

March/April 2004

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American Land Title Association

# TitleNews

## Making Successful Presentations

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- 2004 Technology Products & Services Directory
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in Your Title Plant
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# Title News

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# Funding Follies and Shrinking Violets

An ongoing topic of debate at ALTA and among some of its members has been funding. The debate really started, at least for me, at my first Budget/Planning meeting when I discovered that the formula by which my company's dues was computed didn't really apply to some underwriters and didn't apply at all to agents. That resulted, at that time, in my dues having gone up while others in my category (whose market share hadn't decreased) remained flat. It also resulted in agents which did more premium volume than my small regional paying a fraction of what my company paid. That discussion resulted in a change in the dues structure which, while not yet equal, is better although still based on self-reporting.



The issues of equity, reliability and verifiability of funding was further aired during the discussion of the ALTA Public Awareness Campaign. The decision was made to loosely base voluntary contributions on revenue for the underwriters and leave it entirely voluntary and unstructured for the agents.

That's fine as far as it goes but the system has a number of flaws. First, it seems inequitable that companies of any stripe at the same level of revenue should pay vastly differing amounts. Second, a voluntary system allows (encourages?) members to be, shall we say, conservative in

their estimates of income upon which to base their dues payments. Third, a voluntary system to fund something as important to all of us as the PR campaign leaves too much uncertainty in what I view as a program critical to our future.

Other funding suggestions have been floated by agents. Those suggestions required what other ALTA members believed was proprietary information and, as a result, the suggestions went nowhere. There was not enough support from the proponents to overcome the concern of the opponents. The result is, nothing has changed.

We still need both numbers of people and numbers of dollars if we are to hope to compete with organizations which have both-- issues the Membership Committee and Ad Hoc Team I appointed will be working on.

But it also means that agents have to help us find new ways to raise both members and dollars. If people you do business with aren't being supportive of changes you favor, let them know how important they are to you. The old formulas are not likely to work well enough and shrinking violets aren't going to change the old formulas. If your business is important to you, then ALTA must be. Stop shrinking and speak up.

Charles J. Kovaleski

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# ALTAnews

## Thanks to Minnesota LTA

A special thank-you goes to the Minnesota Land Title Association for their generous contribution of \$5,000 to the ALTA public awareness campaign. Minnesota joins five other land title associations who have contributed to the campaign: Maryland, Ohio, Tennessee, Utah, and Wyoming. Contact Lorri Ragan at [lorri\\_ragan@alta.org](mailto:lorri_ragan@alta.org) or 1-800-787-2582 for more information on the campaign and how you can help.

## ALTA Membership Committee Takes on Challenge

ALTA's Membership & Organization Committee is busy recruiting new members for the association. Committee members took President Chuck Kovaleski's challenge to double agent membership to heart and have undertaken a vigorous membership campaign, which includes letter writing, speaking at state and underwriter events, phoning potential members (the Phone-a-Thon in Phoenix is a prime example), and searching their state association directories.

From October 2003 to early February 2004 their efforts paid off with an incredible 82 new members! Let's hear it for some of our top recruiters:

Bob Newlon, Arizona  
Mike Conway, Florida  
Diana Nichols, Indiana  
Sally McCash, Maryland  
Committee Chair Ted Rogers, Maryland  
Bill Gowen, Montana  
Judy Lehman, Tennessee  
Sharon Sabol, New York  
Martha Guadagno, New York  
Tim Conley, North Carolina  
Bryan Thomason, Oklahoma  
Charles Nichols, Oklahoma  
Connie Sawtell, Virginia

Keep up the great work!

## calendar

### ALTA Coming Events

#### March

**14-16**  
ALTA Tech Forum  
New Orleans, LA

**31**  
Internal Auditors Committee Meeting  
New Orleans, LA

**April**  
**18-20**  
ALTA Federal Conference  
Washington, DC

**May**  
**1-4**  
Title Counsel Spring Meeting  
Victoria, Canada

**16-19**  
Annual Internal Auditors Meeting  
Key West, FL

**June**  
**18-19**  
Education Committee Meeting  
Baltimore, MD

**July**  
**23-26**  
Large Agents Meeting  
Victoria, Canada

**August**  
**7-10**  
Annual Reinsurance Meeting  
Williamsburg, VA

**October**  
**6-9**  
ALTA Annual Convention  
Boston, MA

### Affiliated Association Conventions

**April**  
14-16 Tennessee  
22-25 Palmetto  
29-May1 Oklahoma

**May**  
2-4 Iowa  
6-8 New Mexico  
23-25 California  
23-26 New Jersey

**June**  
2-4 South Dakota  
3-6 Pennsylvania  
4-6 Texas  
4-6 Virginia  
6-9 Wyoming  
24-26 Arkansas  
24-27 New England

**July**  
15-17 Illinois  
15-17 Utah  
18-20 Michigan

**August**  
5-7 Montana  
8-11 New York  
12-14 Minnesota  
19-21 Idaho  
19-21 Indiana

**September**  
2-4 Wisconsin  
9-10 Arizona  
9-11 Dixie  
11-12 Maryland  
16-18 North Carolina  
16-19 Missouri  
19-21 Ohio  
22-24 Nebraska  
23-25 North Dakota

**November**  
17-19 Florida

**December**  
2-3 Louisiana

# ALTAnews

## Sales of Board Game Triumphant

A little play on words... but sales of the new board game "Title Triumph™: The Game of Land Title Knowledge" are breaking records. The game is designed to be a fun way of team building and reinforcement of the topics of closing and escrow, search and exam, and commitment and policies. It debuted last October during ALTA's Annual Convention in Phoenix. Members participated in a tournament to test their knowledge on a variety of title topics. One round of the game can be completed in 45 to 60 minutes – perfect for some lunch hour fun. With 200 questions and answers, Title Triumph may be played multiple times before repeating a question.



ALTA members can order 1 to 10 games for \$135 each, 11 or more for \$105 each. Nonmembers pay \$50 more. To order your game, visit ALTA's Web site at [www.alta.org](http://www.alta.org) and click on Educ/Land Title Inst., then on Title Triumph.

## How Does Your Company Measure Up?

Find out in the "2003 ALTA Abstracter and Title Agent Operations Survey." For the seventh year ALTA has surveyed abstracters and title agents about their operating statistics and other characteristics and compiled them in a report. This year special emphasis was placed on types of office technology used by title agents.

The information developed in the survey is helpful in tracking operating results, in comparing one company with another, and in evaluating changes in the industry. This year 387 companies responded to the survey; 100 more than last year. Participants receive a complimentary copy of the survey. If your company did not participate, copies can be ordered for \$130 for ALTA members. To order, either visit ALTA's Web page at [www.alta.org](http://www.alta.org) and go to the Publications Order Form, or call Elizabeth Twitchell at 1-800-787-2582.

## ALTA Public Awareness Campaign Update

HUD's proposed changes to RESPA have dominated the activities of ALTA's public relations firm Ervin Bell over the past several months. Ervin Bell had several strategy sessions with ALTA on actions to take now and when the final rule is published.

Ervin Bell developed several articles for industry trade publications on the value of title insurance and ALTA's view that the proposed RESPA changes will negatively impact the title industry. Articles were placed in *REALTOR*® magazine, *REALTOR*® online and the *National Relocation and Real Estate Magazine*. Editorials were also sent to local newspapers of members of the Senate Banking Committee to state ALTA's position about the negative impact of REPSA on the thriving real estate economy.

The biggest campaign news is that the **Title Industry Marketing Kits** were mailed to over 500 ALTA members who requested the kit. The kit is designed to help members educate local real estate agents, lenders, and consumers about the value of title insurance.

The kit contains an "evergreen" Q&A format article that you can add your byline to and place in a local newspaper. There are also samples of articles written by your peers to give you ideas for your own columns.

A 12-minute video (or DVD) is included explaining the process of title insurance and why it is valuable to have. It outlines the work that goes into the title search and the preparation of documents for the actual settlement. This would be perfect to run continuously in your lobby or to show in individual closing rooms as consumers wait to meet with you. It can also be shown to local real estate agents groups, or others such as Kiwanis.

Finally, the kit contains some brochures that you can hand to consumers at settlement. The brochures can be ordered in bulk and customized with your logo. And the kit contains some sample ads that can be placed in local publications.

To order your free copy of the kit, fill out the form on page 25 or order online on ALTA's Web site at [www.alta.org](http://www.alta.org). Look under "ALTA News" for the order form.

## ALTA Testifies on RESPA



**Stanley Friedlander, ALTA immediate past-president, testified before the House Small Business Committee that the proposed changes to RESPA will have a negative impact on the title industry.**

Stanley Friedlander, ALTA immediate past president, testified before the House Small Business Committee at a hearing in January entitled "Real Estate Settlement Procedure Act Regulations: Working Behind Closed Doors to Hurt Small Businesses and Consumers."

Friedlander highlighted why ALTA believes HUD's proposed changes will have potentially adverse effects on consumers, the mortgage settlement process, and small businesses. Other industry organizations agreed with ALTA's assessment. Representatives from the National Association of Mortgage Brokers, Mortgage Bankers Association of America, National Association of Realtors®, and the Independent Community Bankers of America agreed that since the housing sector is currently so strong, now is not the time to come out with a change to RESPA. Chairman Manzullo agreed and said that HUD is disregarding a directive from President Bush to review how proposed rules will effect small businesses.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has 90 days to review the rule and will have access to industry comments (including ALTA's) that were sent to HUD last year. ALTA expects HUD to have its proposed RESPA rule back from the OMB in mid-March.

Mark your calendar to join ALTA for our first analysis of the RESPA regulations in a telephone seminar on Monday,

March 22, from 2-4 p.m. EST. RESPA experts Sheldon Hochberg of Steptoe & Johnson and Jim Maher, ALTA Executive Vice President, will outline what the proposal means for the title industry. Register online at ALTA's Web site at [www.alta.org](http://www.alta.org).

## Bankruptcy Bill Passes

ALTA was successful in including admendments in the bankruptcy bill that passed the House at the end of January. ALTA has been working on this issue, believe it or not, since 1996. ALTA has obtained amendments to overturn *McConville*, which failed to allow the protections given to purchasers under the Bankruptcy Code to also be given to lenders. Consequently, a lender's security interest was set aside after the borrower filed an undisclosed bankruptcy. ALTA sought amendments to clarify that a post petition transfer is valid and exempt from the automatic stay of bankruptcy. All the ALTA provisions were included in the House bill. As of press time, the Senate version of the bill had not yet been introduced.

For more information on this issue contact Ann vom Eigen, ALTA's legislative/regulatory counsel, at [ann\\_vomeigen@alta.org](mailto:ann_vomeigen@alta.org) or 1-800-787-2582.

## Caller ID Rules in Effect

While you probably do not consider yourself a telemarketer or making calls to a potential customer as a telemarketing call, beware; the Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communication Commission may. As of October 2003, businesses need to consult the Do Not Call Registry, unless certain requirements have already been met, before placing a solicitation call. Since January 2004 businesses are now required to transmit caller ID information when placing a call. The information displayed must include a phone number that the individual may call during business hours to place a do-not-call request. Please contact Charlene Nieman, grassroots & PAC manager at [charlene\\_nieman@alta.org](mailto:charlene_nieman@alta.org) or 1-800-787-2582 for further information.

## A Special Thank-you

We would like to thank the many ALTA members who responded to an Action Alert and sent letters and e-mails and visited Members of Congress on the issue of RESPA. See the following page for a list of ALTA members who participated in this important effort to encourage Congress to contact the Office of Budget and Management, which is currently reviewing HUD's proposed RESPA rule.

