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N.E. Land Title Association president's message: Alive and in excellent financial condition

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It is hard to believe that a whole year has passed since I was sworn in as the 40th president of the New England Land Title Association on June 20th, 2009. It is more difficult to comprehend that 36 years have passed since Ellen and I attended our first NELTA Convention at the Granite Resort in upstate New York in 1974. I started my journey with NELTA as an attorney associate member, became a member of the board of directors in 1996 and became a regular member in 2005 when I joined the legal staff of Connecticut Attorneys Title Insurance Company.

The past few years have been years of challenge for the real estate industry in general and the New England Land Title Association in particular. I am pleased to report that as a result of the great work of our executive director Cathy Jones and the support of a talented board of directors with a "can do" spirit the New England Land Title Association is very much alive and in excellent financial condition. Our membership has grown and our educational programs have provided much needed revenue to the association's bank accounts.

At the installation ceremony last June as I assumed the role of the association's president, I paraphrased one of our nation's Founding Fathers, Thomas Paine when I stated "These are the times that try men and women's souls." While certainly not as crucial as the American Revolution, many difficult things have happened in the real estate world and in the title insurance industry during the past year. Foreclosures abound throughout the United States, commercial and residential real estate values have decreased in significant numbers and real estate transactions have also decreased. Significant changes in the RESPA Regulations and Rules have created challenges for bankers, attorneys, brokers and members of the title insurance industry.

With respect to the changes to the RESPA Regulations and Rules, our association has met the challenge by bringing together experienced professionals for extremely well attended seminars explaining the workings of the Regulations and Rules. We thank Tommye Frost of Fidelity National Title Insurance Company, Richard Hogan of Connecticut Attorneys Title Insurance Company and Ruth Dillingham of First American Title Insurance Company who presented not one, but three programs, one in Rhode Island and two in Connecticut and Paul McNutt of Title Resources Guaranty, Bruce Donner of the Donner Law Office and Barbara Cunningham of St. Mary's Bank for their program in New Hampshire.

NELTA also presented a seminar in April on another very timely subject, Short Sales. We thank Bruce Zawodniak of Connecticut Attorneys Title Insurance Company, Edward Rosenblatt of Fidelity National Title Insurance Company and Matthew Cholewa of First American Title Insurance Company for presenting a program that unfortunately affects a significant number of our citizens.

These excellent programs have continued the association's long standing tradition of presenting timely educational programs to the New England real estate community.

The real estate professionals of the New England Land Title Association continue to do what they have done during the cycles many of us have experienced over the years: being helpful, being cooperative, being professional and being leaders. By maintaining these characteristics we will continue to make our industry stronger and enduring for many years into the future. It is very satisfying for me personally to be a part of this industry.

Joel Mandell is the president of New England Land Title Association and special counsel, commercial services for Connecticut Attorneys Title Insurance Co., Rocky Hill, Conn.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540