

STATE BAR *of* TEXAS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

December 19, 2005

Happy holidays! This is the last official Executive Report of 2005. I hope these snapshots provided about what is going on at the Law Center are helpful and that you have a better idea of the issues we face and the progress we are making on the goals and challenges that are before us. Here's one happy note: Last week, Emily Jones, our director of the Legal Services for the Poor Division, stopped by the Law Center. Emily is looking great and is getting stronger every day. She came through her treatment in San Antonio with flying colors and we look forward to her return to work early next year.

Holiday Party — The State Bar holiday party was a great success. Employees' guests and children were treated with a visit from a special Santa Claus and we thank all of you who have sent good wishes through this season.

Team Building — On Dec. 14, we had a manager/supervisor retreat. Many of you will remember that in June 2005, I announced the appointment of three staff teams to look at some of the issues facing the organization. These teams presented their findings to the larger group and received feedback, which will be used to finalize their recommendations. Managers were attentive and serious as they looked at some of the challenges we face and considered options for improving our performance in serving the legal profession and the public.

A Great State Bar Service — With reporting of data for half the Bar's fiscal year now complete, our Lawyer Referral Information Service indicates that 6,295 referrals have been made to local bar referral systems by the State Bar staff so far this year. That's an average of 50 referrals a day to local bars. LRIS also refers about 175 cases per day to participating attorneys around the state.

State Tax Reform Progress — The Texas Tax Reform Commission (appointed by the governor) has scheduled public hearings across the state in an effort to develop a plan to modernize the state's tax system. Meetings are now scheduled through January in nine Texas cities. The commission launched a website, www.ttrc.state.tx.us, which includes meeting schedules, contact information and background on commission members.

Remodeling — Construction/remodeling of the Texas Law Center continues. Work on the fire suppression system and telephone cabling resumed Friday after a six-week hiatus. The third floor ceiling has been removed so if you are in the building over the next month, stop by the third floor and see our progress. Work on the system in the fifth floor ceiling is about completed. As part of this process, we are happy to report that there are no more bats in residence at the Law Center. We wish them well in their new digs — wherever that might be!

Joint Venturing — As part of our effort to reach out to other lawyer-based organizations, the Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers Association and TexasBarCLE will co-sponsor a webcast, "Prairie Dog Lawyers Criminal Law," at Texas Tech University School of Law on Jan. 6. This seminar, sponsored for several years by TCDLA and the Lubbock Criminal Defense Bar, will this year also be available at www.TexasBarCLE.com.

New Publication — An advertisement for the *Texas Business Entities Forms Manual (Corporations)* appears in the December issue of the *Texas Bar Journal*, and a press release about the book has been issued to eight publications serving lawyers throughout the state. Response to the book has been very positive.

Law School Outreach — Law Practice Management and St. Mary's University School of Law will present the "Planning to Conquer the Real World of Private Practice" seminar on April 8, 2006. A February date is planned for Texas Tech School of Law.

Executive Committee Meeting — The Executive Committee meeting will be Jan. 10 at the Dallas Bar Association headquarters, the Belo Mansion. Plans for the January 20 board meeting in Houston also are being finalized and more information will be sent to you immediately after the first of the year. If you have questions, contact Pam Dudley at Ext. 1410.

Ad Review Assistance — The State Bar Advertising Review Department is assisting the Nevada State Bar Association as it develops an advertising regulatory program. Gene Major, the director of the Advertising Review Department, will share information and expertise explaining how our regulatory structure works.

MCLE Online — The MCLE department is processing an average of 1,452 course accreditation applications per month. In addition, 43 percent of all attendance records received by MCLE are now received via the Internet. That's up from 37 percent a year ago.

2006-07 Budget Update — The State Bar Budget Subcommittee held budget hearings on Dec. 12. The subcommittee discussed the overall General Fund budget for fiscal year 2006-07 and received reports from the seven subcommittees that President-elect Martha Dickie appointed to various areas of the State Bar budget. We are happy to report that the hearings went very well and the State Bar's budget (which will be presented for publication at the January board meeting) looks financially fit for next fiscal year.

Leadership Training — Division Directors Ray Cantu and Kelley Jones King graduated from the Governor's Executive Development Program on Dec. 8. This program is designed to enhance leadership skills for those in state government and focuses on strategic thinking, long term planning, and how important these "business" processes are to government and regulatory organizations. Congratulations to both of them!

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the State Bar of Texas is to support the administration of the legal system, assure all citizens equal access to justice, foster high standards of ethical conduct for lawyers, support and provide services to its members, enable its members to better serve their clients and the public, and educate the public about the rule of law.

