THE BLOOMIN' TEXAN

November 2014

THE PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS STATE FLORISTS' ASSOCIATION

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THE BLOOMIN' TEXAN

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Susan Weatherford, TSFA President

With the seasons changing, I hope that everyone is feeling the positive energy and getting an **Inspiration for Participation**!

I recently attended two days of intense meetings regarding the 2015-2016 TEXAS FLORAL EVENTS, including Floral Expo, Showcases and Forums, all NEW incredible changes developing within TSFA. I'd like to thank Lynn Lary McLean and Gayle Johnson for taking time out of their busy schedules to meet and share their innovative ideas and inspiration. And, of course, Dianna Nordman for her input and working tirelessly to help us formulate a plan to execute our vision.

With major changes in the works for TSFA, we need a "YES WE CAN" attitude and commitment! We need to work together to increase floral awareness. In the near future, TSFA will announce some of the amazing plans in the works. We all need to commit to the "YES WE CAN" approach to our business and everyday life.

Let's take "NO" and "CAN'T" out of our conversations. Start answering every question with a positive reply and/or option. You will be amazed at how well the conversation will go. By putting out positive…in turn you will receive positive. Now… in order to keep this energy level high and "fertilize" (used that verb for our grower members. Lol) that spirit to grow, it is important to have enthusiastic participation and engagement. This participation should not strictly be within TSFA, but spread throughout the entire floral industry and your associations.

Many members are becoming more active and their involvement helps strengthen our organization. We are excited about the new membership (we received 6 applications last month) and growth within our association. If we haven't already reached out to you — PLEASE reach out to us. Your input and ideas are always welcome. **Big things to come!**

Member Spotlight

Mikaela May TMF, Crowley, TX

NAME: **Mikaela May, TMF**

YEARS IN INDUSTRY: **4**

FAMILY: **Daughter of Wayne and Malissa May and sister of Cody May. Engaged to Ryan Hall planning to get married June 2015.**

COLLEGE: **Currently attending Tarleton State majoring in Agriculture Education with a minor in Horticulture. Planning to graduate in May of 2015 and become an agriculture teacher.**

HOW DID YOU GET INTO THE FLORAL INDUSTRY? **I became interested in the floral industry in high school when I took a floral design class, I then received my high certification, but that wasn't good enough for me. So I went on to become a Texas Master Florist. My plan is to be an agriculture teacher and teach students about floral design and the floral industry.**

YEARS INVOLVED WITH TSFA: **5 years**

PASSION(S): **Flowers, FFA, family, stock-showing**

GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT: **Becoming a Texas Master Florist**

BIGGEST THING LEFT ON YOUR LIFE "TO-DO" LIST? **Get married and become an Agriculture Educator**

HONORS: **I am a member of the TSFA Education Committee. I also received the Seymour Carren Scholarship.**

Corrections to the 2014 Yearbook

Please make these corrections in your Yearbook:

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How to Prepare for an Unemployment Hearing

Reprinted with permission from Texas Business Today

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Appeal Tribunal Hearing is the employer's best opportunity to prove that it should win an unemployment case. This is particularly important in cases where the employer discharged the former employee who filed a claim for unemployment benefits (claimant), since it is the employer's burden to prove that the employee was discharged for misconduct connected with the work. If the employer does not provide the best evidence possible, the employer faces the possibility of being charged for the unemployment benefits paid to the claimant.

The following tips are for employers on how to best prepare for an appeal hearing. Most of these instructions are contained within the hearing notice, but are often overlooked by busy employers in charge of running a business.

1. Note the date and time of the hearing.

The very first thing you should do when you receive a hearing notice is to make sure you accurately note the date and time of the hearing. Put the reminder on a cell phone, computer calendar, wall calendar, or on a simple paper or Post-it note on your desk. When you create the reminder, make sure it is for the correct date and time.

Remember that you must call in within the 30 minutes prior to the hearing start time to notify the hearing officer that you plan to participate in the hearing. Failure to call in on time could result in you being barred from attending the hearing. If you have an unavoidable conflict, such as pre-arranged travel or even a last-minute illness, then you should notify the hearing officer as soon as possible and request that the hearing be postponed. While postponements are rarely granted, your request will be noted in the claim file and can assist you in reopening the case if you are unable to attend the hearing.

