



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

TEI International President
Neil D. Trautenberg

New Member Benefits Unveiled at Annual Conference

The next issue of *The Tax Executive* will contain full coverage of our recently concluded Annual Conference, but I want to take this early opportunity to offer my personal thanks to several groups for making the conference a success:

First, thank you to the more than 400 members and other tax executives who travelled to San Antonio for the 64th Annual Conference. TEI recognizes that the economic downturn has led many companies to reduce their travel and training budgets, and we very much appreciate the confidence that our registrants showed in including the conference in their plans. Onsite comments and a quick review of the written evaluations confirm that our Continuing Education Committee maintained TEI's tradition of offering top-notch educational and networking opportunities at an affordable price.

Second, the committee chairs who compose our Continuing Education Committee and the members who planned and moderated our technical sessions deserve our appreciation. So do our cadre of accomplished speakers, who took time away from their challenging schedules to prepare for the conference, to travel to and from San Antonio, and to demonstrate both their subject matter expertise and their support for the Institute. A successful conference does not just happen. It is the result of dedication and hard work, and I thank our volunteer leaders and our volunteer (*i.e.*, non-compensated) speakers for making it possible.

Third, a tip of the cowboy hat is due to the members of the Institute's Texas chapters who established a hospitality committee that made everyone feel at home. The Dallas, Houston, Fort Worth, and Austin Chapters not only opened up the Lone Star State to TEI, but they opened up their wallets, adding zest and zing to our Welcome Reception and giving the lucky recipients of several door prizes even more reason to be pleased they attended the conference.

Fourth, TEI's conference sponsors deserve our thanks. Like our own companies, most if not all of the accounting, law, and other firms that support TEI's sponsorship initiative have faced staffing cuts and budget reductions because of the recession. While we have never taken their financial and other support for granted, we know that, like us, our sponsors must scrutinize their spending decisions more than in the past. It is primarily because of their ongoing commitment to the Institute that TEI has not raised its dues in *nearly two decades*, even while holding the line on conference fees and increasing member benefits. Special thanks are due to the exhibitors who were in San Antonio to speak informally with our members and to respond to their questions, as well as to the exhibitors who were in San Antonio to speak informally with our members and to respond to their questions as well as Grant Thornton

and Deloitte & Touche for hosting receptions for all conference registrants.

Finally, we owe our thanks to TEI's staff who labored tirelessly before and during the conference to make our meeting a success. From before dawn to long after the sunset, our staff made it look easy. Our conference planning staff of Deborah Gaffney, Mike Lowery, and Kara Mooney deserve special mention, as does Debbie Giesey, TEI's Director of Administration, who celebrated her 25th anniversary with TEI shortly before the conference.

TEI's New Website

The Annual Conference gave the Institute an opportunity to preview the Institute's new website, which will be launched in early 2010. Working with the feedback we have received since the current site was launched five years ago — as well as a group of members from across the Institute — we have striven to keep the features and functionalities that members like and to address their concerns about what was missing and what could be done better.

For example, we have been able to improve the Look & Feel of the site by building it on a Sharepoint platform, which has become the industry standard and will make it easier (and less costly) for us to adapt the site in response to member needs. TEI is also committed to enhancing the content on our site. TEI will be hiring a web content manager, who will be responsible not only for ensuring the timely posting of information on TEI's advocacy, educational, and other activities, but also for working with professional service firms to aggregate relevant information for TEI members and their colleagues.

We will also simplify our members-only discussion forums, launch a blog feature — who knows, we may ultimately end up on Twitter — to alert members to important developments, and improve both our job bank and the site's Search function. We are especially pleased that we will be able to improve our 54 chapter sites. Not only will the chapter sites be easier for our local leaders to manage, but chapters will soon be able to accept online payments through our e-commerce solution and send emails with attachments to their members.

To learn more about the website, visit www.tei.org.

That's Not All: New CPE Initiatives

Staying up to date and maintaining professional credentials are vitally important to tax professionals. For 65 years, TEI has worked to remain first in class in the quality, quantity, and affordability of tax education for the in-house professional. To maintain its well-deserved reputation for excellence and responsiveness to its mem-

bers' needs, TEI has teamed up with Thomson Reuters, its long-time exclusive affinity partner for tax research, to significantly expand distance learning opportunities for members. These new benefits are fully explained on TEI's website and were the subject of a presentation during the Annual Conference.

Specifically, TEI and Thomson Reuters have launched two separate CPE programs. First, we have negotiated significant discounts on Thomson Reuter's tax-related online training programs (which are offered by the company's MicroMash and Pass Online affiliates). There will not only be per-program discounts, but you can purchase an annual "all you can eat" pass — that will entitle you to partake of your choice of more than 400 courses — for only \$450 all without leaving your office.

Second, we have committed to holding as many as 9 webinars within the next year with Thomson Reuters, again at a significant discount for members. (The November and December programs will be offered free of charge.) These programs will build upon the *TEI Talking Points* brand that TEI launched earlier this year, which will continue to be offered to members at no charge. A calendar of TEI-Thomson Reuters programs is available on our website.

A third initiative with Thomson Reuters will interest all members who have CPE or CLE requirements that they have to monitor and satisfy. Specifically, TEI will purchase an account — a "seat" in Thomson Reuters's lingo — for each TEI member on the company's Required platform. This program, *which will be available to members at no additional charge*, will permit members to sort out their own requirements (on a jurisdiction by jurisdiction basis) and to manage

the fulfillment of their requirements. Thus, if a member working in California belongs to the Ohio bar and is a CPA in Texas, she can track her CLE and CPE requirements in all three jurisdictions through her TEI-provided Required account.

What's more, a members' participation in Thomson Reuters's or TEI's programs will be automatically posted to their account (enabling members to "countdown" their remaining requirements and to download their CPE certificates on an on-demand basis). In addition, TEI (and, in the future, our chapters) will be able to assist members by posting their events on the member's individualized calendars. Finally, TEI members will be able to secure additional Required seats for their non-member colleagues at a significant discount. (Regrettably, this CPE-tracking benefit is not currently available to TEI's non-U.S. based members.)

A brochure outlining these TEI-Thomson Reuters CPE initiatives, including the calendar of our webinars, was mailed to all members in mid-October, and it is now accessible on TEI's website.

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True to its commitment to enhancing member service, TEI undertook these initiatives — from building a new website to expanding our distance learning opportunities to providing members (and chapters) with a way to track CPE requirements — in response to feedback from members like you. Let us know if you have additional suggestions for keeping TEI the preeminent association of in-house tax professionals worldwide.



Acknowledgments

TEI gratefully acknowledges the support of the following firms that, as of September 1, had become sponsors of the Institute's **64th Annual Conference:**

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