

October 2013

Official Publication of the  
American Land Title Association

# TitleNews



## Don't Let Your Title Company Fall Prey to Business Identity Theft

ALTA's 'Title Insurance and Settlement Company Best Practices'  
Provides Guidance to Help Ensure Proper Licensing



The eyes of a chameleon allow 360-degree vision because they are mounted on conical turrets that can move independently of each other. Because of this, the chameleon is always aware of its surroundings.

At Old Republic Title, we bring that same sharp eyesight to every transaction.

Spotting defects in title is no problem for our nationwide team of experienced underwriters. We understand that as a title agent, satisfied customers make your business more successful – and rewarding. That's why Old Republic is committed to providing you and your customers with peace of mind through our underwriting expertise, financial strength and stability, and ethical business practices.

For an underwriter who looks out for you, count on Old Republic Title.

# TAKE ANOTHER LOOK

STRENGTH AND STABILITY FOR OVER A CENTURY



612.371.3882

**[oldrepublictitle.com/TNM](http://oldrepublictitle.com/TNM)**

**CONNECT SOCIALLY:**

[oldrepublictitle.com/twitter](http://oldrepublictitle.com/twitter)

[oldrepublictitle.com/facebook](http://oldrepublictitle.com/facebook)

[oldrepublictitle.com/linkedin](http://oldrepublictitle.com/linkedin)

# > contents

TitleNews • Volume 92, Number 10



10

STORY SECTION

Don't Let Your Title Company Fall Prey to Business Identity Theft

Jeremy Yohe

ALTA's 'Title Insurance and Settlement Company Best Practices' Provide Guidance to Help Ensure Proper Licensing

## Features

18

RUNNING YOUR BUSINESS

ALTA Unveils Best Practices Assessment Preparation Workbook

Workbooks Created for Each Pillar Available Exclusively to ALTA Members

20

RUNNING YOUR BUSINESS

Running Your Title Business as a Financial Services Firm  
Patrick Stone

Instead of Bemoaning the Costs of Compliance, Title Professionals Encouraged to Recognize a Real Opportunity

24

RUNNING YOUR BUSINESS

GSEs Announce Uniform Closing Dataset for New Disclosure

Steve Acker

Settlement Agents and Lenders Will Need a Process to Share Data on Closing Disclosures

26

AFTER (WORK) HOURS

Corporate Operations Officer for H.B. Wilkinson Title Knows a Thing About Drama

Terrie Miller Shines Handling Various Roles in the Office and on Stage

## Departments

5

From the Publisher's Desk

6

ALTA News

8

@alltaonline

29

Industry News

33

TIPAC Donors

38

The Last Word

# calendar

## ALTA CONFERENCES

October 9-12

2013 Annual  
Convention  
Palm Beach, FL

## BEST PRACTICES MEETINGS

November 2

Washington  
Everett, WA

## STATE MEETINGS

December 4 - 6

Louisiana  
New Orleans, LA

## Mark Your Calendars: ALTA 2014 Conference Schedule

### Business Strategies Conference

March 12-14  
Omni Nashville

### Federal Conference

May 5-8  
Grand Hyatt, Washington, DC

### Annual Convention

October 15-18  
Westin Seattle

November 2013

# TitleNews

GOES DIGITAL

In addition to the monthly print version of TitleNews, members will start receiving a digital version of ALTA's monthly magazine beginning in November.

- You'll get the edition sooner each month
- Read the magazine on the go on your iPad, tablet or smartphone
- Share the edition by email or social media with your staff or customers
- Add bookmarks, notes and share important information
- Live links from articles and advertisers to web pages

# TitleNews

PUBLISHER  
**Michelle L. Korsmo**

EDITOR IN CHIEF  
**Jeremy Yohe**

COMMUNICATIONS  
MANAGER  
**Shawn Sullivan**

## ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

**Frank Pellegrini**  
Prairie Title, Inc.  
Oak Park, IL

PRESIDENT-ELECT

**Robert Chapman**  
Old Republic National Title Insurance Co.  
Minneapolis, MN

TREASURER

**Peter J. Birnbaum**  
Attorneys' Title Guaranty Fund, Inc.  
Chicago, IL

CHAIR, FINANCE COMMITTEE

**Daniel D. Mennenoh**  
H.B. Wilkinson Title Co.  
Galena, IL

CHAIR, TITLE INSURANCE  
UNDERWRITERS SECTION

**John Hollenbeck**  
First American Title Insurance Co.  
Santa Ana, CA

BOARD REPRESENTATIVES,  
TITLE INSURANCE  
UNDERWRITERS SECTION

**Steven Day**  
Fidelity National Title Group  
Jacksonville, FL

**Stewart Morris Jr.**

Stewart Information Services Corp.  
Houston, TX

CHAIR, ABSTRACTERS AND TITLE  
INSURANCE AGENTS SECTION

**Diane Evans**  
Land Title Guarantee Co.  
Denver, CO

BOARD REPRESENTATIVES,  
ABSTRACTERS AND TITLE AGENTS  
SECTION

**William Burding**  
Orange Coast Title Family of Companies  
Santa Ana, CA

**Herschel Beard**

Marshall County Abstract Co.  
Madill, OK

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

**Christopher Abbinante**  
Fidelity National Title Group  
Jacksonville, FL

## ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE STAFF

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**Michelle L. Korsmo**

VICE PRESIDENT OF  
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS  
**Justin Ailes**

VICE PRESIDENT

**Cornelia Horner, CMP**

VICE PRESIDENT

**Kelly Romeo, CAE**

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

**Jeremy Yohe**

*TitleNews* is published monthly by the American Land Title Association. United States and Canadian subscription rates are \$30 a year (member rate); \$100 a year (non-member rate). For subscription information, call 800-787-ALTA.

Send address changes to *TitleNews*, American Land Title Association, 1828 L Street, N.W., Suite 705, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Anyone is invited to contribute articles, reports, and photographs concerning issues of the title industry. The Association, however, reserves the right to edit all material submitted. Editorials and articles are not statements of Association policy and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editor or the Association.

Reprints: Apply to the editor for permission to reprint any part of the magazine. Articles reprinted with permission must carry the following credit line: "Reprinted from *TitleNews*, the monthly magazine of the American Land Title Association."

©2013 American Land Title Association

AMERICAN  
LAND TITLE  
ASSOCIATION



Members Call Toll Free: 800-787-ALTA • Members Fax Toll Free: 888-FAX-ALTA  
Visit ALTA Home Page: [www.alta.org](http://www.alta.org) • Email Feedback to: [service@alta.org](mailto:service@alta.org)

## Best Practices, Not Magic Key to Customer Satisfaction

A recent study from Harvard Business Review drew some interesting conclusions about customers frustrated with customer service. It found that 96 percent of “fed-up” customers simply find another option.

Regardless of the industry, if you have customers, you're in the customer-service business. All companies have products, but it's the customer service that defines which ones are great and will retain customer loyalty. Not only is existing competition fierce, there are new players in the game. Think about the grocery-store market. Everyone sells groceries these days—even places such as Lowes and Home Depot. A can of corn is—well—a can of corn. Most of the time, it's not the price that determines the sale, but the experience. Think of the settlement services products you provide. What really sets you apart?

The closing keynote speaker at the 2013 ALTA Annual Convention is from the Disney Institute, the professional development arm of The Walt Disney Company. One of their messages is that Disney's world-class reputation for service is not based on “magic.” Rather the company follows time-tested best methodologies and sound business principles. Disney believes that its people—and the culture they create—provide the only true competitive advantage in the modern economy. Implementing best practices and properly training employees helps ensure your organization's vision, mission and values are followed, and ultimately helps exceed the expectations of your customers.

Implementing ALTA's “Title Insurance and Settlement Company Best Practices” and training your employees on proper policies and procedures provides a great springboard for achieving ultimate customer service and being more than a company that provides a commodity.

This month's cover story discusses how business identity theft can destroy a company financially and ruin its reputation. The article provides some great tips on how to protect your company and why it's important to have the proper licenses to conduct business.

Marketplace changes provide an opportunity to improve. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's (CFPB) release of the final rule and integrated mortgage disclosures will provide such an opportunity. We expect this to be released toward the end of October. Once the final rule is released, ALTA will hold webinars and provide information about the regulations and forms so you'll be in the driver's seat to educate your employees and customers.

By going the extra mile to exceed your customers' expectations, not only will you retain business, you'll garner more business as well. It's not magic, but your clients might think it is.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Korsmo". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

- Michelle Korsmo, ALTA chief executive officer

## Second-Quarter Title Premium Volume Up 21 Percent

ALTA reported a 20.6 percent rise in title insurance premium volume during the second quarter of 2013 when compared to the same period a year ago. According to ALTA's 2013 Second-Quarter Market Share Analysis, the title insurance industry generated \$3.3 billion in title insurance premiums during the second quarter of 2013 compared to \$2.7 billion during the second quarter of 2012.

The states generating the most title insurance premiums during the second quarter of 2013 were:

- *California (\$451.4 million, up 8.7 percent compared to the second quarter of 2012)*

## Some ALTA Website Functions will be Unavailable in December

ALTA's website will be unable to process transactions from Dec. 24-31 as upgrades are implemented. All store transactions—such as meeting registration, membership dues

- *Texas (\$436.4 million, up 30.8 percent)*
- *Florida (\$294 million, up 34.8 percent)*
- *New York (\$226.1 million, up 16.8 percent)*
- *Pennsylvania (\$148.5 million, up 31.3 percent)*

The breakdown of market share was led by the Fidelity Family of title insurance underwriters with 33.5 percent of the market during the second quarter of 2013, while the First American Family acquired 26.2 percent, the Old Republic Family reported 14.5 percent and the Stewart Family gained 12.4 percent.

Meanwhile, independent underwriters held 13.4 percent of the market.

payments, license payments and store product purchases—will not be available. Other member services requiring logins also may be affected. Watch *TitleNews Online* for updates.

## ALTA Decertifies Residential Title Insurance Policy; Technical Corrections Made to Policies

The ALTA Board of Governors approved a recommendation to decertify the ALTA Residential Title Insurance Policy (9-1-1987) at their June 13 meeting.

In addition, the ALTA Forms Committee announced technical corrections to the ALTA Residential Limited Coverage Junior Loan Policy (8-1-2012) and the ALTA Limited Pre-Foreclosure Policy (12-1-2012).

The ALTA Residential Title Insurance Policy has been superseded by the

ALTA Homeowner's Policy (2-3-2010).

