they could and would succeed. I am very mindful of the 76-74 party split in the House and the math is what it is. I expect to have a successful and good session and know every member will work efficiently and be prudent in setting and addressing our collective priorities.

### ***Q: At this point, you are a little over a month into the job. What has surprised you the most?***

A: I really do not think I have been surprised by any one issue or topic since I became Speaker. I have been extremely impressed with the intensity with which Members have gotten to work. Since my February 12 committee announcements, bills have been referred to committee and initial hearings conducted. Members are talking to each other and regularly interacting with my office about issues which matter to the people of Texas. Surprised? No, but very pleased and honored to be working with 149 individuals who are focused on advancing and protecting the interests of those who elected us to office.

### ***Q: How has your perspective about the House, the Members, and the process changed with your new responsibilities?***

A: After two terms in the House of Representatives and several weeks as Speaker, I have an enhanced, deeper appreciation and respect for my colleagues and the House. Every House member stands on the shoulders of all who came before us and selflessly served our great state. I am honored with the faith members have expressed in me and the trust placed in me. Serving with them and for them is among the most distinct honors I have had in my life. My newfound responsibility is humbling and making government work for 23 million Texans is a unique challenge and profound opportunity. We embarked in early January on a new direction for the House and reaffirmed our responsibility to ensure government does everything it can to limit how much it spends when working families across Texas are having to do the same.

**Q: What are your personal goals for the session?**

A: My personal goals for this session parallel and reflect promises I made to Members when I was elected Speaker. I committed to help create a House where every single member should come to work feeling like they have a chance to succeed and are empowered to work on issues important to them and the hard working people they represent. Among my goals is to help members effectively represent their districts and encourage them to articulate how I can assist their efforts. Being Speaker is not about me or what I want to do. My goal is to let the House work, operate efficiently, conduct the people's business in an open, transparent manner, support members, and improve morale.

**Q: What major initiatives do you see occupying the Legislature this session?**

A: I have previously identified what I believe to be major priorities which warrant attention and consideration by the House. Our top priority is to write a responsible, fiscally responsible State budget in which we review each revenue and spending decision cognizant how they impact the pocketbooks of every Texan. Providing a quality education for all children is of paramount

importance this session. We must create an educational system which enables every child to achieve and succeed. Our state transportation system must be improved and the Legislature has to continue to create and bring jobs to Texas. Job creation is the key to reinvigorating and sustaining our economy. Finally, we must be better stewards of the state's natural resources. We have a duty and responsibility to do all we can to pass on to our children a beautiful, pristine natural environment provided to us by our ancestors.



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




**MAREK**

FAMILY OF COMPANIES

**Commercial Interior Specialists**

*Helping General Contractors meet today's challenging construction needs with ingenuity and integrity.*

**Six Locations To Conveniently Serve You!**

<b>Houston</b> (713) 681-2626	<b>Dallas</b> (972) 393-4343
<b>Atlanta</b> (770) 973-2218	<b>Harlingen</b> (956) 412-9339
<b>Austin</b> (512) 416-0555	<b>San Antonio</b> (210) 657-4437

**www.marekbros.com**



# ABC Speaks Up at Texas Legislative Day

By Meghan Stephens, Assistant Editor

The 81st Texas Legislature is underway, and the voice of merit shop construction was heard in Austin, Texas in February as members of Associated Builders and Contractors spoke with numerous State Representatives, Texas Senators, and countless staff members about issues critical to Texas businesses during the 2009 ABC Legislative Day. Currently, the legislature is debating issues that will have both positive and negative consequences for the construction industry if certain bills are passed. Here, a few ABC members who attended Legislative day recount their experiences.

Following a warm welcome reception in Austin that was well-attended by Legislative decision-makers and ABC members from around Texas, ABC organized members into small groups who completed a schedule of visits with members of the State Legislature. Each group was briefed on an agenda of bills up for discussion, and took it upon themselves to speak out on behalf of Texas construction. "There are major issues up for debate during this session that are important to the construction industry", said Wayne Navarro of S&B Engineers & Constructors, who attended ABC Legislative Day for the first time this year. "I felt that it was important to make the trip in order to present the facts about certain legislation that could negatively impact our businesses", he continues. Navarro says he was impressed with the experience, and that the Legislators and staff were very accessible, open to the ABC opinion, and knowledgeable about pertinent issues such as the Employee Free Choice Act and immigration reform bills that threaten to hold Contractors responsible for verifying employee documentation.

"Unfortunately, these visits are more often about playing defense, as we are often fighting bills that will overly complicate our business. This year, most of what we wanted to communicate was

why there could be a negative impact on our businesses as well as a ripple effect in larger markets if certain legislation is enacted", says John Marshall of Satterfield and Pontikes Construction, a returning Legislative Day participant. "The good news is that we were there early enough in the session to have significant time with the legislators. They were very receptive, and we have known several of them for years. They are a little more versed in where ABC is coming from. Additionally, newer Legislators are learning about us and what we stand for. It is extremely valuable for people in business to take the time to understand how the legislature works and its impact on business", Marshall says. "What gets done in Austin has a huge influence on our business at home. You will be surprised in a negative way if you don't understand that".