## Radian Loses California Appeal

Radian's appeal to the California Superior Court to have the cease and desist order against them lifted has been denied. Radian's arguments in favor of lifting the order were that RLP was not title insurance and that the mortgage guaranty statute allows Radian to sell the RLP because the mortgage guaranty statute trumps the monoline requirement in the title insurance statute.

The Court found that Paragraph 6D of the RLP converts what would normally be a mortgage guaranty insurance policy into a prohibited combination of mortgage guaranty and title insurance. The Court also found that the Radian Lien Protection constitutes a prohibited combination of mortgage guaranty and title insurance and that it does not protect the lender against financial loss arising solely from default, as required by the CA Insurance Code. The Court further found that the monoline requirement applies to both title and mortgage guaranty insurance, meaning that if a company is licensed to sell one line of insurance, it cannot sell another line.

You may recall in June of 2002 the CA Department of Insurance issued a cease and desist order to Radian, which forbade them from selling the RLP. In December 2002 Administrative Law Judge Leonard Scott sustained that order. On July 18, 2003, the CA Insurance Commissioner approved the Order as final. Radian's most recent Petition for Writ of Administrative Mandate was denied. It is unclear at this time whether an appeal will be filed. For more information on Radian's Lien Protection and title insurance, contact Jim Maher, ALTA's executive vice president at [jim\\_maher@alta.org](mailto:jim_maher@alta.org).

## GSE Reform Legislation Advances

As a result of press and political controversy over the restatement of Freddie Mac's earnings last year, the Committees on Capitol Hill with jurisdiction over the housing secondary market and the Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight Board—the federal regulator of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac—have begun to review agency actions and the structure of their supervision. Chairman Mike Oxley (R-OH) and Rep. Richard Baker (R-LA), key players in the House Banking Committee, held a series of hearings on the agency operations last fall and came close to reporting legislation. This spring the Senate Banking Committee is continuing its hearings on the Government Sponsored Enterprises. Committee members have begun to focus on the possible structure of a new Federal regulator for the housing GSEs and the Federal Home Loan Banks.

Early in February Comptroller General David Walker, head of the General Accounting Office, the program and financial audit arm of Congress, testified before the Senate Banking Committee in favor of creating a regulatory agency with a strong executive director backed by an advisory board consisting of the heads of other agencies. Comptroller General Walker's recommendation is one of several possible models proposed in a regulatory restructuring that ranges from a regulatory structure within the Department of Treasury to breaking up and privatizing the secondary market entities. The ongoing debate is centered on the tension involved between the regulation of the companies' safety and soundness and core capital requirements and the housing entities' ability to fulfill their charter and politically motivated requirements to support the American housing market. Chairman Richard Shelby (R-AL) has indicated that he would like the Banking Committee to consider legislation in March 2004. For more information contact Ann vom Eigen, ALTA's legislative/regulatory counsel, at [ann\\_vomeigen@alta.org](mailto:ann_vomeigen@alta.org) or 1-800-787-2582.



# ALTA thanks you

**ALTA** wishes to thank everyone who responded to our January 2004 Action Alert on RESPA. Our goal was to reach Members of Congress and President Bush and request their assistance by asking them to contact the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). OMB is currently reviewing the rule and one of their options is to send the rule back to HUD without approval to go forward.

ALTA thanks the following individuals who used our electronic system for sending their letters. We realize many more of you sent letters and called in response to the Action Alert, so though your name may not be listed, thank-you for your response and efforts.

If you would like more information on how you can become involved in our grassroots program, please contact Charlene Nieman, grassroots & PAC Manager at [charlene\\_nieman@alta.org](mailto:charlene_nieman@alta.org) or at 1-800-787-ALTA ext. 233.

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*View for yourself at the ALTA Tech Forum 2004*



# Making Successful Presentations

Some studies say people fear public speaking more than death. Making a presentation does not have to be daunting if you prepare ahead of time.

by Ellen Schweppe

**Y**ou've been asked to give a speech. Or you are making a presentation on the value of title insurance as

part of ALTA's Public Awareness Campaign. Once you confirm the time, date, and place, what else do you need to do before you step up to the podium?

Here are the key questions to ask those organizing the event to make sure you know what to expect and can meet the audience's expectations, as well as important questions to ask yourself as you plan your presentation.

Once you have a plan, use the tips below to write and deliver a speech that—whether your goal is to educate or motivate—stays with the audience long after the event is over.

You can use these tips in conjunction with ALTA's Title Industry Marketing Kit. The kit

includes video and PowerPoint presentations about the value of title insurance that are appropriate for consumer, industry, and employee audiences. (See page 25 to order.)

## **QUESTIONS TO ASK EVENT ORGANIZERS**

What is the topic? The organization may have a general or specific topic in mind, or leave it up to you. While you should try to accommodate the group's wishes, make sure the topic is appropriate for getting your message

### Tips From a Veteran Speaker

**T**he key to a successful presentation is “practice, practice, practice,” says Anne Anastasi, a title industry veteran who speaks regularly to business and industry groups.

“Practice out loud, standing up, until you have the timing and flow down,” says Anastasi, president of Genesis Abstract Inc. in Hatboro, PA, and member of ALTA’s Public Relations Committee “Practice enough that you can relax while you’re giving the speech.”

While Anastasi speaks on a variety of motivational, educational, and informational subjects, her most requested talks are on providing good customer service, establishing affiliated business arrangements, and understanding how title insurance works.

No matter what the topic, she starts by preparing an outline of what she plans to cover and researching anything she doesn’t know about the subject. “I try to find the meat of the topic so that people learn something from the presentation,” she says. “I don’t want to waste people’s time. It’s not fair to them.”

She organizes her points so that the audience can follow them easily. She normally uses a PowerPoint presentation to reinforce her points during educational speeches, but she doesn’t find audiovisuals a necessity for most motivational talks.

On the inevitable occasion when the screen is blank when the projector goes on, Anastasi takes advantage of the opportunity to inject humor into the presentation. “I do hand puppets to make the audience relax,” she says. “Once I get them laughing, I’ve got them where I need them.”

Getting the audience on your side is not as difficult as some speakers might think, she adds. “Ninety-nine percent of the people in the audience are pulling for you because they don’t want to be standing up there,” she says.

If the topic is controversial, Anastasi acknowledges that audience members may disagree with her point of view. “Respecting your audience is important, particularly in a hostile environment,” she says.

When she speaks to a group, Anastasi prefers to move around rather than stand behind a podium. She also finds several receptive-looking audience members to make eye contact with, a trick that boosts her adrenaline. And she makes an effort to relax so that she can think on her feet, deal with distractions, and turn any mistakes into opportunities to use humor.

“Do whatever gets you to the point where you can relax while you speak,” she says. “For me, it’s being prepared. And that means practice.”

across to the audience (which, of course, is why you should give a speech in the first place). If the group doesn’t have a topic in mind, ask if

the event has a theme you can weave into your remarks.

What is the occasion? Awards dinner? Networking luncheon?

Annual business meeting?

Informational or educational seminar? Knowing why the audience is there will help you tailor your remarks to their needs and expectations.

What time of day is the speech? Speaking to a post-breakfast crowd full of caffeine can be quite a different experience from making after-dinner remarks to an audience full of good food and spirits. If it is a multi day event, find out if you will speak on day one when audience members are fresh or day three when they may be focused on catching their flights home.

How long should the speech be? Ask for guidance on how long the organizers would like you to speak, but don’t feel compelled to fill every minute assigned to you. Say what you need to say and stop. On the other hand, don’t go over your allotted time. You don’t want to overstay your welcome with the audience or throw the event schedule off. If your time slot is the typical 45 minutes, a good guideline is to speak for about 20 minutes. That leaves five minutes for your introduction, 15 minutes for a question-and-answer session, and five minutes to get the event back on schedule if earlier speakers went over.

Who will be in the audience? And how well do they know your topic? Audiences unfamiliar with your subject or issues may appreciate more explanation, while audiences who took the same college classes you did may expect a greater level of technical detail. Be prepared to adjust your remarks accordingly.

It’s also helpful to know the audience’s attitude, whether it’s supportive, neutral, or even hostile. Some audience members may not agree with your point of view, but they are more likely to respect you if you give a thoughtful, balanced presentation that acknowledges their concerns.

## cover story

Who else is speaking? And what do they plan to talk about? This is particularly important if you are participating in a panel discussion in which speakers will express a variety of perspectives and opinions. You'll want to be prepared with your strongest arguments so you can effectively counter what those who hold the opposite view may say. Even if you're giving a solo speech, it's good to know what the audience will hear from other speakers during the event.

### QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

What do you want the audience to do or think after hearing your speech? Support your organization's position? Use your company's services? Vote for you? Donate money? Volunteer for your cause? Be better employees, citizens, students? This is the most important question because

everything in your speech should lead the audience to this conclusion.

*Practice, practice, practice. Audiences can tell whether a speaker is prepared or just read the speech in the taxi on the way over.*

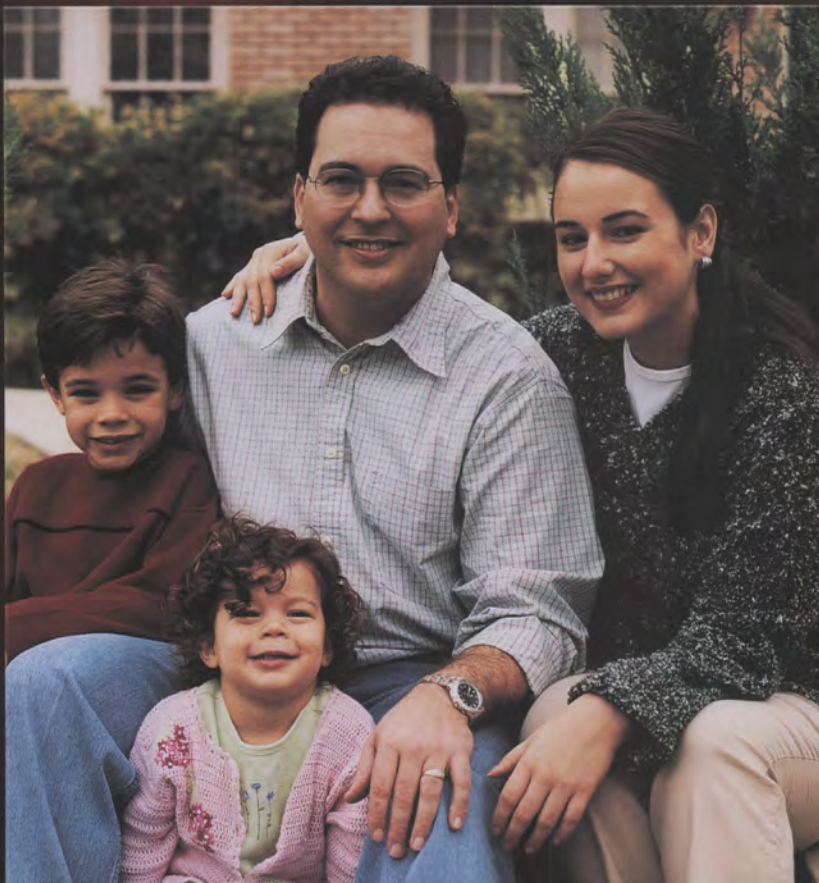
What are the three-to-five key points you want to make? Limit your messages to the most important so your audience will actually remember them—and act on them. It's tempting to pack as much information as you can into your remarks, but if you try to tell your audience everything, they may come away with nothing.

