

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

You're Board of Directors and Committees have been very busy since taking office on November 1, 2008.

As the economy has continued to slide, MLTA members have had to tighten their belts which have had some negative impact on the Association's income. Membership dues are down, as is attendance at both pre-licensing and continuing education classes.

In order to control some of these costs, the Pre-Licensing Committee has decided to reduce the number of courses offered to four in 2009 – although we had a small penalty to pay for canceling several sessions, it is substantially less than we would have had to pay if all courses went forward with minimal attendance. Also, the Board has reduced the honoraria received by speakers as a cost-savings measure. The Continuing Education Committee has likewise made adjustments in its schedule. One quarter of the "Nuts-and-Bolts" course has been deleted, and the number of general continuing-ed classes reduced as well. Fees for CE have been slightly increased, food and beverage service adjusted downward, and speaker honoraria reduced. The adjustments made by these two Committees will result in a balanced overall Education budget during this fiscal year.

The Convention Committee is also off and running – plans are in the works for another outstanding Annual Convention in Ocean City, MD. In an attempt to respond to our member's input, the Convention has been shortened by one day, and will end following education on Saturday morning rather than Sunday. To allow for a full education credits hours, we will be beginning classes Thursday afternoon – which is when most members have been showing up at the beach anyway. There may not be as much "glitz" at this year's Convention, but the good news is that you will still receive the same high level of classes and events you have grown to expect – and we will maintain a balanced budget for this event.

Our membership is currently at just under 250, and our two Chapters continue to prosper. The Southern Maryland is looking forward to its second annual St. Patrick's Day seminar and cocktail party which was very well attended last year. And the National Capital Area Chapter is planning its first educational event for May. Hopefully the memberships in these Chapters will continue at a high level.

Our Legislative Committee continues to monitor and report on the various new bills moving through the State Legislature. Of particular interest is a bill which would raise the required bonds for title agents. Also of note is our attempt to suggest language which would clarify the legal validity of mortgages recorded without including the requisite lender information.

The Newsletter Committee continues to put out e-newsletters for our membership. In an attempt to defray some of the costs involved, the Committee is working on seeking sponsors and possibly including a “classified” section which would generate revenue.

Finally, I need to report a slight change in the membership of our Board of Directors. Due to changes in our industry – particularly with respect to the Underwriter Section – we have had one Director resign, a replacement voted in, one officer change company affiliation, and one Director change company affiliation. The end result is the Board of Directors and Officers listed in a table elsewhere in this web site. I wish to thank all of the Directors, Officers, Committee Chairs, and our Executive Director Margaret Webb for their hard work thus far, and their willingness to take the steps necessary for us to maintain a balanced budget in these difficult economic times. And of course, thank you – our Members whom we represent – for your support of the Association.