Bob Parker of RepconStrickland, Inc. is a longtime veteran of ABC Legislative Day who is passionate about the issues and ABC advocacy. "There are efforts underway in this session to roll back some of the business-friendly tort reforms that have been gained since the first major tort reform Legislative session of 1995. The Texas economy is strong because we are a business-friendly state



*ABC South Texas Members from San Antonio enjoy a beautiful evening (and view) at the ABC Legislative Day Reception where many law makers were on hand to greet ABC Members from across Texas.*

***“Following a warm welcome reception in Austin that was well-attended by Legislative decision-makers and ABC members from around Texas, ABC organized members into small groups who completed a schedule of visits with members of the State Legislature. Each group was briefed on an agenda of bills up for discussion, and took it upon themselves to speak out on behalf of Texas construction.”***

with a pro-business government in Austin, attractive tax policies, and a civil justice system that is both fair and balanced. Texas has continued to produce jobs over the past decade through a conservative and business-friendly stance towards entrepreneurs. One of the most important issues in the current legislative session is to not give up any of the gains that we have made”, says Parker.


“ABC’s Legislative day works great. It is the one real opportunity that we have for our members to get involved at a grassroots level to and affect legislation. There is absolutely no substitute for meeting your legislators and knowing who they are and letting them know who you are”, says Parker. - *MS*

# MORRISON


SUPPLY COMPANY



Wrot & Cast Copper



NIBCO® DURA-PEX®  
Piping System



**NIBCO**  
AHEAD OF THE FLOW™  
[www.nibco.com](http://www.nibco.com)



TOLCO® Pipe Hangers  
& Supports



Commercial Valves

Commercial/Residential Plumbing  
Pipes • Valves • Fittings  
HVAC  
Waterworks

877.709.2227

70 locations throughout Texas  
[www.morsco.com](http://www.morsco.com)

# CHAPTER INITIATIVES AROUND THE STATE

## CENTRAL TEXAS CHAPTER

The ABC Central Texas Chapter is in the center of the action as the 81st session of the Texas Legislature gets underway. Members of the Legislative Committee have been meeting to discuss and review potential bills as the Legislature makes critical decisions that will affect the construction industry. Central Texas has put forth a concerted effort to voice its opinions to ABC of Texas concerning legal issues. The Central Texas Chapter has also scheduled interviews with Austin City Councilmember candidates in the coming weeks.

ABC Central Texas recently completed construction, from the ground up, on a five bedroom house in collaboration with Habitat for Humanity. The energy-efficient “green” home was completed through the donation of labor, materials, and funds to the Central Texas Chapter, with members volunteering throughout the winter. The house was dedicated on Saturday, January 31, and was given to the eleven grateful members of the Vazquez family in Austin, Texas.



*Peco Construction won the recent ABC South Texas “Contractor In A Box” competition, where general contractors compete to see who has the best display, marketing materials, presentations, and company information.*

## SOUTH TEXAS CHAPTER

Odd numbered years in San Antonio mean San Antonio City Council elections, and all of the local politics that go with them. Once again the ABC South Texas Chapter co-sponsored a mayoral candidates’ forum with the Real Estate Council of San Antonio (RECSAA), Greater San Antonio Builders Association (GSABA), San Antonio Apartment Association (SAAA) and the Professional Engineers in Private Practice (PEPP). The top four candidates addressed the local construction, real estate and development industry in March, just before the start of early voting. This gave the 200 plus attendees an opportunity to hear the candidates’ views on issues impacting the industry, and to respond to questions from the audience. The chapter also met with candidates from various city council districts to determine their views and positions on industry issues and the community in general.

Also on the political front, the South Texas Chapter exceeded its national PAC goal for the year, through a one hour phone blitz conducted by the chapter’s Executive Committee and Government Affairs Committee chair.

For the third year in a row a member of the South Texas Chapter was recognized as Beam Club member of the year for ABC Region 3. The 2008 recipient, recognized at the 2009 convention, was Michelle Seward Davis with Joeris General Contractors, Ltd. Michelle is the ABC-National ABC-PAC Chair. The South Texas Chapter has surpassed its membership retention goal of 80% and is nearing 85%.

The chapter’s annual “Contractor In A Box” membership mixer, held in January at the Oak Hills Country Club, was the first major event of the year for the chapter and provided the membership an opportunity to meet the general contractor members in a fun-filled forum. General contractors competed to see who had the best display, marketing materials, presentations, and company information. Peco Construction won this year’s competition.

The annual Chili Cook-off and Safety Awards program held at the beginning of March provided the membership another opportunity to mix and mingle, and to recognize companies for their outstanding safety records. Over 25 teams competed in the chili cook-off competition, while 9 companies were presented with safety awards.

On the “green building” front, Hal Heintz, Education Coordinator, was the first ABC chapter staff person to take and pass the NCCER test to fulfill the requirements to serve as a “Your Role in the Green Environment” Instructor. This new course developed by the NCCER is a great primer for LEED AP. His first class was conducted in late March, with the next class set for late April. Demand for this class has been incredible.