What's the best way to organize your remarks? Remember that audience members are listening to your remarks, not reading them, so organize the speech in a way that is easy for them to follow. One tried-

and-true method is to tell them what you're going to tell them, tell them,

and then tell them what you've told them. That means starting with an introductory statement on the key points you plan to make, going into detail on each point, and ending with a summary of the points that leads the audience to the inevitable conclusion of what you want them to do or think.

What examples, statistics, anecdotes, case studies, personal experiences, etc., do you have to back up and expand on your key points? Connect with the audience by offering striking evidence for each of



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## cover story

your points, whether it is strong statistics, compelling arguments, or interesting stories. Again, audience members are listening, not reading, so resist the temptation to overload them with every detail you have. Choose the best.

Are audiovisuals or props necessary for your presentation? If they are, make sure they are high quality and add value to your spoken message. And keep in mind that less is more. You want the audience to remain focused on you, not nodding off in the dark while you cycle through a series of complicated slides. An alternative is to distribute a handout after your remarks (again, you want the audience's attention on you—not your written materials—while you speak) that outlines or expands on your message.

If your presentation involves audiovisuals, have a plan for what to do if something goes wrong. Instead of spending several awkward minutes fumbling with a computer or slide projector that stops working, have a paper copy of your presentation handy so you can pull it out and keep going.

### TIPS FOR WRITING YOUR SPEECH

Put it on paper. Resist the temptation to wing it, even if you believe you know your subject well. Whether you prefer to speak from talking points or a complete script, putting your remarks on paper will help keep you on track with your message. It also will free you to focus on engaging your audience and delivering your message with enthusiasm.

Keep it simple. You're writing for the ear, so audience members can't reread a section of your remarks if they don't understand it the first time. Structure your talk so it is easy to follow (remember the "tell them what you're going to tell them, tell them, tell them what you've told them" adage). Choose short words over long

ones, and simple sentences instead of complex ones. Use familiar words, and avoid unnecessary jargon that could confuse listeners.

Make it interesting. Once you've determined your message and key points, figure out how you can make them meaningful to the audience. Relate your message to their perspective by talking about audience benefits—by answering the "what's in it for me?" question.

Use the anecdotes, statistics, quotations, and observations you've gathered to make your message concrete: "When you buy a home, what you don't know can cost you. Too many homebuyers without owners' title insurance find that out. That includes the couple who bought a home from a widow, not knowing a long-lost son would come back to make a claim on his father's estate. In fact, one in four property transactions has a title problem."

*Use these tips in conjunction with ALTA's Title Industry Marketing Kit. The kit includes video and PowerPoint presentations about the value of title insurance, appropriate for consumer, industry, and employee audiences.*

Write a strong conclusion. This is what you've been building toward, so make it count. Repeat your main message. Summarize your key points. And make it clear what you want the audience to take away from your talk. Tell them what they can do with the information you've presented, and how they can take that action. You can use a variety of techniques to make your conclusion memorable, such as telling a story, sharing your personal philosophy, asking a rhetorical question, or issuing a challenge.

Write the way you talk. And use language that's right for you. A good

way to test whether you're using a natural, conversational style is to read what you've written out loud. If you stumble over words or phrases, change them to words that come out of your mouth more easily.

### TIPS FOR GIVING YOUR PRESENTATION

Practice, practice, practice. Audiences can tell whether a speaker is prepared or just read the speech in the taxi on the way over. Practice while standing up, in front of a mirror or a trusted colleague or two. Go through the entire presentation several times to work out any kinks. This also will increase your familiarity with the material and raise your confidence level for when it comes time to really deliver.

Hone your delivery. How you deliver your speech is as important as what you say. Project your natural confidence by keeping in mind that

you are an expert. That's why you were invited to speak. Position your body so that you can move comfortably, and move away from the podium if you can. Use natural gestures, but make them bold enough to be seen throughout the room.

Vary the loudness of your voice and the rate at which you speak to create emphasis and enthusiasm. Let your passion for what you are talking about shine through, and don't be afraid to show some emotion if the topic calls for it.

At the same time, use eye contact to connect with the audience and convey your sincerity. Don't sweep the

## cover story

room with your eyes or spend the entire speech looking at one spot. Instead, look at one person until you finish a complete thought and then move on to someone else, just as you would in a natural conversation with a group of people.

Scope out the room in advance. Make sure everything is set up the way you want it. Adjust the lighting, temperature, or window coverings, if necessary. Check the microphone and audiovisual equipment. Make sure you have a glass of water and handkerchief within easy reach. Plan to carry your presentation to the podium to avoid having another speaker pick it up by mistake and walk away with it. Have it in a folder or portfolio that opens flat, with each page numbered.

Set the stage for your presentation. Walk confidently to the front of the room and shake hands with the

person who introduced you. Open your folder on the podium or table. If you're using a microphone, check its position in case another speaker has moved it. Stand up straight with your weight evenly distributed on both feet. Look at the audience for a few seconds to connect with them and allow them to get settled. Now it's show time!

Conduct the Q&A session skillfully. If your presentation includes audience questions at the end, figure out the most likely ones in advance and prepare short, pithy answers. If nobody asks a question at first, be prepared with some of your own.

Be ready to handle tough questions without becoming defensive or angry. If a questioner gets out of hand, you can cut him off politely but definitively and move on to another person. If that doesn't work, step

aside and look to the event organizer to handle the situation.

If you don't know the answer to a question, say so. Offer to take the questioner's business card and get back to him or her with the information requested. End the session with a positive question, or wrap it up on a high note with a summary statement that leaves your message in the minds of the audience members.



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# Avoiding Garbage In, Garbage Out in Your Title Plant

The title plant is the lifeblood of the county title department. Here's how to ensure that you input quality data and do it in an efficient manner.

by Mark F. Cheney

**Y**ou may remember this old data processing phrase from a few years back.

Unfortunately, it still holds true for the title industry. Our customers now require "fine cuisine" to be processed from our title plant information—regardless of what the input has been. In order to meet this standard, it is a prerequisite that we provide our title officers with prime information services, not errors and confusion.

In addition, it is also important that we take a look at our systems to make sure we are collecting the information we need in an efficient manner. I recently confronted a plant representative with a practical problem in a title plant. They were posting all surveys to the general posting of the sectional postings or the subdivisions, and not to specific properties (arbs) or lots, which sometimes involved over twenty different survey plats. I explained that it was a practical impossibility in a production-driven office to look at all

of those surveys to see which might affect the one property being searched. His answer was in essence, "Well, that's the way we do it." No apology, no empathy for the users, and no attempt to correct the procedure. (I think he must have been the programmer.)

After forty years of dealing with computer information and title issues, I have reached the following conclusions about how title information services can overcome the most obvious concerns in posting data to a title plant:

First, it is important to be able to accept the contribution to the programming process of a good title officer, who has seen and used a few title plants in a fairly long career. Do not let a programmer design the plant—something like letting Rush Limbaugh create a charm school. Hire a programmer with enough common sense and humility to know she doesn't know everything! A title plant should be designed with the end user always in mind. Recently a county assessor's office made a big show of asking for input from the title companies in an area, but in the end not a single change based on that input could be detected. Why? Because the bureaucracy didn't feel any obligation to do so—no customer satisfaction interest. Plant services must not be allowed to have that anti-customer attitude.

Nobody is going to post perfectly,

so it is imperative that data input is verified by a second party. Start by employing someone who can easily review a long metes-and-bounds legal like a speed-reader reads a long book. Someone with a background in title and/or surveying would be good, but the right person could be trained to do this. Also, use the software program itself to weed out errors.

Build parameters into the program that limit your title plant's acceptance of erroneous data. For example, if you have a county that only covers township numbers 8 through 17 north, it should not accept any number in the township field below 8 or above 17; the same is true of the range field. Also, why make a user enter an *n* into the township field if there are no south townships in the entire county? If a subdivision only has 120 lots, don't allow the program to accept a posting to lot 144; or if only 12 blocks, to a block 15. A generic title plant program to be used in all counties must have programmable "switches" to allow for the limiting parameters mentioned above. After data is input into a plant index, look at that data on the extremes of the alpha and numeric spectrum, and ask if they are logical. Did a typist 'stutter' on the first letter of a name, e.g. Ssmith? Why not program the plant to catch such anomalies? Even the spell-checker in Word caught this one.

As for erroneous legal descriptions



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# running your business

on documents, they must be researched to determine why they are erroneous. If they have been recorded in the wrong county, then the general index is the best place for them. If they are erroneous legal descriptions, only the courts will ultimately decide whether or not those documents give constructive notice to the world, so try to get them posted where they belong, not where they incorrectly indicate they belong. Use recognizable or logical icons, include multiple search options, and allow for easy access of information.

Teach posting personnel to post popular bank and real estate company names, and other repetitive items the same way. Consistency is one of the most critical factors in developing a usable plant. Abbreviations may only be used according to an approved list provided by management (with

searching experience) but should be used to post quickly and to be easily read. The wrong kind of shortcut make you lose a posted document in the general index or the geographic plant before you can say, "What happened?"

By programming for the ability to search for all names throughout the plant, with first names indicated, you will allow a searcher to find documents that are somehow misposted, either alphabetically or geographically. Fortunately, it is common practice to check for nicknames in almost all plants now when running a general index or name search.

Finally, charge more for the product if you must, but hire quality people who will do whatever is necessary and have the experience to post the plant properly after all of the

above effort is made to create a program worth using.

With increasing demands for lower priced products that can be provided more quickly, the title plant is the lifeblood of the county title department. Don't make these demands, which will increase over time with more bundled services and shorter escrow periods, impossible to meet by handcuffing your people to a plant that is less than it can be.

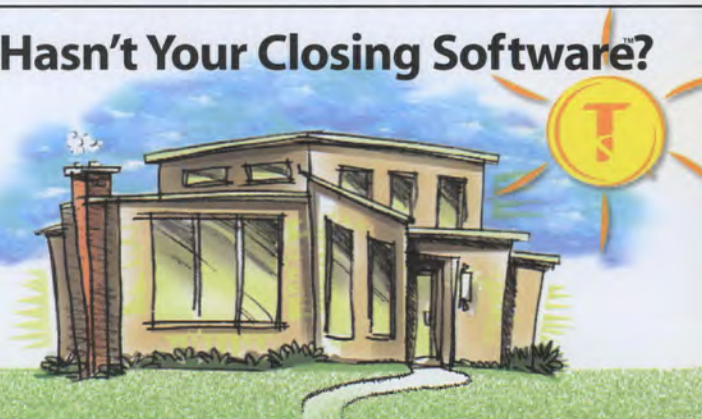
Whether you are computerizing an old tract book, a "slip" plant, one from fiche jackets, or building one from scratch using the county records, take the time now, spend the money necessary, and get a quality product up front. Only then will your title personnel be capable of giving you the production you need and the product that your customers require.

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# Flipping Real Estate— The HUD Response

Flipping of real estate has reached epidemic levels nationally. Learn how HUD is getting involved and the red flags to alert you to potential flip transactions.

by Mark S. Lynch

**T**he intercom on your desk buzzes and the voice on the other end inquires if you are

available to speak to representatives of the Internal Revenue Office, The U.S. Department of Justice, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, all of whom are assembled in your lobby for the stated purpose of reviewing a number of investor settlement files closed by your office the previous spring. This scene is being replayed thousands of times across the nation as anti-flipping initiatives are unveiled to combat this endemic problem in the real estate profession.

