



TREC Advisor

Texas Real Estate Commission * Volume 20, Number 5 * November 2009

Quarterly Report

In the last Advisor, I was introduced and you learned a bit about my background and experience. Also, I offered you a glimpse of the direction I think the agency should be headed. Every quarter, here in the pages of the Advisor, I plan to give you a summary of the progress we've made and the major milestones which lay ahead of us. I hope you find it informative and useful.

I consider my approach to be a mix of common sense, innovation, and urgency. I tend to ask questions like "Why not?" and "How soon?" Within 30 days of beginning this adventure, I had met with each and every staff member and solicited their feedback to this question: "If you could change just one thing to allow you to do your job more effectively, what would it be?" I got some great suggestions from the team at TREC and TALCB.



DOUGLAS E. OLDMIXON

For example, we had several team members in the Communication Center who arrive at work by 7 am each day (because of kids and traffic), but they could not officially start work until 8 am when the agency opened. They wished they could work a 7am to 4pm day. We explored that a bit further and found that all of the Communications Center team would not mind working a flexible schedule to allow the agency to begin accepting calls at 7 am and continue answering calls until 6 pm. Why not? How soon? The team pulled together, came up with a plan and as of October 19, 2009, the agency phones are now answered 11 hours per day, a 22% increase! Now both the public and licensees have substantially more access to the assistance and service the agency offers. That seemed to be a common sense solution that is truly a "win-win."

In the first two months we restructured some of the agency functions to help them operate more efficiently, added significant resources to TALCB where complaints have reached new levels, hired a highly qualified Director of Standards & Enforcement, and an experienced Public Affairs assistant. We sent out an information release to over 200,000 e-mail addresses regarding the expanded call answering hours, and we have begun testing the electronic delivery of licenses to those who renew online. In the last Advisor I asked for your feedback on these initiatives, and while we didn't get a large response, the results we did get were positive. We have simplified the online customer service survey, and truly welcome your comments.

Continuing in that spirit, we have begun a formal "Bottom-Up Review" process, looking for more opportunities to eliminate or reduce limitations to effectiveness, improve service and streamline processes, and reduce expenses. As we evaluate the results, we will invite your ideas and feedback on specific opportunities that we will propose. Since these will affect you, we want your inputs. Watch for notices about these in your e-mail. Our mission is to protect consumers and to contribute to the economy by assisting real estate related service providers through education, licensing, and regulatory services. We value your participation.

We held both a Commission meeting and a Board meeting in October and the staff did an excellent job of preparation to ensure both meetings were very effective. I have to tell you, I was impressed. Having observed Commission meetings in the past, and having served on the Board for over three years, I was still quite amazed to see how much work goes into the preparations for such meetings. Now that I am responsible to ensure these meetings are as effective as possible, I have a new appreciation for the dedication and expertise of the agency's staff. You have a great team of public servants working hard to perform our mission better every day. And that is a commitment I will ensure we continue to honor. Aiming high; and proud to serve.

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TEXAS REAL ESTATE COMMISSION

Meeting Highlights

October 19, 2009

The Texas Real Estate Commission held its regularly scheduled meeting at the TREC headquarters in Austin, Texas on Monday, October 19, 2009. Chairman John D. Eckstrum presided.

The Commission approved payment of two recovery funds and granted staff authority to negotiate the settlement of a third recovery fund payment.

The Commission proposed amendments to 22 TAC §543 regarding Rules Relating to the Provisions of the Texas Timeshare Act. (see pg. 4)

The Commission proposed amendments to 22 TAC §535.61 regarding Examinations; §535.62 regarding Accreditation of Schools and Approval of Courses and Instructors and §535.64 regarding Payment of Annual Fee, Audits, Investigations and Enforcement Actions. (see pg. 4)

The Commission adopted amendments to 22 TAC §537.30 and §537.31 concerning Standard Contract Forms TREC No. 23-9 and No. 24-9. It also adopted the repeal of §537.50 regarding the Addendum Containing Required Notices Under §5.16, §420.001 and §420.002, Texas Property Code. (see pg. 4)

The Commission appointed Patrick Noon of Longview and Dan Odom of Fort Worth to the Broker Lawyer Committee with terms to expire August 31, 2015.

The Commission approved the Memorandum of Understanding with the Texas Appraiser Licensing and Certification Board regarding administrative services provided by TREC staff.

The Commission approved four Proposals for Decision from the State Office of Administrative Hearings: In the Matter of George Edward Durell, SOAH Docket No. 329-09-3916.REC; In the Matter of Deborah L. Gonzales, SOAH Docket No. 329-09-5442.REC; In the Matter of Philip Perez Romo, SOAH Docket No. 329-09-4070.REC and In the Matter of Seung M. Santillan, SOAH Docket No. 329-09-2018.REC.

The Commission denied the motion for rehearing in the Matter of Erasmo Garcia, SOAH Docket Number 329-09-1334.REC/TREC Hearing Number 09-88-053590.

The next scheduled meetings of the Commission will be at 10 a.m. on December 14, 2009, at the TREC headquarters in Austin, TX. The Commission also set meeting for February 8, 2010, May 17, 2010, September 9, 2010 and November 15, 2010. All scheduled meetings would begin at 10 a.m.

The Texas Online initiative was developed to aid Texans when interacting with state agencies by going online instead of standing in line. TREC has increased the convenience to licensees by offering web-based license renewals, original applications and other time saving services, such as the *TRECAdvisor* newsletter, online. The resulting decrease in operating costs has allowed TREC to avoid some fee increases, realign resources and increase other services to licensees. To further this effort, TREC is considering adopting an email delivery system for license renewal notices. **Instead of sending the current renewal postcard notices, TREC would send an email to licensees 90 days, 60 days and 30 days prior to their upcoming license expiration date.** These email notices would be sent to all active license holders, and notices to sponsored licensees (salespersons, apprentice and real estate inspectors, appraiser trainees) would be sent to their sponsors as well. **As part of a related initiative, at completion of an online renewal, TREC would provide a website link to the licensee which allows the printing of license certificates (with companion wallet-size certificates) by the licensee.** Currently almost 85% of license renewals are completed online and an email address is required to do so. To ensure the success of this proposed effort, TREC needs a valid email address for each licensee. TREC welcomes your input on these proposed initiatives. Please send your comments to admin@trec.state.tx.us.

THE MISSION of the Texas Real Estate Commission

is to assist and protect consumers of real estate services and foster economic growth in Texas. Through its programs of education, licensing and industry regulation, the Commission ensures the availability of capable and honest real estate service providers.

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