

TxCMA 2016 Annual Membership Meeting

Scheduled: July 25, 2016, 5:15pm-6:15pm, Sans Convention Center, Las Vegas Nevada

Board members present:

- Matt Bedosky, President (Richardson)
- Paul Carroll, Secretary (Houston)
- Lee Moore, Director of Special Projects (Rockwell)

Members present:

- There were a total of 16 members, 2 sponsors, 4 guests, and our lobbyist present at the meeting

Before the meeting was called to order Matt Dogali, IPCPR's Senior Director of State Legislative Affairs, offered words of thanks for organizations like ours.

The meeting was called to order at 5:32pm PDT.

Mr. Carroll called the meeting to order and introduced Mr. Bedosky.

Mr. Bedosky introduced the board of directors, both present and absent, as well as mentioning each of our sponsors.

Mr. Bedosky provided a brief historical review of TxCMA. He cited such noteworthy topics as:

- Formed in 2007
- Tiffany Rumbo, Club Humidor, San Antonio, as our first president
 - The group of people who served with Mrs. Rumbo brought our organization to life
- Kent Pennington, Elite Cigars, Addison, as our second president
 - During Mr. Pennington's tenure Texas faced backroom political maneuvering, right at the end of the 2009 legislative session, regarding the "Physicians Education Reimbursement Act," an act we never had a chance to participate in.
 - Worked with IPCPR to retain a lobbyist in Austin and our relationship with Longbow Partners begins
- Matt Bedosky, Calypso Cigars, Richardson, as our third president
 - Mr. Bedosky began serving his first of three terms in 2011
 - During this time TxCMA and Longbow Partners try various ideas for engaging Austin politicians and their staff to grow awareness of Tobacconists in the State ultimately settling on a caucus styled format that has proven to be effective
 - TxCMA has been 100% effective in holding back taxes

Mr. Bedosky provided a brief review of our financial situation.

- Due to contractual obligations with IPCPR our portion of the retaining fee for Longbow Partners has increased from 30% to 50%.
 - Our costs now exceed current income levels

- With the upcoming elections we must begin again to build relationships in Austin so cutting this expense is unwise and unwarranted
- A review of our total expenses from a high level
 - \$21,000 is approximately our annual liability for paying our portion of the lobbying retaining fee
 - \$8,000 is approximately how much more TxCMA needs to spend, operationally, throughout the year
 - \$30,000 annually is how much TxCMA should bring in
 - Annual membership is \$250

Mr. Bedosky introduced our lobbyist from Longbow Partners, in Austin Texas, Mr. Brett Findley.

Mr. Findley discussed a wide range to topics. The highlights of which are:

- This is the sixth year Longbow Partners has worked with TxCMA
- This will be our fourth legislative season to work together
- A brief history of Longbow Partners was presented
 - Mr. Findley, a previous staffer in Austin, formed Longbow with another previous staffer from Austin
 - There are three partners in the firm
 - Longbow is selective of which clients they represent for various reasons; the primary reasons stated insure they have no conflict of interests between any of their clientele as well as a focus to insure nothing unethical occurs within their chosen relationships
 - With the three partners working together they are able to cast a wide net in Austin in order to be highly effective when representing their clients
- A brief history of the work being conducted on behalf of TxCMA was presented
 - Longbow works to educate political staffers regarding Tobacconists in the State
 - Began with Lunch and Learn styled events
 - Moved to a caucus styled event whereby staffers are invited for a networking event on a recurring cycle to discuss Tobacconists in the State
 - The caucus used to be held at a rental location in the past. Longbow Partners now invites the attendees of the caucus to their offices.
 - A frequent comment heard at these caucuses is “Wow. I had no idea!”
 - Costs have gone down as a result from roughly \$500 to \$100.
- Mr. Findley provided a look ahead to the next legislative session in Austin
 - There has been a huge turn over in Austin with most of the relationships built in the past now no longer existing.
 - We must begin again building new relationships in Austin
 - There are a few incumbents we still have a relationship with
 - The new staffers are anticipated to have little or no working knowledge of the legislative processes in Austin when they take office
 - Longbow Partners will be hosting a client appreciation event in the near future where anyone from TxCMA is welcome to attend. Date to be announced.

The floor was opened to questions from those present.

1. What is the BOD (board of directors) doing to assist in generating new income?
ANSWER: The BOD just held a meeting which was recessed due to time constraints and Fundraising was a tabled topic. One idea that will be discussed is hosting one (or up to three) golf tournament(s). However, it is up to Texas Retailers to insure our income is coming in through their annual membership dues.
2. How can we target other retailers in the State?
ANSWER: no answer was provided
3. Do we have registration pamphlets?
Answer: We have a PDF that can be used
4. (From LFD) Can we rely on sales reps to promote TxCMA as they make their way across the State?
ANSWER: We'll gladly accept all the help promoting TxCMA we can get.
LFD went on to state they'd offer an 8+1 buying deal for those who join TxCMA.
5. Are there any plans to utilize social media?
ANSWER: The idea has been recently proposed and we should begin utilizing these resources soon.
6. Can't we make a requirement that tobacconists can't be a member of the national organization unless they are a member of the state organization? Many other national organizations, in such industries as pawn shops and real estate, require it. Why not follow their lead? It should provide a pathway for growing contributing members in TxCMA.
ANSWER: IPCPR won't pass funds down to TxCMA and IPCPR already has defined that anyone in the national organization is automatically a member in the state organization.
 - It was mentioned that during the most recent BOD meeting that TxCMA is moving towards two classifications of members.
 - STANDARD Member: Any tobacconist, in the State of Texas, who is in good standing with IPCPR and are not a contributing member of TxCMA will be classified as a Standard Member. Standard members do not get to vote in association matters nor are they eligible for leadership roles within TxCMA.
 - CONTRIBUTING Member: Any tobacconist, in the State of Texas, who is in good standing with TxCMA, through the payment of their annual membership dues, is granted a vote in association matters and are eligible for leadership roles within TxCMA.

A motion to end the meeting at 6:32pm PDT was made. The motion was second and the meeting ended.

Submitted by Paul Carroll, Secretary