



TEXAS LAND TITLE ASSOCIATION **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

John Updegraff, Jr.
TLTA President

Dear TLTA members,

As my year as president of TLTA comes to a close, I remain humbled by the honor of serving you, our industry and our state's booming real estate marketplace. For 114 years our association has worked to protect and strengthen our industry and the communities we serve, and I've had the opportunity to see that legacy from a unique perspective over the past 12 months. It's been quite a journey, and I have a new appreciation for the far-reaching good work of TLTA's members and the army of professionals who make our industry's success a priority.

Earlier this year, I travelled the state for TLTA's Town Hall Tour. Because of the pandemic it had been two-and-a-half years since we were able to hold town halls in person. It was so good to see everyone who came out, meet some new folks and reconnect with old friends. I visited 14 different markets: from North Texas down through Central Texas, out to far West Texas and up north to the panhandle (in search of a chicken fried steak!), down into South Texas and the Rio Grande Valley, up through the piney woods of East Texas and back home again. At the end of the tour, I remarked that all that travelling reminded me of Johnny Cash's song, "I've Been Everywhere". And now, as I prepare to pass the president's gavel to the honorable and esteemed Paul R. Rodriguez, I see that sentiment—that I've been everywhere this year—is more than about putting miles on my car. It's a fitting description of all my experiences at TLTA's helm.

Everywhere I went this year on TLTA's behalf, everyone I met and every story I heard provided me with an extraordinary point of view that I hope you'll come to adopt as your own: TLTA is truly a community of title professionals who are passionate about our industry. And that serves each of us and the industry well. It's something special we should cherish.

Our members roll up their sleeves and work together to address issues and opportunities, equipping us to better serve our customers. We learn from each other, increasing professionalism to better serve consumers and our communities. We bolster our real estate marketplace, making sure that transactions remain safe and secure as technology changes the way we do business. We are a community that cares about something bigger than ourselves, and seeing it firsthand has been a powerful gift. I noted it in the posture of the title professionals doing good work on the ground at closing tables statewide. I heard it in the voices of attendees at our sell-out Institute and Land Title School programs. I saw it in the eyes of our committee volunteers, board of directors and local legislative liaisons working together to tackle issues large and small that affect how we do business and our ability to successfully serve our communities.

I'm sharing my observations with you, in part, because I hope it will inspire you to get involved in your industry too. Your time, talent and resources are hugely important to the success of our association, our community and our industry. If you're not already involved, reach out to [Kim Schoppert](#), TLTA's Chief Administrative Officer, to discuss opportunities to serve on a [TLTA committee](#). I know Kim will work to find a place for you whenever you feel inspired.

If you're already involved, thank you. Your good work is making a difference that counts.

While I could go on and on about the places I went and the people I saw and met this year, the truth of it is, where we're headed is more important than where I've been. There are significant federal, state and local issues on the horizon that must be addressed. We have to find, prepare and mentor the next generation of industry professionals. And we need to continue expanding our industry's diversity, upholding TLTA's tradition of inclusiveness of thought and opinion. While we're in good hands because of the TLTA staff and volunteers who make our industry's future their business, we can always do more and I hope we'll be doing it with you.

If you haven't done so already, please make plans to join us at our [annual conference in Fort Worth June 13-15](#) for the latest industry news, fun, and the tradition of passing the gavel from one TLTA president to the next. Don't worry; I'm not going anywhere after conference. I'm just stepping aside to make room for a fresh perspective. I'll still be doing business, serving TLTA and supporting our industry's success. So, if you find yourself in some new part of Texas and you want to know where to get a good chicken fried steak or the sites you need to see while you're there, don't hesitate to give me a call, because as Johnny Cash sang, "I've been everywhere, man."

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John T. Updegraff, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

John T. Updegraff, Jr.
President
Texas Land Title Association