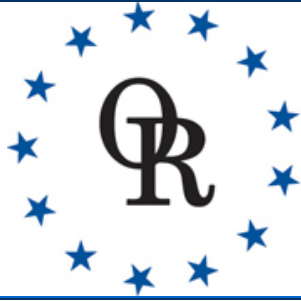


ORT News! – November 2007



OLD REPUBLIC
National Title Insurance Company



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Good morning,



Thanksgiving reminds us of the many things we're thankful for - like doing business with great customers like you. From all of us at ORT, I'd like to **extend to you a sincere thank you for your business** and to also wish you a very special Thanksgiving Day filled with joy, fun and many blessings.

In this month's issue of **ORT News!**, I've also included the following:

- A **Bulletin** regarding the **Prohibited Sources of Down Payment**;
- Information on a **resurgence of an old trick known as the Jury Duty Scam**; and,
- An article titled "**Perfect Timing**", which suggests **ways to take a positive spin** on the current downturn in our industry.

Inside ORT

After leaving the military where she was stationed at Fort Bragg in North Carolina, **Katie Heron** joined **ORT** in April of this year as **Claims Administrator**.

Katie works with Britt (Schmoller) Naponic in processing of claims, opening claims, obtaining the necessary paperwork, gathering information, etc. Katie says her coworkers are what she likes best about working at ORT and definitely not the 100 mile round-trip commute; Katie and her husband Matt - featured with her in the photo, live in Splendor, Texas.

Born and raised in Willis, Texas, Katie played softball in high school and worked training horses. Today, her hobbies include most anything outdoors including fishing, swimming, and riding horses. She also is an avid baseball fan - whether it's the Houston Astros or watching her husband play in a men's league. When asked what her favorite food is, Katie said she is "*like a kid when it comes to Pizza*".

And since many of us have often heard that weddings can be a great place to meet that special someone, Katie can be counted as one of those believers since she met her husband while she and her family were guests at his brother's wedding. Two years later they married and recently celebrated their one year anniversary.



Katie can be reached by telephone at 888-678-1700, or via email at: kheron@oldrepublictitle.com.

ORT Press

Corrinn Arthur

It is with **both joy and sadness** that we say farewell to a member of the **ORT** family. Corrinn Arthur of OREXCO will be **leaving next month** to get married and start her new life in San Antonio. Corrinn, who works Alan Hall in the Houston office, joined the 1031 Exchange Company four years ago and has been a wonderful member of our team. **While we hate to see her go, we wish Corrinn all the best.**

Industry Related Information

Bulletin

Prohibited Source of Down Payment Assistance

Effective October 31, 2007[*], an amendment was made to HUD's regulations governing the specific standards for a mortgagor's investment in property for which the mortgage is insured by the Federal Housing Authority ("FHA").

Restrictions on seller funding are provided in Section 203.19(c). This **final rule states that a prohibited source of down payment assistance is a payment that consists**, in whole or in part, of **funds provided by any of the following parties** before, during, or after closing of the property sale.

- The seller, or any other person or entity that financially benefits from the transaction
- Any third party or entity that is reimbursed directly or indirectly by the seller, or any other person or entity that financially benefits from the transaction.

[*] Notwithstanding the effective date given under the DATES caption of this rule and pursuant to an April 1998 settlement agreement resolving litigation between the Nehemiah Progressive Housing Development Corporation (Nehemiah) and HUD, the effective date is to be March 31, 2008 for the Nehemiah down payment assistance program described in the settlement agreement between Nehemiah and HUD.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact our Legal Department by calling 888-678-1700.

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## Jury Duty Scam

The FBI and other law enforcement agencies around the country have reported **the resurgence of an old trick known as the jury duty scam.**

In this scam, **potential victims receive calls from people posing as court officers.** The caller informs the victim that he or she failed to appear for jury duty and that a warrant has been issued for his or her arrest. After alarming the victim, the caller then seeks to "confirm" the victim's Social Security number and other personal information. **After divulging this information**, the victim is often told that the entire matter can be instantly dismissed by paying a fine. All the victim needs to do is provide a credit card or checking account and routing number.