During the past several years, there has been widespread media coverage of this growing abuse in the real estate industry known as house flipping, where distressed properties are purchased and resold within a short time period after little or no verifiable rehabilitation. In a four-year period in

Baltimore, MD, over 2,000 individual properties were resold within 120 days at profits ranging from twice the initial acquisition price to ten times the original price. In the city of Cleveland, OH, approximately a thousand individual properties, with over 80% occurring in the lowest income areas were the subject of flipping activities over a three-year period. National housing fraud task forces, some formed as early as 1997, have focused on approximately 50 U.S. cities where the default rate on FHA loans exceeded 50% of closed loans and have resulted in numerous fraud prosecutions and convictions of loan officers, settlement agents, appraisers, attorneys, and mortgage brokers. Targeted cities for review have included Asbury Park, NJ, Annapolis and Baltimore, MD, Atlanta, GA, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Broward and Dade counties in Florida. With victims numbering tens of thousands nationwide, these abuses not only have affected innocent purchasers but also have begun to impact upon tax assessments in the affected neighborhoods targeted by the flippers. Each flipped property sends an inflated price signal influencing the judgments of other sellers and buyers in the same housing market who do not recognize the properties as unreflective of the market and that adversely affect the marketplace.

## WHAT A FLIP LOOKS LIKE

While variations on the following scheme have occurred in urban centers throughout the United States, the following is a “typical” flip transaction.

As an initial step, an unscrupulous real estate speculator acquires typically run-down or abandoned properties in low-income and/or depressed neighborhoods. Before the acquisition of the property at its “as is” condition, the speculator performs minor cosmetic repairs while seeking prospective purchasers among renters with low incomes and marginal credit. At the same time, the speculator will typically enlist the aid of a local mortgage broker who specializes in “creative financing” rather than a traditional institutional portfolio lender.

Once a prospective buyer is lured by the assurance of the investor that only a nominal down payment is necessary, sometimes as low as \$100, an examination of the property reveals that although in a depressed neighborhood, the property appears attractive with its freshly painted interior and exterior. The interior may also have new, albeit substandard, carpeting and newly installed appliances, although little if any substantial renovation or repair has been accomplished. The unsuspecting buyer accepts the offer of the investor to sell the home for \$30,000, unaware that the investor purchased the



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# inside the industry

property just weeks ago for \$18,000 and put only \$2,000 in cosmetic repairs.

The investor and the mortgage broker assure the soon-to-be homeowner that all the “paperwork” necessary to process the loan will only be a formality. Because of the purchaser’s modest income and the need to make the loan look attractive on the secondary mortgage market, almost all the information on the loan application, sales contract, and settlement documents is enhanced, embellished, or outright falsified. The purchase price is listed as \$60,000 rather than the \$30,000 agreed to. The \$500 deposit magically becomes \$5,000, and the investor agrees to hold a second trust of \$15,000. The investor also secures an appraisal from an independent appraiser who appraises the property at the contract price of \$60,000, using comparables in the same neighborhood, which are, typically, companion flip properties.

At settlement, the investor rushes the purchaser through the process, assuring the anxious new homeowner that “everything is in order and the papers are just a formality.” Typically the purchaser is induced to sign the papers without reading them and is frequently not given a copy. Oftentimes, the caring investor will suggest to the purchaser that since the execution of the loan documents is simply a formality, the purchasers can execute a power of attorney to enable a party, typically one designated by the investor, to take care of that necessary burden of paperwork. For many investors, the opportunity too conduct the closing in the settlement agent’s offices, without the physical attendance of the unsuspecting purchaser, is an opportunity to tempting to pass up. The purchasers, typically placing trust in the fraudulent investor, who has given them their first hope of purchasing a

home, are singularly unaware of perhaps the most significant and often fatal financial decision of their lives. With a profit of \$20,000 as illustrated below, the investor is on to the next deal after an investment of time and ownership in the distressed property for less than a month.

Inflated Sham Purchase Price	\$60,000
Less fictitious deposit	- 5,000
Less fictitious 2nd trust	-15,000
Less Actual cost	- 8,000
Less Minor Repairs	- 2,000
Proceeds to Seller	\$20,000

Because the purchaser’s were never really qualified by traditional income standards of mortgage lending, generally unsophisticated in the handling of money, and often subject to unemployment because of low training and educational standards, they rapidly fall behind in the payments, and the loan subsequently goes into foreclosure. When the lender obtains a preforeclosure appraisal, typically this is the first instance that the true value of the property (\$18,000 to \$20,000) comes to light.

*While many flipping schemes depend upon the dishonesty of the appraiser to present value and induce a lender to make a mortgage loan, many times honest though careless appraisers serve the task almost as well.*

## IS THE APPRAISER ALWAYS DISHONEST?

While many flipping schemes depend upon the dishonesty of the appraiser to present value and induce a lender to make a mortgage loan, many times honest though careless appraisers serve the task almost as well. Because many flip transactions occur in specific neighborhoods targeted for flipping, the rapid turnover of

properties creates an artificial market value of homes in the area. Many times appraisers, overworked, lazy, or deficient in their market research, utilize comparables given to them by the investor without independent verification of the information. More often than not, the comparable homes values submitted by the appraiser are other “flipped” properties, and the inattentive appraisers may not even notice that many of the comparable properties were sold within months of the proposed transactions, many times by the same investor submitting the current contract.

## WARNING SIGNS

Here are some warning signs that the sale might be a potential flip transaction.

1. An unrecorded deed being “held” by the settlement agent pending the “flip.”
2. High valuations for personal property on loan applications.
3. A report of title disclosing the owner of record being other than that reported on the binder of title insurance. For example: “Fee ownership in John and Mary Jones, Equitable ownership in Investor.”
4. A power of attorney prepared on behalf of the purchaser significantly in advance of closing for no apparent reason.
5. Altered deeds, instruments, and loan documents or documents executed by a power of attorney granted by the purchaser significantly in advance of the closing.

## inside the industry

6. Multiple transactions in a narrowly defined geographical area and/or multiple sales by the same investor in a geographical area.
7. Settlement fees to the agent conducting the closing grossly in excess of settlement fees charged in non-flip transactions.
8. Absence of photographic identification of the parties to the transaction contained in the settlement agent's file.
9. Unrecorded and/or unexecuted second trusts naming the investor

fraudulent abuses of HUD loan products sought to attach liability to persons and/or entities that make, present, or submit a false statement or a material omission of material fact in an FHA loan application. The penalties for culpable conduct as determined by an administrative law judge may include, in addition to monetary fines, the penalty of "debarment" which is an administrative sanction excluding the culpable party from doing business with any of 28 federal agencies, including but limited to, HUD and

rapid resales of property with large escalations in purchase prices.

The 90-day Rule: Any proposed resale involving FHA financing may not occur 90 or fewer days from the last sale of the subject property; the previous sale date under the regulations is deemed to have been established by the HUD-1 settlement statement. The final rule also requires verification that the seller of the property is the owner of record and permits verification in the form of a property sales history report, a copy of the recorded deed, or other

*In response to HUD-financed flipping schemes of the 1970s in urban areas of America, Congress passed the Program Fraud Civil Remedies Act of 1986, which became effective in August of 1988.*

- as the secured party.
10. Gift letters of large monetary amounts, contractual references to "decorating allowances," unspecified repair allowances, and large monetary deposits for properties of modest values.
  11. Deposits made in cash as earnest money deposits.
  12. Routine conduct of closings significantly after the close of business hours on a repetitive basis.

While the presence of any individual item in the listing above may not suggest a sham transaction, multiple combinations in the same file should suggest that such files require a closer examination, especially if the property in question is located in urban-targeted areas.

### REACTION BY HUD

In response to HUD-financed flipping schemes of the 1970s in urban areas of America, Congress passed the Program Fraud Civil Remedies Act of 1986, which became effective in August of 1988. This initial weapon in the arsenal against

the Veteran's Administration, for as long a period of time as the administrative judge may determine.

In a national effort to protect FHA buyers from the effects of predatory lending endemic to property flipping, HUD has promulgated specific anti-flipping regulations to establish a regulatory framework. These new rules, effective as of June 2, 2003, set a timetable for the eligibility of certain real property for FHA financing and impose certain previously unrequired conditions.

Under the promulgated rules, FHA insured mortgages may only be made to prospective purchasers from owner's whose interest in the property is of record. This specific element of the rule is designed to eliminate "double escrow" closings where the seller's interest in the property is pursuant to an unrecorded deed from the owner of record or an unrecorded assignment of a contractual interest of the investor/seller.

Additionally, HUD has imposed timing rules to determine the eligibility of property for FHA financing that are targeted to address

documentation in the nature of a property tax bill or title insurance binder detailing current ownership of the property in question.

The 91-to 180-Day Rule: If the proposed sales price of the subject property exceeds the sale price established by the seller's acquisition settlement sheet by 100% or more, the regulations impose the additional requirement of supplemental property value documentation. This additional documentation, the costs of which may not be imposed on an FHA buyer, shall be in the form of a secondary appraisal from an independent appraiser. While the mortgage lender may also document rehabilitation costs and expenses, the seller documentation may not replace the requirement of the secondary appraisal.

The 5% Rule: If the proposed sales price is 5% more than the lowest sales price of the subject property during the previous 12 calendar months, the regulations empower FHA with the right to require additional documentation, which may include, but is not limited to, a secondary

## inside the industry

independent appraisal.

Exceptions to the 90-day Rule:

- Relocations of employees under property acquisitions by employers or relocation companies.
- HUD-REO programs are exempt although subsequent resales must meet the requirements and guidelines of the 90-day rule.
- Sales by new homebuilders or circumstances where a builder is building a home for a specific buyer.

It is the hope and expectation of HUD that these newly implemented rules making flipped properties ineligible for HUD financing will protect FHA homebuyers from becoming victims of predatory practices.

Another significant fallout of the practice of flipping is the artificial and detrimental effect that flipping has on

the real property assessment records of unsuspecting neighbors. Because sale prices of properties are a matter of public record, they create statistical

*It is the hope and expectation of HUD that these newly implemented rules making flipped properties ineligible for HUD financing will protect FHA homebuyers.*

comparables to state and local tax assessors utilized in the formation and calculation of real property tax assessments. The artificially inflated purchase prices based on fraudulent appraisals tend to drive up neighborhood assessment values in areas targeted by investors for flip transactions, thus making innocent homeowners who have not refinanced or conveyed their properties subject to higher real property tax assessments.

Legitimate lending institutions, in an effort to curb the abuses and losses triggered by flip or equity-skimming transactions, have moved to require

the settlement industry to provide Source of Title certifications. The purpose of the certifications, whether known as source of title or otherwise, is to document and flag certain types of loan transactions that have become the frequent vehicle of flipping and/or equity skimming. These red flag transactions are typically broken down into four categories:

- Loans to occur simultaneously with any other sale or financing of

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## inside the industry

the property securing the loan in question. These simultaneous closings are often described in the real estate industry as "double escrow," "double closing," "flip sales" "pass through," "equity skimming."

- Transfers of the record title where the title report shows a previous transfer of the record title within six months preceding the current contemplated transaction. Lenders often refer to the period of current ownership as "seasoning" of the title.
- If the current transaction is represented to be a purchase transaction but the purchaser has acquired or will acquire an interest in the property prior to the scheduled loan closing.
- If the current transaction is represented to be a refinance but

the proposed borrower has not yet acquired a record interest in the property.

All of the above transactions cannot be deemed fraudulent by definition, but rather are transactional vehicles more subject to incidents of fraud and dishonesty and deserve a closer examination.

With homeownership in the United States approaching 66% and approximately 6 million new and existing home sales nationwide during 1999, the incidence of fraudulent flipping of real estate is proportionately increasing and still adversely affecting a large portion of homebuyers across America.

