

October 2009

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

Defending the Rights of Merit Shop Contractors



Senator Mike Jackson Reviews the Successes of the 81st Legislative Session and His Thoughts About the 2011 Texas Legislature

Also In This Issue:

ABC Coastal Bend Chapter's Educational Affiliate Experiences Great Success With Training Center

ABC of Texas Names Free Enterprise Champions of the 81st Texas Legislature





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KOEBEL

Letter From the Chairman

ABC of Texas has made great strides over the last two years thanks in large part to outgoing Chair Roger Berry, with SpawGlass Construction, and his predecessor Mike Weaver, with Weaver & Jacobs Constructors, Inc. These two fine leaders have laid a foundation upon which we will continue to build ABC of Texas as a force in our great state. I am looking forward to following in their footsteps in leading this great organization.

Having been involved on the state board for a number of years, serving as South Texas Chapter Chair and on the Chapter Board, I fully appreciate the role our state association plays in Austin. I have watched ABC of Texas have an even greater impact each legislative session, and hopefully this will continue.

Mike Toomey, our State Lobbyist, is available to help guide us through the political maze of Texas politics and an outstanding Board of Directors is in place to develop our goals and plans. Mike is well respected in the halls of the State Capitol, and is very knowledgeable about the inner workings of the legislative process. Your State Board deserves a pat on the back for their involvement and vision. We have a pretty darn good mix of ABC members from across the state that bring their personal expertise and respective chapters' input to help grow our state association to make us more effective and visible. This group was able to provide the direction and focus for our new state President, Jon Fisher, to follow during the recently completed Texas Legislative session.

Now, with the legislative session over, it is time to start looking towards the 2011 session. This will give the Board and our state President the opportunity to further establish those important lines of communication with the various elected officials in Austin, their local and district staff, the many state agencies that impact the construction industry, and the other state business and trade groups in Austin, many of whom we work with very closely and others who could be our allies in future efforts. It is also the time to identify issues and develop priorities. To this end, if you have any ideas or concerns that you feel ABC of Texas should address, please contact your local ABC Chapter, a state Board Member from your area, or call Jon Fisher directly. The more input we have from ABC members, the better able we will be to serve and meet the needs of the construction industry in Texas.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to give back to an industry that has done so much for me.

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

Andy Koebel
Kunz Construction Co., Inc.
2009-2011 ABC of Texas Chairman

For more information about ABC of Texas visit www.abctexas.org.



FISHER

Letter from the President

Wow! It seems like just yesterday that I took over the reins at ABC of Texas.

ABC of Texas has been around for a while and has quite a history. You've had a state leader before, and you've gone for a while without one. You had a paid coordinator, and then you went for a short period existing solely through the chapters. Of course, during the last two decades, you've had a great lobbyist who I really enjoy working with—Mike Toomey.

A couple of years back, you spent some time assessing your needs and came up with a plan. You began implementing that plan when I was brought on board. We still haven't done everything that you set your sights on in 2006, but we've done a lot!

By the time you get this issue, we will have held another planning meeting and set our sights on some new goals. Among those will likely be the yet to be realized goal of making more of an impact in the election process. If you read my article in this magazine, you will get some ideas of where I would like to lead you—into not only building a mechanism for contributing financially to elections, but contributing some human resources that will also make an impact. This is critical.

I want to use some of this space to let you know how grateful I am to you as an organization for giving me this opportunity to lead you over the next decade or so. I give that time frame because I'm no spring chicken!

My goal when I took this job was to take you where you want to go and leave you an organization that can carry you into 2020 and beyond. We've got some more work to do. Let's roll up our sleeves and "get 'r done."

Jon Fisher
ABC of Texas
President



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ABC Coastal Bend Chapter's Educational Affiliate Experiences Great Success With Craft Training Center



The Craft Training Center of the Coastal Bend (CTCCB), a non-profit training provider for Associated Builders and Contractors Texas Coastal Bend Chapter, has been conducting skills training programs and registered DOL apprenticeship programs for over 20 years in the Corpus Christi area. The CTCCB is accredited by the National Center for Construction Education and Research as a Training and Assessment Center. The training programs have been delivered in an evening setting: three hours a night, two nights a week for 14 weeks, with three 14-week semesters conducted each year. This ongoing training program is provided for adult students. All students who apply for admission must pass a drug screening, and they are subject to random drug testing throughout their training at the CTCCB.