**By the time the call ends**, the scammer has all the information necessary to open lines of credit under the unsuspecting victim's name. Identity thieves can quickly empty the victim's bank accounts or run up staggering credit card bills.

As with many ploys to obtain consumers' personal information, **it is likely that many of these identity thieves are actually thousands of miles away**, often in other countries and out of reach of U.S. law enforcement. Under this scheme, criminals simply go through the phone book hoping that sooner or later someone will provide the sensitive information they need to steal an identity.

This **ploy is particularly effective because it causes victims to react immediately out of fear**, rather than

taking the time to reflect about the information being requested. While citizens could face legal consequences for failing to respond to a valid jury summons, **legitimate court officers would never leave threatening messages on someone's voicemail** to demand personal information and immediate payment of a fine.

Consumers who receive such a call can verify whether they must appear for jury duty by calling their local courthouse or district court. **Consumers should NEVER hand over personal information in response to an unsolicited telephone call or e-mail**, no matter how legitimate it might appear.

## ORT Sales & Customer Service Corner

### Perfect Timing

*What a great time to get your customers to fall in love with you all over again.*

Remember when our "current" customers were "new" customers? And because they were "new", we usually had no difficulty in giving them **some extra attention** either by providing information, walking them through the processes of doing business with us, or simply to make sure they new how much we appreciated them choosing us to do business with.

But over time - **as things become familiar** with us and our customer, we stop doing the things we did in the beginning. And while most of it is because **we don't HAVE to** give that type of attention anymore, that's **not how customers see it**. What they do see and notice is that **we are not giving them the same amount of attention** as we used to.

One of the biggest reasons for **not doing what we used to** do for customers when they were new is related to time. No time to follow up. No time to call the customer for no specific reason. No time to spend a few extra minutes with a customer just chatting about non-business things. No time because any extra time we do have we prioritize to give **"new" customers because they need it more**. Right? **Wrong**.

With home sales down right now all across the country, which has translated into you perhaps having a little extra available time due to a decrease in transactions, you can **sit idly and panic** during this phase - or, you can use this downtime to **re-market to "current" customers**. How? Perform a simple Account Review.

An Account Review is actually a **customer service tool** and is a true win-win. You win by **gaining valuable information** and your customer wins because they **notice and appreciate** your unexpected attention. Account Reviews can even be done over the telephone - but, not via email as that will appear "cold" in your customers' eyes.

#### Here are four simple steps to perform an Account Review:

**1. Ask your customer to share with you their experiences of the last six months or year.** What do they like best in doing business with you / your agency? Do you return telephone calls promptly? Be specific with your questions. Don't just simply ask, "How do you think things are going?"

**2. Ask your customer about what's new in their business / industry.** This is an ever-changing and fast-growing industry. If you are not growing with them by learning new ways to service them, they may grow with your competitor.

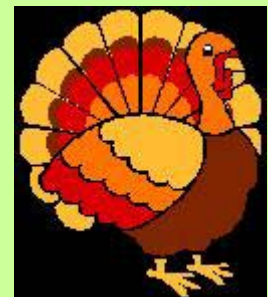
**3. Tell your customer about what's new with you / your agency.** New regulation? New staff members? New product / service? Customers who have been doing business with us the longest tend to know the least about us because we often assume they know everything they need to know because they are a current customer.

**4. Ask your customer, "If you have a suggestion for improvement for me / my agency, what would that be?"** This is the hardest question to ask because we often fear the answer. However, I think you'll be pleasantly surprised with the response because when customers do have something to suggest it is generally not a big deal. Think about the people and places with whom you do business with - wouldn't you like to be asked that question?

## Turkey Facts

*Here is a little Turkey Trivia for you....*

- Turkeys have great hearing skills, but no ears.
- Turkeys can see in color, have excellent visual acuity, and their field of vision spans across approximately 270 degrees.
- Turkeys have a poor sense of smell but a great sense of taste.
- Turkeys are so sensitive that they can drown by looking up while it is raining and can have heart attacks due to sudden shocks.





**Happy Thanksgiving!**