On the ALTA Residential Limited Coverage Junior Loan Policy, a technical correction was applied to section 15, "NOTICES, WHERE SENT," adding a prompt to fill in the company's address and making that section consistent with other policies. A reference to "ONE-TO-FOUR-FAMILY" was removed from the header on the ALTA Limited Pre-Foreclosure Policy.

For more information, go to [www.alta.org/forms](http://www.alta.org/forms).

## ALTA Awards Three More NTP Designations

ALTA awarded three National Title Professional (NTP) designations on Sept. 3. The professional designation was received by Paula Bachmeier of Minot Guaranty and Escrow Company in Minot, N.D.; Nancy Landmark of Commercial Partners Title in Minneapolis, Minn.; and

Gregory Wolff of Fidelity National Title Company in Colorado Springs, Colo.

The NTP designation recognizes land title professionals who demonstrate the knowledge, experience and dedication essential to the safe and efficient transfer of real property.

## ALTA Develops Online Educational Material about Benefits of Title Insurance

ALTA is pleased to unveil its Title Insurance Education e-Kit ([www.alta.org/ekit](http://www.alta.org/ekit)) to help members educate consumers, real estate agents, lenders, the media and others about the importance of title insurance.

“While ALTA continuously promotes the importance of title insurance, the most effective education comes from our members across the country,” said Michelle Korsmo, ALTA’s chief executive officer. “All parties involved in the real estate process—especially consumers—should have an understanding of the importance of title insurance and what’s involved in the closing process.”

Items available for download from ALTA’s website include a homebuyer presentation, videos, articles, social media content, brochures and other material that members can use for educational purposes.

The homebuyer presentation includes recorded audio with a Power-Point presentation. The Power Point and script are available as separate files so members can modify and create their own presentation.

The two videos available for download can be used by members to explain title insurance and the closing process. The videos can also be used as an example to help a company develop their own materials.

There are seven articles in Word format covering a variety of title insurance topics, which ALTA members can submit to their local newspapers. Members can use the articles as they are (just add your name and bio information) or revise them to give them a personal touch by including information pertinent to their local area. ALTA provides information on how to submit articles to the media. Members also can use the material for their website or content for a blog. Articles available include:

- *Title Insurance Vital to Protecting Homebuyers*
- *The Cost of Title Insurance is Worth the Investment*
- *Do You Really Need Title Insurance?*
- *What Every Realtor Should Know About Title Insurance*
- *What a Homeowner Walks Away With*
- *Understanding the*

*Closing Process*

- *Why You Must Purchase a New Policy When Refinancing*

Because social media is a powerful tool to reach a wider group of people and provide education about title insurance, ALTA also provides sample content members can use on Facebook and Twitter. There also is a social media dictionary to help members get up to speed with unfamiliar terms.

Three brochures are available as well. Members can download any of the brochures and print them or purchase printed brochures from ALTA’s online store. Here are the available brochures and what they discuss:

- *The Title Insurance Industry Protects Your Homeownership Rights: This informational brochure is written for potential homebuyers and explains the many steps land title professionals take to ensure that title issues don’t impact the owner’s property rights.*

- *Why Title Insurance?: This informational brochure is written for potential homebuyers. Topics include owner’s coverage, lender’s protection, hidden title defects and hazards.*
- *A Common Title Problem: This informational brochure is written for potential homebuyers, provides examples of common title problems and how an Owner’s Policy of Title Insurance provides protection to the homeowner.*

“Buying a home is an exciting time, and the more consumers know about the process the better their experience will be,” said Frank Pellegrini, ALTA’s 2013 president. “The various elements included in the e-Kit help explain the closing process and how title professionals help consumers get the keys to their home and also how title insurance protects them in case ownership of their home is ever challenged.”

**ALTA**  
Education e-Kit



## Title Trick-or-Treat

Beginning October 16, ALTA will post several trivia questions and crossword puzzles as part of our Title Trick-or-Treat promotion. Individuals who complete the crossword puzzles and correctly answer the trivia questions will be entered to win a prize package of ALTA swag. Be on the lookout for some tricks along the way!

## Change the Scene

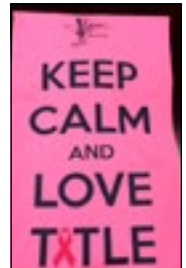
If you are frustrated with your current social media participation, trying changing the scene! Identifying moments each month to change the



scene on your social media platforms is important as you continue to grow and evolve with your audience. Dedicate a week to posting many different kinds of content (photos, links, trivia, news, etc.) and determine which type of posting resonates most with your audience. Once you have figured this out, you can modify your content strategy to apply and begin engaging again with your tweeps. With so much information being consumed each hour on social media, keeping your fans engaged is critical.

## National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

We are unveiling new "Keep Calm and Love Title" t-shirts. These new shirts commemorate National Breast Cancer Awareness Month and



incorporate the pink ribbon in our design. The shirts cost \$20 each. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to Susan G. Komen. You can purchase the shirts at [alta.org](http://alta.org) in the ALTA Store.

## Looking for Annual Convention Photos?

We will soon post all of our Annual Convention photos to our Flickr page at [flickr.com/altaonline](http://flickr.com/altaonline). In the meantime, be sure to visit our Facebook page ([facebook.com/altaonline](http://facebook.com/altaonline)) and search our Instagram hashtag ([#ALTA2013](https://www.instagram.com/ALTA2013)) to check out some of the biggest events from the convention. If you want to share your own photos, email them to us at [social@alta.org](mailto:social@alta.org).

## #SocialStrategySessions

We are planning a few ALTA Social Strategy Sessions in 2014. These webinars will focus on helping clear the clutter for organizations that are either starting social media program or looking to revamp their existing strategy. Would you like to be a panelist? Do you have topics you would like for us to discuss? Email us at [social@alta.org](mailto:social@alta.org) and include Social Strategy Sessions in the subject line.



**good.**

**better.**

**[fntg.com/bestpractices](http://fntg.com/bestpractices)**

**never, never rest.**

## **To improve is to change!**

Our commitment to our agents is tireless. That is why we have expended significant effort to not only educate our agency personnel about the regulations and requirements proposed by the CFPB, but also to develop strong affiliations with various service providers that can help our agents in meeting the ALTA Best Practices. Change is good, but it can be daunting. We can help you find the best answers to your questions.



# Don't Let Your Title Company Fall Prey to Business Identity Theft

ALTA's 'Title Insurance and  
Settlement Company Best Practices'  
Provides Guidance to Help Ensure  
Proper Licensing

**L**eafing through company records filed with the California Secretary of State, Bill Burding came across something alarming. While checking to make sure Orange Coast Title Co. had all its appropriate licenses, he discovered that someone outside of the company filed an amendment changing the resident agent for service of process to a fictitious address.

By Jeremy Yohe



12-34

“Thinking that was curious, we checked the court records and fortunately did not find anything,” said Burding, who is executive vice president and general counsel for Orange Coast. “However, in speaking with our counsel to correct this, we found that the scam is to get a default judgment because the complaint is never served on the right person. A writ of attachment would then be issued to wipe out

establish lines of credit with banks or retailers. With these lines of credit, the identity thieves can make large purchases with relative ease.

According to Scott Gessler, secretary of state for Colorado, the damage can be devastating to the victim’s business and lead to denial of credit, which can lead to operational problems. The cost to clean up and correct the damage can be costly monetarily and in hours of lost time.

history that can be worth a lot of money to fraudsters.”

Gessler created an email alert system in Colorado to notify companies when a form has been filed affecting a business’s record or when the status of the record has changed. Colorado also offers Secure Business Filing, which provides optional password protection for business records. By creating a Secure Business Filing account, companies can control who is able to make changes to their record.

Despite having safeguards in place, attempts to steal businesses persist. In May, two Florida men were indicted on charges for unlawfully acquiring businesses by looking up delinquent firms on the Colorado secretary of state’s website and submitting false documents to buy them. According to reports, the accused “stole” 12 businesses from February 2011 to April 2012.

In Florida last year, a scam targeted title companies as fraudulent entities were being established with names similar to those of licensed title insurance agents. The corporate name was modified slightly with the addition of “services,” “group” or “corporation” for example, to allow for incorporation with the state division of corporations.

Once registered, the fraudulent companies were able to obtain a federal tax identification number and open bank accounts. Criminals at the fraudulent companies then created documents purporting to be title insurance commitments, using commercially available software. Then they provided lenders with the fraudulently created insured closing service letters.

Diane Evans, vice president of Colorado-based Land Title

## Scams to steal business identities are a threat to title and settlement companies across the country and are not bound by state lines or jurisdictional constraints.

the company’s checking account. We obviously stopped it, but this is a scam to literally ‘steal’ agencies.”

According to the Better Business Bureau, identity theft affects more than nine million people and costs more than \$56 billion to the economy every year. However, consumers are no longer the only targets of identity thieves. Scams to steal business identities—such as the one Burding uncovered—are a threat to title and settlement companies across the country and are not bound by state lines or jurisdictional constraints.

Business identity theft—also known as corporate or commercial identity theft—is a new development in the criminal enterprise of identity theft. In the case of a business, a criminal will hijack a business’s identity and use that identity to

In 2011, in response to significant incidents of business identity theft nationwide, the National Association of Secretaries of State formed the NASS Business Identity Theft Task Force. The Task Force, comprised of secretaries of state from across the nation, has been working with a wide array of industry stakeholders, including state legislators, law enforcement, business support groups, financial institutions and others.

“Secretaries of state want to warn businesses, particularly small and mid-size business owners, that this type of crime can be financially devastating,” said Gessler, who is co-chair of the NASS Business Identity Theft Task Force. “Business identities are uniquely valuable, because they often have an established credit

Guarantee Company, said the best way to protect a company's business identity, at least in Colorado, is to sign up for email notification. That way, each time any person modifies the records of your entity or entities on the secretary of state's website, you will be notified.

"This is just another wrinkle to the many issues title companies must protect their operations against," Evans said. "ALTA's 'Title Insurance and Settlement Company Best Practices' provides great guidance in ensuring you have the proper licensing as required to conduct business."

Aside from signing up for any services a state may provide, another option to safeguard against identity theft is to monitor activity around your business. Following the discovery of the attempted scam against Orange Coast Title, Burding said the company instituted a quarterly secretary of state search policy for all entities.

"It's incumbent for title professionals to perform due diligence to not only protect their business, but also personal and sensitive information of its customers," Burding said. "Developing a plan to protect your business, your employees and your customers from becoming victims of identity theft is essential in today's world."

According to the Identity Theft Protection Association, secretaries of state generally do not have statutory authority or discretionary power under state law to review, confirm or investigate the information presented during the business registration or filing process.

Authority is often limited to a ministerial function, such as ensuring

that the basic requirements have been met, the submitted forms are complete with all required information and the appropriate filing fees have been paid. Burding said this means most states are good-faith filing states.