“Each year, the CTCCB has graduated between 60 and 80 students, with an average of 95% employment rate in the respective industry within 90 days of graduation.”

Enrollment in the adult evening programs totaled about 100 to 125 students each semester, divided among welding, pipefitting, and instrumentation as well as Registered DOL Apprenticeship programs in electrical and plumbing. Upgrade programs in scaffold-building and industrial painting have also been delivered. Each year, the CTCCB has graduated between 60 and 80 students, with an average of 95% employment rate in the respective industry within 90 days of graduation.

In December 2007, the CTCCB dedicated a new, \$3 million state-of-the-art classroom and laboratory building at 7433 Leopard Street in Corpus Christi. The 22,214 square foot building was the result of a partnership between CTCCB and Contractors Safety Council, also located at the Leopard Street complex. The facility includes an electrical laboratory, an instrumentation laboratory, seven classrooms, a computer-based assessment center, administrative offices, a conference room, and a 68-booth welding laboratory.

With the opening of the new facility, a small, experimental daytime high school program began in the Spring of 2008 with a total of 21 students in welding from three high schools: Gregory-Portland, Calallen, and Richard Milburn Academy. The school districts transported their students to and from the CTCCB facility in school buses except for Richard Milburn Academy. Richard Milburn Academy is a small charter school and does not receive funding for bus routes, so the innovative director, Sally Irvine, arranged for a local taxi company to transport their four students to and from the CTCCB each day. The school districts paid a base tuition of \$200 per student per semester with additional charges for textbooks, consumables, tools, and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Semester totals averaged \$350 to \$465 per semester. A continuing student in welding, for example, would not require new purchases of PPE or tools each semester, so the costs for succeeding semesters would be substantially less than for the first semester.

The NCCER Contren Learning Series Curriculum was aligned with corresponding courses accredited for high school credit through Texas Education Agency. The TEA courses (PEIMS numbered) are comprised of individual competencies outlined in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). The individual knowledge and performance criteria specified by NCCER were coordinated with the corresponding TEKS criteria with the approval of area school curriculum administrators and superintendents. Those participating districts entered into written agreements with the CTCCB, stipulating the curriculum alignment with TEKS and instructor qualifications so that high school students attending the CTCCB could earn high school credit toward graduation while building their “national transcript” in craft training through NCCER’s National Registry. All courses begin with NCCER’s Core Curriculum training and continue with specialization into welding, pipefitting, or electrical. Just as with the adult evening students, all high school students must pass a drug screen in order to be admitted to the CTCCB and are also subject to random drug testing throughout their enrollment.

The first experiment was successful, and three of those first students graduated from their respective high schools and continued with CTCCB in evening adult classes. To our surprise, seven continuing high school students asked to return for the

Summer, and 12 new students came in, taking an "Industry Overview Course" using the NCCER Core Curriculum and industry craftsmen to demonstrate seven different industrial and/or commercial crafts. This Overview Course was created in response to requests from high school administrators asking us for "something that helps these students learn what opportunities are possible."

Throughout the first seven months of 2008, CTCCB continued to meet with superintendents, counselors, parent groups, and students over the 12-county Coastal Bend area. By the Fall of 2008, three different approaches had evolved to reach high school students:

1. Students attending the facility: Ten school districts sent a total of 108 students to CTCCB each day in the Fall Semester for welding, pipefitting, or electrical. The school districts were Mathis, Odem, Sinton, Robstown, Calallen, West Oso, Richard Milburn, Tuloso-Midway, Banquete, and Gregory-Portland. In January, three more high schools (Richard King, Ray, and Coles) joined CTCCB from Corpus Christi ISD, bringing the Spring Semester total to 121 students coming to the CTCCB each day.

2. Kingsville Model: Too far away to send students back and forth each day, H. M. King High School developed an innovative approach to work with CTCCB. They received a grant from TEA for a 10-period school day, and CTCCB sends teachers to them for classes that run from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Thirty-one students enrolled in that program.

3. Ag Mechanics Model: A number of other high schools have welding labs through their Vocational Agriculture program. So, CTCCB worked with those teachers to have them certified to teach the NCCER curriculum (3-day workshop). They use the NCCER textbooks and module-testing process so that their students are also earning NCCER credit while concurrently earning high school credit in Ag Mechanics. CTCCB welding instructors work with the Ag teachers to align performance testing to industry standards. One hundred students from 5 districts (Tuloso-Midway, Calallen, Taft, George West, and Ingleside ISDs) earned NCCER welding credit through this process.