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criminal and civil penalties for those who engage in these fraudulent practices are a significant step forward and is an additional critical element in the control and eradication of industry abuses. The process of buying and selling a home is a stressful and confusing series of events even to those who are veterans of the process, and the continuing education of the real estate professionals who shepherd the consumers through the process is an absolute necessity. An informed real estate professional, without whom these transactions could not readily occur, is the last line of defense and a final critical element to ensure that the abuses visited upon those who can least afford it will not become a lasting and unfortunate legacy of the real estate industry.

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Many of these companies will be exhibiting at ALTA's Tech Forum 2004, so make plans to attend the meeting March 14-16, at The Fairmont in New Orleans. Visit [www.alta.org](http://www.alta.org) for meeting registration information and to research the products and services available from these member companies.

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# Congress 2004: Roadblocks at Virtually Every Turn

Getting things accomplished in an election year can be a challenge. However, ALTA will remain vigilant in meeting with Members of Congress on our key issues.

by Ann vom Eigen

**W**We are all aware that 2004 is an election year just

from watching television and reading the newspaper. As such, the federal legislature will be in session for a relatively short period of time. Unfortunately, this will impact everything that ALTA and other groups try to accomplish this year.

The normally brief second session of the two-year Congress (which is oriented to fall elections) is even more compressed this year since the National Party Conventions will consume July and August. Exacerbating the short time frame for legislative action is the close Republican majorities in the Senate and the House. The Democratic minorities in both Houses have the ability to tie up legislation and exercise leverage through procedural mechanisms such as a filibuster, which further limits the ability of the legislature to enact legislation. At the beginning of the congressional session, Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY), Majority Whip of the

United States Senate, counseled lobbyists that it would be a year in which there will be "roadblocks at virtually every intersection on Capitol Hill." The Senate Democrats, led by Senator Tom Daschle (D-SD), have informed the whip that they clearly intend to craft the message to assure that conference reports on legislation agreed to by the Senate and the House must be consistent with and acceptable to the Senate minority. Bills that don't meet their requirements will be filibustered and effectively killed. In fact, Senator McConnell's advice to lobbyist members of the Republican Senate Council was to "lower your expectations" about what can be done this year.

So what does that mean for the title insurance industry? Essentially, it means that very little positive action that would benefit the industry will be taken on Capitol Hill. Congressional action on Bankruptcy Reform legislation illustrates this point. ALTA has successfully lobbied amendments to overturn a Ninth Circuit decision and to provide coverage of security interests in real property by relief from the automatic stay in bankruptcy. While the amendments we have been seeking were first introduced in 1997 and have been included in all congressional conference reports since 1998, those agreements have never become law. The conference report on the "Bankruptcy Reform Act of

2003" passed the House in early February 2004. However, it is uncertain whether the Senate will ever act on this report, since it is unable to garner votes due to language in the legislation affecting the ability of persons convicted of bombing abortion clinics to declare bankruptcy.

## SENATE BANKING COMMITTEE AGENDA

Jurisdiction over RESPA, authority to regulate HUD, Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and other major federal programs related to housing and insurance fall under the jurisdiction of the Senate Banking Committee and the House Financial Services Committee. Senator Richard Shelby (R-AL), Chair of the Senate Banking Committee (who is familiar with the title insurance industry as an agent-owner), has announced his priorities for the year, and RESPA is noticeably absent. Here is what Senator Shelby has indicated will be on the committee's agenda.

### • GSE Reform

Driven by the current press reports of abuses in the mutual fund industry and press coverage of Freddie Mac's efforts to restate and manage earnings, much of the Committee's time will be spent addressing crises in the financial markets, such as the consumer interests in regulation of fees and trading in the mutual fund industry. In reaction to the concern



Ann vom Eigen is ALTA's legislative and regulatory counsel. She can be reached at [ann\\_vomeigen@alta.org](mailto:ann_vomeigen@alta.org) or 1-800-787-2582.

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about Freddie Mac's efforts to manage earnings and the resulting restatements, Chairman Shelby has indicated that the Banking Committee will consider legislation in March to establish a strong and credible regulator for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, the housing Government Sponsored Enterprises. As *Title News* goes to press, the Senate Banking Committee is continuing its series of hearings on restructuring the GSEs. The General Accounting Office, the audit and oversight arm of the U.S. Congress, is urging Congress to create a new regulatory body to take the place of the current Office of Federal Housing and Enterprise Oversight Board within the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The new entity would have power to monitor Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac's financial health as well as their compliance with their existing federal charter mandate to spur homeownership. Currently, the Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac charters established by federal legislation do not address title insurance as a risk. Rather, the servicing guidelines of both entities require that title evidence support loans offered for sale to the secondary market agencies. As the focus on Capitol Hill rests on the basic safety and soundness and core capital requirements of these institutions, products that support a securitized mortgage will be reached. It is unlikely that they will reach such security interest issues as appraisal or title. Chairman Mike Oxley (R-OH), Chair of the House Banking Committee, has indicated that he will consider a House bill to regulate the housing GSEs only after Senate action has been completed.

- **Interest on Business Checking**  
Regulatory relief legislation for financial institutions passed the

House last year, and is also high on the Senate Banking Committee's agenda. This legislation may well turn into a vehicle for interest on business checking amendments, which will have a direct effect on the way we do business. The Interest on Business Checking Act of 2003,

*Despite the challenges ALTA and the industry face this year in achieving results, we will continue to be consistent in getting our messages across.*

which passed the House last year, will modify the federal law on which our current treatment of escrow funds rests. If the House bill is enacted, title insurers and agents would begin to receive interest on impounds and escrows and could be required to pass those earnings on to consumers. Earnings credits and overnight loans would disappear. ALTA has succeeded in obtaining an amendment in legislation introduced in the Senate that would allow us to continue our current escrow practices.

- **National Flood Insurance**

The national flood insurance program authorization is scheduled to expire in March of 2004, and Chairman Shelby has indicated that some kind of reauthorization will be completed.

- **USA Patriot Act**

Oversight of recently enacted statutes is also a congressional responsibility. The Senate Committee is also likely to focus on implementation of the federal response to the September 11 terrorism act, including a review of the national money-laundering strategy and the effectiveness of the USA Patriot Act. However, reconsideration of the regulation of financial institutions is unlikely to reach the specially designated nationals list. While the title insurance industry is

technically considered a financial institution, and thus subject to USA Patriot Act restrictions, the Treasury Department has considered real estate settlements a fairly low risk for money laundering for terrorist activities. Consequently, it has devoted efforts elsewhere and not yet reached

rulemaking for real estate settlements. Additional oversight may also rest on the competitive market landscape that has occurred as a result of the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act. Tying and insurance regulation and industrial loan company growth will be reviewed in that context.

### **REGULATORY ACTIONS ON RESPA**

A short legislative session may also mean limited time to override any regulatory actions undertaken by the administration. In some instances this may favor American businesses. For instance, the business community currently has expectations that proposed changes to the Department of Labor rules to modify the current treatment of overtime will favor management. However, the limited time frame for action on labor rules will also be applicable to the environment in which changes to any RESPA reform rule may be sought.

As you may recall, HUD transmitted a final RESPA rule to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in December 2003. OMB is provided with up to 90 days to review an agency's rulemaking analysis, including the draft rule, a regulatory impact analysis, and any other supporting materials. Since HUD's RESPA rule will have a significant

## issue focus

effect on a substantial number of small entities, a Regulatory Flexibility Act analysis is also required for the RESPA rulemaking. In an Executive Order, the President has directed agencies, to the extent permitted by law, to follow certain principles in rulemaking, such as consideration of alternatives and analysis of impacts, both the benefits and costs. There are ultimately three possible outcomes of OMB review: (1) conclusion of review and publication in the Federal Register; (2) withdrawal by the agency for further consideration; or (3) return by OMB to the agency for reconsideration.

ALTA has been very active in getting out our message that HUD's proposed changes to RESPA would have a negative impact on the title industry. In November 2003 and again in December 2003, ALTA

joined with all the major real estate trade groups – the Mortgage Bankers Association of America, the National Association of Homebuilders, the National Association of Mortgage Brokers, and the National Association of Realtors® -- to caution the Administration that "now was not the time" to issue the RESPA rule.

As I'm sure you know from your business volume, housing has been one of the few healthily functioning sectors of the economy. Over 40,000 comments were filed on the proposed RESPA rule. Mortgage brokers objected to the treatment of yield spread premiums, lenders objected to changes in the good faith estimate, and the title insurance and appraisal industry objected to the guaranteed mortgage package. Many industry groups, such as the Mortgage Bankers Association of America, the Appraisal

Institute, the National Association of Realtors®, and consumer groups filed comments with HUD during the formal comment period. These interest groups also subsequently met with HUD to express their objections. In addition, the Small Business Administration's Office of Advocacy organized a roundtable of affected small business providers, who solicited suggestions for alternatives that would make the rule more workable for small businesses. In the formal rulemaking process, HUD and the Federal agencies are able to listen but not respond to industry concerns.

ALTA testified several times in 2003 before the House Financial Services and Senate Banking Committees and before the Small Business Committee. In early January 2004, ALTA also testified at a hearing held by Small Business

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Committee Chairman Don Manzullo (R-IL). At the most recent hearing, Congress saw some dramatic changes from industry groups. While ALTA has consistently held to its position that HUD should repropose a RESPA rule before moving to final implementation, many other groups have now joined that chorus. Hopefully, a united real estate industry will cause the administration to have second thoughts about proceeding with the proposed rule.

If the administration proceeds to publish a final rule and ALTA determines the rule to be detrimental to the industry, the ALTA Board of Governors has authorized ALTA to challenge implementation of the rule in the courts. Congress may also be asked to join the fray. At present, over several thousand ALTA members have sent letters or made calls and

visits to Members of Congress asking them to delay action on the RESPA rule. ALTA is assisting several members of Congress who are circulating a letter to be sent to the Administration asking them to delay action on the RESPA rule. Congress may also enact a joint resolution of disapproval. There have been a number of congressional joint resolutions of disapproval that have been introduced since 1996, the year in which the Congressional Review Act establishing the process was enacted. However, there has been only one instance where a joint resolution was actually signed into law. A Department of Labor regulation to deal with repetitive motion actions or ergonomics standards was finalized at the very end of the Clinton Administration in November 2000. A joint resolution of

disapproval was introduced at the beginning of the next Congress when it convened in January 2001. Whether there will be time or energy to undertake such an effort in the 108th Congress will depend on industry reaction to a final rule.

### KEEPING THE MOMENTUM

Despite the challenges ALTA and the industry face this year in achieving results, we will continue to be consistent in getting our messages across. Members of Congress don't only want to hear from us when we have a problem. A year in which legislation is difficult provides Members of Congress an opportunity to be attentive to constituent concerns and allows us to keep our foot in the door on important issues for the next Congress.

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## Mortgage Activity to Decline in 2004

Officials from Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae predict that mortgage activity will decline in 2004, but it won't necessarily cause a downturn in activity in the recording industry.

Paul Peterson, chief operating officer of Freddie Mac, and David Berson, vice president and chief economist of Fannie Mae, say higher interest rates will slow down housing activity in 2004, while rising mortgage rates will stem the rise of home refinancing.

However, with the volume of work accumulated from 2003, recording officials shouldn't see a big drop in business anytime soon, said Carolyn Ableman, chief deputy auditor in Snohomish County, Washington.

Recording officials should stay busy verifying scores of records, images, and manually checking electronically recorded documents, she said.

Also, the industry is saving money with e-recordings, Ableman said. E-recordings have allowed us here in Washington to not increase staff despite the high work volume.

## PRIA Looks at Hiring Full-time Employee

Setting electronic recording standards for the property records industry is an expensive and time-consuming undertaking that needs skilled people to keep the goal attainable.

