

League of Agricultural and Equine Centers

March 2016 E-News

The year is off to a great start, and the League has great plans for the rest of 2016 including a newly redesigned website, so watch for our new look! This issue of the League e-News contains the first of our 2016 League Symposium session recaps, as well as shout outs to all of our sponsors and partners that support the League and make the annual Symposium possible.

Don't forget, The League offers many great benefits for our members, including educational and consulting opportunities. Be sure to take advantage of them to get the most out of your membership!

League Membership Benefits

We are often asked by young professionals and those new to our industry, "What are the benefits I receive for my membership with The League?"

Our response centers on these main thoughts: professional development and personal engagement.

Professional development is the League's core value proposition. It is our promise to all our members and our primary goal. We achieve this by delivering outstanding educational and networking opportunities. These industry-leading educational programs are offered by attending our annual Symposium and bi-annual footing academies and by participating in quarterly teleconferences on pertinent industry topics. An e-newsletter is distributed six times throughout the year.

Yet the value of League membership is more than the variety of professional development offerings. Because The League represents a very broad and diverse membership base, determining member value is unique to each person and his/her individual engagement level. The value of joining our association varies from person to person; it is unique to each individual and is dependent on how much that person is willing to invest.

Membership ROI is all about what your needs are, where you are in your career, how you leverage the membership benefits to work for you and what you give back. Have you attended a footing academy? Have you taken part in a League Forum? Do you help the organization by serving on a committee? Have you been involved in a League Symposium?

The value of your League membership is directly tied to the effort you put forth, whether you are a long term supporter or a new member. Your personal engagement will enable you to get the most out of your membership.

Engaging in the activities of The League is a significant step in moving yourself toward personal and professional growth.

Upcoming League Events

The League Forum is a round table teleconference sponsored bi-monthly by The League. Every other month a topic will be announced. Interested participants are asked to sign up through the League office, www.info@laec.info or 859-887-0033. A dial-in number and passcode will be sent the day prior to the call. It is not a toll free call. Long distance charges will accrue depending on your telephone calling plan. Each call will be moderated by a board member or CMEC graduate. Experts may be included on the call to give their knowledge of the specific topic. The times will be 2:00 Eastern, 1:00 Central, 12:00 Mountain, 11:00 Pacific and 10:00 Alaskan time.

Be sure to mark your calendars and contact the League office if you wish to be on a call.

Upcoming Forum Dates

Wednesday, April 6, Planning 101

Wednesday, June 1, Equine Disease Communication Center

The League Footing Academy - Summer 2016

The League Footing Academy will be held May 17-18 in Oklahoma City, OK at the Oklahoma State Fair Park. We are returning to the State Fair Park after visiting during our January Symposium in order to make the most of the extensive array of equipment and drags found there. Bob Kiser from Kiser Arena Specialists will be the instructor.

Thank You

The League Footing Academy and Symposium 2016 was held January 15-20 in Oklahoma City, OK. The League would like to thank all those that attended for helping to make the event a success. Special thanks go to the Oklahoma State Fair Park and Grady County Fairgrounds, the two facilities symposium participants were privileged to tour.

The League would also like to thank our 2016 sponsors: WW Livestock Systems, Populous, Tarter Farm and Ranch Equipment, Synbiont Global, Reveal 4-N-1, Elite Stall Mat Rentals, Kiser Arena Specialists and MacroAir. Thank you to the 2016 League Partners as well: Swisstrax, Polyplast, Priefert Ranch Equipment, Premier Equestrian and Riata.

Symposium

The League Symposium 2016 featured a wide range of topics and presentations, highlights of which will be shared here each month. Many of the presentations are available to download [here](#).

Social Media & Marketing

Presented by Scott Munz, Vice President of Marketing & Public Relations and Katelyn Kelly, Manager of Public Relations & Integrated Media at the Oklahoma State Fair Park

One of the key components in an effective marketing plan is branding. Elements of branding include identifying, developing, and marketing your brand. To identify your brand, consider that every brand has a personality and ask yourself these questions: What is my business mission? What is my brand personality? How is my brand communication?