Again, CTCCB had a busy summer training continuing students and some new students, while also conducted an innovative program for the three high schools in Refugio County: Austwell-Tivoli, Refugio, and Woodsboro. The three school districts collaborated in providing bus transportation for a total of 21 students who traveled 55+ miles each way from June 8 to July 20 to train with us for 6 hours each day. At the end of the training, all students had completed the NCCER Core Curriculum and Welding I and II (plate) curriculum and passed the 3G Open V-groove welding performance tests.

Other activities included hosting seven contests for the Texas

STATE SKILLS USA Competition over a two-day period in March; hosting our 15th Annual Welding Contest with 19 high schools; and hosting a number of tours and shorter "overview" programs for elementary, middle school, and high school students.

The total completions as of July 31, 2009:

Core Curriculum and Welding I	230 high school students
Welding II	77 high school students
Welding III	3 high schools students
Welding IV	1 high school student
Pipefitting I	21 high school students
Pipefitting II	9 high school students
Electricity I	19 high school students
Instrumentation I	8 high school students

Current enrollment for Fall 2009:

High school students:	167 students (with more anticipated)
Evening adult students:	270 students

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Dr. Anne Matula is President of The Craft Training Center of the Coastal Bend (CTCCB), which is ABC Coastal Bend's educational affiliate. CTCCB allows Corpus Christi industrial owners and contractors to come together and work to solve the growing manpower shortages facing the South Texas construction industry. To reach Dr. Matula, please call (361) 289-1636.

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One on One With... **TEXAS SENATOR MIKE JACKSON**

Elected to the Texas Senate in 1998, Mike Jackson represents Senate District 11, which includes portions of Brazoria, Harris and Galveston Counties. He chairs the Senate Nominations Committee and is a member of the Senate State Affairs, Business and Commerce, Natural Resources, and Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committees. Jackson is also a five-term veteran of the Texas House of Representatives where he represented District 129.

Since the 81st Legislative Session ended in June, Lieutenant Governor David Dewhurst has appointed Senator Jackson to serve as a Texas representative to the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee of the Southern Legislative Conference. Just this month, Mr. Dewhurst appointed Mike to another term on the Redistricting and Elections Committee and to a new position on the Environment Committee, both on the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Senator Jackson has been declared a "Champion of Texas' Economy" by the Texans for Fiscal Responsibility. The group touted the senator's "consistent support for free markets throughout his service in the Texas Legislature, notably highlighted by his principled vote against the Gross Margins Tax."

Some of his other honors include a "Coastal Stewardship Award" from the General Land Office and the American Shore and Coastal Preservation Association; a "Special Recognition Award" from America's Wetland Foundation; the "Texas Affordable Housing Leadership Award;" the Texas Chemical Council's "Legislative Leadership Award;" and a Texas Association of Business "Champion for Free Enterprise" award.

Mike is the president of Force Corporation, his family's La Porte-based industrial construction and maintenance company, and is a 35-year veteran of the construction industry.

Q: Please describe your business background.

A: My dad started Force Corporation, our family's La Porte based industrial construction and maintenance company, 36 years ago. I was first employed there as a pipefitter's helper, working my way up through the ranks to serve as the Corporate President. For the past 15 years, I have been the majority stockholder and serve as the Chief Executive Officer.

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

A: The free enterprise system is what makes America great. It provides for individual ownership of property and the freedom for a person to make their own choices in the operation of their business. It relies on private property rights, freedom from obtrusive government intervention and the right to make a profit. It encourages discovery, creativity, partnerships and growth.

Q: Do you view government as a friend or a foe?

A: By all rights government should be a friend but it seems lately that government has become a more and more dominating and over regulating body. Government should be an ally to business, creating an environment to allow business to prosper, but too many onerous regulations and taxes cripple the ability for business to grow, create jobs and help the overall economy.

Q: Is the tax burden on businesses too high, too low or just right?

A: The tax burden on businesses, especially small businesses, is entirely too high. As a small business owner, my taxes have increased dramatically over the last three years and it is a heavy burden to maintain payroll, provide health insurance for employees and pay local, state and federal taxes that are ever-increasing.

On a good note, during the 81st Legislative Session, we passed House Bill 4765 (Oliviera/Patrick) in response to the negative impact of the revised franchise tax passed in 2007. This bill exempts all small businesses that make a total revenue less than \$1 million in 2010 and 2011 from paying any franchise tax. In future years, the exemption will apply to all small businesses with less than \$600,000 in total revenue. This is a small step in lightening the burden on business owners but it will make a difference.