The PRIA committee charged with carrying out this task is looking for ways to pay for a full-time employee to keep the group on track. One of the plans under consideration is a special assessment to counties with healthy budgets, said Mark Ladd, register of deeds in Racine County, Wisconsin, and co-chair of the Technology Committee.

Counties that have the money in their budgets can contribute over and above their normal dues, Ladd said. Participating counties will submit a separate form directing the money into a specific fund for e-recording standards development, including the hiring of a full-time employee dedicated to the XML project. The money won't be diverted off to fund anything else.

PRIA is working closely with the Mortgage Industry Standards Maintenance Organization (MISMO) on the XML standards. It requires a lot of man hours and expertise. PRIA needs skilled people to keep it moving. MISMO has a paid administrator to keep it on schedule; we have only one part-timer, Ladd said.

## Discharge Records

Military discharge records filed with county recording offices in Minnesota are now considered private information and will not be accessible by the public.

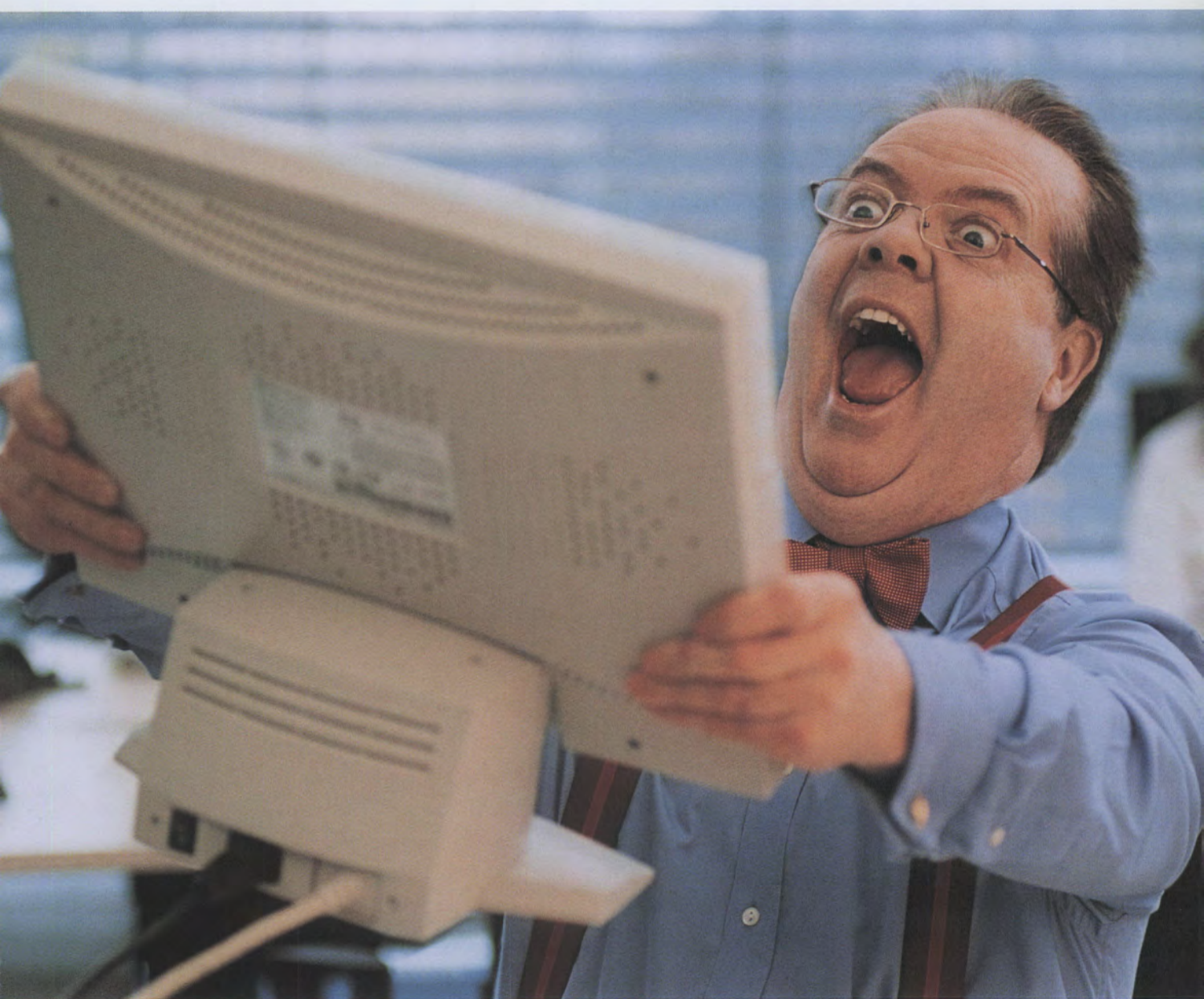
Under a new law that became effective January 1, in order to access military discharge information and obtain a certified copy of the discharge, a requestor will have to fill out and submit a form explaining his or her interest, said Cindy Koosman, Washington County recorder and PRIA State Advisory Committee member.

Access to sensitive information on recorded military discharge papers such as names, addresses, and Social Security numbers has been a growing issue for recording officials across the country.



**Property Records  
Industry Association**  
P.O. Box 3159  
Durham, NC 27715-3159  
(919) 433-0121  
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Affecting  
Your  
Business**



**ALTA**  
**2004**  
**FEDERAL CONFERENCE**  
April 19-21, 2004

# FEDERAL CONFERENCE PROGRAMMING

## **Affiliated Title Association Officer-Executive Meeting**

*(open to state association staff and elected officials)*

This meeting for state leadership will feature interactive roundtable discussions, along with topics on different aspects of running an association.

## **Abstracters & Title Insurance Agents Open Meeting**

*(open to ALL abstracter/agent members)*

This is one of two opportunities that ALTA provides Abstracter and Agent Members to discuss and consider issues relevant to the Section as a whole. All Abstracter and Agent Members are strongly encouraged to attend this Open Meeting. Following the "Town Meeting" format, members will be able to exchange ideas and learn from each other. The meeting will also feature a report on the "Agent Section Visioning Session" held March 12-13, 2004, as well as a discussion on the impact of packaging on agents.

## **Bundling: the New Reality**

Now that we are ready, where do we go? Many of the major underwriters are ready to go with their new products and services in a bundle or package of settlement services. Lenders have been clamoring for ways to make the consumer's life (and their own business practices) easier, and some title agents have managed to find the way. Discover how the title agent is designed to fit into this new world of bundled services.

## **Doing Business under the New RESPA Rule**

What will be the emerging business model under the new RESPA Rule? Right now, affiliated business arrangements are the hot vehicle for the delivery of bundled services. Under the new RESPA Rule, an affiliated business arrangement may become an unnecessary—and even a cumbersome—corporate structure. Learn about potential structural changes to the industry and the evolving future business models from the parties in Washington who will be interpreting the Rule.

## **Enforcement in the New RESPA Environment**

How do you comply with RESPA now? We may be facing a new rule in 2004, but even a Federal agency recognizes that it would take some time for companies to develop new software for disclosures, to train employees, and to modify internal systems. And, there will always be gray areas, as there are with any new law. How do you avoid getting in trouble with the RESPA enforcement division if companies you work with try creative approaches now and in the future?

## **Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac: Reform or Transformation?**

The Bush Administration has proposed new regulations for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac designed to increase supervision over those entities. On the other hand, other policy analysts are proposing "privatization" of the secondary market agencies. Will requirements to increase core capital affect how we do business with Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac? Or, will they become fierce competitors in our arena? This will be the critical year when these decisions are made on Capitol Hill.

## **Identity Theft: No One Is Safe**

From June 2002 to June 2003 approximately 7 million people became victims of identity theft. Congress recently enacted legislation that provides consumers with additional protections. Are you safeguarding your customers' information as required? What security issues does your business face? Find out how to protect your customers and your business.

## **The New Agent Role in RESPA**

Several Washington DC area title agents have begun to bypass affiliated business arrangements and offer real estate agents and lender customers a better price for their services. Will this be the next new thing? People who have already tried this business model will share with Federal Conference attendees what works and what doesn't—and why.

## **Now I Can't E-mail, Fax, or Phone!**

You probably added your own home number to the FTC's "Do Not Call" Registry, but did you know it applies to your own business solicitation calls? Do you use e-mail, fax, or phone to contact your customers? If you do, you may be running afoul of several new Federal laws. One new Federal law, the "CAN-SPAM Act" (Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing Act of 2003), establishes a framework of tools to help America's consumers, businesses, and families combat unsolicited commercial e-mail, known as spam. The law allows consumers to choose to stop further spam from a particular sender—which could be you! You've already heard that you can't fax and can't call. Now you can't e-mail. Learn the new rules on what you can and can't do when you contact your customers from people who work with the industry.

*The legislative and regulatory goals of ALTA can best be achieved through personal influence and personal contact. In order for our industry to prosper, we must maintain constant, persistent and favorable relations with members of Congress and federal regulators. Grassroots involvement is the key to success. ALTA's Federal Conference provides its members with an opportunity to "state its case." Be responsible - attend.*

**Mark Edward Winter, Stewart Title, Washington, DC and Member, ALTA Board of Governors**

# FEDERAL CONFERENCE PROGRAMMING, cont.

## Overtime—or Not?

The Department of Labor is scheduled to issue overtime rules in March, 2004. This new rule will have a direct effect on your labor costs and your bottom line. Be sure to attend this session about the new rules and see how to make them work for you.

## Meet Representative Mike Oxley



Michael Oxley (R-OH) is Chairman of the House Financial Services Committee. 2004 Federal Conference attendees will have an exceptional opportunity to meet Rep. Oxley during an

informal gathering on Tuesday evening, April 20. Rep. Oxley will give participants his insights into the important issues his committee will address during this Presidential Election year, as well as answer questions of relevance to the title industry. (Time and location of this event has not been determined at the time of the printing of this brochure, but will be listed in the 2004 Federal Conference Final Program.)

*The Federal Conference, for me, is always a great experience. Not only are the educational sessions top-notch and timely, but it gives us an opportunity to make appointments to see our Representatives and present our issues to them in person. You can't beat the power of that kind of face time!*

**Stanley B. Friedlander, Pres.,  
Continental Title Agency Corp.,  
Cleveland, OH and Immediate  
Past President, ALTA**

## TIPAC Luncheon: Political Trends—2004 and Beyond



Stuart Rothenberg is editor and publisher of *The Rothenberg Political Report*, a Washington-based biweekly newsletter that reports on and analyzes U.S. House, Senate and gubernatorial elections, presidential politics and current political developments.

His commentary has been featured in newspapers throughout the country. He has appeared on ABC's *This Week*, the CBS *Evening News with Dan Rather*, NBC's *Meet the Press*, PBS's *News Hour with Jim Lehrer*, *The McLaughlin Group*, *The Today Show*, CNN's *Inside Politics*, and C-SPAN.

During the 1996 and 2000 Presidential elections, Mr. Rothenberg served as an analyst for the Voice of America (VOA), and he was an on-camera election night analyst for CNN for over ten years. He has been speaking to corporate and association audiences around the country for more than a decade, helping them identify and stay on top of political trends. His humorous anecdotes and voluminous knowledge keep his audiences entertained and informed.

## DINE AROUNDS

Over the past several years the ALTA Dine Arounds have become a popular Federal Conference activity. This year Dine Arounds will take place the evening of Tuesday, April 20. This is an excellent opportunity to meet and socialize with fellow attendees, see a bit of the city, and enjoy some of the world-class cuisine that makes DC one of the country's best places to dine. Each Dine Around will be "hosted" by an ALTA member. Sign-up sheets will be available on-site. Plan to participate.

