

ORT News! – July 2007



OLD REPUBLIC

National Title Insurance Company



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Hello,

Good Morning!

Today is the 200th day of the year. Just **165 more days** until 2008. Are you thinking like I am about how fast 2007 is flying by?

In addition to our regular features, **this month's issue of ORT News!** also includes:

- Special recognition to a TLTA member - and ORT Agent employee, David Wolff;
- Information about the relationship between government contracts and employee contributions;
- An article on "*First Class*"; and
- More fun facts that are sure to make you ponder about whose job it is to discover them.

On behalf of **Old Republic National Title Insurance Company**, thank you for the pleasure of having you as one of our valued customers.

Inside ORT

With over 15 years in the title industry, Steve - pictured here, joined ORT in June 2002 and holds the position of **Underwriting Counsel**. His responsibilities include staying abreast of regulatory, legislative and case law developments while monitoring internal trends as well as those in the industry. Additionally, he handles inquiries concerning closing and title issues to assess risk and provide direction. Steve also provides training and continuing education for title company personnel.

Steve attended LSU and then the University of Houston Law School where he received his J.D. in 1992.

He began his career in the title industry examining title and serving as Chief Title Officer for a Southeast Texas



title agent while maintaining a sole practitioner law practice focused on real estate transactional documentation. Steve returned to the Houston Metropolitan area to manage an escrow office and close both residential and commercial transactions. Subsequently, he managed a greater Houston area title insurance agent servicing several offices and regularly furnishing title evidence to title company clientele.

Born in Houston, Steve lived in Mississippi until the age of five, and then he and his family returned to Galveston where he attended Ball High School. While growing up, Steve participated in football, water polo and swimming. You may recall from our April 2007 Newsletter, that Steve was featured in our ORT Trivia as the champion swimmer.

Steve's hobbies include spending time in "Paradise" - aka, his bay house in Galveston, movies, and football - particularly the Southeast Conference.

Steve can be reached by calling 888-678-1700, or via email at: sstreiff@oldrepublictitle.com

ORT Press

Professional Excellence Award

David Wolff, Title Examiner for First Community Title in Temple, Texas, **was honored at the recent TLTA Annual Conference with the Professional Excellence Award**. This prestigious award honors individuals who have given **exceptional contributions** to his or her employing firm.

David is a 15-year veteran of the title industry and is **known for his wealth of knowledge and his willingness to teach others with patience**. David has received **multiple recognitions** from his employer including a National Circle of Excellence, Customer Service, Employee of the Year, and several top producer awards.

Congratulations, David!

Industry-Related Information

Campaign Contributions, Government Contracts, and Your Agency

An ever **growing number of states and municipalities** are enacting so-called "pay-to-play" laws that **bar or severely limit campaign contributions** by state and local contractors, their executives, and in some instances, **employees**.

If your **Agency does business with state or local Government**, you need to be aware that the stakes of non-compliance are high. More than twelve states and several specific cities have laws **on the books that prohibit or regulate** the making of campaign contributions by employees.

"You should ascertain whether your jurisdiction has a pay-to-play law in place and, if so, take the appropriate steps to safeguard the company's ability to secure government contracts", says Ronald J. Blitenthal, VP and Governmental Affairs Counsel for ORT.

Home Protection Coverage

Did you know that Old Republic offers a **Home Protection Plan** that includes standard coverage for a home buyer, a home seller, and even for new construction? **If you didn't know, now you do!**

For information, please visit: www.orhp.com.

ORT Sales & Customer Service Corner

First Class?

When you hear "**first-class**", what comes to mind? Seat on an airplane? An upgrade at a hotel? Service?

Customers today **want things better**. Better food, better accommodations, better schools, and **of course, better service**. But just **what is better service?**

Better service is whatever the **customer sees as being different enough to be desirable**. Here's how this applies to you: There are **levels of service** at your place of business and at your competitors place of business. Unless the product is different in the mind of customers, then **your level of service**, friendliness and accommodation will make you more desirable or less desirable to do business with.

Your level of service will also **lead to word-of-mouth advertising and reputation**. Your goal is to be **known as a first-class company full of first-class people**. It's not the company, **it's the people** in the company that will make or break the business. When you have a great reputation, no one can beat you.

Companies spend millions, sometimes billions of dollars, on advertising, branding, strategizing, and every other element of marketing that they believe will bring business success. **But if the people aren't great**, all that money spent on marketing means nothing.

So, **what can you do?** Here's a list of **3 easy ways to make sure that each transaction you have** with a customer will reflect the great service you say you provide:

- **Set the example**. Don't do it for your company, do it for yourself. Develop the pride in doing your best.
- **Hang around with the winners, not the whiners**. There are only two things in life - reasons, or results. Whining about things that could be better does nothing. Be the customer service winner - even on those most challenging days.
- **Create your own customer service best practices**. Sure, everyone should do this - but, don't wait for everyone else to jump on board before you find ways to do what you do even better. Look at the best practices of other companies - not only in your industry, for ideas that you can adapt and/or adopt.

Put yourself in your customers' shoes and **ask yourself with each customer contact** if the service you just provided was a positively memorable one. **It matters**.

ORT Tools

Back Again By Popular Demand!

After we featured these **two links** below in previous Newsletters, many of you told us how **useful and valuable** you found them. **So here they are again.....**

»For quick links, downloadable forms, tips, and other information to help make your transactions go smoothly, check out the **Old Republic National Title Insurance Company Resource Center** at:
www.oldrepublictitle.com/newnational/Resources/index/asp

»Here's a quick link to the **ORT Rate Calculator**:
www.oldrepublictitle.com/txnational/insurancerates/Calculator.asp

Fun Facts

Things that make you ponder whose job it is to discover these things.....

- Seals sleep only one and a half minutes at a time.
- Dragonflies have six legs but cannot walk.
- Licking a stamp burns 10 calories.
- A teaspoon contains 120 drops of water. *And last, but certainly not least....*
- If you keep a goldfish in a dark room, it will eventually turn white.