Q: You have a historical family tie to ABC of Texas—would you share that with our readers?

A: I am proud to say, my Dad, Jack Jackson, was an active member and past president of ABC Houston back in the early eighties. He served as the Texas State ABC Chairman and was a part of the group to start a National Chapter.

Q: Where do you see our state heading as we approach the next Legislature in 2011?

A: Texas is going to face significant revenue shortfalls during the next biennium unless there is a major turnaround in the global economy. There will be tough choices to make as we build our budget for the next two years. My efforts will be to cut spending instead of raising taxes to maintain the services that we now provide. There will be an effort by some of the members to raise taxes and spend more money than we have. I urge all ABC members to be diligent.

Free Enterprise Champions of the 81st Texas Legislature

by Jon Fisher, ABC of Texas President



Christina Stone, Jon Fisher, Mike Gremillion and Russell Hamley, present Representative Wayne Smith (Center) with the ABC Champion of Free Enterprise Champion Award.

This year, ABC of Texas chose to recognize six legislators for actions above and beyond the call of duty. Of course, many legislators helped us pursue our goals and eliminate threats, but these six stood out by championing our priority issues and major defensive efforts.

The “Free Enterprise Champion” award was presented to two legislators who helped us pass one of our legislative priorities (as well as protect us from threats), two legislators who took leadership roles in defeating personal injury trial lawyer initiatives which would have harmed our industry, and two “freshmen” legislators that stood out by fighting ill-conceived legislation.

The first two awards went to State Senator Mike Jackson of La Porte and State Representative Wayne Smith of Baytown, the respective Senate and House authors of our Trust Funds bill—HB 1513 (and SB 1137). Passing legislation is never easy, but by working with these two authors who understand our industry, our interests were well-served. Both of these individuals also stood tall in opposing legislation that would have harmed our interests—*Mesothelioma Causation* legislation in the Senate and the *Entergy* bill in the House.

The next two awards went to State Senator Tommy Williams of The Woodlands and State Representative

Todd Hunter of Corpus Christi. State Senator Tommy Williams assisted us in gathering Senate blockers for all of the major initiatives of the personal injury trial lawyers—*Mesothelioma Causation*, *Entergy*, and *Paid or Incurred* (Phantom Damages). He stood resolute in trying to block all three, succeeded in blocking two and missed blocking a third by only one vote. Our other winner, State Representative Todd Hunter, the chair of the House Committee on Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence, succeeded in helping block the *Mesothelioma Causation* and *Paid or Incurred* bills in his House committee. He also voted against the *Entergy* bill in the House, which only made it to the floor because it was referred to another committee—the bill was worded to keep it

(Continued on page 10)



Representative Todd Hunter (second from left) is presented the ABC Free Enterprise Champion award by Mark Roach, John Taylor and Jon Fisher.



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out of the House Committee on Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence. Both of these legislators protected our favorable civil justice climate.


Last, but certainly not least, awards were given to two freshmen legislators who chose to defend our interests by actively opposing bills favored by the personal injury trial lawyers during floor debate in their respective houses. State Senator Joan Huffman of Houston was an active participant in the *Mesothelioma Causation* bill debate, using the skills of an accomplished and experienced jurist. She also helped gather Senate "blockers" for the *Entergy* and *Paid or Incurred* bills. Since each Senator is one of 31 votes, it is critical that a Senator use that vote and influence judiciously. State Senator Joan Huffman did the State of Texas a great service by picking her issues and becoming an effective spokesperson for our civil justice system. As a freshman in the House, State Representative Tim Kleinschmidt had a different path. House freshman should generally be "seen and not heard." However, when a vacuum occurs, and they can contribute, the freshman legislator must be ready to step up and perform. State Representative Tim Kleinschmidt did just that, choosing the House debate on the *Entergy* bill to show his stuff.

State Representative Todd Hunter received his award on August 19th at a "State of the State" luncheon hosted by the Texas Coastal Bend Chapter. State Representatives Wayne Smith and Tim Kleinschmidt received their awards on the Greater Houston Chapter's PAC Cruise on August 20th. We will be presenting State Senators Mike Jackson, Tommy Williams and Joan Huffman with their awards at a future meetings of the Greater Houston Chapter.




Everyone serving in the Texas Legislature deserves to be thanked for their service to Texas, and we recognize that each consistently does what is best for their constituents.