"If all the basic filing requirements are met, the secretary of state must accept the information filed about a business as true and accurate," Burding said. "Because of the good-faith nature of state business filing procedures, criminals have learned they can easily manipulate state business registration systems and filing processes."

The Identity Theft Protection Association ([www.businessidtheft.org](http://www.businessidtheft.org)) provides a great amount of information about business identity theft and offers resources for each state, including an interactive map allowing companies to review business filings.

"Business should regularly review their state business filings, file annual reports in a timely manner and enroll in email alerts or other preventative systems that may be offered by your state," Burding added. "If not, you may unknowingly attract the unwanted attention of business identity thieves."

### Tips on Preventing and Detecting Business Identity Theft

The following tips from the Identity Theft Protection Association will help you prevent business identity theft and detect if your business' identity is stolen.

#### Have a Plan

A business plan is a critical component of operating and running a successful business. An important,

and often overlooked, aspect of a business plan is a security strategy. It is helpful to create a business protection plan that includes steps to prevent and deal with identity theft.

#### Protect Your Business Records and Information

Although identity theft can be a high-tech crime affecting those people who shop, communicate or do business online, the majority of identity theft takes place offline. Stealing wallets and purses, intercepting or rerouting mail and rummaging through garbage bins are some of the common tactics that thieves use to obtain sensitive information.

Therefore, it is important to maintain only those records that are necessary to run or operate your business and to shred those records that are not necessary. If you have not done so, take an inventory of the documents that you maintain. The inventory will help you determine your exposure to risk and then to manage that risk.

Any documents or records that you must keep should be maintained in a secure location. You should also limit the amount of mail and paper with financial information printed on it to reduce the chance of criminals stealing it. If possible, you should consider signing up for electronic statements for bank accounts, credit cards and bills whenever possible.

Never provide an employer identification number (EIN), a Social Security number, and financial or personal information to anyone unless you have initiated the contact and have confirmed the requesting business or the person's identity.

If a credit or debit card is lost or stolen, cancel the card immediately.

# *Introducing* *An unrivaled solution...*

RamQuest One enables your operation to lead in the markets you serve today, keeps your business on the leading edge of information and innovation, and gives you momentum to ensure growth in your operation for years to come.

## **See RamQuest One for yourself!**

Join us for a free webinar, *Introducing RamQuest One*, where you will get a chance to see this new solution and how it could benefit your title operation for yourself.

**November 13th at 2:00pm (CST)**

Register at: [ramquest.com/seeone](http://ramquest.com/seeone)

*Introducing*  
**RamQuest**  
**one**

The logo for RamQuest One features a stylized 'C' or circular graphic composed of concentric blue and orange lines, positioned to the left of the word 'one'.

Learn more at  
[ramquest-one.com](http://ramquest-one.com)

Or, call us at  
**800-542-5503!**

Also, if a check is not processed in a reasonable amount of time, contact the payee and consider canceling the check.

Finally, if you decide to retire or dissolve your business, contact the credit reporting bureaus to notify them that you are closing your business and will no longer be applying for credit.

### Protect Your Business Online

Do not share financial documents, sensitive personal information or account numbers via email or other web-based services. If you must provide this sensitive information over a website, ensure that the site is secure. A secure website is indicated with “https” in the website’s URL.

### Business Records Filed with Secretary of State

If you have registered your business with your secretary of state, you should do the following:

- Maintain the “Good Standing” or “Effectiveness” of the business;
- Note your reporting or renewal month on a calendar;
- Timely file your reports or renewals;
- If available, sign up for email notification for your entity or trade name;
- Sign up for Secure Business Filing if available; and
- Periodically check your entity’s or trade name’s history.

### Monitor Activity

The best method to detect possible identity theft is to monitor activity around your business. You should:

- Monitor your business’s credit report and, if possible, sign up for a credit monitoring service.
- Subscribe to your secretary of state’s business entity email notifications



service, if it has one.

- Sign up for email alerts for your accounts.
- Monitor your accounts and bills. If an unexpected bill, charge, credit card or account shows up or a regular bill doesn’t arrive, contact the billing company.

### Common Criminal Tactics Involving Business Registration Records

#### Tactic: Fraudulent change of your business registration information

For the cost of a filing or processing fee, typically \$10 to \$20 in many states, thieves may attempt to file a fraudulent change of your business address, or file changes to your business’s officers, directors or registered agent.

**The Danger to You and Your Business:** Changing your business’s officers or directors places the thieves in a perceived position of control over your business’ operations, as far as outside parties are concerned, with corresponding authority to act on behalf of your business. For example, by making themselves or an accomplice president or secretary,

a criminal may be able to initiate the fraudulent sale of your business assets; conduct transactions or make purchases in your business’s name; open or access your business bank accounts; and open or access loans, lines of credit and other credit accounts—including those that require a personal guarantee by an owner or officer of the business.

Likewise, changing your business’s registered address or registered agent can place the thieves in receipt and control of important mailed notices and statements, or service of legal process, which might otherwise alert you that your business has been victimized.

#### Tactic: Fraudulent reinstatement of a dissolved, closed, or “dead” business

A dissolved business entity is a business that has voluntarily elected to discontinue business operations, has filed articles of dissolution with the secretary of state, or has been administratively dissolved because of failure to comply with its obligations under state law, such as filing

required periodic or annual reports. (Model Business Corporation Act)

Though the specific procedures vary from state to state, each state has an established process for reinstating a previously dissolved business and an established time frame for doing so. A dissolved business entity can typically be reinstated up to two years after it has been dissolved. (Model Business Corporation Act)

## Criminals engaged in business identity theft sometimes utilize or register a business name or d.b.a. that is intentionally similar to a well-established business.

**The Danger to You and Your Business:** Criminals know that once a business has been voluntarily or administratively dissolved, it is unlikely that the previous business owners will continue to monitor their business registration records. This provides criminals with a window of opportunity.

Because a business's registration records and status (active, dissolved, etc.) are available as public record, thieves can identify a dissolved business and potentially reinstate it without the previous owners' knowledge by filing the required forms and paying the filing fee within the reinstatement time period. The criminals may or may not choose to change the owner or officer information in the process.

### **Tactic: Fraudulent Registration as a Foreign Business**

Although business registrations are public information, secretaries of state are often prohibited by state law from actively sharing business registration information with other states. Because of this, thieves may identify a target business in one state, and fraudulently register that business as a foreign (out-of-state) business in another state.

**The Danger to You and Your Business:** A business being impersonated in this manner is not notified by the new state in which it has just been registered, and has no reason to suspect that anything is amiss, until it is too late—often learning of the fraud only when it is contacted by unknown creditors or by law enforcement.

If this happens to your business, thieves can utilize your company's standing or piggyback on your business's established reputation and credentials for credibility as they engage in fraudulent activities in your business' name in the other state.

### **Tactic: File or Use an Intentionally Similar Business Name or d.b.a**

Criminals engaged in business identity theft sometimes utilize or register a business name or

d.b.a (doing business as) that is intentionally similar to a well-established business. Through a slight variation in spelling; adding, removing, or abbreviating a word; changing the entity type, or other minor change, they intentionally cause the business name to be confusingly similar to the legitimate company's name in order to deceive creditors, financial institutions and other businesses.

Some simple examples might be:

- XYZ Title Agency vs. XYZ Title Services
- Title Company, LLC vs. Title Company, Inc.
- Williams & Son vs. Williams & Sons
- Beringer Law Firm vs. Berhinger Law Firm
- Davis Abstracting vs. Davis Abstracting & Title Company

**The Danger to You and Your Business:** When the similar name is used in conjunction with other real and verifiable information from the legitimate business, such as on a purchase order or in a new account application, the change is slight and easily explained. Often it may appear to simply be the result of a minor typographical error. Either way, the order or application may be accepted.

If this happens to your business, you may suddenly discover that you are receiving bills and invoices for goods and services you never ordered or received. ■



**Jeremy Yohe** is ALTA's director of communications. He can be reached at [jyohe@alta.org](mailto:jyohe@alta.org).



# Release Tracking Services as a best practices solution to the consumer for paid mortgage liens

Laws, regulations and contractual duties provide the mortgage servicer and title insurer with the minimum guidelines to comply with the mortgage lien release. They do not, however, fulfill the reasonable expectation of the consumer that their paid-off mortgage at closing will clear the mortgage lien from their recorded title.

With the increasing pressure being placed on servicers and title companies by regulatory agencies such as the Office of the Comptroller of Currency (OCC) and Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), it is apparent that one of the “best practices” of a closing is assuring that the previous lien on property is removed within a reasonable amount of time after the closing on that property.

Third-party release tracking services have been and currently are the “best practices” solution to the consumer for paid or satisfied mortgage liens.

---

Inspired to eliminate setbacks for everyone at the closing table, our Team of legal, real estate, and technical professionals has developed a fast and efficient release tracking service. The depth of our commitment and ingenuity present in our people is derived from the passion for what we do and who we do it for — our clients, colleagues, and customers.

## My approach:

Consumers can rely on release tracking services to satisfy their expectation to obtain “clear title” — not just “insurable title” after they close on a loan.



**Daniel Morris**, reQUIRE Founder and CEO

**LEARN MORE.**

To read more on how release tracking is a best practices solution to the consumer, visit [gorequire.com/expectations](http://gorequire.com/expectations).



**Contact Us:**

877.505.5400

information@gorequire.com

gorequire.com

a fresh approach 

# ALTA Unveils Best Practices Assessment Preparation Workbooks

Workbooks Created for Each Pillar are Available Exclusively to ALTA Members

**A**LTA has created Best Practices Assessment Preparation Workbooks that members can use to examine adoption of ALTA's "Title Insurance and Settlement Company Best Practices" and measure whether a company is prepared to undergo an assessment.

ALTA has provided a Workbook for each pillar of the Best Practices.

"We are hopeful that ALTA members find these Workbooks helpful in preparing for a Best Practices Assessment and also in the day-to-day running of their companies," said Michelle Korsmo, ALTA's chief executive officer. "You can think of the Workbooks as the Cliffs Notes to help title professionals prepare for the assessment."

The Workbooks consist of six tabs that include a cover page, an introduction letter, instructions, questionnaire, worksheet and an action-item report. Embedded in the Excel file is a two-minute tutorial video to help guide members in how to complete the Workbooks.

The questionnaire tab in the Workbooks includes a series of questions asking about a company's business practices. Questions are broken out by each Best Practices pillar and designed to match up with the requirements of the Best Practices and the assessment procedures. Each question should be answered by placing an "X" in either the "yes" or "no" columns.

