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Message from the President

Cam Ferenbach, State Bar of Nevada President



REFLECTIONS ON THE STATE BAR OF NEVADA, PART 2

"My sincere thanks go out to all of you who have worked so hard in furtherance of the important work of the State Bar of Nevada over the past 12 months."

Last month's President's Message described:

1. Why an effective state bar association is critical to our system of justice; and
2. How the state bar's effectiveness depends on its dedicated staff.

Here are some other things I have learned about the State Bar of Nevada:

3. The state bar's effectiveness also depends on our volunteer committee, panel and section members.

Based on an informal inventory of our committees, panels and section leadership, we conservatively estimate that 29,000 hours of volunteer service, in furtherance of the mission of the State Bar of Nevada, were donated by our members in 2010. At \$200 per hour, the value of these donated services would be \$5,800,000, an amount almost equal to the state bar's annual budget.

Staff handles day-to-day operations – including coordinating the efforts of all these volunteers – but the Board of Governors is ultimately answerable to our members and the Supreme Court for the manner in which the state bar operates. Without the volunteer assistance of our members the job would not get done.

4. The Board of Governors and staff work together to balance long-term benefits against short-term costs.

Taking advantage of technology is saving the bar money. All membership data is now maintained in a central

database. In the past, different departments at the state bar had to maintain their own duplicate files on members within each department's area of activity: Admissions, Discipline, Client Security Fund and Lawyer Referral, for example. Now, only one entry is required to update a member's information and that update is automatically applied to all departments.

We have expanded online and podcast CLE. Our own video-conferencing equipment and teleconferencing bridge saves time and travel costs. We are evolving toward paperless files, which save time and storage costs and create better-preserved records. Even the Board of Governors has done away with its board book, which used to contain hundreds of pages for each meeting. The book has been replaced by delivery of electronic files via the internet, which board members view on their laptops during our meetings.

One major cost/benefit issue facing the bar involves our Las Vegas office. The state bar purchased our office building at 600 East Charleston in 1997. At that time, the bar had 5,886 members and 27 employees. Now it has 10,584 members and 44 employees statewide.

We have been gradually increasing staffing in the Northern Nevada Bar Center (9456 Double R Blvd. in Reno) and now have five employees based there. This relieves some of the crowding in Las Vegas. However, we have run out of room in our 10,440 square foot office. To efficiently accommodate staffing, hearings, meetings and CLE programs, the state bar requires more configurable square footage for various purposes. With a larger facility we would realize significant reduction in fees and expenses incurred when we rent space off-site for CLEs and bar exams; we would also see more functional space for discipline hearings and committee meetings. Our facilities committee is exploring options for consideration by the Board of Governors.

My sincere thanks go out to all of you who have worked so hard in furtherance of the important work of the State Bar of Nevada over the past 12 months. I also greatly appreciate the input I received from members throughout the year. Serving as your president has been truly an honor and a pleasure. ■