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## CRAIN'S NEW YORK BUSINESS

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# Exclusive: Elizabeth Crowley to replace Lou Coletti as Building Trades leader in May

EDDIE SMALL



*Courtesy of BTEA/Buck Ennis*

*Elizabeth Crowley will take over as president of the Building Trades Employers Association from Lou Coletti.*

Lou Coletti will retire from his longtime position as president of the Building Trades Employers Association during the first week of May and will be replaced by Elizabeth Crowley, a former

member of the City Council who will be the first woman to lead the organization, *Crain's* can exclusively report.

Crowley had worked as a union restorative painter on city landmarks before representing Queens on the City Council from 2009 to 2017. She plans to focus on making the construction industry more diverse and the city's buildings more environmentally friendly as the incoming leader of the city's largest association of contractors, which dates back to 1903.

"We have more work to do growing minority- and women-owned businesses and also diversifying the industry—getting more women into the trades," she said.

### **State's largest contractors group elects first female officers in 119-year history**

Affordable housing will be a top priority for the BTEA under Crowley as well, she said, stressing the need to make sure the city is building it quickly and with well-paying union jobs. She plans

to work with leaders at the city and state level to push for zoning changes that will make it easier to build these types of residential projects and described the current lack of affordable housing as one of the biggest problems facing New York.

"It has not been built union, [nor has it been affordable](#), and we are in a crisis," she said. "Our city is in a crisis with young people not being able to afford and families not being able to afford proper housing."

Coletti has led the BTEA for more than 20 years and plans to start his own consulting firm after stepping down from the organization. The new company will focus on reducing development and construction costs in the city. Coletti cited rising construction costs as the biggest change the industry had seen during his time as BTEA president in a [previous interview with \*Crain's\*](#).

"I look forward to seeing Elizabeth's leadership and vision continue to advance the BTEA," Coletti said in a statement. "It has been an honor to lead this organization, see it grow and make a positive impact on the lives of so many people who work in the construction industry."

Crowley represented District 30 in Queens, which includes the borough's Ridgewood, Maspeth and Glendale neighborhoods, on the City Council and was narrowly defeated by the current councilman, Bob Holden, in the 2017 elections. She has run for multiple other offices since then, losing an extremely tight primary for Queens Borough President in 2021 to Donovan Richards and a primary for [a state Senate district](#) representing parts of Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens in 2022 to Kristen Gonzalez.

<https://www.crainsnewyork.com/real-estate/exclusive-elizabeth-crowley-replace-lou-coletti-building-trades-leader-may>