2. Identify the issues to be covered at the hearing.

All hearing notices list the hearing issues on page 3A. If there has been more than one hearing, then the page number listing the issues could be different. Common issues comprise: the job separation, chargeback, timeliness of appeal, and other eligibility issues. You must know the issues that will be covered in the hearing so that you can adequately prepare to present your best case.

3. Examine the documents in the hearing packet.

After you know the issues that will be covered during the hearing, look through the hearing packet to determine if it

includes the documents you need to prove your case. Which documents are relevant will depend on the issues covered in the case. For example, if the claimant quit due to a pay discrepancy, then it would be important to submit the employee's time records, pay stubs, and any written notice of resignation. If the relevant documents are not in the hearing notice, then you should immediately gather the documents you need and mail them to both the hearing officer and the claimant using the addresses printed on the hearing notice. Failure to send the documents to the claimant could result in the hearing officer refusing to enter the documents into evidence. Only those documents that are entered into evidence can be considered when making a decision in the case. Make sure that the documents in the hearing packet and those that you send after receiving the packet are clear and legible. A photograph of the claimant violating a policy does not help your case if the picture is blurry or dark. Similarly, using a highlighter on documents can cause problems during the faxing and copying process. As you prepare for the hearing, mark which documents you want to emphasize or explain so that you can point them out to the hearing officer. Be ready to state who prepared the documents and to explain how the documents help your case.

4. Arrange for witnesses to appear at the hearing.

Firsthand testimony under oath will always be the best evidence. Firsthand witnesses are those individuals who saw, with their own eyes, or heard, with their own ears, the incident that resulted in the job separation. You should make every effort to ensure that the employer's firsthand witnesses are available to testify for a hearing. Notify them in advance of the date and time for a hearing and tell them to be prepared to be available by phone to discuss the case. Beware — the Appeal Tribunal's telephone number can show up as "unavailable" on a caller ID machine, so ensure that your witnesses know this and answer the telephone anyway for the hearing. If for some reason the firsthand witnesses are not able to participate in a hearing, notify the hearing officer as soon as possible so that you have the best chance at having the hearing moved to a different date. While there is no guarantee that the hearing officer will agree to reschedule the hearing, it never hurts to ask. Also, while an employer can submit written statements from witnesses as evidence, the statements will not carry as much weight as testimony. Many employers are concerned about lost productivity and, therefore, do not arrange for other employees to testify during a hearing. However, keep in mind that your witnesses do not need to be present for the entire hearing. You can request that the hearing officer only call the witnesses when it is their turn to testify. This limits downtime for employees and results in less inconvenience for employees who may be participating in the hearing at a time when they would not normally be at work.

5. Assistance is available through TWC.

The unemployment appeal process is designed to work without attorney representation. Of course, an employer can choose to have an attorney present during the hearing at their own expense. Employers should contact their local Workforce Solutions office if they need access to a telephone, speaker phone, or fax machine. Be sure to request assistance well in advance of the hearing so that the staff at the local offices can have the equipment available at the time of the hearing.

6. Request interpreters when necessary.

Do not let a language barrier prevent you from having your witnesses attend a hearing. TWC can provide interpreters for a wide variety of languages as long as you notify the hearing officer in advance that you need an interpreter.

Keep in mind that interpreted hearings take longer than hearings without an interpreter. Allow for additional time when preparing to attend an interpreted hearing.

In Conclusion

With adequate preparation, an employer will be able to avoid surprises that can result in losing an unemployment claim. By following the steps above and providing the materials and information necessary to prove your case, the employer will have the best chance at prevailing in an unemployment claim. As always, if you have any questions or concerns regarding an unemployment hearing, or the appeal process in general, please do not hesitate to contact one of Commissioner Andrade's staff attorneys at 800.832.9394.

The very first thing you should do when you receive a hearing notice is to make sure you accurately note the date and time of the hearing. Put the reminder on a cell phone, computer calendar, wall calendar, or on a simple paper or Post-it note on your desk.

Are Your TWITTER Skills up to Date?

