

The Reporter

Winter Issue ★ Old Republic National Title Insurance Company, Boston, MA 02108 ★ Happy 2004

The Patriot Act – What Our Agents Need to Know



Many of you have already received requests by mortgage companies for “the form” designed for their compliance with the Patriot Act. At present, title insurance companies are not required to implement an identification procedure, and we have not promulgated any such “form”. It is the lender’s responsibility to implement a procedure for identifying their customer.

Old Republic Title’s requirements for identification are two forms of identification at or before closing -- one of which has a picture and is government issued. In addition, the customer’s name should be checked against the Specially Designated Nationals (“SDN”) List. ORT provides the SDN List via **ORLINK** in an easily searchable format. Go to our New England Area homepage at www.ortboston.com and click on “ORLINK”; then click “Executive Order 13224”. Immediately contact the ORNTIC state office if a name is found on the List. Also check the names of those who will be receiving money from your settlement who are not the buyer or seller.

You are encouraged to visit the Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (“OFAC”) website to familiarize yourself with the requirements and penalties of OFAC. Their website is www.treas.gov/ofac, and then click on “Regulation by Industry”, then click “Insurance”.

FRAUDULENT CHECKS WARNING!

Recently, there have been several instances where fraudulent checks have been presented against escrow accounts. The checks have been extremely good reproductions of the check stock and authorized signatures created through the use of scanners, personal computers and laser printers. A large national bank involved with one of the attempts stated that it is seeing a sudden increase in attempts to defraud title company escrow accounts.

In order to protect your escrow accounts as much as possible, please make sure you are accomplishing the following:

- Reconcile all bank accounts and identify all reconciling items as quickly as possible. (For a claim of a fraudulent check to be valid against a bank, most banks require notice within **30** days of the **receipt** of your bank statement);
- Maintain strict control over your check stock inventory and utilize checks with enhanced security features;
- Review the numeric sequence of checks daily in order to identify duplicate or out-of-sequence check numbers;
- Alert your staff to be on the lookout for anything suspicious or out of the ordinary.

Another convenient safety feature that many local banks offer to reduce the risk of fraud is a service called “**Positive Pay**”. The account holder issues checks each day and sends the data filing to their bank listing each item’s serial number, amount and issue date. As checks are presented to the bank for payment, they will match them against your data files. Those included in your list will be paid immediately and those not listed will be reported to you for authorization of payment. The most important step you can take to protect your accounts is to reconcile promptly each month.



MARKETING TIPS/REMINDERS :

★ Attention Notaries Public: You have until April 19, 2004 to comply with Gov. Mitt Romney Executive Order 455 (03-13), which establishes the standards of conduct for Notaries. <http://www.mass.gov/legal/notaries.html>

★ Old Republic Agents are eligible for special discounts from DELL that are not available to the general public! www.dell.com/eppbuy Customer ID: LS14202034

★ Are you using our Short Form Policy for Residential Transactions? Call your software vendor to make sure you have it in your system. Visit www.ortboston.com and click on “ALTA Forms and Endorsements”



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A FREE GIFT IS JUST A CLICK AWAY! VISIT WWW.ORTBOSTON.COM TO CLAIM YOURS!

Military Powers of Attorney ... Did you Know??

Did you know that federal law exempts military powers of attorney from any "requirement of form, substance, formality or recording that is provided for powers of attorney under the laws of a State?" With so many members of the armed forces serving overseas and reservists called to active duty, it is not unlikely that you will eventually see a military power of attorney in one of your real estate transactions. Section 1044b of the U.S. Code goes on to state that military powers of attorney "shall be given the same legal effect as a power of attorney prepared and executed in accordance with the laws of the State concerned," as long as the power of attorney is notarized in accordance with the preceding section of the Code. The term "State" includes the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

Section 1044a of the U.S. Code lists the persons authorized to notarize military powers of attorney, including judge advocates on active duty or performing inactive-duty training, civilian attorneys serving as legal assistance officers, adjutants, assistant adjutants, or other active duty personnel designated by regulation or statute to have those powers.

Be sure to check with your underwriter if you are provided with a military power of attorney in a real estate transaction and have questions regarding its validity.

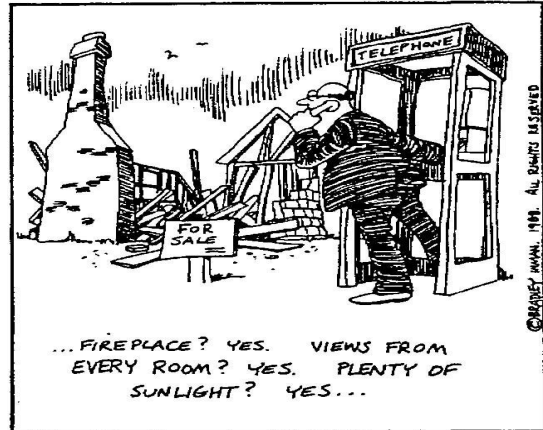
Old Republic's 2002 Annual Report Wins National Award!



The Old Republic Title Group's 2002 Annual Report was recently named one of the best 100 annual reports in the nation. Our annual report received this honor at the 18th Annual Black Book AR100 Award Show, the largest and most prestigious competition for recognizing excellence in corporate annual reports in the country.

"This is the first year the ORTIG Annual Report has earned this type of award. We were pleased to be distinguished by and recognized in the competition," said Rande Yeager, President and CEO of Old Republic National Title Insurance Company, who set and approved the direction for this year's report. A panel of four leading annual report designers judge thousands of entries each year in categories covering nearly every aspect of a report's creative process, including a tough evaluation of how well the report reflects a company's personality. According to Mike Haug, Senior Designer of Larsen Design in Minneapolis, "Since Old Republic Title is such a successful company, with a great reputation for having capable, experienced employees, great customer service and financial strength, the team wanted this year's report to highlight these very positive attributes and to reach out and speak to the following target markets: realtors, lenders, loan processors and lawyers. The report achieved these goals."

The Lighter Side of Real Estate



Do we have your  mail address??

From time to time, it's important for us to get information out to our agents in a timely fashion. If you'd like to receive information via email, kindly send an email to Lisa Hemeon so that we can plug your address in. Lhemeon@oldrepublictitle.com

Employee Spotlight - Lisa Hemeon



Lisa Hemeon joined Old Republic Title in January of 1994 and just celebrated her tenth anniversary with the Company! She is a graduate of Katharine Gibbs School in Boston and worked as an executive secretary for several years before becoming the "Sales Administrator" for Old Republic.

As Sales Administrator, Lisa helps process new agents and provides "back at the ranch" support our sales representatives out in the field. She aids in the planning and implementation of agent seminars, social functions and trade shows. She also lends her creativity in designing some of our promotional items and is responsible for putting together this Newsletter.

Lisa is a proud supporter of the Red Sox (win or lose), enjoys the local band "Guster" and, because of her love of languages, she usually enters the office saying "good morning" in at least four languages. She resides in Reading and is the mother of two beautiful girls.

