

**LIA ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 15, 2015, 11:45 A.M. TO 12:45 P.M.
DON'S SEAFOOD RESTAURANT
BATON ROUGE, LA**

President Jack Hopper called the meeting to order at 11:55 A.M., welcomed everyone and asked them to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. There were 44 voting members and 3 non-voting members present for a total of 47. In addition, there were 20 guests present.

Jack asked everyone to review the Minutes of the last Meeting and if acceptable, move that they be accepted. John R. Kavanaugh moved, seconded by Octave Ferrer, to accept the minutes. Motion carried.

Jack asked Severn to provide the financial report. Severn stated that the 3rd Quarter revenues were \$3,836.96 and the 3rd Quarter expenditures were \$6,012.90 which left \$2,175.94 in the red. Severn said that only about a third of the Annual Meeting registrations were included in the 3rd Quarter revenues which caused much of the deficit.

There being no questions, Wayne Guillot moved, seconded by Mary Mizell, to accept the financial report as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Jack asked Severn to report on the Membership, Website and Newsletter. Severn stated that as of October 13, 2015 we had 141 members and that he expected more after this meeting; the website will be more user-friendly in the future; and he hoped that everyone liked the Newsletter, respectively.

Jack asked Severn to give a report on Blumberg and Associates, Inc. Severn stated that Blumberg and Associates were offering a new and expanded coverage program. They had partnered with Markel Insurance Company to offer Green Industry businesses better and more competitive insurance coverage to include Property Coverage-such as small tools, equipment, sign coverage, plus Business Income Insurance during a period of restoration for revenues it would have received had there been no loss.

Liability coverage to include General Liability which protect against unforeseen claims and lawsuits; Professional Liability for employees was included with General Liability at no additional cost-customized enhancements some of which included: contractual liability, premise liability, medical payments, fire, legal liability, herbicide/pesticide application and much more.

Excess Liability is coverage that covers losses that may exceed ones policy limits or catastrophic losses. This coverage was available immediately with a 48 hour turnaround for quotes and one could call Blumberg and Associates, Inc. (Andy Blumberg) at 225-767-1442. Blumberg and Associates, Inc. is and has been endorsed by the Louisiana Irrigation Association.

Jack moved on to Old Business and asked Dr. Peter Gallagher to report on the \$100.00 Scholarships to College Students. Dr. Gallagher stated that the new program was published on the front page of the most recent LIA Newsletter and that he contacted each of the department heads of Louisiana colleges to acquaint them with it.

Jack then moved on to New Business and asked Severn to hand out a survey to LIA Members asking their opinion of a new LIA proposed Certification Program for Landscape Irrigation Contractors which would be completely different than the LDAF recertification required every three years. Severn stated that if the Membership was in favor of the program, he would explain it next year at the Annual Meeting.

Jack moved on to the Election of Officers. He stated that the Nominating Committee had presented the slate of Officers and Board Members to the Board Meeting and the Board had voted in favor of the proposed 2016 slate of Officers and Board Members. They included;

President, Wes Gauthier
Vice-President, Christopher Friedman
Past-President, Jack Hopper
Director 2015, 2016, Wayne Orton
Director 2015, 2016 Curt Bowman
Director 2016, 2017, Mary B. Mizell
Director 2016, 2017, Ardis Tooke

Jack asked if there was a motion to accept the Board recommended slate of Officers and Board Members for 2016. Wayne Guillot moved, seconded by Dave Palmintier to accept the slate of officers as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Jack then stated that again for 2015, LIA received a proclamation signed by Governor, Bobby Jindal stating that July was Smart Irrigation Month in Louisiana.

Jack asked Severn to discuss the Board Vitality Index. Severn stated that at the July Board Meeting and at the request of President, Jack Hopper, the Board went through an exercise called the Board Vitality Index. It's a self-assessment of the Board's functionality and efficiency as to 13 areas of concern which included: board agendas, meeting minutes, mission, vision and values, governing documents, quorum, orientation of new board members, conflict of interest, nominations and succession, risk management, strategic outcomes, finances and budget, committees and board-staff relations.

Each Board Member was asked independently to grade each of the above mentioned areas of concern from 5, best score; to 1, worst score. Then each Board Member was given a score sheet and they began to fill it out. Severn collected each Members' scores and later compiled them to see how they scored each section and then compared it with his score since he filled it out as well.

Once compiled the Board Members' average score was 61.83 out of a total possible score of 65 and Severn's score was 58, both in the 'A' range. It was a very enlightening exercise and each Board Member had to navigate through a criteria of points in each area of concern. For example in the last area of concern, Board-Staff Relations, it read, "Directors are aware of the duties of the Executive Director and act as a *supportive partner*. *Lines of communication and authority* are depicted in an organizational chart. Directors maintain a *collegial professional relationship with staff* but do not critique or manage staff that fall under the supervision of the Executive Director."