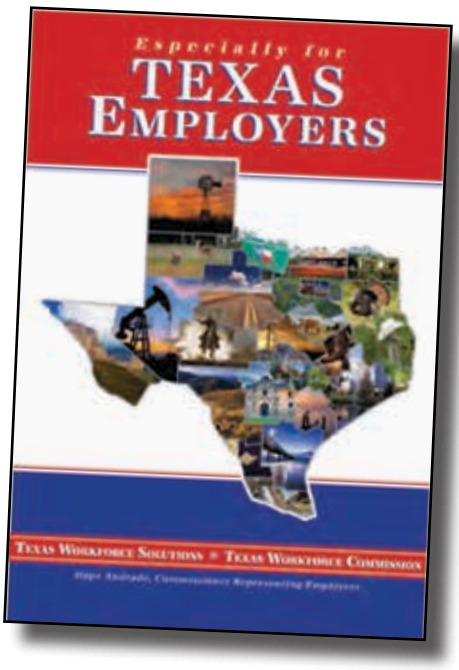
Twitter has been around since 2006, but that doesn't mean we're all using it the way we should. (Who hasn't squeezed in a couple of extra hashtags, or forgotten to leave space in a tweet so people could add comments?)

Ragan.com shares some takeways from an infographic by Passion Digital that are a nice reminder of some best practices organizations and individuals should follow on Twitter.

- **Insert links in the middle of your tweets.** Write your key message first, add the link, and then end with your thoughts.
- **Use relevant hashtags.** Don't use a hashtag just because it's trending. Only use hashtags that are relevant to you. Trends typically only last an hour on Twitter.
- **Keep tweets short.** Try to keep your tweets at around 100 characters. This leaves room for others to retweet your message and their own comments.
- **Share photos.** Twitter now shows image previews in the timeline, which offers more opportunities for followers to engage with your tweets.
- **Tweet in the afternoon.** Mobile users are 119 percent more likely to use Twitter during the day, specifically the afternoon.

(Source: ragan.com/Main/Articles/Infographic_Are_your_Twitter_skills_up_to_date_48545.aspx)

New Edition of Employers' Book is Available



The latest edition of Especially for Texas Employers , a free publication of Commissioner Andrade's office for the employers she represents, is available now both in print and online at www.twc.state.tx.us/news/efte/tocmain.html.

That website has links for requesting a printed copy of the book, as well as for accessing the entire book online. There is also a link for downloading a PDF copy of the book, which can be either displayed on a desktop and/or laptop computer or on a mobile device, such as a smartphone, iPad, Android tablet, or one of the popular e-readers available from booksellers.

The book has hundreds of topics relating to Texas and federal employment laws, organized into sections according to the four main phases of an employment relationship — hiring, pay and policies, work separations, and post-employment issues. There is also a section with sample forms and policies. The online edition features small apps that allow employers to estimate unemployment benefits and chargebacks, and how certain chargebacks might affect their unemployment tax rates. The online book also contains an app allowing quick estimates of overtime pay for employees who are paid at two different rates or who receive a fixed salary for fluctuating workweeks. Again, the book's website address is www.twc.state.tx.us/news/efte/tocmain.html.

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Dianna Nordman
TSFA 2014 Achievement Award

By Bridget Weatherford
Courtesy of Allied Florists of Houston

Ken Freytag, Dianna Nordman, Pam Fuller

For those of us that were lucky enough to attend TSFA's 100th Year Anniversary Gala, it was certainly a pleasure to watch as Ken Freytag, of Freytag's Florist, stood at the podium to announce Dianna Nordman AAF as the winner of this year's Achievement Award. As members of TSFA, we all know how instrumental Dianna has been in finely tuning this Association with her unbelievable organizational, financial and communicational skills. Although TSFA has been extremely blessed to have her as Executive Director over the past 23 years, it is really you and me that have been the lucky ones. With most of our readers being members of both Allied Florists of Houston (AFH) and TSFA, I would be remiss if I did not mention how the partnership between AFH and TSFA has remained strongly intertwined due greatly to having Dianna as the liaison between the two organizations. Even with all the duties and responsibilities that she has as TSFA Executive Director, she has always been there to help AFH out whenever possible. So, with all of that in mind, I now get to what I feel is the best part. We, as members, not only have someone that is completely dedicated to TSFA and committed to seeing it remain a viable and strong organization, but we are also blessed with the greatest gift of having a truly loving and caring person to call our friend. How can we ask for more?