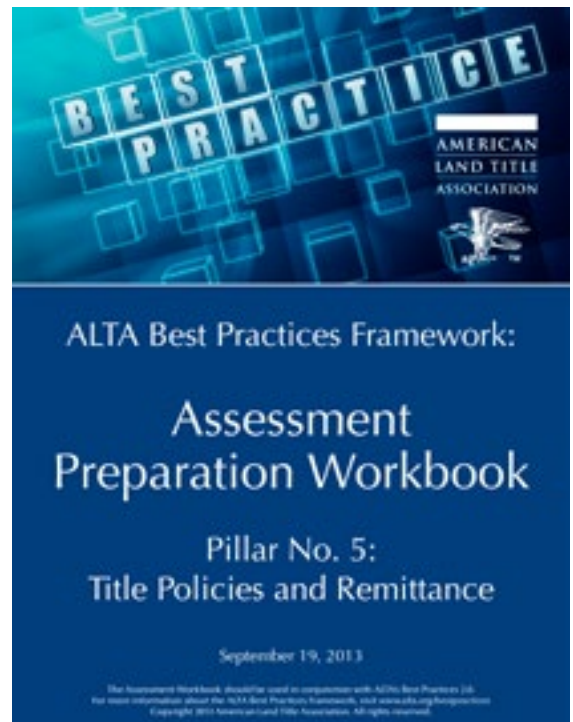
Some questions may require an explanation. In addition, the Workbook asks to indicate whether the practice is documented in a company's written procedures and whether the company has a system for determining if employees follow the procedures.

"If completed electronically, the Workbook generates a useful report outlining what items your company may need to implement

and add to your written procedures in order to pass an Assessment," added Frank Pellegrini, ALTA's president. "This action report is a great tool to help you figure out where your company stands in the Best Practices process."

For Herschel Beard, who is the owner of Marshall County Abstract Co. in Oklahoma, the Workbook provides his operation an executable plan in reviewing its policies and procedures.

"As many title company owners and managers can attest, finding time to evaluate what Best Practices your company has implemented and documented can be challenging," Beard said. "But the Workbook



## Resources

- The Workbooks can be downloaded by members at [www.alta.org/bestpractices](http://www.alta.org/bestpractices). You will need your ALTA login and password to access the documents.
- ALTA has created a tutorial video that is embedded in each Workbook.
- Questions about the Workbooks or the Best Practices can be sent to [bestpractices@alta.org](mailto:bestpractices@alta.org).

breaks it down in manageable chunks so if you spend a little time each day you can get a useful report of what you need to do and avoid business disruptions. If you're waiting for a lender audit or assessment to get this done, you've waited too long."

Meanwhile, the Workbooks are beneficial for large companies as well. A good example of a larger company that has benefitted is Orange Coast Title Family of Companies, which offers title insurance in 45 states and closing services in all 50 states.

"The Workbook is a solid blueprint on how to get through a lender assessment," said Bill Burding, Orange Coast Title's general counsel. "With lenders being held accountable for the actions of their service providers, this is a perfect time for our industry to shine. The title industry has long provided services that protect the integrity of the transaction, but this exercise helps in putting policies and procedures to paper, which is what lenders and regulators want and deserve." ■

## Instructions for Completing the Workbook

Below are instructions on completing the Workbook.

- Open the Workbook and click the Questionnaire tab. This tab contains the Workbook questions that you will need to answer.
- In columns D and E, place an "X" in the appropriate box for a "yes" or "no" response. Some questions may require a description or comment in addition to the "yes" or "no" answer.
- When answering column F, determine whether the control specified in the question is formally documented in your organization. If so, leave this column blank. If it is not documented, place an "X" in this column.
- Likewise, when answering column G, determine if your company possesses any documentation or other evidence to prove that it follows the written procedures identified previously. If the answer is "yes," leave this column blank. If you do not have documentation or other evidence for this procedure, place an "X" in this column.
- If a question does not apply to your company, enter N/A and include a reason why the question does not apply in the "Descriptions/Comments" box. Some questions require a narrative response to be entered in the Descriptions/Comments box. These questions will have the responses shaded in grey.
- Once you have completed the questions, click on the action-items report tab. This report will compile all questions for which you provided a "no" response. These are the controls and procedures that your company will need to implement prior to undergoing an Assessment.



# Running Your Title Business as a Financial Services Firm

Instead of Bemoaning the Costs of Compliance, Title Professionals Encouraged to Recognize a Real Opportunity

BY PATRICK STONE

**F**or decades, various members of the title industry have labored under the belief that what we do is unappreciated, that our role in the real estate transaction is all-too-frequently and unfairly downplayed. We have chafed at the notion of being “vendors” in the transaction, in spite of being held accountable at any number of junctures in the deal. Yet, even now, few outside of our space truly understand what we do.

The recent groundswell of increased regulatory scrutiny has certainly captured the attention of the entire mortgage and real estate industry.

The way we do business—and the way we interact with each other as well as the consumer—has changed, and will continue to change even further. Admittedly, the cost of compliance has been steep. I have heard more than a few grumbles about the growing burden of compliance. But this transformation is also creating a real opportunity for those title businesses willing to accept it.

Now more than ever, our lending and real estate agent clients will need to rely on their partners. The new demands of compliance will require this cooperation. This presents a unique opening for title businesses to transform their role and perception. It presents a chance to improve

revenue and market share by way of differentiation and increased client retention. And it begins with recognizing that the title industry is, and should behave as, a part of the larger financial services world.

## What Does It Take to be a ‘Financial Services’ Firm?

In truth, the title industry has always been a part of the financial services world. Often, however, we’ve failed to act the part. A financial services firm is, essentially, a trusted entity operating under a clear set of rules and regulations to protect the consumer’s interests and financial well being.

The stock market includes all publicly traded title companies in its financial services segment. When one stops to consider, most settlement services businesses have as much access to crucial borrower data and elements of financial interest as any number of personal financial advisors. Most title businesses are entrusted with critical information and access most consumers wouldn’t grant to just anyone. And yet, we’ve placed almost all of our focus on the lender, the real estate broker and other direct “clients.”

In truth, we have as much contact with the consumer as anyone in the transaction. It’s time to embrace that role.

## Why Would a Title Business Want to be Considered a ‘Financial Services Firm?’

Let’s cut to the chase. There are noble reasons to make clear to



**For the Consumer, it's about Trust...  
Earn their trust with Guaranteed,  
Accurate GFE Data Solutions  
from Ernst.**

*"We understand how important it is to create a great borrower experience. By creating a better buying experience, where there are so few mistakes, so few errors and so few surprises together we win that consumer trust."*

Gregory E. Teal, Ernst President and CEO

**The Industry Relies on Ernst as their  
Trusted Partner for Guaranteed GFE and  
HUD Data Solutions; You should too.**



For more information contact us at 1-800-345-3822  
or visit us at [www.ernstpublishing.com](http://www.ernstpublishing.com)

the world that our business is one of financial services. But it also presents a golden opportunity for individual businesses to increase revenue. Lenders may already be held accountable for the actions of their service providers, according to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's (CFPB) April 2012 bulletin.

So it seems fair to say that prudent lenders will be vetting and auditing their partners to ensure that they operate in a compliant fashion. It is also no stretch to say that lenders are probably not eager to take on the extraordinary time and cost necessary to train and micro-manage service partners. It is thus a reasonable conclusion that those service partners who demonstrate a culture of

compliance (as do the true financial services firms)—an understanding of not only the letter, but also the spirit of the law—will be the most attractive partners.

There are other great reasons for title businesses to champion themselves as financial services providers. For those who believe the title and settlement services industry has long been overlooked in spite of its important part in the real estate transaction, here is the chance to demonstrate to our clients the additional value we bring to the table.

Settlement services companies manage the closing, which is one of the most vulnerable and sensitive elements of the entire transaction. We take part in a great deal of

interaction with the consumer. We are responsible, in many cases, for managing the escrow account—the borrower's and the lender's money. We are entrusted with sensitive data. We are sentinels against mortgage fraud. And now, if we choose to embrace the role, we can be partners with our clients in the compliance effort.

This is also an opportunity for the title industry to at long last demonstrate to the consumer that we play a vital function in the real estate transaction. To those who complain that “no one understands what we do,” I offer the following solution: take on the role of financial services firm, with all of the responsibilities that come with that effort.

## Excited Customers Do Some Crazy Things.



Simplifile has the easiest electronic recording service available. Give it a try. We're pretty sure you'll join the thousands of customers in more than 800 counties who love using Simplifile so much, they've gone...well, a little overboard.

Simplifile can help you reduce the recording gap and free you from the hassles of recording paper documents.

Join the craze by calling  
**800.460.5657**  
or visit our site at  
**[Simplifile.com](http://Simplifile.com)**



E - R E C O R D I N G   M A D E   S I M P L E

I strongly believe that those businesses taking this approach will spearhead a change in public (and industry) perception.

### Embracing the Role: How to Become a True Financial Services Firm

If the title industry has always been considered part of the financial services sphere, how does a title company go about embracing the role? It starts by remembering that we offer a service (our product is, in essence, a commodity). The MBA Knowledge Base spells out a number of the identifying characteristics of “financial services.” One of those, it explains, is that “unlike any other service, financial services do tend to perish and hence cannot be stored. They have to be supplied as required by the customers. Hence financial institutions have to

associated are compliant. It means adopting a culture of compliance.

Fully acting the part of a financial services firm also means stepping out from the crowd, so to speak. People do business with people—not logos or mission statements. We need to make the characteristics of a financial services firm (professionalism, compliance, honesty, transparency) an integral part of our brand and identity. And we need to do a much better job of presenting those characteristics. Take this small example, provided by Venrock partner Brian Ascher in a March 20 article he wrote for *Forbes*. If your business “wants consumers to entrust you with their nest eggs, you ought to be willing to show your face too. This means full bios of the management team, with pictures, and clear location for your company as well

“This also is an opportunity for the title industry to at long last demonstrate to the consumer that we play a vital function in the real estate transaction.”

ensure a proper synchronization of demand and supply.”

For title businesses, that means understanding what our clients truly want—not just what we think they want or what they should want. It means delivering the product as they demand. It means treating their customers (the consumers) as our own. And it means willingly and actively participating to ensure that the activities with which we are

as numerous ways to be contacted.

It’s also a good idea to make sure that your management team have detailed LinkedIn profiles and that a Google search for any of them will yield results that would comfort a consumer.”

This is not necessarily a call for full-fledged social media campaigns, but rather, a suggestion that the most successful title businesses in the near future will be those that make their

## Submit an Article

If you’d like to submit an article to be considered for publication in *TitleNews*, send an email to Jeremy Yohe, ALTA’s director of communications, at [jyohe@alta.org](mailto:jyohe@alta.org).

personalities known to the consumer, the client and anyone else interested.

