

STATE BAR *of* TEXAS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

October 6, 2006

TMCP — The 14th annual Texas Minority Counsel Program in Dallas last week attracted record attendance and elicited rave reviews. Twenty-two corporations interviewed 400 minority and women attorneys for potential outside counsel opportunities. Former Dallas Mayor Ron Kirk delivered the keynote address and former State Bar President Eduardo Rodriguez discussed the future of the legal profession. Special thanks to new Minority Affairs Director Caren Blackwell and TMCP's 39 sponsors for making the event such a success.

The Classroom of the Future — There have been 13,741 "Online Classroom" registrations this fiscal year. (These are the archived video programs available at www.TexasBarCLE.com.) All other programs that TexasBarCLE coordinates (live, video replay, and webcast) are at 12,990 at this point in the year. Because our biggest live programs are held in the summer and early fall, Online Classroom programs will in all likelihood considerably eclipse the attendance of all other programs by the end of the year. We interpret this as an affirmation of the power of convenience in CLE. Online programs are available 24/7 and can be paused and restarted at will. The availability of such programs reduces the real cost of CLE to State Bar members substantially because one doesn't have to travel across the state or city to attend, and one can weave the learning into the most convenient times to avoid conflicts with the needs of clients.

What Do Oil & Gas Lawyers Know that Hedge Fund Traders Don't? — For those of you who use CLE attendance to play the market, registrations for the Advanced Oil, Gas, and Energy Resources Law Course, which is concluding today in Houston, are up 50 percent over last year.

Crime Pays — Attendance at the Advanced Criminal Law course in Dallas in July jumped 31 percent over last year's course. Part of this success was due to having, for the first time, a defense attorney and a prosecutor as course co-directors, which helped ensure a better balanced range of topics and speakers of interest to both prosecutors and defense attorneys. Also, the Criminal Law Boot Camp, which occurred the day before the Advanced course, had a 15 percent increase and the Law Practice Management Program's "Perfecting Your Criminal Law Practice" on Tuesday evening had a 100 percent increase in attendance.

Workers' Comp Section Proposed — Paperwork has been submitted for the creation of a Workers' Compensation Section. The information has been forwarded to the Section Representatives to the Board Committee, the chair and vice chair of the Council of Chairs Committee, and the State Bar General Counsel for review. There are currently 43 State Bar Sections.

Budget and Finance — State Bar Division and Department Managers were given their FY 2008 budget packets this week. Managers have three weeks to compile their data and submit it to the Finance Division for input and analysis. The financial audit for the fiscal year ending May 31, 2006, is wrapping up. A final report will be presented to the Finance Committee in November and then to the entire Board of Directors. An internal audit of certain departments and procedures is underway. This year, TexasBarCLE, TBLS, Purchasing and Facilities, cash disbursements and travel processing, payroll and personnel processing, the Public Funds Investment Act, and the disciplinary process will be reviewed by our internal auditors, Sprouse & Anderson.

TEAJF Supreme Court Lunch — The Texas Equal Access to Justice Foundation hosted its annual Supreme Court luncheon on Thursday, Sept. 28. The Court presented letters of commendation to the Texas Fellows of the American College of Trial Lawyers who conducted the 2006 Trial Academy and the members of the SBOT Appellate Section who conducted the 2006 Appellate Academy, both of which were sponsored by the Texas Access to Justice Commission and trained legal aid lawyers in trial skills and appellate practice.

Dallas Mental Health Therapy Group — The Texas Lawyers' Assistance Program completed discussions with a Dallas therapist to begin a facilitated Mental Health therapy group in Dallas. TLAP has referred individuals to the therapist to begin the process for admission into the group, which will start in October.

Building Update — A contract was executed with Carrier for the cooling tower replacement. The project will be completed in 120 days. Bids to replace the elevators in the Law Center have been received and the low bid is \$90,000 lower than the budgeted amount. The State of Texas Building Procurement Commission has approved renovation plans for the Jaworski Plaza.

Occupation Tax Suspension Notices — There were 1,119 attorneys who did not pay their occupation taxes by the August 31 deadline and who were suspended from the practice of law. Email notices informing these attorneys of their suspensions were sent on Sept. 12, 2006, and paper suspension notices were mailed by Sept. 13. Last year, 1,090 were suspended for failure to pay occupation taxes timely.

The number of attorneys who paid online (occupation tax, membership dues, or legal services fee) was 13,680, a 33 percent increase over last year.

State Bar Assistance — The Advertising Review Department has been giving CLEs at local bar associations throughout the state on the lawyer advertising rules. If your local bar is interested in scheduling a CLE on lawyer advertising, please contact Gene Major, the director of the Advertising Review Department, at (800)204-2222, Ext. 1503. In addition, local bar associations interested in learning how to better use the online accredited sponsor website should contact Nancy Smith, the director of the MCLE Department, at (800)204-2222, Ext. 1801. Nancy is available to train administrators on how to submit course information and attendance records for attorneys through the State Bar's website.

ATJ Contributions — The Supreme Court of Texas issued an order on August 24 regarding the distribution of the voluntary Access to Justice contributions made by attorneys through the State Bar dues statement. Each year, by court order, the chair of the Texas Access to Justice Commission recommends to the Court how the funds should be distributed. The funds, about \$510,000 so far this year, go to legal services to the poor through the Texas Equal Access to Justice Foundation and the Texas Bar Foundation. For 2006, TBF will receive \$140,000 and TEAJF will receive the remainder of the funds.

School Supplies — LRE is a great resource for teachers going back to school. The LRE website had 12,074 hits in September. The previous high month was September of last year with 8,465 hits.

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.

