SBN MOVES FORWARD WITH FIRST STEP IN RELOCATING LAS VEGAS HEADQUARTERS

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At its January 2012 meeting, the State Bar of Nevada (SBN) Board of Governors (BOG) voted to move forward with locating approximately 20,000 square feet of existing commercial space to purchase to serve as SBN’s new southern Nevada headquarters. The SBN’s current location – the “Wengert House” at 600 E. Charleston Boulevard, Las Vegas, Nevada – is a Tudor-Revival residence built in 1936 by civic leader Cyril Wengert. Prior to the Wengert House becoming SBN’s headquarters in 1998, it had been converted from a historic residence to an office and enlarged by its prior owner, the Schreck Morris law firm. While the Wengert House has served the SBN well over the years, the SBN has outgrown the 10,745-square-foot space and requires a larger, more updated and efficient office space in order to adequately serve SBN members now and for decades to come. In 1997, the SBN’s membership statewide was 5,886 and the SBN had 27 employees. Today membership statewide is 10,899 and SBN employs 47 full-time and part-time employees – 43 of whom work out of the Wengert House.
The Las Vegas headquarters is used for staff, committee and section meetings, and disciplinary and fee dispute hearings; it has been expanded and revamped over the past 15 years to accommodate the SBN’s growth, changing demands and staff duties. Over the past few years the SBN has “restacked” (reorganized workstations and offices into smaller spaces) to fit more employees into the current facility. While the BOG still holds meetings at the Wengert House in the conference room – which is the largest space in the facility – this small, 330 square foot room is barely adequate for this purpose. No CLE programming or large member gatherings can be held at the Wengert House because it simply cannot accommodate those functions.

To assist the BOG in formulating a southern Nevada facilities strategy, we retained the Las Vegas firm of Applied Analysis to provide the SBN with an analysis of the options available: lease, purchase or build. Applied Analysis, which is well known in Nevada as an information and analysis resource for the public and private sectors, has extensive experience in market research, urban economics and public policy analysis. In its report to the SBN, Applied Analysis recommended that, given the needs of the SBN and the current commercial Las Vegas real estate market, purchasing an existing building makes the most sense. The SBN is currently in the process of performing a Request for Proposals to obtain bids from commercial real estate brokers to provide brokerage services to the SBN.

The good news is that the SBN’s purchase of a building should not require a dues increase since the BOG has been setting aside money from various revenue sources for this purchase for the last several years and has up to $2,500,000 to commit toward the purchase. Additionally, although a final decision has not been made about what will be done with the Wengert House, it will probably be sold or leased, thereby further defraying the cost of the new facility. It is hoped that given the historical significance of the Wengert House to the Las Vegas community, the SBN will locate a buyer who will appreciate the unique history of the home and commit to its preservation.

The Future of Nevada Law Begins With the Past

With the June 28-30, 2012 date of the SBN’s Annual Meeting fast approaching, don’t postpone your visit to the SBN website (www.nvbar.org/annualmeeting) to register. While you may have had reasons for not attending in the past or even just in recent years, this year is different! You have EVERY reason to join us this year: a keynote address about the Future of the Practice of Law, the excellent CLE programming, which features the Nevada Supreme Court and many other members of the Nevada judiciary, the Young Lawyers Section Trial Academy, the beauty and charm of the historic Hotel Del Coronado in San Diego, the beach, the dinner cruise ... the list is endless.

I also encourage you to take advantage of one of the numerous opportunities to sponsor events at the Annual Meeting, which are all listed on the website. I look forward to seeing you in San Diego! ■