Jack asked Brent Salzman with LA One Call 811 to make a presentation. Brent stated briefly that before you dig, call 811. Line location was the most important facet of damage prevention for underground or submerged utilities. Without this vital function, we could have serious consequences during excavation activity. He gave out bumper stickers and cards and asked everyone again to use the 811 number before they dig.

Jack asked our Key Note Speaker, Tad Hardy, Director of Horticulture and Quarantine Programs with LDAF to make his presentation. Tad stated that he was in charge of five horticultural license categories in Louisiana and Landscape Irrigation contractors is one to them. He stated that the goals LDAF strived for was, 1) Transparency, 2) Efficient Management, 3) Good Taxpayers' Servants, and Protect and Promote Agricultural, Forestry, and Water Resources.

But he said, “ There are some challenges.” First of all he stated that there were budget restrictions which resulted in a work force reduction of 45%. Federal regulations and especially Waters of the U.S were most challenging according to Tad.

Accomplishments of the Department, he indicated, were a reduction in the debt liabilities, the elimination of vehicles and aircraft, better fleet management, consolidated commissions, dredging of water ways to where the 2/3 of the nations grain exports could easily move through Louisiana waters.

Future endeavors included, E-Commerce to where license holders can pay on-line, electronic exam capabilities, continuing working relationships with LSU, SU, and agricultural industries. And to protect the citizens of Louisiana.

Jack, in closing comments, stated how much he enjoyed being President of LIA and all the support he had received. He further stated that he hoped that he made progress in encouraging Landscape Irrigation Contractors to recognize the importance of back-flow prevention and the importance it was to drinking water and to the safety of all citizens. Jack then turned the gavel over to incoming President, Wes Gauthier.

Wes asked Jack to come back to the podium. He presented Jack with the Presidential plaque which stated, ' Presidents' Plaque Presented to Jack Hopper For Outstanding Dedication as President of the Louisiana Irrigation Association For 2014, 2015.

Wes then asked John R. Kavanaugh to come to the podium. He handed him a framed certificate stating, 'Presented This Day October 15, 2015 to John R. Kavanaugh in Grateful Appreciation for the Years of Service As President and Serving on the Louisiana Irrigation Association Board'. In addition Wes handed John a stitched note pad cover with LIA and his name on the front. John thanked everyone and told Severn to be sure and thank Julia Ann Dickerson, LIA's Administrative Assistant, for making him the stitched note pad cover.

Wes went on to introduce himself by stating that he had been a Landscape Irrigation Contractor for the past 15 years and had been a voice for the industry all that time. He stated that Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) had not gone well for the Green Industry and we needed to continue to oppose EPA's regulatory authority of it. LIA's website will be updated to where, you as members, can more easily navigate through it. He also wanted the Members to know that LIA cares about them and will work hard to provide the best service and training possible.

Wes then asked for comments from the membership. There being none, Wes asked Ansel Rankins to give an LDAF update.

Ansel stated that there were 383 Louisiana Landscape Irrigation contractors currently and 13 more from out of state. So far this year 50 individuals took the license exam for a pass rate of 60%. After the March and June Basics Classes (20 individuals) the overall pass rate was 80%.

Concerning the enforcement actions, at the March 12th Horticulture Commission Meeting, there were 3 cases, 9 violations and \$2,250.00 in fines assessed. At the June 25th meeting there were 9 cases, 22 violations and \$10,500.00 in fines assessed. At the September 24th meeting there were 4 cases, 7 violations and \$1,250.00 in fines assessed. Totals for the year so far were 16 cases, 38 violations and \$14,000.00 in fines assessed. The next Horticulture Commission Meeting will be held on December 10, 2015 and all the meetings are open to the public. The commission meeting minutes may be found at wwwprd.doa.louisiana.gov/boardsandcommissions.

There were 3 new inspector hires recently for the Alexandria District, 2 for the Monroe District, 1 in New Orleans, LA, 2 in Opelousas, LA and 2 in Shreveport, LA for a total of 47 inspectors statewide.

Ansel went on to discuss the Legislative changes. HB 291 (Act 202) increased fees and civil penalties relative to the regulation of Horticulture. It raised the maximum civil penalty amounts for each violation assessed through the adjudicatory hearing process for First (\$250.00 to \$500.00); Second (\$500.00 to \$1,000); and Third (\$1,000.00 to \$1,500.00) appearances. HB 296 (Act 198) adds authority for the department, boards and commissions issuing licenses to deny, revoke or not renew such privileges, if the applicant owes any monies.

Finally, Ansel discussed Exam and License/permit changes. After October 20, 2015 fees to take or re-take all Horticulture licensing exams, except Landscape Architect exam, will change from \$50.00 to the new fee of \$114.00.

After December 20, 2015 license fees will increase from \$75.00 to \$100.00 and 2016 renewal applications will not be mailed out or processed until after December, 20th, allowing for change in fees. In closing, Ansel stated that all increased fees cover LDAF expenses and reduces the reliance in state funds.

There being no more business, Wayne Guillot moved, seconded by John R. Kavanaugh to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed and the meeting concluded at 1:00 P.M.