**Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC), Inc. Northern California Chapter**

Indiana Ortega, Vice President Business Development; Sergio Cortez, Workforce Development Manager; and Luah Huynh, Carpentry & Construction Laborer Instructor from the Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC), Inc. Northern California Chapter were the speakers for the lunch program. ABC advocates for a merit shop in the construction industry as opposed to union-controlled shop. A merit shop is defined as *a philosophy that awards work to the most qualified and lowest bidder regardless of labor affiliation*. ABC is the leader for fair and open competition in the construction industry.

The ABC Northern California Chapter is the preeminent construction trade association providing all segments of business within the construction industry (e.g., general contractors, subcontractors, suppliers, associate members). ABC is fighting to protect the merit shop environment and aids with

* Safety
* Training
* Compliance
* Workforce Development
* Advocacy
* Certification
* Recognition Programs
* Legal Assistance
* Business Discounts
* Volume Purchase Opportunities
* Business Development, and
* Networking Opportunities.

The primary focus of the presentation was the Workforce Development Program, which provides opportunities for contractor workforces in a state-of-the-art facility in Livermore as well as on the job site. Programs include

* safety
* craft training
* state electrician trainee
* continuing education certification for state mandated trades
* management and leadership training
* supervisory field and foremanship training, and
* business development.

The trainees in the program come from member nominees, homeless individuals and even former inmates. All trainees are provided with required tools, boots, and all other assistance during and after the training.

More information about the Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC), Inc. Northern California Chapter is available at <http://www.abcnorcal.org/>