These six legislators, and many others who supported our efforts, deserve a special thanks. If you have the opportunity to visit with any of them in the near future, please make the effort to thank them and congratulate them on winning an ABC of Texas "Free Enterprise Champion" award for the 81st Texas Legislature. They are leaders in the Texas Legislature working to preserve the free enterprise philosophy and keep Texas a great place to do business.

- JF



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What Goes on When the Legislature Leaves Town

by Jon Fisher, ABC of Texas President

Board on the morning of July 29th. The last report I gave was to the Texas Gulf Coast Chapter at their August 18th Board meeting.

Of course, we had an ABC of Texas Board meeting on July 8th where, among other things, we set up a Board meeting by conference call for August 24th to adopt a bylaw change that treats the TEXO Chapter fairly in state dues.

We have a State Planning Meeting scheduled for September 30th and our last Board meeting of the year set for November 10th.

Certainly, our goals for the election cycle will be on the table for the September 30th Planning Meeting. It is critical for any association active in lobbying to be at least as active in the election process—after all, that is how we establish a Legislature and acquire other elected officials. If you restrict your political activity to lobbying, you will find your welcome wearing thin over time, because every elected official has to face election to get in office.

“Participation means more than just handing out contributions. It means getting involved in elections as a volunteer. I spoke with one of our award recipients on the Greater Houston Chapter’s PAC cruise, and he told me that although he could not remember everyone that gave him \$1,000, he could remember everyone who worked on his election campaigns.”

Participation means more than just handing out contributions. It means getting involved in elections as a volunteer. I spoke

(Continued on page 12)

Many people assume that life gets a little slower when the Legislature leaves town. As a veteran association staffer, I know better.

While most of us do take a little time to decompress after a contentious legislative session, that time usually comes after the Governor considers bills and after we have written our biennial reports. In my case, it was time to hit the road to give personal presentations to whatever audiences I could muster at the chapters.

My first report was to the Government Affairs Committee at the South Texas Chapter on June 10th. On June 16th, I appeared at the Central Texas Chapter’s Board meeting. The Texas Coastal Bend Chapter had me speak at a luncheon on June 19th. The Greater Houston Chapter invited several of its committees to an event the afternoon of July 1st. I joined Mike Chatron and Corbin Van Arsdale of the Associated General Contractors-Texas Building Branch at a TEXO Government Affairs Committee meeting on the afternoon of July 28th, and together we addressed the TEXO

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with one of our award recipients on the Greater Houston Chapter's PAC cruise, and he told me that although he could not remember everyone that gave him \$1,000, he could remember everyone who worked on his election campaigns.

When I met recently with new Board Chair Andy Koebel, he had me outline what I believed would be my breakdown of activities during the interim. Among those key efforts are:

- Association Operations - paying the bills, creating dues invoices, preparing for meetings, budgeting, filing campaign and lobby reports, general administrative duties and getting our older files in order pursuant to our records retention policy;
- Communications - articles for Texas Merit Shop Journal, board communications and chapter presentations and visits;
- Election Activities - political action committee work including election research, meeting candidates, and visits with incumbent members of the Texas Legislature;
- Coordination and Networking with other Associations - tort reform issues, workforce development, and construction industry issues;
- Preparing for the next Legislature - identifying ABC issues and preparing plans;
- Regulatory Activities - establishing and maintaining relationships at key regulatory agencies.

Of course, all of this is subject to change once the Board, Chapter Presidents and invited guests develop our plan for the next 4 years. The Board agreed that it is important to plan beyond the next legislative cycle so we can see clearly where we want to head as a state association. We intend to review our mission and vision, and spend time determining our goals and outlining strategies to meet those goals. Part of that process could include, depending on time, outlining our key issues in a broad sense so we can make sure the ABC of Texas priorities are in line with the priorities of our members. Once I am given additional direction, it will fall to me to develop specific tactics and activities designed to implement those strategies so we can meet our goals.

Andy has already told me that I need to utilize every opportunity to get out to the local chapters to meet and listen to the members. For that, I will need your help. Let me know about opportunities to visit your chapter. Between now and when the 82nd Texas Legislature meets in 2011, I hope that I have the chance to meet all of you. If I don't, it won't be because I haven't tried. - *JF*



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CHAPTER INITIATIVES AROUND THE STATE

TEXAS COASTAL BEND CHAPTER

The Texas Coastal Bend Chapter (TCB) is happy to announce that they successfully hosted the 17th Annual Fishing Tournament in June, attracting over 24 teams, 35 individuals, and 7 child entries. The event raised over \$1,200 for the ABC Scholarship Fund.

