

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NOTES

## IMPORTANT DATES

**August**—Renew your TMEA membership and preregister for the 2013 convention.

**August**—Attend your fall Region meeting (see page 4 for details).

**August 20**—Liability insurance through TMEA expires.

**October**—Convention housing opens.

**December 31**—TMEA convention mail/fax preregistration deadline.

**January 24**—TMEA convention online preregistration deadline.

**February 13–16, 2013**—TMEA Clinic/ Convention in San Antonio.

## It's not too late

BY ROBERT FLOYD



The success of our new Distinguished Administrator Award Program has far exceeded our expectations in terms of acceptance and success. To date, TMEA has awarded 95 administrators with this distinction. In addition to sending the administrator a congratulatory letter, we have provided the nominating member a certificate to present to their administrator at a concert, school board meeting, or other appropriate public venue. After you read about a few of the worthy recipients in this magazine, I encourage you to go online to read previous installments of the Distinguished Administrator Spotlight that include stories of other deserving, supporting administrators as seen through the eyes of our members. The stories will warm your heart.

At a time when it would be easy to blame our superintendent, principal, or board of education for not fully supporting our programs, we need to be mindful of the intense pressure they are under from state financial cuts and the new high-stakes accountability STAAR system. It is refreshing, then, as well as important, that we recognize administrators who are making the right decisions for students by supporting programs in their district or on their campus.

What you won't find on the website or in this magazine are copies of responses from administrators who have received the award. One superintendent from a small West Texas community, after praising his music staff in an email to me, said the following: "I consider this honor as one of the most precious throughout my educational career. I am humbled beyond imagination." Another superintendent wrote, "This is a high honor of which I am humbly proud . . . thank you for the work that your association does to promote excellence in music education."

I love this time of year because it allows us to celebrate victories, reflect on the year, and assess what we can do better in the future.

I usually issue a thank-you and recognition to our sustaining members in our April convention wrap-up issue, but this year I am compelled to honor those companies that make up our support industry prior to the February conference. While still trying to survive in a down economy and with looming school finance budget cuts threatening future dollars that may have been spent with their companies, businesses could easily rationalize not exhibiting at the 2011 TMEA convention. The opposite, however, has proven to be the case. *Our 1,119-booth exhibit show is sold out, and over 440 companies will be represented in the two exhibit halls.*

Even though we strive to hold down booth costs and charge minimal fees for a sustaining membership, the reality is that exhibiting is expensive. Travel, housing, and meals for staff, drayage, decorating fees, distribution material, and giveaway costs reach far beyond the price of booth rental. So why do our sustaining members continue to support us? I asked that question of exhibitors at the recent Midwest Clinic in Chicago who also attend our show, and the answer was the same from each of them, one we know to be obvious. "Texas is still the cornerstone of music education in this country, and if our company is to thrive, then we must have a presence at TMEA." One exhibitor came up to me in Chicago and thanked me for recruiting him to the TMEA convention ten years ago. He said it has become by far his most productive show.

The trickle-down benefit for our members from such strong exhibit show support is obvious. There is no other event in this country where such a spectacular marketplace is assembled under one roof for perusal and shopping by our attendees. From receiving hands-on demonstrations of the latest software or new technology tools, to ordering that piece of music or designing next year's new uniforms, to planning a trip for your ensemble—it is all there. Beyond that convenience, such wonderful support by the music industry allows us to limit membership and registration fees for you, the teacher or college student.

So my challenge and simple request to you is that as you tour the halls in San Antonio this year, that at every booth you visit you conclude your conversation with a simple thank-you for their presence. It can never be a luxury we take for granted. Exhibitors, we thank you, and hope

you have a wonderful and productive convention.

### Keynote Speakers Offer Valuable Messages

I encourage you to attend the convention general sessions and learn from our outstanding keynote speakers. The take-aways, I believe, will be a bit different from messages of the past few years. On Thursday, Dr. Peggy Bennett, a former Texas music education professor, will deliver a most pragmatic message on communication. Many of our frustrating problems are triggered by our inability to communicate effectively with our colleagues, students, parents, and administrators. Peggy will offer meaningful strategies to improve this shortcoming in each of us.

Commissioner of Education Robert Scott will be attending the convention to receive our Distinguished Service Award at the Friday session, and he has accepted an offer to bring us an update on the latest happenings at the capitol in the midst of the legislative session. Commissioner Scott will be followed by Larry Livingston from the Thornton School of Music, University of Southern California. He will inspire and rejuvenate our passion for teaching and remind us of our mission as music educators to serve all students beyond those in our traditional bands, choirs, and orchestras. His love of teaching and music is infectious, and you will leave energized to serve the 4.8 million students in Texas schools.

### State Farm Sponsors President's Concert

State Farm Insurance Company has agreed to sponsor the President's Concert featuring the Swingle Singers at the 2011 convention. TMEA is appreciative of State Farm extending its contributions to public education in Texas beyond UIL athletic and academic activities to support TMEA's efforts in music education. I hope you are also making plans to enter the State Farm Original Score Contest

that will be awarding \$100,000 in prize money to deserving music programs this May. For more information, visit the contest site, [www.originalscorecontest.com](http://www.originalscorecontest.com).

### Show Us Your Badge

The San Antonio Convention and Visitors Bureau has initiated a new program that will financially benefit convention attendees. Over 50 restaurants across the city have joined in their "Show Us Your Badge" program, which will give you discounts on food and beverage simply by showing your TMEA convention badge. It has proven to be quite popular with attendees at recent conventions, and you will want to take advantage of this program. Participating restaurants will have signs in their windows designating them as partners.

### Legislative Session

As a quick overview, most of the major statewide offices were up for election this year and Republicans swept all of them, from governor to comptroller. In the Texas Senate, 16 of the 31 members were up for election this year. Seven incumbents had major party opposition and all were easily re-elected. Two incumbent Senators did not seek re-election. The two new members are retired Lt. Colonel Brian Birdwell (R-Grandbury) and former El Paso County Attorney Jose R. Rodriguez (D-El Paso). The Senate will continue to have 19 Republicans and 12 Democrats. As a result, the Democrats will still have the 11 votes they need to block bills from Senate consideration under the two-thirds rule.

In the Texas House all 150 members were up for election this year. Nine incumbent representatives did not seek re-election. There were 57 general election contests in Texas House Districts, and Republicans picked up 22 seats. In the last session, the House had 77 Republicans and 73 Democrats. The count going into this session will be 99 Republicans and 51 Democrats. As a sidebar, 21 incumbent

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