

## **EBA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

The Annual Meeting will soon be here and this is my last President's Message. It is therefore a good opportunity for me to thank you and to review some of your EBA accomplishments since the last annual meeting. I will do this, as I have before, in terms of EBA's collective "community health."

A healthy community has strong "schools." EBA has been holding nearly one educational program per week covering nearly every cutting edge energy law topic. The Energy Law Journal also plays a key role in effectively communicating energy law education. As in past years its efforts have been stellar. Taken together, the live educational programming (webinars, energizers, larger meetings) and the textbooks (the ELJ) have offered something for everyone, regardless of area of energy law interest.

A healthy community supports its "youth." We now have the largest student membership ever. Many EBA members have stepped up to personally pay the dues of at least forty new student members. EBA is now also, for the first time, formally examining recommendations for improving how energy law is taught in law schools and elsewhere, thanks to a task force headed by Donna Attanasio and a new committee headed by Vice President Bob Wiesshar.

A healthy community also relies on the "wisdom of its elders." This year, we formed a Presidents' Advisory Council comprised of past EBA Presidents. The purpose of the Council is to serve as a resource for sitting Presidents who may seek input on historical practices and policies or other advice. The initial Counsel Chair and Vice Chair are former Presidents Dave D'Alessandro and Richard Bonnifield.

A healthy community supports "those in need of help." There is especially good news here. Following on the heels of the CFEBA receiving an ABA award for Program of the Year last year, the CFEBA is on course to have its best fundraising year since its initial organization fundraising drive fifteen years ago. The CFEBA will be holding a first ever dinner gala at the annual meeting. The proceeds of that gala will help fund an unprecedented CFEBA project: Providing electric service for a previously unserved Bolivian community, with the groundwork performed by volunteer utility technicians from the United States.

A healthy community embraces "diversity." Diversity is an explicit part of EBA's existing strategic plan; and diversity manifests itself in various ways in the EBA community. There is diversity among attorneys and energy professionals. The large number of EBA committees and programs demonstrate diversity of interest. There is diversity among in-house, large and small firm, trade association, profit and non-profit, and state and federal government sectors in which members work. There is diversity in the geographic regions in which members reside. And, importantly, there is personal diversity. Support for diversity will continue. A healthy community "grows." With an unprecedented membership drive, each of the last eight months has seen larger increases in new members than during the same months in years' past. In some instances, those increases have been multiples of prior-year recruitments. Chapters have been growing too, with the most significant growth achieved in Louisiana.

A healthy community “listens.” EBA cares about what its members think. This year EBA has conducted a member survey for the first time in more than a decade. The survey results are currently being analyzed for dissemination to the EBA Board. Rest assured that specific action plans will result from your input.

A healthy community offers “opportunities.” EBA presents a cornucopia of opportunities to its members, including multiple leadership opportunities. For example, in addition to serving on the EBA, FELJ, or CFEBA boards, there are opportunities to serve as chair or vice chair of one of EBA’s many committees. Each committee, in turn, offers opportunities for member contribution, through committee programming. For example, there are opportunities to network, to write, and to present—in other words, there are too many opportunities to list here. Ultimately, these opportunities exist for you. As we come upon the end of one EBA year and are now planning for the next, right now is the perfect time for you to consider which opportunities are best for you and to communicate your interests as appropriate.

I want to express my most heartfelt thanks to every member of our healthy EBA community. I thank you for allowing me the wonderful opportunity to work with so many fine, brilliant, and insightful individuals. I thank the firms, companies, associations, and individuals that have supported the EBA through financial support, time, and commitment. I specifically thank the officers and members of the three boards, committee leadership, and the administrative staff. Nothing happens without your hard work. I have tried to do my best as your President. It has been a true high point in my life. I hope I have made a positive difference.

With appreciation and affection,

Rich Meyer