I want to take this opportunity to thank Ken Freytag for allowing me to share with our readers the speech that he gave as he announced Dianna as the recipient of the 2014 100th Year Anniversary Achievement Award.

"Leaders know what their mission is. They understand why this association exists. A superior leader has a well thought out plan, enjoys working with people and has the ability to implement the plan with success. TSFA is blessed to have someone with these attributes receiving the TSFA Achievement Award this year.

TSFA was blessed to employ this year's recipient as its credit union manager in the late 80's. In 1991, TSFA was searching for the right person to take the TSFA to the next level. This person was right under our nose. It just took a year for us to get smart enough to realize it. As TSFA's Executive Director, she continues to amaze us with her tremendous organizational skills and unbelievable financial skills. She can stretch a dollar farther than anyone I have ever experienced. I am sure this was learned being a single mom of two children. She has taken our association to a level none of us could have imagined 23 years ago.

On a personal note, our recipient was born in Knox County, Mt. Vernon, Ohio, but grew up in Mansfield. As a youngster, she had a true love of flowers and hung out at the neighborhood florist. As a child she loved to wear dresses and jewelry. She also mastered square dancing and used it throughout her life to hook men. Our recipient has 2 sisters, 2 brothers, and was raised by her single mom until she was 15 years old. That's when her mom married Jim, the man she calls dad today. As a teenager they traveled across the U.S. staying in K.O.A. campgrounds. We all know she loves to travel, but we also know this is not her idea of accommodations.

Our recipient is a loving, nurturing and encouraging mom to her two children Scott and Siobhan. She met the love of her life a few years back. They met square dancing, but we knew it was the real deal when she told us she was going to the lake to watch him water ski. Needless to say, Karl doesn't ski anymore. You know how things change after you get married.

Monica and Scott have blessed our recipient and Karl with 1 grandchild, Sidney. Cody and Siobhan have blessed them with Hunter and one in the basket. She is a doting grandmother who has many plans for her grandchildren's future.

We are blessed as an association, and I am honored as a friend, to present Dianna Nordman as this year's 2014 Achievement Award recipient." — Ken Freytag

Dianna, 'Congratulations' from all of us at **Allied Florists of Houston** and we want to send you huge round of applause for this much deserved award. We simply can't think of a better recipient to capture the 100th Year Anniversary Achievement Award!

I was honored an humbled to receive the TSFA Lifetime Achievement Award during the 100th Anniversary. How special! I admire the former recipients and hold each in high regard. Please accept my deepest thanks. I love this industry, TSFA and my work.
— Dianna Nordman AAF

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Full Name	Complete Mailing Address
Texas State Florists' Assn.	PO Box 170760, Austin, TX 78717

11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Hoding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds. Mortgages, or Other Securities. If none, check box [X] None

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13. Publication Title	14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below
BLOOMIN' TEXAN (THE)/TEXAS STATE FLORISTS ASSOCIATION	08/01/2014

15. Extend and Nature of Circulation			Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total Numbers of Copies *(Net press run)*			800	800
b. Paid Circulation *(By Mail and Outside the Mail)*	(1)	Mailed Outside County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 *(include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)*	587	555
	(2)	Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 *(include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)*	0	0
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c. Total Paid Distribution *(Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), (4))*			587	555
d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution *(By Mail and Outside the Mail)*	(1)	Free or Nominal Rate Outside County Copies included on PS Form 3541	25	25
	(2)	Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies included on PS Form 3541	0	0
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e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution *(Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3), (4))*			25	25
f. Total Distribution *(Sum of 15c and 15e)*			612	580
g. Copies not Distributed			188	220
h. Total *(Sum of 15f and 15g)*			800	800
i. Percent Paid *((15c / 15f) times 100)*			95.92 %	95.69 %

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c. Total Print Distribution *(Line 15F)* + Paid Electronic Copies	612	580
d. Percent Paid *(Both Print and Electronic Copies)*	95.00 %	95.00 %

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17. Publication of Statement of Ownership
[X] If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the 11/01/2014 issue of this publication. ☐ Publication not required.