There is no doubt that the ever-changing regulatory environment, with all of the requirements that come with it, will put a strain on every business that wishes to operate within that environment. It may not be pleasant. But it is truly an opportunity for those willing to adapt.

William Smith summarized this perfectly. In an article titled “What Exactly Does Financial Services Mean?” that appeared on [StreetDirectory.com](http://StreetDirectory.com), Smith said that “In this environment, the winners will be companies that can turn the challenges into opportunities to build stronger and more enduring customer relationships, sharpen their process efficiency, unlock talent and creativity, use improved risk management processes to deliver more sustainable returns and use regulatory demands as a catalyst for strengthening the business and enhancing market confidence.” ■



**Patrick Stone** is president and CEO of Williston Financial Group. He has enjoyed a lengthy career in real estate and real estate related

services, including “C” officer positions with three public companies and as a director on two Fortune 500 Boards.

# GSEs Announce Uniform Closing Dataset for New Disclosure

## Settlement Agents and Lenders Will Need a Process to Share Data on Closing Disclosure

BY STEVE ACKER

For more than a year, title agents and loan originators have been closely following efforts by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) to create new rules and disclosure forms for real estate settlements. Under the proposed rule, expected to be finalized this fall, a new Closing Disclosure form will replace the existing HUD1 settlement statement, while another new form, the Loan Estimate, will replace the Truth in Lending (TIL) and Good Faith Estimate (GFE) forms.

The new Closing Disclosure, in particular, will require significant changes to software and office procedures. Gone are the familiar line numbers of previous HUD-1 forms—replaced by a new format that

alphabetically organizes loan costs into new groups, such as “Origination Charges,” “Services Borrower Did Not Shop For” and “Services Borrower Did Shop For.” (This assumes that the final disclosures will resemble earlier drafts.)

New rules also require that the Closing Disclosure be provided to the consumer three days before closing, with any significant changes to costs triggering a new waiting period. This rule will require loan originators and settlement agents to share information much more closely in order to be compliant. (This assumes that settlement agents continue to have responsibility for providing the settlement statement to consumers—another uncertainty.)

Although the draft CFPB disclosure rules put ultimate

responsibility for the accuracy of the Closing Disclosure on the lender, most industry insiders fully expect title and settlement agents to maintain their role in preparing this statement. In order to stay compliant with the three-day rule, lenders and settlement providers (each of whom provide some of the cost information for settlement statements) will need to make sure their software systems can exchange closing costs electronically.

In an effort to standardize the underlying data required by the new Closing Disclosure, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac have jointly created a new standard dataset called the Uniform Closing Dataset (UCD). This dataset will be a new component in the Uniform Mortgage Data Program (UMDP), which is an ongoing endeavor by the GSEs, under the direction of the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA), to improve the quality and accuracy of loan data.

Similar to other widely used UMDP standards, such as the Uniform Loan Delivery Dataset (ULDD) and Uniform Appraisal Dataset (UAD), the UCD will be based upon XML standards produced by the Mortgage Industry Standards Maintenance Organization (MISMO).

Although full details on the UCD will not be announced until after the CFPB releases its final disclosure rules later this year, this is a very significant development for several reasons and offers organizations and vendors a real opportunity to reduce



implementation costs and risks associated with the new disclosures.

For software providers who must update systems to support the new Closing Disclosure, the UCD will take much of the guesswork out of determining where data goes on the form. The MISMO Origination Workgroup, with feedback from the CFPB, has documented how to populate the new disclosures using the MISMO data points which underlie the upcoming UCD.

In addition to providing a blueprint to populating the disclosures, the UCD will also serve as a standard data format for settlement software and loan origination systems (LOS) to exchange information about loan costs. By embracing these standards, software providers have the

opportunity not only to comply more easily with the CFPB's three-day rule, but also to increase the pool of trading partners with which they can easily integrate. The most important thing to note about the UCD is that, like the ULDD and UAD before it, the dataset is likely to become a required format for all loans acquired by the GSEs. This is not something settlement service providers are going to be able to ignore.

With these new requirements coming, title agents and lenders should take time now to verify that their systems can accept electronic information from the other. Lenders, in particular, will likely demand this capability from settlement providers in order to ensure compliance with the three-day rule. Rekeying of data

from one system to the other is not going to be an acceptable practice under the new rules.

Rather than waiting and "bracing for impact" later on, settlement services providers and lenders would be well-advised to stay informed as more information comes out about the UCD and incorporate it into their plans to implement the new disclosures. Hopefully, adhering to and using the guidance inherent in the UCD will make the transition easier and less costly rather than simply being an added burden. ■



**Steve Acker** is the owner of Closergeist LLC and can be reached at [steve@closergeist.com](mailto:steve@closergeist.com).

## SOLUTIONS

TitleExpress

TitleExpress  
Cloud Solution

TitleSphere

# THIS IS TSS



We are more than technology providers, we are title industry experts. That's what sets us apart from the others.

Simply put: **WE KNOW TITLE.**

Schedule a free demonstration on any of our solutions and see the difference for yourself.

[iwantTSS.com/experts](http://iwantTSS.com/experts)  
443-321-5600



# Corporate Operations Officer for H.B. Wilkinson Title Knows a Thing About Drama

Terrie Miller Shines Handling Various Roles in the Office and on Stage

The ability to “improv” and juggle many job functions on any given day at the office come naturally to Miller. She enjoys “orchestrating” closings almost as much as she loves the stage and performing. Miller has been captivated by theater since the age of five when her grandfather took her to see “Once Upon a Mattress,” a musical comedy that opened off-Broadway in May of 1959 before moving to Broadway that same year.

Miller first appeared on stage at the age of 12 and has acted ever since. Her favorite role is a character called “Fannie Mae Garretson,” who is based on a dancehall girl from the late 1800s. She’s portrayed the character in five different shows, most recently in “Queen of the Cow Towns” by Mike Craver. Additionally, Miller often handles backstage roles

**P**ick any day of Terrie Miller’s work week and you’ll be hard pressed to find any two that are identical.

Miller works out of H.B. Wilkinson’s office in Mt. Carroll, Ill., but she spends time at all nine of the company’s offices wearing multiple hats and performing various duties. A typical day begins sifting through email, assisting with title and closing questions, and examining files and conducting closings if necessary. She’s also in charge of training, meaning there’s an assortment of items that may need addressed.

“I’m not sure I have a routine day,” Miller said. “It is always an adventure.”

Her “adventure” started with Galena, Ill.-based H.B. Wilkinson Title 25 years ago when she was looking for a full-time job and was hired as a typist/receptionist.

During her time with the company, Miller gained affection for working

on commercial transactions. While she doesn’t participate in many of these now, Miller enjoys the complexity of the search, exam and closing of commercial deals.

“I could do that type of work all day long and be content,” Miller said.



**A** Terrie Miller performs in the show “Queen of the Cow Towns,” which just concluded Oct. 5 before she left for ALTA’s 2013 Annual Convention in Palm Beach, Fla.

including directing, stage managing, sound/light tech and costuming.

“It’s been a slow year. I was only in two plays. I have to work sometime, I guess,” joked Miller, who sang “The Star-Bangled Banner” to open ALTA’s 2012 Annual Convention in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Miller said her love for acting

■ “If you talk to the folks I work with, I’d bet they would say I am a bit theatrical at the office.”

shows itself in the office at times.

“If you talk to the folks I work with, I’d bet they would say I am a bit theatrical at the office,” she said smiling. “So I guess there is a definite cross over.”

Miller also is active with various civic organizations including the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary and the Carroll County Haiti Mission Project (CCHMP). The mission project was created in 2001 to build a medical/dental clinic in the village of Juampas but has expanded its missions to vaccinations, dental care, nutrition and water purification. Miller made her first trip to Haiti in February 2002 and has made seven other trips since.

Miller described travelling to Haiti as a “humbling experience.”

“It is hard to imagine the poverty until you have seen it, and since the 2010 earthquake it has gotten worse,” Miller said. “It makes you realize how truly blessed we are in the United States.”

She said a typical trip to Haiti includes digging—with a shovel

and pick—footings for an addition or a new building at the clinic site, moving rock by hand onto and out of a truck, and moving sand by filling five-gallon buckets.

“It is very labor intensive,” Miller said. “We also hike to a couple of churches and schools in the remote villages of Peradone and Loperone.

The hike to the schools is always an adventure and involves fording a river or a short ride in a canoe made from a hollowed-out tree. I normally travel in February, which is considered the dry season. In June, the fields we normally walk through were under water. The October crew encounters the rainy season with the swarms of mosquitoes.”

Besides acting, Miller also has a fervor and skill for sewing. She has used her skills to make several wedding and bridesmaids’ dresses and has helped plan several weddings for family and friends. Her dream is to open a one-stop bridal shop.

“I really want a shop that is full service, providing catering, photography and deejay services,” Miller said. “I would love to have my children and their families involved in the business. We talk about it often. Maybe one of these days I’ll retire from title and go on to my second career.” ■

## After [Work] Hours Feature

Do you or a co-worker have a fascinating hobby or interest to share with *TitleNews*? If so, send an email to Jeremy Yohe, ALTA’s director of communications, and we’ll consider your suggestion for a future After [Work] Hours feature.



▲ Miller sings “The Star-Spangled Banner” at ALTA’s 2012 Annual Convention in Colorado Springs, Colo.

# A TIME OF CHANGE CALLS FOR A DEPENDABLE PARTNER.

**With a host of new regulations** in the banking and title industries, your company is at a crossroads. Union Bank® has more than 70 years of experience in the title industry and can be the stable partner you need in these turbulent times.

Streamline your business with our wide range of products that can help title companies operate more efficiently. We offer remote deposits, account reporting services for prior-day and current-day transactions, and the ability to administer your accounts online. Union Bank also offers state-of-the-art wire technology and provides the latest wire initiation deadlines in the industry, so your deals will close faster.

Contact a member of our dedicated, knowledgeable team below to discover all the ways we can help your business adapt—and thrive.

[unionbank.com/title](http://unionbank.com/title)   



John Murphy  
VP & Team Leader/Manager  
949-553-4304

Erin Wagner  
VP & Senior Relationship Manager  
949-553-4305

Brad Kirk  
VP & Senior Relationship Manager  
949-553-7062

### Conforming Loan Limits Expected to Drop in 2014

The Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) is expected to announce in November it will lower 2014 conforming loan limits for all conventional mortgages delivered to Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. This will include both the general loan limits and the high-cost area loan limits.

