2000 Elections:

ABC Targets 36 Candidates To Support in 2000 Elections

ABC has developed a target list of 36 candidates to champion in the 2000 elections. These targeted candidates will receive donations from ABC PAC, assistance from chapters and grassroots volunteers, help from local members.

Recent polls show that many races could be decided by just a few thousand votes. ABC has stepped up its efforts in the campaigns of candidates who support open competition and the free enterprise system.

Coordinating this help is ABC Victory 2000 (ABC V2K), a structured program that will prioritize assistance and help campaigns match their needs with resources of ABC’s membership.

Former Gov. George Allen (R-Va.) is one of eight U.S. Senate candidates that ABC is assisting. At a recent ABC-sponsored fundraising event, Allen said, “As governor, I could count on ABC as good working partners. With ABC’s support in this campaign, we will continue to advance our mutual goal of building a better Virginia and America by promoting positive tax and reasonable, common-sense regulatory policies.”

ABC also is working hard to support Rep. Bill McCollum (R-Fla.), who notes that “ABC is one of my strongest and earliest supporters. I have many friends who are ABC members, and our statewide network could be one of the key differences in my race.” —Sen. Bill McCollum (R-Fla.)

Union Protestors Fail to Derail ABC Regional Meeting in Toledo

One thousand union protestors did not deter ABC members from Region 6 from holding a planning meeting last month in Toledo, Ohio.

“The protest did not prevent us in any way from holding the meeting as planned,” said ABC President W. Thomas Musser.

The demonstration was organized by the Northwest Ohio Building and Construction Trades Council and the Toledo-area AFL-CIO Council to protest the ABC meeting.

The protestors disrupted traffic as they marched from a local park across the Martin Luther King Jr. Bridge to the hotel where the meeting was being held.

Musser and Region 6 Vice President Mark Small spoke to local reporters from ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox television and the Toledo Blade. “These folks have the freedom to demonstrate anywhere they want, but ABC contractors should also have the right to work anywhere in the country where they are qualified to do so,” Musser told local reporters. Musser and Small also discussed the merit shop philosophy and how it has resulted in more than four out of five construction workers across America choosing to work merit shop.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Says It Will Soon Make Decision on Wage Data Collection

The Labor Department’s Bureau of Labor Statistics said it may decide whether it will implement a new method for determining prevailing wage rates by the end of the year.

ABC believes BLS’s survey methods could be more accurate than the methods used by the Wage and Hour Division, which traditionally determines prevailing wage rates through contractor surveys.

Four Pilot Studies Completed

BLS said it has completed the last of four pilot studies that examined the agency’s ability to collect wage and benefit data in four cities: Salt Lake City-Ogden, Utah; Toledo, Ohio; Jacksonville, Fla; and Tucson, Ariz.—and is now evaluating the success of those projects.

BLS said it hoped to be able to publish prevailing wage rates for all types of construction every three years if it took over the responsibility of determining wage rates by modernizing its collection methods, a marked contrast to the standard six to seven years required by the Wage and Hour Division.

BLS Found Helpers

BLS results showed that contractors are in fact using helpers, a fact Wage and Hour frequently disputes. “It is particularly interesting that different divisions of the Labor Department are saying completely different things in terms of help-
ABC Says Ergonomics Regulation Takes Wrong Approach To Ensuring Safe Sites

ABC has told OSHA that an ergonomics regulation for the construction industry is not needed and that the agency should focus instead on further developing voluntary partnerships and methods for reducing injuries and illnesses.

During a public hearing on the ergonomics regulation at the Labor Department, ABC Director of Legal and Regulatory Affairs Charley Maresca said the proposed regulation "goes in the wrong direction" of enforcement. "Our Platinum partnership is one of many partnerships the agency has established, and it is our belief that these cooperative measures are the best means to help OSHA achieve its stated goal of a 15 percent reduction in injuries and illnesses in construction over five years."

He said ABC members have seen their rates of injuries, including ergonomic injuries, fall far below the national average. "This has been achieved without the need for an ergonomic program such as the one called for in the proposed regulation," Maresca said.

Industry News:

Owners Form Roundtable Group

The Business Roundtable's former Construction Committee has re-established itself as the Construction Users Roundtable and operates independently of any other organization.

Members of the now de-funct committee, feeling strongly that there was a need for an organization for construction owners, began searching for a new identity shortly after the BRT sunsets the group last fall.

"The goal is not to recreate the construction committee but to create an enhanced and improved organization, one that comprehensively represents the voice of the owner," the organization plan says, as reported by Engineering News-Record.

The group hopes to have 50 members by next year. Members must support $75 million worth of U.S. construction and maintainance each year and pay an annual dues of $10,000.

