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Oklahoma Abstractors Board

MARCH "MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD"

Spring is just around the corner...flowers have already begun to sprout, the trees will soon be blooming and before long it will be time to drag out the lawn mower again...that is if Old Man Winter will finally leave us alone.

While growing up in our great state of Oklahoma, I have always had a grand sense of pride for our state and an immense interest in our states' history. To be given an opportunity to work for the Oklahoma Abstractors Board has been a true pleasure. You, as abstractors, are at the very heart of our heritage on a daily basis. When I was hired by the Board in August of 2008, I will admit I did not have much knowledge of the abstracting or land title industries but I did have an extensive background with business and office management. It is astonishing how much I have learned working with the professional staff here at the OAB office as well as our OAB Board members and I have a high level of respect and admiration for your industry. The abstractors that I have been in contact with have been very kind and a pleasure to work with also.

As a previous small business owner myself, I can truly appreciate the pride and satisfaction of owning your own business but also understand the daily trials and hardships that a business can burden you with. As the governing agency for Oklahoma abstractors, it is our duty to keep all of the abstractors in compliance with Title One, the Oklahoma Abstractor's Law and the Oklahoma Abstractors Rules at Title 5 of the Oklahoma Administrative Code. I hope that when you are contacted by me or other staff here in the office for additional documentation or any other reason, that you understand that we take our duty seriously and only aspire for the abstracting industry to succeed and to improve the public view of our industry. The OAB can thrive only if our abstractors prosper also.

Out of the 136 Certificate of Authority and Permit Holders in Oklahoma, 117 renew their certificates during the months of January through May each year. 574 of the 889 individual abstractor licensees renew their licenses during the same months as above. These numbers reveal that December through January in our office is quite eventful to say the least. Usually we are still working on renewals from the

previous month while new renewals are coming in for the following month. Renewals that come in with incomplete documentation impede the progress as we have to stop and make notes, contact the abstractor and then move on to the next one. It may not sound as if this is a gigantic problem but when just one item is missing from almost all of the renewals, it does get difficult. I then have pieces coming in from everywhere that I have to go back and match up and look over again. The most common response when I contact someone is “we have never had to do this before”. Please realize that we are trying our hardest to follow and enforce the Board’s rules and treat everyone equally and the best way to do that is to ask the same of everyone. These requirements have been set to protect the Board, you and also the public. Our office does do things differently than our predecessor but we expect that everyone will appreciate this once they understand why we do it. I hope this message will also inform everyone that they are not alone and everyone is having the same issues.

As we are winding down from this “renewal season”, as we like to call it, I have noticed a few small things that I would like to bring up in order to expedite our service and make things more trouble-free for you also. When sending in renewals, please combine all of your fees into one check; this will save us both valuable time. Also the instructions for the new OAB Fee Schedule form do not instruct you to present them in typewritten form but we have been asking that you do so. The Microsoft WORD version is available on our website for you to download and use to type your information in and send to us. Since the fee sheets are available for everyone to view on our website, the typed version has a better appearance and looks more uniform with the other sheets.

Once we started requiring everyone to use the OAB form, we started noticing that some send in the fee sheet a month or two prior to their renewal time and then also again with their renewal. You are permitted to change your fee sheet twice during the year, once when you renew each year and one other time during that year. If you are going to be changing your rate sheet close to the time your renewal is due, please wait until then so you do not waste one of your renewal options. Fee sheet requests received in our office are reviewed by our Field Inspector and the Enforcement Committee and then they recommend approval to the Board.

A few weeks ago I was given the opportunity to sit in on the OLTA Abstractor School and must say that I thoroughly enjoyed the school and appreciate the knowledge that I have acquired on this fascinating industry. I hope that what I learned at the school and my improved knowledge over the past two years will help me to better assist our Oklahoma abstractors. Please know that I am always willing to be of assistance when I can and welcome you to stop by our office at anytime.

Sincerely,

Terri McNulty
Executive Assistant