In a statement, the agency said a “gradual reduction in loan limits is an appropriate and effective approach to reducing taxpayers’ mortgage-risk exposure ... and expanding the role of private capital in mortgage finance.”

Conforming loan limits have not changed since 2006 when the government raised the national limit to \$417,000. In 2009, loan limits were raised in “high-cost” areas. This would be the first time since 1990 that the loan limits would be lower than the prior year’s limits, according to Dan Green, a loan officer with

Waterstone Mortgage. He said the move will make it harder for U.S. homebuyers and refinancing households to qualify for conforming home loans.

“If we use history as a guide, according to the Home Price Index, today’s home values are roughly the same as what home values were in 2005,” Green said. “In 2005, the conforming loan limit for a 1-unit home was \$359,650.”

Green doesn’t expect the 2014 conforming loan limits to drop that much, but believes a 4 percent decrease may be more reasonable. Assuming a 4 percent change, the 2014 conforming loan limit would look like this:

- one-unit home : \$400,000
- two-unit home : \$501,800
- three-unit home : \$606,600
- four-unit home : \$753,800

### WFG National Title Enters Wyoming

WFG National Title Insurance Co. has expanded its geographic coverage and is now approved to issue title insurance policies in Wyoming. The WFG family of underwriters may now issue title insurance on property in 44 jurisdictions. “In less than three years, WFG National Title has become a truly national title underwriter,” said

Joseph Drum, executive vice president of WFG’s Agency Division. “We look forward to offering our agent-friendly approach and national resources to agents doing business in Wyoming. We are confident they will find us to be a deep and knowledgeable resource for all aspects of the transaction, including underwriting counsel and compliance.”

### Wisconsin-based Knight Barry Title Acquires Competitor

Knight Barry Title continued its aggressive expansion strategy with the recent acquisition of Pinnacle Title of Appleton.

“Knight Barry is now bigger and stronger in the Fox Valley with an immense opportunity for lenders and real estate professionals to use our services,” said Jeff Green, president of Knight Barry. “With the addition of Pinnacle Title we now have two Appleton offices with 15 title professionals concentrating on residential and commercial real estate transactions.”

Angie Bodenheimer, former president of Pinnacle will become the branch manager of Knight Barry’s Appleton office. Barb Skoglund will remain at Knight Barry’s Grand Market Drive office and was named commercial services manager.

Over the past 10 years, Knight Barry has expanded into Michigan, Illinois and Minnesota and has become licensed in nearly 30 other states. Established in 1854, Knight Barry Title Group is headquartered in Racine and employs nearly 240 people in four states and now has 27 offices.

## Ohio-based Northwest Title Expands to Six States Following Merger

Northwest Title, a family-owned and operated title insurance agency that has served the Columbus and Central Ohio market since 1967, recently merged with Arrow Title Agency, a title insurance agency serving clients in six states from its Columbus headquarters.

Northwest Title President Scott Stevenson said his company's long history in the residential real estate market in Columbus, combined with Arrow's wide array of services and geographic footprint, make the two firms a perfect match.

"These two companies complement each other wonderfully," he said. "Northwest has nine offices in the Columbus area, while Arrow has offices in other cities around the state as well as in Kentucky. Arrow brings experience in the commercial title insurance market to the team to go with our residential expertise."

The combined company will be licensed to operate in six states, including Ohio, Kentucky, West Virginia, Michigan, Indiana and Florida. All existing local offices of Northwest Title and Arrow Title will maintain their name while operating under the

Northwest Title corporate umbrella. The firm will also include a separate law practice with five attorneys.

The combined company will have more than 80 employees and 16 closing locations. Stevenson said there are no plans for any reductions in staffing. In fact, Stevenson said the new firm plans to add positions aggressively.

"We need all hands on deck because our plan is to grow and the current staffs of Northwest and Arrow are the foundation," he said. "One of the things that I highlighted with our team is the opportunity here because our plans are to grow and grow quickly."

Stevenson noted that he believes that larger regional firms like the combination of Northwest Title and Arrow Title will be the norm in coming years based on regulatory changes in the title industry.

"New regulations coming from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau will require larger investments in computer networks and data security," he said. "A larger firm will have the resources to keep up with the required improvements. So in addition to the fact that Northwest and Arrow are perfect matches for

each other, we're excited that we'll have the size and strength necessary to provide the services that the residential and commercial real estate industries will

## TRG Expands Florida Footprint with Acquisition

Title Resource Group (TRG) announced the expansion of its Sunbelt Title operations in Florida into Brevard County through the acquisition of the assets of Security First Title & Escrow LLC. The newly acquired company's three offices in Melbourne, Merritt Island and Orlando will now operate as Sunbelt Title Agency, which is owned and operated by TRG.

TRG is the title and settlement services subsidiary of Realogy Holdings Corp. and provides services to NRT LLC, Realogy's company-owned residential real estate brokerage operation. In the past four months, NRT acquired three brokerage operations in Brevard County, in and around Melbourne and Merritt Island. According to Realogy's latest annual report, TRG was involved in the closing of approximately 194,000 transactions in 2012. Approximately 54,000

need in the coming years. We are very excited for the future based on this new partnership."

were orders related to NRT.

"This acquisition not only marks Sunbelt Title's entrance into Brevard County, but it also complements NRT's existing residential brokerage operations to provide a full-service real estate experience to clients across Vero Beach, Melbourne and Merritt Island," said Don Casey, TRG's president and CEO. "TRG is strategically focused on aligning its operations in markets where NRT has a presence, and this is another step toward that goal."

Karyn Wyce, former owner and manager of Security First Title & Escrow, will remain in her role overseeing the newly acquired Brevard County offices for Sunbelt Title, which has operated for 20 years and has 42 offices throughout Florida. TRG has 335 branches across the country, operates in 48 states and provides closing services in all 50 states.

## HomeServices Acquires Prudential Fox & Roach

In a move to expand into Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware, HomeServices of America acquired Philadelphia-based Prudential Fox & Roach Realtors. The deal includes Prudential Fox & Roach's subsidiary, The Trident Group, which is comprised of Trident Land Transfer Co., Trident Mortgage Co. and Trident Insurance. Terms were not disclosed.

Prudential Fox & Roach has more than 4,000 sales associates in 62 offices located in major markets in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. In 2012, Prudential Fox & Roach had more than \$8.3 billion in sales volume and nearly 25,000 transactions; Trident Group originated \$2.4 billion representing more than 9,800 home mortgages. Trident Land Transfer closed nearly 11,500 title and escrow transactions.

The acquisition represents HomeServices of America's expansion in the Mid-Atlantic and entry into Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. With the transaction, HomeServices of America now has 30 brands and more than

21,000 real estate professionals operating in 24 states. In 2012, the company's associates facilitated nearly \$53 billion in residential real estate sales, nearly 186,000 transactions and nearly 153,000 mortgage, insurance, title and escrow transactions.

Prudential Fox & Roach will join nine other Prudential-affiliated brokerages, including eight owned by HomeServices, in rebranding as Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices affiliates this fall, the companies said.

Larry Flick, chairman and CEO of Prudential Fox & Roach, will continue in his current role running the day-to-day operations along with Gerry Griesser, president of Trident Group; Joan Docktor, president of Prudential Fox & Roach and their leadership teams.

The company said its growth strategy "focuses on identifying market-leading companies that have established deep and enduring reputations within their community and long-standing traditions for excellence."

## Delaware-based Bank Purchases Mortgage and Title Companies

WSFS Financial Corp. announced that its wholly owned subsidiary, Delaware-based WSFS Bank, has entered into a definitive agreement to purchase the assets and operations of a mortgage banking company as well as an abstract and title company.

WSFS Bank has acquired Array Financial

Group Inc. and Arrow Land Transfer Company. Both companies are headquartered in Haverford, Pa. The transaction closed July 31.

Array Financial Group specializes in a variety of residential mortgage and refinancing solutions. In 2012, Array originated \$150 million in mortgage loans.

## Survey: 71 Percent of Real Estate Brokerages Offer Title Services

More real estate firms are offering ancillary settlement services such as title, mortgage and home warranty services, according to a recent survey from Imprev Inc.

The survey of top real estate executives found that 75 percent of their firms offer at least one major ancillary service. At 89 percent, mortgages were the top additional offering by real estate firms that provided at least one ancillary service. According to the survey, 71 percent of the real estate executives surveyed said their firms offered title services. Nearly half offered home warranty services.

"For decades, the National Association of Realtors has tracked growing consumer interest

in a one-stop shop through its surveys," said Renwick Congdon, chief executive officer of Imprev, the real estate marketing software firm that works with 150,000 agents and brokers nationwide.

When real estate executives were asked to select the top benefits from offering ancillary services, 79 percent said "higher profits," 70 percent said "one-stop marketing opportunities," 62 percent said "increased customer satisfaction" and 60 percent said "better quality control."

Poll respondents included executives at franchises and brokerage firms responsible for more than one-third of all U.S. residential real estate transactions last year.



## **Celebrating 25 Years of Service to ALTA Members and the Title Industry!**

Times were tough for title professionals in the 1980s. Like today, E&O insurers were either ceasing to offer coverage or raising rates dramatically. To respond to this crisis, ALTA members created Title Industry Assurance Company (TIAC) to provide a long-term stable E&O market for its members.

25 years later, TIAC is one of the longest running and successful E&O insurance providers available! Combining broad coverage, expert claims and underwriting services, and competitive rates, TIAC is the choice for title professionals!

If you have not received a quotation from TIAC lately or compared our broad coverage, contact us at 800-628-5136 or complete our online premium estimate form at [www.cpim.com/tiac](http://www.cpim.com/tiac).