18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner	Title	Date
Dianna L. Nordman	Executive Director	09/30/2014 00:00:00 AM

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TSFA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NOVEMBER 2014

2 Daylight Savings Time Ends
11 Veterans Day
16 TSFA Board of Directors Meeting at 9am, Austin, TX.
27 Thanksgiving

DECEMBER 2014

17 Hanukkah Begins
21 First Day of Winter
25 Christmas
31 New Year's Eve

JANUARY 2015

1 New Year's Day
12-15 TSFA School of Floral Design Classes, Houston, Texas. Registration information: www.texasschooloffloraldesign.com or telephone TSFA at 512.834.0361.
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14 Valentine's Day
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18 Ash Wednesday

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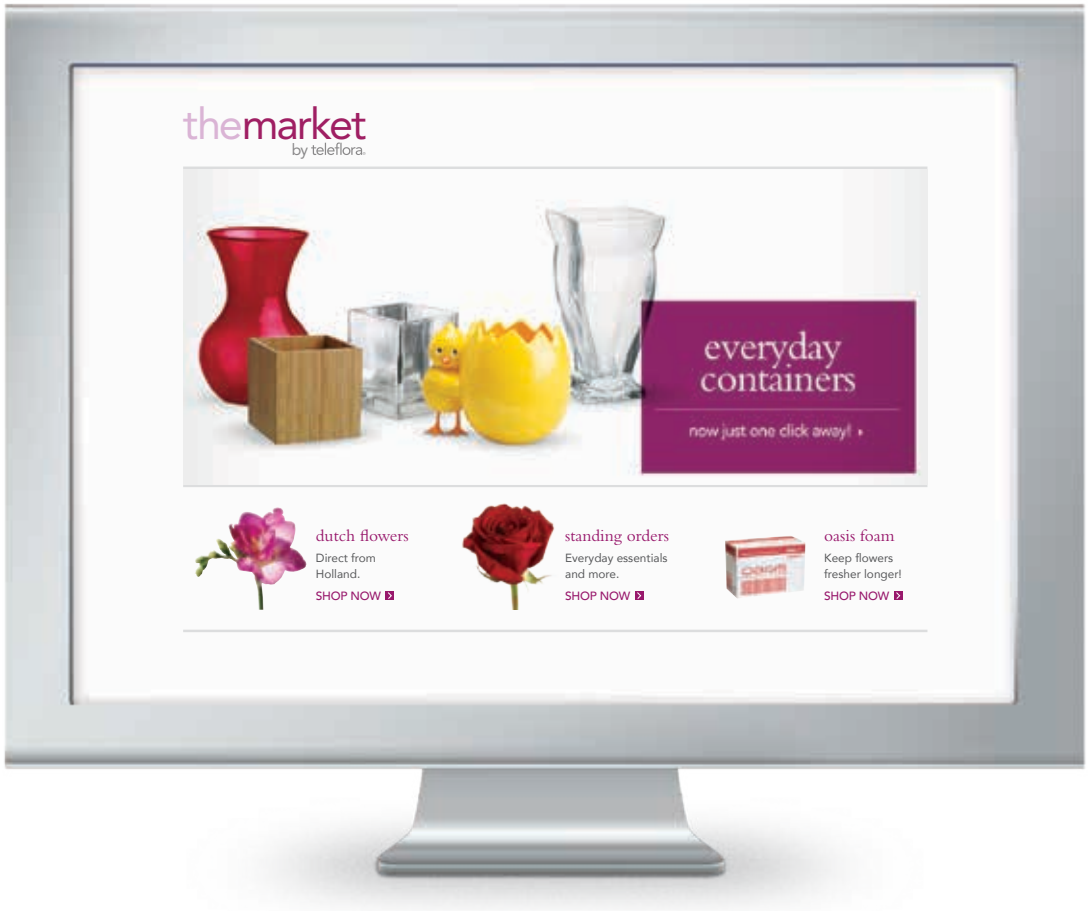

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