The charter members are: Air Products and Chemicals; Johnson & Johnson; Eastman Kodak; Champion International; Texaco; FMC Corp.; Toyota; Praxair; American Electric Power; Proctor & Gamble; General Electric; DuPont Corp.; General Motors; Pfizer; Dow Chemical.

A Valuable ‘Tool’ For Your Jobsite

ABC has developed a series of safety "toolbox talks" for its members to use on their job sites. The 69 individual "talks," available in both English and Spanish, focus on a variety of topics, such as accident investigations, demolition, horseplay on the job site, working with lead, working on scaffolds and working under severe weather conditions. The talks are provided in CD-ROM and in printed form. Cost: $150 for members, $225 for non-members. Contact your chapter for more information.

Ways and Means to Vote On Estate Tax Repeal

The House Ways and Means Committee is expected to vote this week on legislation that would repeal death taxes over 10 years. A vote in the full House could occur as early as the first week of June. ABC supports estate tax relief, which disproportionately affects small businesses. The Center for the Study of Taxation says the majority of federal estate tax returns are filed by estates with a gross value of $650,000 to $1 million.

The bill was introduced by Rep. Jennifer Dunn (R-Wash.)

OSHA Guides Employers On Lyme Disease

OSHA has issued a bulletin that advises employers how to protect employees from Lyme disease.

Lyme disease is a tick-borne illness that affects thousands of people each year and which, if untreated may cause chronic arthritis, heart disease, and neurologic disorders.

The bulletin explains the steps workers need to take to reduce the risk of Lyme disease, such as using insect repellent and considering getting a protective vaccine.

The bulletin is simply advisory in nature and creates no legal obligations.

The bulletin was issued as a result of a request from the Senate Appropriations Committee, which in its 2000 budget report called Lyme disease an "occupational health risk."

The bulletin and a fact sheet may be found at the OSHA website, www.osha.gov. More detailed information about Lyme disease and its prevention can be found at the Centers for Disease Control website, www.cdc.gov.

EEOC Says More Women In Construction in 1998

The percentage of women working in the construction industry continues to climb, although most of the women employed are in office or clerical positions.


However, women comprise only small percentages of craft workers (2 percent); equipment operators (5 percent); and laborers (7 percent).
ABC Works with ‘Learning for Life’
To Educate Youths about Construction

ABC is working with an organization called Learning for Life to tell young people about the many opportunities for careers in the construction industry and to give them a grounding in the free enterprise philosophy. It is entirely integral to ABC’s mission.

“ABC and Learning for Life share a basic outlook that is based on a positive, entrepreneurial and values-driven approach to life,” said ABC Vice President of Education and Workforce Development Dan Mosser. By working together, the two organizations hope to capitalize on each other’s strengths, Mosser said.

Learning for Life is a K-12 educational program that works with schools to help young people meet the challenge of growing up “by teaching character and good decision-making skills and then linking those skills to the real world,” according to Learning for Life.

The Learning for Life program has three basic components: school-based learning, connecting activities, and work-based learning. For the work-based component, Learning for Life works with the Boy Scouts Explorer program, which is open to both girls and boys who are at least 14.

“The Learning for Life program is yet another way ABC will be able to strengthen its school-to-career program and attract more young people to the industry,” Mosser said.

There will be a Learning for Life booth at the ABC convention May 31-June 3.

Send Chapters Your Email Address

Please send your email address to your chapter so that ABC can respond to your requests in a more timely way. Also, beginning June 1, ABC will send out Newsline via email only.

Regulatory Report

• The Labor Department’s Employment Standards Administration plans to move forward on two proposals affecting employers working on federal Davis-Bacon projects. ESA has said it will issue a proposal clarifying that the “site of work” covered by the Davis-Bacon Act typically does not include offsite plants or sites. ESA will issue the proposal to comply with two court rulings in the mid 1990s which said the Labor Department’s interpretation of the law did not conform to the statutory language.

• OSHA plans to complete action on several regulations this year, including the ergonomics standard (December), steel erection (July), injury and illness recordkeeping (June), occupational exposure to tuberculosis (July) and personal protective equipment (July).

For more information, contact Charley Maresca at ABC, (703) 812-2039, or maresca@abc.org.

ABC Offers with McGraw-Hill Construction Marketing Book

ABC worked with McGraw-Hill to develop Building Profits in the Construction Industry and is now offering the marketing book targeted to the construction industry at a 25 percent discount to ABC members.

The 416-page book covers a range of topics, including growing development plans, work plans, bid schedules, releases and marketing on the World Wide Web. The book comes with a CD-ROM that includes the book plus a CD-ROM that offers web links to more than 250 resources. To order, call ABC’s Ordering Department, (703) 812-2000. Cost: $60.

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