**Title Industry Assurance Company,  
A Risk Retention Group**

7501 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 1500E  
Bethesda, MD 20814-6522

- p. (800) 628-5136
- f. (800) TIAC FAX (842-2329)
- e. [tiac@cpim.com](mailto:tiac@cpim.com)
- w. [www.cpim.com/tiac](http://www.cpim.com/tiac)

**ENDORSED BY THE MAJOR TITLE UNDERWRITERS**



# tipac contributors

## **Diamond Club Level • \$5,000**

Chris Abbinante  
*Fidelity National Financial*

Justin Ailes  
*American Land Title Association*

Anne Anastasi  
*Old Republic Title Insurance Company*

Suzanne Basiago  
*Midland Title*

Mark Bilbrey  
*Old Republic Title Insurance Company*

Bill Burding  
*Orange Coast Title Company*

Steve Day  
*Fidelity National Financial*

Pam Day  
*Day Title Services*

Tim Evans  
*Evans Title Agency, Inc*

Diane Evans  
*Land Title Guarantee Company*

Dennis Gilmore  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Thomas Hartman  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

John Hollenbeck  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Parker Kennedy  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Michelle Korsmo  
*American Land Title Association*

Chris Leavell  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Kevin Lutes  
*Fidelity National Title Group*

Erika Meinhardt  
*Fidelity National Financial*

Barbara Miller  
*TSS Software Corporation*

Bill Peirson  
*Peirson Patterson*

Frank Pellegrini  
*Prairie Title Services*

Raymond Quirk  
*Fidelity National Title Insurance Company*

Linda Stelle  
*AmeriTitle*

## **Emerald Club Level • \$4,999-\$2,500**

J Herschel Beard  
*Marshall County Abstract Company*

Karen Brown  
*Boone-Central Title Company*

Robert Burgess  
*Chicago Title Insurance Company*

Diane Calloway  
*Specialized Title Services*

Richard Cannan  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Curt Caspersen  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Rob Chapman  
*Old Republic Title Insurance Company*

Cara Detring  
*Preferred Land Title, LLC*

John Freyer, Sr.  
*Land Title and Escrow Company*

John Killea  
*Stewart Title Guaranty Company*

Greg Kosin  
*Greater Illinois Title Company*

John Magness  
*Old Republic Title Insurance Company*

Matt McBride  
*Continental Title*

Beverly McReynolds  
*North American Title Company*

Daniel Mennenoh  
*H.B Wilkinson Title Company, Inc*

Matt Morris  
*Stewart Title Guaranty Company*

Stewart Morris, Jr.  
*Stewart Title Guaranty Company*

Michael Nolan  
*Fidelity National Title Group*

Maureen Pfaff  
*Olympic Peninsula Title*

Kurt Pfothenauer  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Brian Pitman  
*Independence Title*

Richard Reass  
*RynobLive*

Al Santoro  
*Esquire Title Services*

Mark Sinkhorn  
*Fidelity National Title Insurance Company*

Bill Vollbracht  
*Land Title and Escrow Company*

John Voso  
*Old Republic Title Insurance Company*

Monica Wittrock  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

## **Platinum Club Level • \$2,499-\$1,000**

Kenneth Aalseth  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Marty Askins  
*Stephens County Abstract*

Joseph Attura  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

**TITLE INDUSTRY**

**POLITICAL ACTION**

**COMMITTEE**



Matt Ballard  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Jeffrey Bates  
*D. Bello Associates*

John Bethell  
*John Bethell Title*

Peter Birnbaum  
*Attorneys' Title Guaranty Fund, Inc.*

Cynthia Blair  
*Rogers Townsend*

Jeffrey Bosse  
*Bosse Title Company*

Shonna Cardello  
*White Rose Settlement Services, Inc.*

Trey Dittmann  
*Frontier Title*

Morris Erickson  
*Monroe County Land Title, Co.*

Robert Ewbank  
*Ewbank Land Title*

Richard Flory  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Celia Flowers  
*East Texas Title Companies*

Daniel Fowler  
*Near North National Title, LLC*

Tommye Frost  
*Orange Coast Title Company*

Sue Geigle  
*Professional Title Solutions*

Joseph Ghilardi  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Larry Godec  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Mark Greek  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Jeffrey Green  
*Knight Barry Title, Inc.*

Gerard Griesser  
*Fox & Roach/Trident*

Peter Griffiths  
*Land Title and Escrow Company*

Nick Hacker  
*North Dakota Guaranty & Title*

Brian Hamilton  
*Land Title Guarantee Company*

Paul Hammann  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Blake Hanby  
*City Title & Closing, LLC*

Craig Haskins  
*Knight Barry Title, Inc.*

Michael Hillman  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Dean Hoag  
*The Title Resource Network*

David Horne  
*Self-Employed*

Cornelia Horner  
*American Land Title Association*

George Houghton  
*Stewart Title Guaranty Company*

Rod Ives  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Roger Jewkes  
*Fidelity National Title Insurance Company*

Curt Johnson  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Todd Jones  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Cynthia Koebele  
*Title Smart*

John LaJoie  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Brent Laliberte  
*Bayou Title, Inc.*

Sherri Landauer  
*Lakeside Title Company*

Linda Larson  
*Old Republic Title Insurance Company*

Randy Lee  
*Stewart Title Guaranty Company*

Ted Lovec  
*American Title & Escrow*

Carl Luna  
*Excel Title Group*

Scott Luna  
*Excel Title Group*

Lance Luna  
*Excel Title Group*

Richard Macaluso  
*Orange Coast Title Company*

Kenneth Mackay  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Andy Maloney  
*Nashville Title Insurance Corporation*

Mike Maniche  
*Guardian Title*

John Marconi  
*Orange Coast Title Company*

Michael Marconi  
*Orange Coast Title Company*

Merry Mennenoh  
*H.B Wilkinson Title Company, Inc*

Bob Newlon  
*Pioneer Title Agency*

Keith Newlon  
*Pioneer Title Agency*

Rich Patterson  
*Connecticut Attorneys Title Insurance*

Tim Pearson  
*North Dakota Guaranty & Title*

William Perry  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Joe Powell  
*Chicago Title Insurance Company*

Mike Pryor  
*Stewart Title of Arkansas, LLC*

Brenda Rawlins  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Caleb Reppert  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Thomas Richardson  
*Liberty Title Agency*

John Robichaux  
*Ironclad Title*

Jeffrey Rogers  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Steven Rogers  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Bill Ronhaar  
*Land Title and Escrow Company*

Brent Scheer  
*Agents National Title Insurance Company*

Randall Scott  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Deborah Scroggins  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Phillip Sholar  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Denise Smithhisler  
*Alpha Title*

Kirk Sterling  
*Old Republic Title Insurance Company*

James Scott Stevenson  
*Northwest Title*

David Townsend  
*Agents National Title Insurance Company*

Darin Trites  
*The Title Resource Network*

Janette Waller  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Herb Walton  
*Old Republic Title Insurance Company*

Greg Wick  
*Pennington Title Company*

Marilyn Wille  
*The Title Company*

Stephen Wilson  
*Old Republic Title Insurance Company*

Tony Winczewski  
*Commercial Partners Title, LLC*

Mark Winter  
*Stewart Title Guaranty Company*

Evan Zanic  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Nebraska Land Title Association

**Gold Club Level • \$999-\$500**

Andrew Acker  
*D. Bello Associates*

Ellen Albrecht  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

David Armagost  
*Security 1st Title*

Kathy Austen  
*Fidelity National Title Group*

Doug Bello  
*D. Bello Associates*

Sam Benne  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

J. Allen Berryman  
*Stewart Title Guaranty Company*

Jeffrey Bluhm  
*Old Republic Title Insurance Company*

Gregory Booth  
*Booth Title Group, LLC*

Judith Braun-Colcord  
*Old Republic Title Insurance Company*

Glenn Clements  
*Stewart Title Guaranty Company*

Wayne Condict  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Cathy Cook  
*Community First Title Agency*

Cheryl Cowherd  
*Agents National Title Insurance Company*

Robert Dailey  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Larry Davidson  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Larry Deal  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Lynn Donner  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

- Andrew Drake  
*Meridian Title Corporation*
- David Dunbar  
*Meridian Title Corporation*
- Mary Pat Dunleavy  
*Fidelity National Title Group*
- Joseph Dwight  
*First American Title Insurance Company*
- Ric Eborall  
*Alliance Title & Escrow Corporation*
- Philip Fanning  
*Fidelity National Title Group*
- Ray Forlitti  
*Old Republic Title Insurance Company*
- Thomas Gates  
*First American Title Insurance Company*
- Leslie Godec  
*First American Title Insurance Company*
- Steve Gottheim  
*American Land Title Association*
- Michele Green  
*First American Title Insurance Company*
- John Green  
*Retired*
- Carol Hare  
*Fidelity National Title Group*
- Michael Holt  
*First American Title Insurance Company*
- Dan Hunt  
*Mid Valley Title & Escrow Company*
- Robert Ibler  
*Chicago Title Insurance Company*
- Jerome Jelinek  
*Corporate Settlement Solutions*
- Jeffrey Knudson  
*Fidelity National Title Group*
- William Langner  
*Douglas County Abstract Company*
- Carl Langner  
*Access Information Systems, Inc.*
- Jerome Leugers  
*Title Service, LLC*
- Deborah Lewis  
*Taylor Abstract & Title Company*
- Maxwell Link  
*First American Title Insurance Company*
- Chip Lutz  
*Sentry Abstract Company*
- Scott Mainwaring  
*First American Title Insurance Company*
- Claire Manning  
*Chicago Title Insurance Company*
- Jill Marshall  
*Columbia Title*
- Marianne Mathieu  
*Fidelity National Title Group*
- Frank McCormick  
*Fidelity National Title Group*
- Mark McElroy  
*RamQuest*
- Edith Michalski  
*Arrowhead Abstract & Title Company*
- Theresa Miller  
*H.B Wilkinson Title Company, Inc*
- Glenda Mittasch  
*Powers Abstract Company, Inc*
- John Obzud  
*Fidelity National Title Group*
- Don Ogden  
*First American Title Insurance Company*
- Mary Pellegrini  
*Prairie Title Services*
- Randy Pittman  
*West Texas Abstract & Title Company*
- Andree Ranft  
*First American Title Insurance Company*
- Jack Rattikin  
*Rattikin Title Company*
- Margaret Redman  
*First American Title Insurance Company*
- Marvin Ripp  
*First American Title Insurance Company*
- Gary Robison  
*Land Title Guarantee Company*
- Kelly Romeo  
*American Land Title Association*
- Bryan Rosenberg  
*First American Title Insurance Company*
- John Row  
*Claremore Abstract & Guaranty*
- Jim Russick  
*Old Republic Title Insurance Company*
- Mark Rutherford  
*First American Title Insurance Company*
- Thomas Schlesinger  
*First American Title Insurance Company*
- Sandra Schoen  
*Old Republic Title Insurance Company*
- Charles Schultz  
*First American Title Insurance Company*
- James Sibley  
*Title Data, Inc.*
- James Smyithe  
*Sathre Title and Abstract*
- Wayne Sobien  
*First American Title Insurance Company*
- Mitchell Steeves  
*First American Title Insurance Company*
- Casey Tomten  
*The Title Company*
- Larry Tuliszewski  
*Fidelity National, Inc.*
- Mark Turner  
*Fidelity National Title Group*
- Philip Webb  
*First American Title Insurance Company*
- David Welshons  
*DCA Title*
- Phillip Wert  
*First American Title Insurance Company*
- Charles Wimer  
*Fidelity National Title Group*
- Dennis Wolfe  
*First American Title Insurance Company*
- John Wunderlich  
*Fidelity National Title Group*

