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**AB&I CELEBRATES WOMEN IN INDUSTRY**

OAKLAND, CA August 20, 2020: AB&I Foundry, in celebration of women in engineering, manufacturing, and the skilled trades, has developed an iron woman character named “Rose.” The foundry has had a long history with its iron man character who is a big burly man. It was time for the company to feature a female character. The new Iron Woman pays tribute to the iconic Rosie the Riveter – the symbol of women civilians who built warplanes during WWII.

“There is a huge gap in our historical narrative about women in the trades. But that is quickly changing as women are starting to fill the void in skilled trades created by the retirement of of baby boomers. While women are stepping into these rolls they are still underrepresented,” said Francesca Venezia Dunbar, Vice President of Group Marketing for McWane. “We hope that the new Iron Woman will pay tribute to the vast opportunities for women in industry.”

According to The Institute for Women’s Policy Research (IWPR), between 2017 and 2018, the number of women working in construction trades increased by 17.6 percent, rising to well over a quarter of a million women (276,000). The American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) shows that women make up about 47 percent of the overall workforce but are still underrepresented in science and engineering occupations. Only 14 percent of engineers are women. Despite these increases, women still only represent 10% of the construction workforce. According to the U.S. Department of Labor Statistics, jobs in the skilled trades are expected to grow by at least 11 percent by 2026, while three out of every four tradespeople are set to retire. This brings opportunity for women seeking employment in engineering, manufacturing and the skilled trades.

“The plumbing industry, as well as other industries, are chock full of women breaking barriers with their actions. At AB&I we celebrate those individual women who are pushing through to achieve greatness, no matter the obstacles or tasks,” said Shannon Hooper, National Sales Manager of AB&I Foundry. “I feel that Rose is an embodiment of the changes happening in the construction industry and the world. I look forward to seeing Rose and other women meet the future head on and all the great things they will accomplish.”

AB&I Foundry, an Oakland-based company that manufactures cast iron pipe and fittings for the plumbing industry, has a long legacy of manufacturing in East Oakland. The company has been manufacturing quality cast iron soil pipe that is used to convey fluids out of commercial and residential buildings since 1906. Plumbing infrastructure is critical to public health and sanitation and there are only three manufacturers remaining in the United States. We remain OaklandSTRONG. Please follow us on [www.ABIOakland](http://www.ABIOakland), Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to keep current with AB&I events and information.

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