



NEWS RELEASE

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Longtime BIAW Leader Moves On

OLYMPIA—Tom McCabe is leaving the Building Industry Association of Washington after serving as its executive director for 21 years.

Under McCabe's leadership, BIAW transformed from a small, sleepy association into the state's most aggressive advocate for small business and free enterprise. BIAW became instantly recognizable statewide by its initials only, and attracted national attention from publications such as *The Wall Street Journal*, *Forbes Magazine* and the *Washington Post*.

During McCabe's 21 years of leadership BIAW membership grew from 2,000 businesses in 1990 to more than 10,000 today. McCabe built BIAW's workers' compensation retro program into the largest of its kind in the state, refunding \$360 million from state government back to builder businesses over the past 20 years. Under McCabe, BIAW became a powerful political force for conservative, pro-business candidates and causes.

BIAW hired McCabe the same year the disastrous Growth Management Act became law in 1990. Over the next 20 years, McCabe directed a lobbying team that prevented the passage of any legislation that negatively targeted the building industry. The list of bills turned back by the BIAW lobbying team includes legislation to eliminate exempt wells, require costly fire sprinklers in new homes and expand impact fees.

In 2003, the people of Washington State used the initiative process to reject restrictive, job-killing ergonomics regulations imposed by the state Department of Labor & Industries (L&I), in an effort organized by BIAW. "That's the first and only time I know of in the nation where regulations were dismantled using the initiative process," said McCabe. McCabe said he is also proud of the role BIAW played in getting Initiative 602 on the ballot, which restricted the growth of state government. "If I-602 had passed in 1993 and was still in effect, we would have a budget surplus today."

"We didn't win every battle—nobody does," said McCabe. "In my 20 years at BIAW, we never had a Republican governor and most of the time the legislature was controlled by liberal Democrats. So in every battle, we were the perpetual underdogs and I am so proud of the courage and determination of my staff and the small businesses that fought along side us."

(more)

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McCabe said when he was first hired, “BIAW executives lasted about as long as Mariner managers.” The association had one other employee and a small rental office. McCabe said there was no desk waiting for him because the last executive took it with him. There was a chair, but a stray cat was sleeping in it, he said.

“I deeply admire the vision, courage and hard work it takes to start and operate a small business,” said McCabe. “It has been a great privilege to stand up for public policies that make the dream of owning your own business possible in Washington State.”

McCabe will leave BIAW at the end of December. He is pursuing several other ventures. He will also provide future assistance to BIAW.

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Known as the “champion of affordable housing,” the Building Industry Association of Washington is the largest trade association in Washington State, representing over 250,000 families and more than 11,000 member companies involved in the homebuilding business.