



## New England Real Estate Journal – July 2014

### **No summer slowdown this year**

**By Richard R. Fisher**

Summer may be a time for vacations and slower pace of life – but not this year, for the construction industry or for ASM. And we're not complaining!

After years of dismal economic news, it's great to see continuous improvement in construction hiring, and cranes going up in every direction not only in and around Boston – but across the state as well. We're particularly encouraged at the spurt in affordable housing developments, complementing the brisk pace of retail and office projects. Extending beyond Boston, there are significant projects slated for Chicopee, Duxbury, Fitchburg, Greenfield, Haverhill, Lunenburg, Middleborough, Northampton, Dartmouth, Pittsfield, Quincy, Springfield, Williamstown, New Bedford, and even out on Provincetown. All those projects not only create housing opportunities for working class families and veterans, they also create job opportunities for hundreds of construction companies, big and small.

So while for many, July means summer break, it's high season for ASM's subcontractors.

It's high season on Beacon Hill, too – or rather, “crunch” season, as the 2013-14 legislative session races to a finish on July 31. ASM has been right in the thick of the action over the past several months. Together with other construction industry associations, we expressed concern earlier this year at proposed increases in Unemployment Insurance (UI) rates that would have increased UI taxes for most contractors by 36%. Responding to our concerns, the Legislature adjusted the rates, and passed fair UI reforms that provide significant relief to all employers, including contractors. We applaud their moderate approach to this issue, which was signed into law in June.

With that issue behind us, we are now engaged in another issue equally important to the construction industry – a bill to reduce the amount of retainage withheld from payments to contractors on private projects. Current practice is 10% retainage – which is too much, held for too long. Our bill (S.2120) would cap retainage at 5% on projects over \$3 million, and set up a clear process that improves project close out and speeds release of retainage – to the benefit of all parties. This bill represents a historic compromise with the Associated General Contractors of Massachusetts, and the two associations are pleased to be working collaboratively to pass the legislation – which we believe is good for all parties to a project, and good for the Massachusetts economy.

Looking beyond July 31, legislative activity may come to an end, but that will only be the start of new activity at ASM – a full schedule of fall events (see partial calendar below), and other new initiatives to benefit Massachusetts subcontractors.

### **ASM Young Professionals cruise Boston Harbor (include photo)**

ASM new Young Professionals (YP) Group kicked off the summer season in style with a sunset cruise on Boston harbor July 12. Mother Nature failed to deliver the “sunset” part, but the group had a great time networking and getting to know each other during the 90-minute cruise, which took them from the harbor islands to Charlestown Navy Yard, where they caught the USS Constitution firing its cannon to mark the end of the day. This was just the second event for ASM’s YP Group, which is open to anyone in their 20s or 30s from any ASM member company. The Group is working now on plans for fall educational and networking events. Contact ASM if you’d like to get involved with this dynamic YP Group!

### **ASM hosts “Spotlight” event with Suffolk Construction (include photo); delete this story if necessary for spacing**

On June 17, ASM hosted a panel discussion with several members of Suffolk Construction’s management team. The panelists touched on a wide range of topics, including Suffolk’s “build smart” philosophy and expectations of subcontractors; its emphasis on state-of-the-art technology to drive efficiency; and tips on how subcontractors can tap into Suffolk’s growing project opportunities. The program ended with a reception, where the conversation and Q & A continued.

### **ASM returns to The International, July 14 for golf and scholarships**

As we go to press, ASM golfers and guests will be gathering at the prestigious International Golf Club in Bolton, MA for the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual ASM Golf Tournament, the association’s most important fundraising event of the year. It is shaping up to be another record-breaker – completely sold out, with 280 players over 100 sponsors – a sure sign of economic recovery for the construction industry! Of course, our venue might also have something to do with it, with two championship golf courses and one of the most challenging in the world.

Highlight of the dinner program at the end of the day will be the presentation of this year’s Scholarship Awards, which are funded by proceeds from the event. We congratulate our four outstanding winners, who will each receive a \$2,000 award: **Ryan Donegan**, of North Reading, MA, sponsored by [T.J. McCartney, Inc.](#); **Brady Greene** and **Fallon Greene** of Smithfield, RI, sponsored by [Chapman Waterproofing Company](#); and **Tucker Plante**, of Gloucester, MA, sponsored by [Mark Richey Woodworking](#).

### **2014 Directory and Buyer’s Guide now available online**

ASM’s 2014 Associate Member Directory and Buyer’s Guide is now available – providing a complete listing of ASM Associate Members who provide materials and/or services to the construction industry, such as insurance and bonding, tax/financial planning, safety training, specialty tools and equipment, and more. Included are many special deals exclusively for ASM members. The Guide makes it easy to find the products and services your business needs all in one place, and save money at the same time. And by doing business with other members, you help build a stronger association. Visit the ASM website to download a free copy.

## **ASM Calendar of Events**

### **Tuesday, September 16**

*Turning Project Managers into Business Manager*

8:00 to 10:00 AM

Westin Hotel, Waltham

### **Wednesday, September 24**

*ASM Safety Roundtable*

11:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Place TBA

### **Monday, October 6**

*GC Showcase*

4:00 – 7:00 PM

Sheraton Hotel, Framingham

For more information, visit the ASM website.