## SPECIAL TOUR - Sunday, April 18, 2:00pm

### The National Building Museum

401 F St., NW

Phone: 202 272-2448

Web site: [www.nbm.org](http://www.nbm.org)

Metro: Judiciary Square

Created by an act of Congress in 1980, the National Building Museum is America's premier cultural institution dedicated to exploring and celebrating architecture, design, engineering, construction, and urban planning. Since opening its doors in 1985, the Museum has become a vital forum for exchanging ideas and information about such topical issues as managing suburban growth, preserving landmarks and communities, and revitalizing urban centers. The Museum's engaging exhibitions and education programs annually attract more than 400,000 people.

The Museum occupies one of Washington's most spectacular structures, designed in 1881 by civil engineer and U.S. Army General Montgomery C. Meigs and completed in 1887. The building, which originally housed the Pension Bureau and was later occupied by many government agencies, is widely recognized as a marvel of engineering.

The impressive Italian Renaissance design, with a central fountain and eight colossal Corinthian columns—among the tallest interior columns in the world—has made the Great Hall a sought-after spot for gala events, including Presidential Inaugural Balls and the annual holiday special, Christmas in Washington.

ALTA is pleased to offer a special guided tour of the National Building Museum on Sunday, April 18, at 2:00pm. A museum docent will lead participants on a private tour through the building, pointing out exhibits and sharing the Museum's history. After the 45-minute tour, participants will have ample opportunity to visit the exhibits at their leisure. This tour is complimentary to Federal Conference registrants, but space is limited. Reserve your place early by using the registration form at the back of this brochure.

# REGISTRATION FORM

Registration includes: General Sessions, TIPAC Luncheon, Breakfasts, and Congressional Luncheon.  
 Does not include April 20 Dine-Arounds.

## Important:

Please read carefully

Full payment for ALTA's 2004 Federal Conference must accompany this form.

## Questions?

Call 1-800-787-ALTA for prompt assistance!

## Mail

Return this form with payment to:

ALTA Registrations  
 1828 L Street, NW, Suite 705  
 Washington, DC 20036

## Fax

Fax this form to ALTA (toll-free) with credit card payment:

1-888-FAX-ALTA or  
 202-223-5843

## Online

Register online at: [www.alta.org](http://www.alta.org)

## Hotel

Make reservations at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill by calling 1-800-233-1234 or 202-737-1234 by **March 24, 2004**, to obtain special ALTA room rates. Room Rates (per night, plus tax): \$259 (single), \$284 (double)

### 1. Primary Registrant (please print or attach business card)

First Name	MI	Last Name	Badge Name
Company			
Address			
City	State	Zip Code	
Phone	Fax	Email	

### 2. Guest/Spouse Registration

First Name	MI	Last Name	Badge Name
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### 3. Registration Type

Check registration type and enter the amount in Payment Options Section.

	By March 24, 2004	After March 24, 2004
ALTA Active/Associate Member	<input type="checkbox"/> \$349	<input type="checkbox"/> \$399
Guest/Spouse	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
Non-Member	<input type="checkbox"/> \$399	<input type="checkbox"/> \$449

### 4. National Building Museum Tour

The National Building Museum Tour is free, however please indicate whether you plan to attend.

Number attending \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. Congressional Luncheon

The Congressional Luncheon is included in your registration fee.

Check here if you plan to attend the Congressional Luncheon on April 20.

### 6. TIPAC Luncheon

The TIPAC Luncheon is included in your registration fee.

Check here if you plan to attend the TIPAC Luncheon on April 21.

### 6. Payment Options

Total Registration Fees (Section 3) Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Payment Method:

- Check       American Express  
 VISA       MasterCard

Printed Name of Cardholder \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature \_\_\_\_\_



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Fax: 602-383-1945

Website: [www.titleprogram.com](http://www.titleprogram.com)

e-mail: [nwalker@titleprogram.com](mailto:nwalker@titleprogram.com)



## member news

### Movers & Shakers

#### ARIZONA

First American Title Insurance Company, Phoenix. **Chip Carmer** has been promoted to the positions of regional vice president for the Southwest region and president of the Arizona division for First American. He joined First American in 1993 and most recently served as county manager and division vice president in Santa Clara, CA.



#### CALIFORNIA

**Bruce Maita** has been named president of Financial Title Company, Folsom. Prior to joining Financial Title, Maita was president of the Sacramento division of Alliance Title Company.



**Lavette Cozzitorto** has been named escrow officer for the Folsom branch of Fidelity National Title Insurance Company's Sacramento division. Previously she worked at Placer Title for 13 years.

**Dennis J. Gilmore** has been named executive vice president for First American Corporation, Santa Ana. With First American since 1988, most recently he was president of First American Real Estate Solutions.



#### CALIFORNIA, CONT.

**Michelle Wilson** has been named vice president and division manager for the Santa Clara County division of First American Title Company, Santa Ana. Wilson joined First American in 1980. Most recently she was vice president and division manager for Contra Costa and Solano counties.

**Glyn Nelson** has been promoted to executive vice president—direct services for the LandAmerica Financial Groups Inc.'s Santa Ana office. Previously, Nelson was senior vice president—California state manager for LandAmerica Commonwealth.

#### COLORADO

**Margie Lewis** has joined First American Heritage Title Company, Loveland, as escrow officer. She has been involved in the real estate industry since 1979.



**Kirk Hanes** has been appointed vice president of business development for Zenodata Corporation, Louisville. Hanes brings more than 18 years of experience in corporate sales and business development.



#### ILLINOIS

**Patty McConnell** has been hired as national account manager for Tigor Title Insurance Company's Chicago Loop and Milwaukee offices. Prior to joining Tigor, McConnell was regional sales director for International Land Services.

# NEW ALTA MEMBERS

### ACTIVE MEMBERS

#### Arkansas

**Lucenia Whitehead**  
Grand Prairie Title Co.  
Cabot

**Ron Holetzky**  
Advantage Research Corp.  
Hot Springs

#### Colorado

**Stephane Atencio**  
Alomosa Title & Closing, LLC  
Alamosa

**Jerrold Spaeth**  
Metro Denver Title  
Denver

#### Connecticut

**Carol Donnelly**  
Dayville

**John Harlow**  
Wallingford

#### Florida

**Susan Levin**  
CU Title LLC  
Boca Raton

**Venita Pool**  
Guarantee Title Research  
Bonifay

**Robert Peters**  
Nassau Title Company  
Fernandina Beach

**Sharon Cunningham**  
Premier Title of Lakeland, Inc.  
Lakeland

**Harry Binnie**  
HB Title of Florida, Inc.  
Margate

**John White**  
Barrister Title & Guaranty Co.  
Miami

**Robert Cochran**  
Dan Cochran Enterprises, Inc.  
Panama City

## member news

### MARYLAND

**Tine K. H. Dickey** has been promoted to senior vice president, sales manager for Fidelity Residential Solutions, Inc., Arnold. FRS is a division of Fidelity National Financial, Inc. Tine joined FRS from Fidelity's National Agency division.

### OHIO

**Christine Coughlin** has been promoted to the position of branch manager for First American Title/Midland Title's Elyria office. Most recently she headed the Escrow Department at the branch.

### TEXAS

**Patrick Shields** has been appointed manager of Stewart Title Guaranty Company's national title services operation in Houston. Shields joined Stewart NTS in 2000 serving as manager and underwriter for the Philadelphia office.



### VIRGINIA

LandAmerica Financial Group, Inc., Richmond, has several announcements.

**Melissa Hill** has been promoted to the newly created position of executive vice president of production and process improvement. Hill previously served as president of LandAmerica OneStop.

**Cheryl Cox** has been promoted to president of LandAmerica OneStop. Previously she served as vice president—national closing operations for OneStop.

**Bruce Wood** has been elected senior vice president—financial planning. Wood has been with LandAmerica for over 25 years and most recently served as vice president—planning and analysis.

## Mergers & Acquisitions

**Access National Settlement Services** announced the acquisition through merger of a controlling interest in Metropolitan Title and Escrow Company, Centreville, VA.

**Capital Title Group, Inc.**, Scottsdale, AZ, will acquire Nationwide Appraisal Services Corporation near Pittsburgh, PA.

**First American Title Insurance Company**, Santa Ana, CA has agreed to acquire Seattle-based Pacific Northwest Title Holding Company and its subsidiaries.

**LandAmerica Financial Group, Inc.**, Richmond, VA has purchased County Title Holding Corp., the parent company of Southland Title Corporation of Burbank, CA, Southland Title of Orange County, Southland Title of San Diego, and Southland Title Equities.

**Old Republic National Title**, Minneapolis, IN, has acquired Kaspar & Associates, Inc., and Kasparnet, LLC in Medina, OH.