In July, the Chapter hosted ABC National Chief Economist Anirban Basu for a special luncheon, "The Real State of the Economy: Are You Stimulated?". Over 200 people attended the event, including many ABC member companies as well as the chambers of commerce, county commissioners, and various other business and civic organizations.

In August, at the General Membership Luncheon, the Chapter hosted State Representatives Todd Hunter, Abel Herrero, and Solomon Ortiz, Jr. for a State of the State briefing. ABC of Texas President Jon Fisher and Region III Political Manager April Brown were in attendance as well as many city and county officials. John Taylor, TCB Chapter President, Jon Fisher, Mark Roach, TCB Executive Board Member and PAC Committee Chair proudly presented ABC member State Representative Todd Hunter with the "Distinguished Legislator Award" for his outstanding commitment to the Free Enterprise System. In addition, each of the State Representatives were given an award on behalf of the chapter for their support during this year's session.



State Representative Todd Hunter receives the Distinguished Legislator Award at the ABC Texas Coastal Bend Membership Luncheon.

Also in August, Corpus Christi's local chambers of commerce, in conjunction with Governor Rick Perry's Office, hosted the Spirit of Texas Small Business Awards Luncheon. Texas Railroad Commissioner Elizabeth Ames Jones along with Robert Melvin from the Economic Development & Tourism Division of the Office of the Governor were the program's speakers and presenters. The Chapter was the proud recipient of the 'Corpus Christi Star Award' in the non-profit category. TCB was selected largely due to a recent fundraiser hosted to solely benefit the Harbor Playhouse Community Theatre of Corpus Christi. With the leadership of ABC Board of Director Randy Larson of Larson Plumbing & Utility and Pete Cordova of Industrial Piping & Steel the chapter hosted the first Grillin' on the Playa Barbeque Cook-Off benefiting the Harbor Playhouse. Forty-five professional and back yard cook teams competed for \$6,500 in prize money. The event collectively raised \$8,200 for the Harbor Playhouse in the first year for the event.

TCB is proud to also announce that they have awarded scholarships to 1st and 2nd year students attending the Craft Training Center of the Coastal Bend.

GREATER HOUSTON CHAPTER



ABC Greater Houston members raise money for the Political Action Committee at the Fall ABC Greater Houston PAC Clay Shoot.

The end of summer is an exciting time for the Greater Houston chapter. In order to celebrate the beauty of the Texas coast, the Political Action Committee hosted a Red, White and Blue Summer Cruise on Clear Lake. Members of ABC rubbed elbows with state representatives and elected officials from three area city councils that attended the event. Donations to the Political Action Committee totaled over \$7,000 that will be used to lobby for pro-business, pro-merit shop legislation and to endorse candidates in the upcoming city-wide elections. The night was made complete with the presence of prestigious state and local elected officials who were the guests of honor for the intimate gathering and made the most of their time onboard the FantaSea Yacht while mixing and mingling with their constituents.

As the ship sailed past the Kemah Boardwalk, Jon Fisher, president of ABC of Texas, presented awards to Representative Tim Kleinschmidt (House District 17) and Representative Wayne Smith (House District 128). Fisher praised the two representatives for their promotion of the tenets of the Free Merit Shop Philosophy during the 81st Legislative Session. Both were deemed "Free Enterprise Champions" and were presented with a beautiful trophy. Also in attendance were Rep. Charlie Howard (District 26), Rep. Randy Weber (29), Rep. Allen Fletcher (130), Rep. Alma Allen (131), Rep. Ken Legler (144), Rep. Debbie Riddle (150), Houston City Council Member Toni Lawrence, Jersey Village Mayor Russell Hamley, Pasadena City Councilmen Steve Cote and John Moon.

ABC members also celebrated the opening of hunting season with a festive Fall Clay Shoot to raise money for the Political Action Committee. Teams of five marksmen shot targets at American Shooting Center in West Houston, also enjoying a barbecue cookout and the lighthearted camaraderie that is typical of any ABC event.

In the coming weeks, the Chapter will have the privilege of recognizing these following members of the Texas Legislature as Free Enterprise Champions: Senator Tommy Williams, District 4; Senator Mike Jackson, District 11, and Senator Joan Huffman, District 17. Check out the

CHAPTER INITIATIVES AROUND THE STATE

ABC Greater Houston Chapter website for upcoming PAC events and opportunities to get involved in local and state politics.