*Donald Day, of Texas Glass & Tinting, and Dale Fowler, President of the Victoria Economic Development Corporation (VEDC) visit with Todd Hunter, State Representative for District 32.*

## TEXAS MID COAST CHAPTER

Donald Day, of Texas Glass & Tinting, and Dale Fowler, President of the Victoria Economic Development Corporation (VEDC) attended Associated Builders and Contractors of Texas 2009 Legislative Day in Austin on February 3rd. Donald joined fellow members of Associated Builders and Contractors from around the State to meet with elected officials to discuss issues important to the construction industry and Free Enterprise. While visiting with

# CHAPTER INITIATIVES AROUND THE STATE

Legislators, Donald had the opportunity for a photo shoot with Todd Hunter, State Representative for District 32. The chapter was a PAC contributor to S.R. Hunter's campaign in 2008. A special thanks go to Donald, for representing the Chapter at this important event!

Corpus Christi legislator, Todd Hunter, has been named to chair the House Judicial and Civil Jurisprudence Committee by Speaker of the House Joe Straus. The Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence Committee is composed of 11 members and has jurisdiction over civil laws, judicial districts, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct, courts and court procedure and several state agencies including the Supreme Court, the Courts of Appeals and Criminal Appeals and the Office of the Attorney General. In addition to chairing the Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence Committee, Hunter was named to serve on the Insurance and General Investigating Committee.

## TEXAS COASTAL BEND CHAPTER

The Texas Coastal Bend Chapter rung in the New year celebrating the receipt of the Charles A. Mullan award. ABC National Chairman Jerry Gorski made the long trip down to Corpus Christi in search of warmer weather and to install the 2009 Chapter Officers and Board of Directors. Gorski emphasized the importance of ABC members getting involved in politics and challenged each member to recruit one new member this year.

The Texas Coastal Bend Chapter increased its legislative and political involvement this year by hosting a legislative outlook with Texas State Representatives Todd Hunter and Solomon P. Ortiz, Jr. and Representative Abel Herrero's District Director, Zulema Zapata following the State Legislative Day. The Chapter also hosted a seminar on the Employee Free Choice Act focusing on the negative impacts of the proposed legislation and ABC's efforts to defeat it. In late March, candidates running for Corpus Christi Mayor and City Council spoke to ABC members about Corpus Christi business and development issues.

The Texas Coastal Bend Chapter is also working to expand its community involvement to include the Harbor Playhouse. The Harbor Playhouse is a local non-profit theatrical company whose facilities are in dire need of repair. In response to those structural and cosmetic needs, the Chapter will be hosting an IBCA sanctioned BBQ cook off. The proceeds from the event will go straight to the Harbor Playhouse for capital improvements.

The Texas Coastal Bend Chapter continued to support more educational programs for contractors in the Coastal Bend starting with a full virtual plan room training conducted by the Builders' Exchange of Texas. Brandon Frail and Bryan Lynch with the Builders' Exchange conducted two seminars for ABC members wishing to learn more about the tools available online through the Builders' Exchange. The Chapter also hosted a Construction Quality Management course for contractors wishing to work on Naval and Corp of Engineering projects. With three naval bases and a growing number of Corp of Engineering projects it is a popular course for members and non-members alike. In addition to the Chapter's management educational opportunities, this semester the Craft Training Center of the Coastal Bend celebrated its largest evening enrollment of over 200 students.

Finally, the Texas Coastal Bend Chapter successfully completed the first of four major events. The Fat Friday Mardi Gras Casino was a rendition of the Chapter's annual Casino Night with some Cajun flair. The popular event entertained 300 guests.



*Members of ABC Greater Houston enjoy dinner as they discuss the visits they plan to make the following day with lawmakers in Austin, Texas during the 2009 ABC Legislative Day event.*

## GREATER HOUSTON CHAPTER

The Greater Houston Chapter has been very busy responding to the new political environment. After seeing the election results from last November, it was a little easier to raise money for both the Free Enterprise Alliance (FEA) and Political Action Committee (PAC). Houston has an FEA check-off included in the dues statement, which gets about a 60% response rate and has collected over \$32,000 for FEA.

The PAC hosted a fundraising luncheon to raise \$10,000 in January. The Greater Houston Chapter then took 32 members to visit our 39 elected officials in Austin during the ABC Legislative Day. This provided a great learning experience for many of the members who have never been inside the Capitol before and also a learning experience for the Representatives and Senators who now know about ABC and understand our issues.

The chapter formed an ad hoc Legislative Review Committee that has reviewed dozens of bills and debated them to reach a consensus opinion of the value of the bills. This takes many hours of reading and research as some bills are not very transparent as to the problem they are trying to fix. This committee meets every two weeks and has prompted lively debate among the different companies represented by ABC.

Recently, the PAC Trustees and ABC Board of Directors held a PAC call out to raise money from ABC members who are not habitual PAC contributors. This effort secured pledges of over \$8,000. The PAC has set an ambitious goal of \$72,000 to help our friends get elected in the fall elections, and they are a third of the way along to reach that goal.

PRSR STD  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
HOUSTON TX  
PERMIT 542

**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!**

