

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC), New Mexico Chapter stands up for the rights of merit shop contractors in New Mexico. We advocate for free enterprise and fair and open competition in the construction industry. Our member companies have strong reputations for delivering high quality construction on time and on budget, while providing competitive pay and benefit packages to their employees.

The term "merit shop contractor" was coined by one of ABC's founders in the 1950s. It means that the construction company embraces the ideal that employees should be rewarded based on their own merit, not based on whether they are or are not members of a union.

In the past 18 months, the Southwest Regional Council of Carpenters has imported union organizers from California and Nevada who are unaware of the solid reputations of our members. Carpenters union representatives have systematically harassed members by sending untruthful letters to project owners and hiring day-labor individuals to hold "shame on" banners and conduct pickets.

The pickets have been disruptive to local businesses, their customers and the general public as well as those on the construction worksite. Further, union representatives have threatened physical violence, going so far as to show up at individuals' homes to make threatening statements to member employees and their families.

Let us be clear, the carpenters union imports are not assisting company employees who may have expressed a desire to be represented by a union. Rather, they are creating problems for both merit shop company owners and their employees in the form of pure harassment. Reportedly, local union leadership is embarrassed as

well. Outside union activists are attempting to force the company to cease work or pressure the project owner to require that the construction company cease work. This is not an activity that is sanctioned by the National Labor Relations Board.

ABC calls on the Southwest Regional Council of Carpenters to stop their unfair activities in New Mexico immediately.

*Dawn Matson, president
Associated Builders and Contractors, New Mexico Chapter*

I must take issue with the headline of the article about me in the [June 26-July 3] issue of New Mexico Business Weekly that reads: "Developer Goodman floats his own proposal for convention hotel." To start with, I feel that the city has selected an outstanding development team for the project. The team has come up with a sound, well supported plan. I have merely suggested to the team that they consider locating a piece of the development on Central to continue energizing the heart of downtown. Locating the hotel along Central connected to the Andaluz is one of several ways to reach that goal. We are in the process of examining the financial and architectural feasibility of the idea which will then be presented to the development team and the community. To say that I am "floating my own proposal" is misleading. Our company fully supports the development team, and we plan to fully support the ultimate plan.

I also take issue with the statement that Central has been a "long neglected slice of downtown." The Alvarado Transportation Center, the movie theater building, 516 Arts, exciting new retailers and now the revitalization of the KiMo are examples of

investment in Central which has become more exciting every year.

I also don't understand the statement that I am "late to the party," as I have been talking with all of the development prospects before a selection had been made; and I have been regularly talking with the current development team since its inception. Right now, all we have is a conceptual plan, drawings on paper. This is the perfect time to be examining variations. On the other hand, I have had no conversations with Sheraton.

Another inaccuracy is the assertion that the study recommends locating the facility on one particular site. The study was not directed to and, in fact, did not address various locations and made no recommendation of location. It merely accepted the one suggested and focused on the financial feasibility of a downtown event center attached to the Convention Center.

It's also important to note that "the trend to put hotels next to convention centers" is a trend to put the hotel within a block of the convention center. In fact, every example, save one, of a convention hotel used in the study is located about a block from the center.

In short, our convention center, once a generator of tremendous income for our city, has seen steady decline in usage since its heyday in the early 1990s. A revitalized convention center with an attached event center would help businesses throughout the city and bring much needed revenue to our city. It deserves our support.

Making the event center a reality will take a strong coalition of many factions within our community. The last thing we need is to create and ferment divisions in that coalition.

*Gary Goodman
Goodman Realty Group*

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