SOUTHEAST TEXAS CHAPTER

In July, the ABC-Southeast Texas (SETX) Director of Education, Kimberly Bernard, was honored at the Career & Technology Association of Texas Annual Awards Luncheon in Houston for her "Outstanding Service to Career and Technical Education". Kimberly has been working for SETX since 1996; in her roll as Director of Education, she has promoted industrial and technical certifications to groups of students throughout the Southeast Texas region. Through her efforts, SETX has provided curriculum, consumables, tools, materials, industry guest speakers, and construction demonstrations for the CTE students of Southeast Texas.



ABC Southeast Texas' Director of Education, Kimberly Bernard, was honored at the Career & Technology Association of Texas Annual Awards Luncheon in Houston for her "Outstanding Service to Career and Technical Education"

Kimberly also initiated co-enrollment courses and summer certification programs for high school students. She worked with Region 5 ESC to provide NCCER training workshops for CTE teachers. After receiving their certification, the CTE teachers can provide entry level NCCER certification training for their students. Additionally, she has coordinated and hosted various regional welding competitions at the SETX training center.

Kimberly is actively involved with a variety of professional and community organizations including serving as an advisory board member of the Southeast Texas P-16 Council; an education committee advisor for the Southeast Texas Workforce Alliance; program co-chair of the Leadership Southeast Texas Advisory Council Board; a member of Southeast Texas Human Resource Association; and treasurer of the Southeast Texas Chapter of the Coastal Conservation Association.

ABC CENTRAL TEXAS CHAPTER

ABC Central Texas held a Political Action Committee fundraiser on August 4th at Zilker Clubhouse in Northwest Austin. Chapter members enjoyed sizzling barbecue and cold beverages as Commissioner Michael Williams addressed the group about Kay Bailey Hutchinson's available Senate position. Additionally, Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott took the time to visit with ABC members and address industry concerns. Texas House Representatives Patrick Rose and Mark Strama were also in attendance, thanks largely in part to Regional Political Manager April Brown and Pat

Riordan with Riordan Construction, who were instrumental in soliciting legislator support for this event.

On September 22nd, the Chapter hosted a combination Live and Silent Auction to benefit the West Austin Youth Association. "It's very important that we give back to the community, and the large amount of participants in this event is reflective of the nature of our organization", says President David Ford. The chapter will host a Golf Tournament for its members in October, and an Excellence in Construction and Safety Awards gala on October 19th.

SOUTH TEXAS CHAPTER

Education activities are heating up in South Texas! For the 2009/2010 school year, the South Texas Chapter has seen a 25% increase in enrollment over the previous year in the carpentry, electrical, plumbing and sheet metal trades. Classes started September 7th at the South San Antonio ISD campus. All apprentices are now going through a "green" class as part of their curriculum. Workforce Development Director Bob Jett was appointed to the Texas Workforce Commission's Apprenticeship Training Advisory Committee for a three year term earlier this summer, and Hal Heintz, Workforce Development Coordinator, was a featured speaker at the July Texas Vocational Technical Education Conference, held in San Antonio, where he spoke about career opportunities in the construction industry.



The South Texas Chapter's held their annual Sporting Clays Shoot and Barbecue cook-off in August. Over 280 shooters and 20 barbecue teams participated.

On the fun front, the chapter's annual Sporting Clays Shoot and Barbecue cook-off, held in August, were outstanding successes, with over 280 shooters and 20 barbecue teams. The Fall Golf Tournament was held at Sonterra Country Club last month, and the Chapter also hosted a Free Enterprise Alliance (FEA) fund raiser on September 24th to help meet the FEA goal, having already exceeded the chapter's PAC goal for 2009.

While it is still three months away, the chapter's 2010 planning process is nearly complete. The Executive Committee held a mid-year retreat to review activities to date and discuss priorities for 2010. The board conducted breakout sessions in July and August discussing the top three priorities – chapter marketing/image, education expansion and securing greater involvement from the younger members in the construction industry. The October retreat will finalize specific plans to accomplish the goals.

TEXAS GULF COAST CHAPTER



Angleton ISD students were able to view and handle different types of slings and were tested on their understanding of what would require a sling to be discarded for safety reasons

Merit Shop Training, Inc. (MSTI), the educational affiliate of ABC Texas Gulf Coast Chapter welcomed 46 Angleton ISD students working on completing requirements for NCCER's Core curriculum to their facility for demonstrations on rigging. The students had the opportunity for a first hand, introductory lesson in rigging and crane operation.