Your brand is the experience customers have when doing business with your company. Your brand is not a logo, but may be represented by one. Your visual presentation wraps your brand up in a cohesive package, and includes things like colors, typefaces, your logo and overall graphic style. These should be kept consistent in all materials, such as letterheads, websites, banners, advertisements, etc.

The bottom line behind developing your brand is that people buy brands that they trust. This can translate into creating a venue that your customers trust. All of your communications should support your brand. Marketing your brand is getting yourself and your venue out to the public by joining various trade organizations, such as the League, placing ads, or offering yourself as a guest speaker or writer.

Social media can be a great tool for marketing your brand. However, care should be used in what is posted on sites such as Twitter or Facebook. People tend to zone out ads, so post things that are relevant to your brand but not self-serving. Give your followers attention by responding and commenting. You can also use your fans as free research and let them help make decisions by taking surveys or running contests. Be sure to show your fans you care about them by offering follower-only specials.

If you are thinking about starting a social media campaign, be sure that you are committed to it. Go in with a specific plan such as what you will post, how often, and who is allowed to do it. An infrastructure for monitoring and responding to social media is also requisite, as well as being prepared to respond to negativity and turn it into a positive.

Hot Employment Topics to Watch in 2016

Presented by Elizabeth Scott Wood of McAfee & Taft

One of the dominant issues in this year's employment topics is medical marijuana and workplace drug testing. As of January 1, medicinal marijuana was legalized in 23 states. Recreational use of marijuana is also legal in Alaska, Colorado, Oregon and Washington. It is predicted that full legalization of marijuana will happen in the coming year for Arizona, California, Maine and Nevada. This legalization brings up employment issues, so be sure to know the laws and keep up with changing legalization in your state.

Employers have an absolute right to maintain a drug-free workplace, and can prohibit employees from using marijuana in or around the workplace as well as reporting to work under the influence of marijuana. However, the effects of marijuana in the body do not dissipate as quickly as alcohol and other drugs, so urine tests are inaccurate. Blood tests are more accurate, but are more

expensive and may even be prohibited in some states. Employers may be able to have policies prohibiting off-duty recreational marijuana.

Other topics include changes to the wage and hour laws and raises in minimum wage in various states. Increased focus by the Department of Labor on whether individuals are employees or independent contractors means more workers will be classified as employees. Additionally, the National Labor Relations Board is seeking to expand authority into non-unionized workplaces, especially in areas such as social media. Pregnancy accommodation is an increasingly popular requirement in states, as well as restrictions on the criminal history check box on job applications.

With so many laws and employment debates going on, the bottom line is to be aware of the laws in your area and how they affect you. If you have concerns, contact a local attorney.

LEGIS Corner: Cyber Crimes

It seems like every other day we hear about some company that gets hacked and sensitive data, employee or customer, is compromised. While we tend to hear primarily about large corporations, the sad truth is that every business is vulnerable. Cybercrimes, as this type of malicious activity is referred to, is becoming disturbingly common, and all of us are vulnerable.

What can you do? First, don't stick your head in the sand and say it can't happen to you. It can, and the costs associated with a data breach are costly in dollars, time, and reputation. Second, understand what kind of sensitive data your facility or company has and in what form. Undoubtedly you have employee records. Are they stored on your computer system? If your facility is part of a municipality, possibly all your data is managed by another department. Do you have sensitive information – names, addresses, social security numbers, banking information, credit card information – for any of your customers or vendors? Be aware of the data you have and don't be too quick to assume you have no risk. Third, discuss your insurance coverage specific to data breaches with your insurance agent. Generally Commercial General Liability policies have some limited coverage. You should also discuss with your agent the pros and cons of a specific Cyberliability Policy.

The cost of a data breach can range from \$3.00 per name to \$100 per name. Different states have different requirements for how a company must handle a data breach, but the bottom line is that a company suffering a data breach must be responsive in a very timely fashion. This issue is a case where an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure, and being aware goes a long way. As always, the LEGIS Team is happy to discuss this and other insurance issues with you.