**Stewart Title Guaranty Company**, Houston, TX, has purchased Platte County Title & Abstract Company, MO.

# NEW ALTA MEMBERS

### Florida, cont.

**Gregory Todd**  
Professional Title Group  
d/b/a Quest Title  
Pompano Beach

**Stephanie Brown**  
Tri-Star Title Services LLC  
West Palm Beach

### Georgia

**David Oliver**  
Dorr Settlement Services of Atlanta,  
LLC  
Atlanta

**Gary Solomon**  
Carrollton

**Tonya Cole**  
Ogeechee Title, Inc.  
Millen

### Illinois

**Norvel Brown**  
Precision Title, LLC  
Alton

**Gary Spurling**  
Spurling Title, Inc.  
Taylorville

**Ronald Bykowski**  
Affiliated Midwest Title  
Waukegan  
Indiana

**Lisa Hoover**  
TitlePlus!  
Bloomington

**Marshall Kiel**  
Smart & Johnson Title Corp.  
Columbus

**Don Plank**  
Title Search Services, LLC  
Noblesville

### Iowa

**Robert Filter**  
West Des Moines

# member news

## **Kansas**

**Renee' Delay-Pierson**  
American Title & Abstract Specialists, Inc.  
Liberal

**Steven Dieter**  
Nemaha County Abstract & Title Co.  
Seneca

**Janeen Bruna**  
Washington County Abstract Co., Inc.  
Washington

## **Kentucky**

**Patricia Molony**  
Northern Kentucky Title, Inc.  
Edgewood

**Ewing Hardy**  
Abstracts & Titles, Inc.  
Louisville

**Edward Baker**  
Jeff Baker Abstracts  
Louisville

## **Louisiana**

**James Kempf**  
Copiah Interests, Inc.  
New Orleans

**Chris Alario**  
Tala, Inc.  
New Orleans

**Elizabeth Peck**  
Elizabeth H. Peck, Inc.  
Shreveport

## **Massachusetts**

**Paul Miller**  
PCM Title  
Belmont

**Kelly Goltz**  
Jacobe Title & Recording  
Methuen

**Mark Constable**  
Quincy

## **Maine**

**Jeffrey Patterson**  
Genevieve Loan & Settlement Services  
South Portland

## **Maryland**

**Kim Caspari**  
AmKor Titles, Inc.  
Baltimore

**Marco Epps**  
Paramount Research, Inc.  
Baltimore

**St. Clair Jennings**  
Atlantic Closing & Abstract Services,  
LLC  
Bowie

**Joseph Steneman**  
Crystal Title Services, LLC  
Catonsville

**William Yerman**  
Fountainhead Title Group  
Columbia

**Myra Wheeler Williams**  
Colonial Title Company  
Easton

**Bill McKissick**  
Dugan, McKissick, & Wood, L.L.C.  
Lexington Park

**Robert Cerullo**  
Rock Creek Title, LLC  
New Carrollton

**Richard Ridgway**  
Universal Title, LLC  
Rockville

**Lawrence Kramer**  
Silver Spring

**Lisa Gibson**  
Gibson Abstracts, LLC  
Upper Marlboro

## **Minnesota**

**Scott Schwahn**  
Tradition Title  
Chanhassen

**Julie Pfeilsticker**  
Lake Pepin Abstract Co.  
Lake City

## **Minnesota, cont.**

**Corwin Vatnsdal**  
Roseau Lake of the Woods Title Co.  
Roseau

**Kevin Webb**  
All American Title  
Spring Lake Park

## **Missouri**

**Jerry Harley**  
Ozark Abstract and Loan, Inc.  
Ozark

## **Montana**

**Grace Foster**  
Powell County Title Co.  
Deer Lodge

**Claude Burlingame**  
Clark Fork Title, Inc.  
Thompson Falls

**Roger Wimmer**  
Roosevelt County Abstract Co.  
Wolf Point

## **New Hampshire**

**Timothy Sullivan**  
Sullivan & Coakley, P. C.  
Wolfeboro

## **New Jersey**

**Deborah Balak**  
Nationwide Title Agency  
Manahawkin

## **New Mexico**

**Cory Beckner**  
CU Title, Inc.  
Clayton

## **New York**

**Nancy Farrell**  
Venture Title Agency  
Blue Point

**David Carroll**  
S.J. Carroll, Jr., Inc.  
Brooklyn

**Patricia Yungbluth**  
Network Title Agency of New York  
Buffalo

## NEW ALTA MEMBERS

### **New York, cont.**

**Audrey Czesak**

Trinity Title & Abstract Corp.  
Buffalo

**Shelly DiGiulio**

Accudata Search, Inc.  
Cheektowaga

**Phyllis Camposano**

Atlantic Agency  
Commack

**Dianne Erdmann**

Gold Coast Abstract, Inc.  
East Islip

**Janice DeCuffa**

Consumer Marketing Services, Inc.  
East Syracuse

**Carol Weinerman**

Atlantic Coast Title Agency, Ltd.  
Farmingdale

**Richard Lipman**

Accord Abstract, Ltd.  
Hicksville

**Sharon Chin Quee**

New World Abstract Corp.  
Jamaica Est

**Raymond Jurina**

Clove Valley Abstract Ltd.  
Lagrangeville

**Marco Materassi**

Counsellors Abstract, Inc.  
Lake Success

**James Crawford**

JC Abstract, Inc.  
Manlius

**Darlene Barbera**

Easy-Close  
Melville

### **New York, cont.**

**George Lake**

Realty Titleworks Agency  
Melville

**Russell Coyne**

Class Abstract Services, Inc.  
Mineola

**Vincent Monte**

Vincent J. Monte Agency Inc.  
New City

**David Gorenstein**

Choice Abstract Corp.  
New York

**Diane Priola**

Counsel Abstract, Inc.  
New York

**Nancey Walker**

Arlington Abstract  
Poughkeepsie

**Kenneth Zahler**

Aquebogue Abstract Corporation  
Riverhead

**Arleen Stewart**

Affirmative Abstract  
Ronkonkoma

**Stephen Heidorn**

Broadway Title Agency  
Saratoga Springs

**Patrick Reidy**

Excelsior Title, LLC  
Saratoga Springs

**Christopher McKenna**

American Land Services, Inc.  
Syosset

**Nazzara Bernardo**

ClearTract Title Agency  
Syracuse

**Robert Martyn**

Sutton Alliance, LLC  
Valley Stream

**Robert McManus**

Esquire Title Agency, Inc.  
Warwick

### **New York, cont.**

**Tammi Chalmers**

Royal T Title Agency  
Warwick

**Mary Barnett**

Glenmar Abstracting Services Inc.  
West Hempstead

### **North Carolina**

**Tamara Ward**

Lending Tree, Inc.  
Charlotte

**Wesley White**

White's Title Service  
Durham

**Gina Sanders**

The Closing Place of Franklin  
Franklin

**Kathleen Samet**

Capital Title Services, Inc.  
Mount Airy

**Sean Delaney**

Union Title, Inc.  
Raleigh

**Lori Blackwell**

LB Abstractors Inc.  
Valdese

### **Ohio**

**Marc Smith**

Reliant Abstract Service  
Centerville

**Sherri Christian**

Sherri Christian Land Abstracting  
Services  
Jackson

**Renee Friend**

Friend Research, Inc.  
Mansfield

**Barbara Gromek**

Insured Title & Escrow Agency, Inc.  
Painesville

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# NEW ALTA MEMBERS

## **Ohio, cont.**

### **Kevin Blum**

Ohio State Title Agency, Ltd.  
Pepper Pike

### **Bonny McDaniel**

All Star Land Title Agency  
Rocky River

### **Carol Conlan**

The Title Solutions Group, LLC  
Toledo

### **Jeffery Sanimons**

Precision Title Services, LLC  
Westerville

### **Deborah Brazalovics**

Family Title Services, Inc.  
Willoughby

## **Oklahoma**

### **John Foley**

Trinity Title & Escrow Co.  
Oklahoma City

## **Pennsylvania**

### **Nick D'Amico**

Direct Settlement Services  
Pittsburgh

### **Ina Manni**

Integrity Plus Settlement Inc.  
Springdale

## **South Carolina**

### **J. Stanley Claypoole**

Cooper River Title Ins. Agency  
North Charleston

## **Tennessee**

### **Jane Fletcher**

Title Equity Corporation  
Bristol

### **Donna Morgan**

Choo Choo Title Inc.  
Chattanooga

## **Tennessee, cont.**

### **Pete Ensign**

Ensign Title & Escrow, Inc.  
Chattanooga

### **Gregory Swafford**

Swafford & Hays Settlement Services,  
Inc.  
Knoxville

### **John Kidd**

Prestige Title Agency, LLC  
Maryville

### **Brenda Bratcher**

Bratcher, Brenda  
Mc Minnville

### **John Gleaves**

Rudy Title & Escrow, LLC  
Nashville

### **John Kimery**

Tennessee Title Agency Co., Inc.  
Nashville

## **Virginia**

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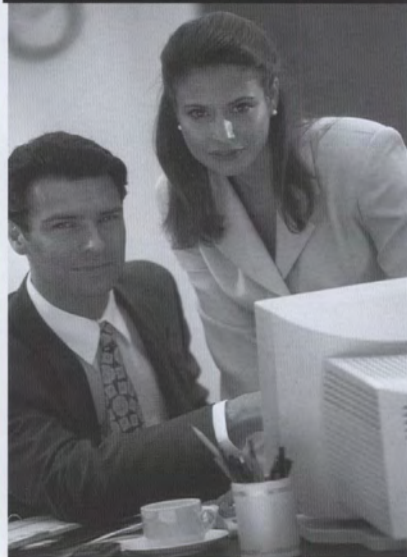
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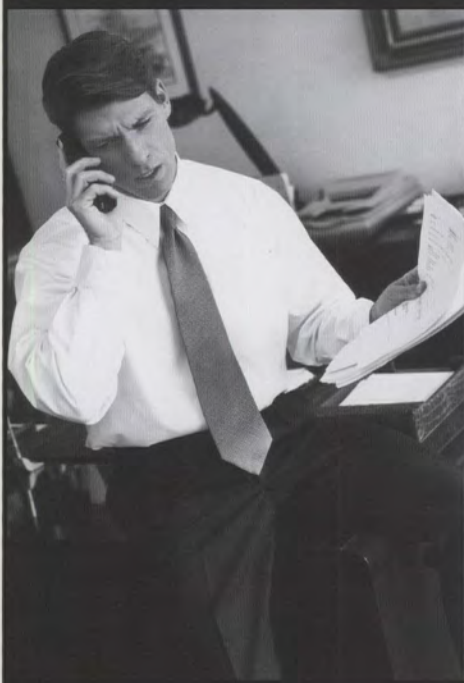
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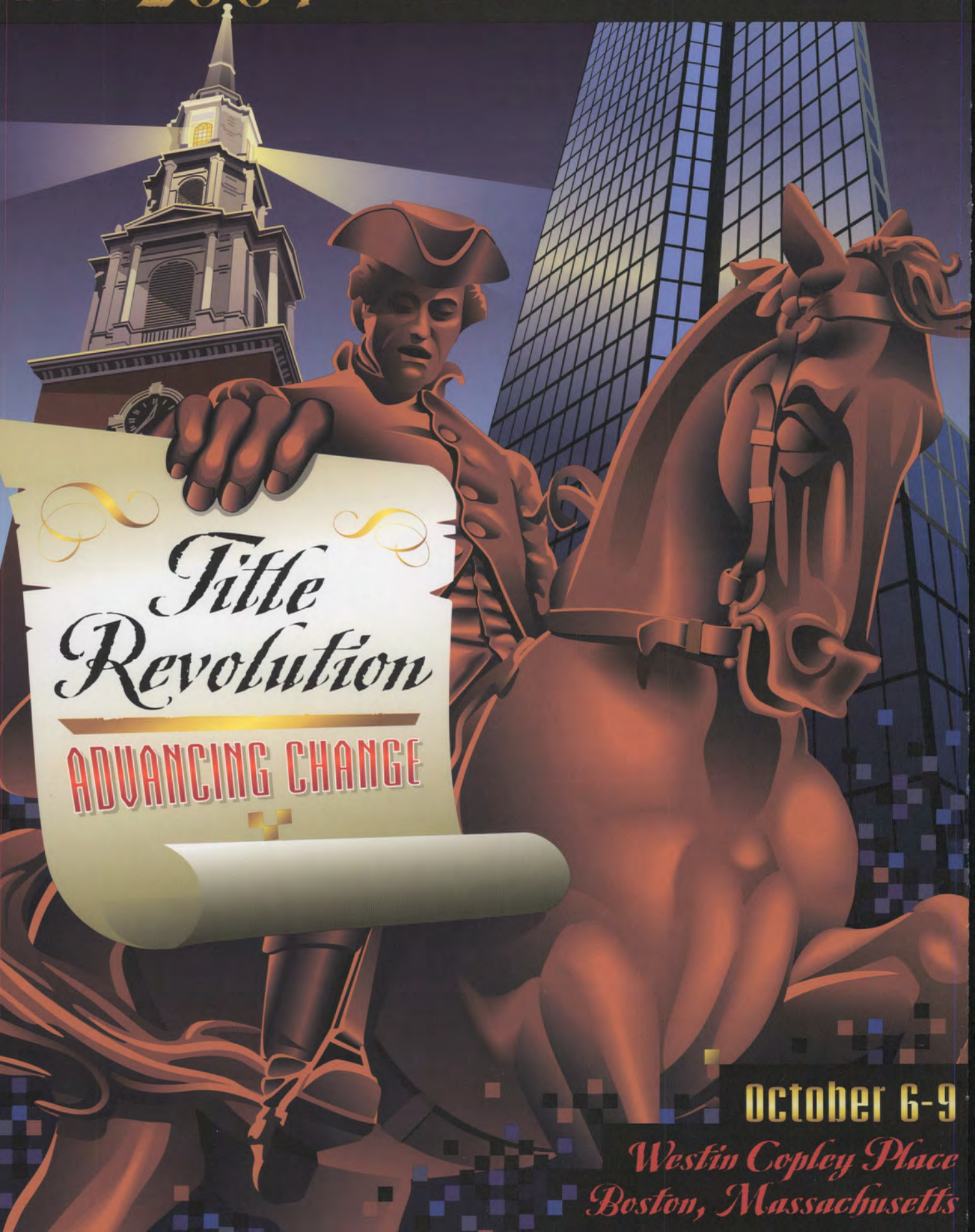
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