

INTRO TO LEGISLATIVE ISSUE

A RECAP OF THE SESSION
FROM THE LAC CHAIR



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The articles in this issue pertain to topics selected from the 2013 legislative session. All community associations in the State of Utah are impacted by one or more of these items. I urge you to closely review the topics and use this issue as a source of reference.

Later in this article I state “this is not our first rodeo.” When writing this I thought of an experience I had as a young boy.

I grew up on a farm where horses and cattle were part of everyday life. I had older brothers who had aspirations for me to be a rodeo cowboy. I was 5-6 years old (this was a dramatic event which must be why the experience is still imprinted on my mind) and they wanted to introduce me to bull riding. Luckily for me they started with a calf. To ensure my success one of my brothers, who was about 11-12 at the time, had the bright idea that if my feet were tied together under the calf’s belly there would be no way I could get bucked off. So with a couple coaching tips like “don’t let go of the rope” they opened the gate (actually they just untied the calf) and away we went. It turns out the coaching worked, I did not let go of the rope. Having my legs tied under the calf’s belly kept the two of us connected. The foreseeable problem was that the calf’s round belly did little to keep me upright so I quickly found myself upside down under the calf’s belly. I can picture the calf’s furious legs, the dirt, and of course manure, being kicked into my face as we made our way around the corral. At some point my bothers were able to corner the calf and untie me. I don’t remember crying but distinctly remember that I never wanted to do that ever again. Later I will relate this story to my first experience as the chairman of the Utah Legislative Action Committee.

The Utah Legislative Action Committee is comprised of 15 individuals with various involvement with community associations: 4 attorneys (who specialize in community association law), 4 community managers, 5 homeowners, and 2 service providers. I have not calculated the exact tenure of our members, but my guess is that each person has an average of 12-14 years of experience working directly with community associations. Literally, we are individuals working at your side. We understand the problems and concerns community associations face because they are the same problems and concerns we face. You are not alone in the trenches.

CAI national recommends that a certain percentage of representation in each of the following categories be achieved: attorneys, managers, home owners, and service providers. This balance helps to ensure that the myriad of issues that the LAC is confronted with has a well rounded perspective. We are in compliance with these percentages.

Combined, the members of our committee have volunteered thousands of hours, set aside their real jobs and sacrificed their personal interests. They have worked late hours and weekends to meet their professional commitments and made more than a few apologies to spouse and family members. All in order to safeguard and improve the legal wellbeing of community associations.

This is not our first rodeo. The legislative process is more of an art than a science. So, no doubt there will be future lessons to learn. However the LAC has and will continue to comprise the best and brightest individuals to lead this effort. We are fortunate to have other qualified and willing attorneys, homeowners, community managers, and service providers who are ready to fill vacancies on the committee and are already involved by contributing in various ways to the cause. For those of you who fall into this category, thank you and please continue with your involvement.

The LAC has several significant financial obligations it must meet in order to run effectively. The largest obligation is the cost of a lobbyist. Each month we issue a check for this expense. Is it worth it? Absolutely! The legislative process is complex. Relationships, access, and visibility are just a couple factors that have a significant bearing on the outcome of law. If you and your community/company are not contributing at least a small financial contribution yearly to the LAC please start. Go to <http://www.utahlac.com/> and look under tab “Donate” to download a form to facilitate a financial contribution.

Be involved: If you have not already done so register for LAClink. This can be done by going to <http://www.utahlac.com/> look under the tab “Get Involved”. Your email will not be shared with others and as a rule we have only sent an email a couple times per year. The one email blast we sent in 2013 was a call to action regarding legislation that negatively effected community associations. When diplomacy had run its course we sent this blast soliciting help. It worked! We will never be on a level playing field with organizations that have hundred of thousands of dollars to be used to influence law. But we do have something few other organizations have. We have tens of thousand of individuals living in community associations in the State. If our collective voice is heard, we will level the playing field.

At the beginning of this article I related my fist experience at bull riding. That experience has many similarities to acting as LAC chairman for the past year.

- (1) I was reluctant and wasn’t sure what I was getting into.
- (2) My feet may not have been tied but there was no turning back once I started.
- (3) When the 60th legislature session commenced on January 28, 2013, I had little control of where, or how, it was all going to end.
- (4) I had dirt and a little of that other substance kicked in my direction.
- (5) I am grateful it is over.

In spite of this, my involvement with the LAC has been a great experience. I appreciate deeply the commitment, skill, patience, desire, work ethic, integrity, and devotion that so many of you have contributed to a most worthy cause. Please continue by being a good neighbor and making community associations a great place to live.