**Silver Club Level • \$499-\$250**

- Katherine Abbinante  
*Spouse*
- Gustavo Abello  
*Chicago Title Insurance Company*
- Johnie Adams  
*Adams Abstract Company*
- Peggy Adams  
*Adams Abstract Company*
- John Arcidiacono  
*Stewart Title Guaranty Company*
- Paula Bachmeier  
*Minot Guaranty & Escrow Company*
- Raymond Baker  
*Gold Crown Management*
- Marjorie Bardwell  
*Fidelity National Title Group*
- J.T. Beard  
*Marshall County Abstract Company*
- Sandra Bell  
*First American Title Insurance Company*
- Christos Bettios  
*First American Title Insurance Company*
- Jim Bondurant  
*Tennessee Valley Title Insurance*
- Michael Brandner  
*Gowey Abstract & Title Company*
- Judy Brandner  
*Gowey Abstract & Title Company*
- Edson Burton  
*Chicago Title Insurance Company*
- Sally Bustillos  
*DataQuick*
- Chester Carmer  
*First American Title Insurance Company*
- Pat Carney  
*reQuire*

Scott Chandler  
*Westcor Land Title Insurance Company*

Jason Chun  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Christopher Clemens  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Bill Coyle  
*Accu-Title, LLC*

Mike Currier  
*Guaranty Title Company*

Patrick Curry  
*Waco Title*

Patricia Day  
*Spouse*

Joseph Desalvo  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Michael Doting  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Michael Dulin  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

B.J. Fast  
*Lenders Title Company*

David Floyd  
*Land Title Guarantee Company*

Frank Freyer  
*Land Title Guarantee Company*

Wendy Gibbons  
*Stewart Title Guaranty*

Adeline Gibson  
*Fidelity National Title Group*

Woody Girion  
*Fidelity National Financial*

James Graham  
*Ottawa County Abstract & Title*

Arlene Griffith  
*Knox Title Agency, Inc.*

David Hancock  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Andy Hand  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

James Harper  
*PFA, Inc*

Marty Henschel  
*Edina Realty Title, Inc.*

Mark Holley  
*Old Republic Title Insurance Company*

Kenneth Jannen  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Fred Jones  
*Old Republic Title Insurance Company*

Beverly Jones  
*Grand River Abstract & Title*

Brandt Keefe  
*Stewart Title Guaranty Company*

Michael Kennerley  
*Signature Information Solutions, LLC*

Nicholas Koester  
*Chicago Title Insurance Company*

Charles Kovaleski  
*Old Republic Title Insurance Company*

Mitchell LaFleur  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Paul Langner  
*Douglas County Abstract Company*

Robert Liebrich  
*Old Republic Title Insurance Company*

Chris Lieser  
*Old Republic Title Insurance Company*

Anne McCauley  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Jessica McEwen  
*American Land Title Association*

Donald McFadden  
*McFadden & Freeburg*

Jim Milinkovich  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Malcolm Morris  
*Stewart Title Guaranty Company*

Virendra Nath  
*HDEP International*

Charles Nichols  
*Abstract & Guaranty Company*

Jeffrey Noble  
*Old Republic Title Insurance Company*

Michael O'Donnell  
*Riker Danzig Scherer Hyland & Perretti, LLP*

Karen Panter  
*Collier Abstracts, Inc.*

Cheryl Piderit  
*Land Title Guarantee Company*

R Scott Rager  
*Old Republic Title Insurance Company*

Robert Reich  
*NextDeal/Digital Docs*

Kevin Reilly  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Lori Rice  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Rush Riese  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Ted Rogers  
*Security Title Guarantee Corporation*

Mark Rosser  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Alma Rushing  
*Orange Coast Title Company*

Elissa Santoro  
*Esquire Title Services*

Connie Sawtell  
*Dominion Title Corporation*

Paul Sawtell  
*Dominion Title Corporation*

Barry Schmulbach  
*Stewart Title Guaranty Company*

Donna Schmulbach  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Eric Schneider  
*Lakeside Title Company*

Mike Schuh  
*Stallard & Schuh*

Lincoln Scoffield  
*Cornerstone Title*

Bob Sink  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Donna Snider  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Dana Solms  
*Old Republic Title Insurance Company*

Chris St. John  
*Lawyers Title of Topeka*

Jim Stipanovich  
*Old Republic Title Insurance Company*

Nori Strong  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Raymond Summeier  
*Trustworthy Land Title Co., Inc.*

Michael Tafoya  
*Title365 Company*

Nancy Tarr  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Gregory Teal  
*Ernst Publishing*

Steven Tjaden  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Stephen Torneo  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

C Peter Vanderlinden  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Robert Vavrock  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Adrienne Verdone  
*Commonwealth Land Title*

Frank Violi  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Mark Webber  
*First American Title Insurance Company*

Richard Welshons  
*DCA Title*

John Wiles  
*Wiles Abstract and Title Company*

Francine Wirsching  
*Community First Abstract*

Ken Wright  
*Bayou Title, Inc.*

John Younglove  
*Genesis Abstract*



**stewart**<sup>®</sup>  
Vetted and verified.

As a Stewart Trusted Provider you'll be able to show lenders that you're the kind of agency they need to work with.

**Another reason why Stewart is the right underwriter for you.**

Being a part of the Stewart agency network is an accomplishment and marks you as a top tier agency. The Stewart Trusted Provider seal gives you a way to market your elite status. A symbol of the quality and trustworthiness of your agency, the seal is proof to lenders that you have been vetted and verified through our rigorous vetting process, which we believe to be the toughest in the industry.

Visit us at the ALTA<sup>®</sup> Annual Conference booth #104/106 to find out more about Stewart's initiative to provide our agencies with the knowledge and tools needed for success in the new regulatory environment.

**stewart**<sup>®</sup>

## Turbo-charged Year Makes for Memorable Journey

A 365-day trip around the sun—that’s a year. Our tiny planet makes its annual journey and gives us 52 short weeks, 12 distinct months, four glorious seasons, the sun in the morning and the moon at night. Well, some of us get four seasons. A few do not experience much change in seasons at all. While others, like me in Chicago, get only two seasons—winter and road construction.

For the last trip around the sun, it seemed to me that the earth got itself a 12-cylinder, super-charged race car and pressed hard on the accelerator the whole time. It went by in a Formula-1 blur.

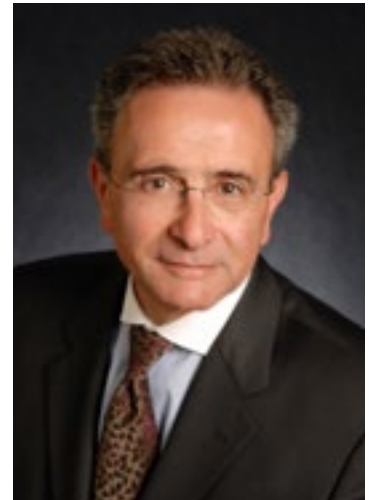
But what a ride it was! During the past year as president of ALTA, I have met the world’s most interesting, gracious, concerned and conscientious people. I am so fortunate to work among you all.

The message I tried to convey as I traveled to so many wonderful places is that we need to remind ourselves frequently of the important role we play—not only in the title and settlement business and the real estate industry—but in the creation of wealth and in the growth of our economy. I introduced and re-introduced Hernando de Soto to my audiences because he so convincingly instructs us about the importance of a reliable record of ownership; it being the greatest element in the triumph of western economies. It wasn’t his intention when he wrote his book, *The Mystery of Capital*, but he has provided a great story for us to tell about ourselves.

As my year started last October, the work of many months under the careful guidance of Chris Abbinante was culminating in the creation of ALTA’s “Title Insurance and Settlement Company Best Practices.” As Chris handed me the baton, I saw my role as one of education and implementation. Thanks to the extraordinary work of ALTA staff and the tireless efforts of our volunteer leaders, the Best Practices were brought to countless states in every region of our country. We called it the “Road Show.” We provided the reasons for the Best Practices, we introduced tools to implement them, we listened to concerns and we allayed fears. It could have been daunting but for the commitment, dedication, and passion of each person involved. I cannot thank the staff, the Board of Governors, and the other Association leaders enough. My role was fulfilled only through you.

I now pass that baton to Rob Chapman. He will guide us through actual deployment of the Best Practices throughout the industry. This will entail integration into our office systems, measurements and assessments, refining our tools and testing compliance. There could be no better candidate with the skills and talents suited to this task. We are fortunate to be in Rob’s hands in the coming year.

Now, as I say so long, let me once again thank all who served with me and all who welcomed me and my wife, Mary, so warmly. Let me say that I am honored, privileged and humbled to have been chosen to serve as your president. Let me also pledge my support to Rob and the new Board in any way needed. And as for my last 365-day trip around the sun, let me say it was quite a ride. An unforgettable journey!



- Frank Pellegrini, ALTA 2013 president

Best Practices,  
streamlined.

**Best Practices: Simplified** is First American's approach to help you implement the ALTA Best Practices Framework.

Learn more at [Firstam.com/simplify](http://Firstam.com/simplify).

FIRST AMERICAN®

**BEST PRACTICES:**  
Simplified



*First American Title™*

866.701.3361 • [www.firstam.com](http://www.firstam.com)

First American Title Insurance Company makes no express or implied warranty respecting the information presented and assumes no responsibility for errors or omissions. First American, the eagle logo, First American Title, and [firstam.com](http://firstam.com) are registered trademarks or trademarks of First American Financial Corporation and/or its affiliates.

©2013 First American Financial Corporation and/or its affiliates. All rights reserved. • NYSE:FAF

A cartoon illustration of a man with a mustache and glasses, wearing a white shirt and blue tie, falling upside down. He is holding a blue smartphone in his right hand and a pen in his left. His legs are sticking straight up, and he has a surprised expression. The background is a light blue sky with white clouds.

# Communicate With Your Customers From Just About ANYWHERE.

SoftPro's award-winning closing and title software will help you work more efficiently – from helping to create and manage a workflow process for your organization, to providing a transaction management tool that is accessible from your mobile device and allows you to connect with your customers from anywhere. Choosing SoftPro means you'll be getting the very best technology, keeping you up-to-date with industry regulations and changes, while backed by the very best support. **Start using SoftPro today and do more, in less time, from just about anywhere.**



**SOFTPRO**<sup>®</sup>  
CLOSING AND TITLE SOFTWARE

Call **800-848-0143** for a **FREE 30 DAY TRIAL** or visit **[www.softprocorp.com](http://www.softprocorp.com)**.