JURY

APPRECIATION WEEK

FIRST WEEK *of* MAY

The Texas Legislature designated the first week in May as Jury Appreciation Week. The State Bar of Texas developed this guide to assist people who interact with prospective jurors and those who serve on juries in learning more about Jury Appreciation Week. The goal is to stimulate conversations and ideas on how to improve the public's image of jury service.

STATE BAR *of* TEXAS

Resources

The State Bar of Texas website has resources for Jury Appreciation Week and throughout the year. These resources include:

- **Public Service Announcements**
- **Articles About Jury Service**
- **Texas Uniform Jury Handbook**
- **Jury Service Toolkit: A Public Education Resource for Lawyers**
- **Jury Information Guide: A Public Education Resource**
- ***Guia Para Particpantes Del Jurado En Texas***
- **Sample Thank You Letter from Judge to Jurors**

Individual counties and District Clerks can link to these resources on their websites using **texasbar.com/juryservice.**

Jury Appreciation Week is designated to occur during the first week in May but can be scheduled during any week that jurors are empaneled.

APPRECIATION IDEAS

Program Ideas

Speakers: Welcoming speakers during Jury Appreciation Week is a great way to have community involvement in the jury selection process. Ask community celebrities and leaders to give 30 minutes of their time to speak to prospective jurors about their experiences, their jobs, or new developments in the community. Court personnel also make great speakers. Judges, court reporters, county and district clerks, and court clerks can give insight into their jobs and positions. Be aware that speakers who promote one perspective and who might influence the decisions of jurors during that week should be avoided.

Refreshments: Nothing says you are appreciated more than free refreshments. Local restaurants, coffee shops, and donut shops are sometimes willing to donate to a celebration for a good cause when they can also receive free publicity. Creative titles for the celebration might gain attention and news coverage, such as *Java with Jurors, Juice with Judges,* or *Popping for Service* by serving popcorn in the afternoon.

Door Prizes: Daily drawings for gift giveaways are another way to have a positive atmosphere and get prospective jurors talking about their experiences. Local businesses may be willing to donate gifts or free services, such as free oil

changes, a dozen donuts, T-shirts advertising their businesses, or massages. Businesses and other organizations might be solicited to have booths with giveaways on the courthouse lawn as part of an information fair.

Proclamations and other public recognition: City or county officials can issue proclamations and local media can be asked to publish them.

Public service announcements, press releases, radio spots, guest editorials, and newspaper articles: The State Bar of Texas has many of these resources on its webpage. Go to **texasbar.com/juryservice.**

Decoration of the Jury Assembly/Empaneling Room with banners thanking jurors. Court personnel might wear "Thank You" stickers and buttons.

Thank You Gifts: Small gifts and tokens of appreciation can be a welcome surprise for someone who only thought they were going to sit in a courthouse for jury service. Giveaways might include buttons, stickers, mugs, bookmarks, T-shirts, or the daily newspaper.

Live Music: Live music when the prospective jurors are arriving in the morning or during the lunch hour. The lunch hour can be used to give free lunches with or without speakers.

Appreciating the Service of Citizens

For the inaugural Jury Appreciation Week in 2016, the State Bar of Texas worked to spread the word to County and District Clerks about the new celebration. More than 50,000 stickers were created and distributed to the clerks in all 254 counties. These stickers—which read "Jury Duty, A Texas Tradition"—were distributed to jurors serving during the first week in May. The State Bar also distributed jury service toolkits to offer additional support and information to the clerks. The information was well received, and many counties held events to honor and celebrate their jurors.

Jury Appreciation Week: A Brief History

The 84th Regular Session of the Texas Legislature began in its usual fashion, but by the time it was over the first seven days of May would never be the same. Senator Royce West authored Senate Bill 565 (sponsored in the House by Representative John Smithee), which proposed the creation of Jury Appreciation Week in Texas. Although the language of the bill was simple, and short, it spoke volumes about the importance of the jury system, and the individual citizens that serve as jurors. The bill passed, adding Section 622.155 to the Government Code, which states that the first seven days of May are deemed Jury Appreciation Week, "...in recognition of the outstanding and important contributions made by Texas citizens who serve as jurors..." The message was clear. The work of juries is extremely important to the function of our democracy and the protection of our liberties and freedoms, and Texans appreciate those efforts.

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