John East of Gulf States, Inc. (GSI), a 30+ year veteran in construction and a Rigger Foreman, attended courtesy of GSI and Dow to help students with Module 6 of Contren Learning Series Core. Students were able to understand the basic components and purposes of rigging. Mr. East also brought numerous examples of slings, hitches and other rigging hardware for the students to inspect. During his demonstrations, students were able to view and handle different types of slings and were tested on their understanding of what would require a sling to be discarded for safety reasons. Some students had the opportunity to try their hand at using basic ANSI hand signals to direct Mr. East, who was at the controls of a flex truck. While all 46 students from the high school welding class may not become riggers or crane operators, or perhaps even join our industry for a career in construction, all have a better idea and respect for the responsibility and skill required of a rigger and a crane operator.

Additionally, the Texas Gulf Coast Chapter held a graduation for its various craft training programs. For the first time, the chapter celebrated the completion of craft training not only with our local community college partner, but also with our contractor company ATU's and our in-house Construction Management Academy. Guest speaker at this event was Mike Huston, of Dow Chemical, who began his career in the ranks as a craftsman and worked his way up to his position now as I & E Workforce Development Coordinator with Dow Chemical Texas Operations.

The Suppliers' Council Committee hosted their quarterly mixer that allows member suppliers to showcase their goods while networking and generally enjoying the company of friends and their local ABC membership. Our first mixer this year, held in April, featured four Supplier members and was held in the shop of supplier EPSCO International. It was a great success, and is one of the many ways this chapter tries to support it's members.

The Texas Gulf Coast Chapter has been very active in community and charitable activities the last quarter. Despite the most miserable weather

in months, the 20th Annual ABC Barbecue Cook-off was held March. Twenty teams competed for top prizes in brisket, pork ribs, chicken, and beef fajitas, bringing in substantial contributions for community charities.

The month of April brought out the gamblers in the area. ABC members as well as many from the community participated in our Texas Hold 'Em Tournament to help raise funds for the chapter. And more recently, the 6th annual ABC Fishing Tournament, held June 5th-7th, saw a record number of contestants vie for prizes while contributing to the funds that help support our community.

One recipient of the many contributions was a student from an area high school. The student was selected for the ABC/Contractors for Kids and Community Scholarship based on his intentions to attend our local community college, Brazosport College, and to pursue a degree related to the construction industry. This student's essay cinched the competition when he stated that his interest in drafting and welding had been piqued by his participation in our annual Construction Exhibition. This year's exhibition had 190+ contractor and industry volunteers helping 500+ students through various hands-on activities, everything from using power tools to building scaffold, to operating heavy equipment. In addition to our annual scholarship, the ABC Texas Gulf Coast Cares Committee has donated money, food and clothing to local charities such as the Brazoria County Youth Home, The Brazoria County Women's Center and Helping Hands and Hearts Hospice.

The Texas Gulf Coast Chapter also recently welcomed ABC's Chief Economist, Anirban Basu, as their featured speaker at the September Membership Event and Luncheon. Close to 100 people were on hand to hear Basu's presentation, entitled "The Amazing Race", and to participate in an informative question and answer session. Basu's quick wit and analogies to current reality shows like 'Fear Factor' and 'The Biggest Loser' as he explained various economic indicators made a difficult and stressful topic easier to understand. ABC members were joined by the Boards of Directors from Merit Shop Training, Inc. and Contractors' Safety Council of Brazosport for this joint meeting.

The chapter and Merit Shop Training, Inc., the educational affiliate of Texas Gulf Coast Chapter, took this opportunity to recognize craft instructors at Brazosport College, Wharton County Junior College, and several local high schools who provide instruction for MSTI's Craft Training Program. Additionally, the 2010 slate of officers for the ABC Board Texas Gulf Coast Chapter was presented and approved by the membership in attendance.

Lastly, ABC Texas Gulf Coast Chapter and Contractors' Safety Council of Brazosport recently welcomed Ron Speir of Lake Jackson, TX as the new Operations Manager of The Contractors' Safety Council. Ron brings close to 30 years experience in public education, mostly at the administrative level, to this job. His primary responsibility involves coordinating testing and daily operations. He has implemented several new procedures that have streamlined the credentialing process and helped move contractors into the plants quickly and more efficiently.

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