



# Bulletin

Texas Community Building with Attorney Resources • August 2005

## Corporate Legal Department Spotlight

### Ethics in Action: ExxonMobil's Corporate Commitment to Pro Bono Makes A Difference

ExxonMobil is a leader in corporate pro bono and uses its position as one of the state's largest corporate legal departments to maximize its pro bono impact. **Peggy Montgomery**, Chair of ExxonMobil's Pro Bono Committee explains the corporation's philosophy, "One of Exxon Mobil Corporation's 'Guiding Principles' is to be a good corporate citizen in all the communities where the company does business. This is evident here in Texas, where ExxonMobil's Law Department has been a pro bono leader in the corporate law community." ExxonMobil frequently participates in pilot projects, helping pro bono program staff to refine new projects before recruiting other firms and corporations. In Houston, ExxonMobil attorneys staff pro bono clinics, often partnering with law firms. ExxonMobil, in partnership with Fulbright & Jaworski, serves as counsel to Avenue Community Development Corporation, a nonprofit that develops affordable housing and provides financial education services to a largely latino client population in Houston. Most of Avenue CDC's homebuyers earn less than 80% of area median income (\$48,800 for a family of four); more than half earn less than 60% of area median income (\$36,600 for a family of four).

According to **Candice Frembling**, Texas C-BAR's ExxonMobil volunteer coordinator, "ExxonMobil's partnership with Texas C-BAR provides opportunities for ExxonMobil law staff to use their corporate legal skills to assist community-based nonprofits in developing good business practices. ExxonMobil lawyers are proud to partner with Texas C-BAR in assisting community-based nonprofits who are revitalizing low-income communities by pro-

viding affordable housing, economic self-sufficiency, and community development." Two of ExxonMobil's recent matters for Texas C-BAR will have a long-lasting impact on nonprofits around the state. Volunteer attorney **Herbert O'Neill** is helping to revise Texas C-BAR's popular manual, *Nonprofit Guide To Employment Law Issues in Texas*. Employment law issues are the basis of the majority of claims filed against nonprofits. Just one claim can often derail a nonprofit for several years. Since its original publication in 2002, hundreds of nonprofits in Texas have relied on the manual to create better business practices. Thanks to ExxonMobil's help in updating the manual to reflect recent changes in state and federal law and funding from the **State Bar of Texas Labor and Employment Law Section**, nonprofits can be sure that they will continue to receive the guidance they need in order to comply with employment laws and avoid claims that threaten their survival as organizations.

*Continued on page 2.*



## Save the Date – Celebrate With Texas C-BAR!

Texas C-BAR is celebrating our fifth anniversary and looking to the future! Come celebrate five year of linking lawyers and communities, with over \$2.5 million of free legal services donated to community development nonprofits.


**When: October 19, 2005 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.**

**Where: The Bank of America Center, 700 Louisiana Street, Houston, Texas**

**Hosted by Bank of America in Houston**

ExxonMobil volunteer attorney **John Graves** provided assistance on one of the most common issues facing nonprofit housing developers—exemptions from ad valorem property taxes. Nonprofit housing developers have seen several changes in the Texas Tax Code during the last two legislative sessions. John Graves provided research to the Texas Association of Community Development Corporations as the nonprofit's staff worked with members across the state to formulate public policy strategies on this important issue.

ExxonMobil has taken a high profile role in the Texas Equal Access to Justice Commission effort to increase the private bar's support for and participation in pro bono activities. The TEAJC, under the leadership of **Jim Sales** of Fulbright & Jaworski recruited **Charles Matthews**, General Counsel of ExxonMobil, to head a Corporate Counsel committee designed to increase corporate commitment to pro bono in Texas. The committee organized the first Corporate Counsel Pro Bono Summit in Houston on June 12, 2005. In-house attorneys from Houston's leading corporations learned about the legal needs of the poor in Texas, while corporate counsel shared best practices for creating comprehensive in-house pro bono programs. Texas C-BAR clients, Dress Up Houston and Solid Rock CDC, provided testimonials about the importance of access to high quality legal services for nonprofit corporations. According to **Peggy Montgomery**, more corporate

counsel pro bono summits will be organized throughout Texas in the coming year. ExxonMobil's work to promote corporate pro bono at the statewide level is an important part of TEAJC's mission to support pro bono work in Texas. Whether piloting innovating programs or advocating for greater private resources for free legal services in Texas, ExxonMobil continues to be a pacesetter in the pro bono legal community. 



Builders of Hope Youthbuild Project © Alan Pogue

*Builders of Hope Green Team, sponsored by The ExxonMobil Foundation, learn construction skills while providing affordable housing to Dallas residents*

## Texas C-BAR Welcomes New and Returning Attorney Volunteers

4/13/05 - 07/15/05

Alfredo Barrera – *Baker Botts L.L.P.*

Brandy Copley – *King & Spalding LLP*

Gretchen Denum – *CenterPoint Energy*

David Duncan – *ConocoPhillips*

Mike Farnell – *Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP*

Sheryl Gussett – *Reliant Energy, Inc.*

Philip Haag – *Winstead Sechrest & Minick P.C.*

Alaina Harrington – *Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP*

Gene Ann Herrin – *King & Spalding LLP*

Hillary Holmes – *Baker Botts L.L.P.*

Jason Jean – *Bracewell & Giuliani, L.L.P.*

Steve Jones – *Vinson & Elkins L.L.P.*

Sung Lee – *Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP*

Michael Li – *Baker Botts L.L.P.*

Samita Mehta – *ConocoPhillips*

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Stephanie Osteen – *Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP*

Eduardo Perez – *Bracewell & Giuliani, L.L.P.*

Edd Prince – *ExxonMobil*

Debbie Ramirez – *Graves, Dougherty, Hearon & Moody, P.C.*

R.B. Ramsey – *Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP*

Christine Reinhard – *Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP*

Judy Reyes – *Bracewell & Giuliani, L.L.P.*

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Jennifer Sweeney – *Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP*

Adam Wilk – *Bracewell & Giuliani, L.L.P.*

# Summers for C-BAR

Last year, Houston firms partnered with Texas C-BAR to promote business pro bono through pizza parties. This summer, Dallas firms joined the fun. Nine law firms in Houston and five law firms in Dallas held “Summers for C-BAR” pizza parties for their summer associates to increase awareness of transactional pro bono opportunities through Texas C-BAR. Response was tremendous, and over 180 summer associates and current attorneys participated in the events. The following law firms participated in Houston: **Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld, LLP; Andrews Kurth LLP; Baker Botts L.L.P.; Bracewell & Giuliani LLP; Haynes & Boone, LLP; King & Spalding, LLP; Locke Liddell & Sapp, LLP; Vinson & Elkins L.L.P.; and Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP.** In Dallas, the following law firms took part: **Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld, L.L.P.; Andrews Kurth LLP; Baker Botts L.L.P.; Patton Boggs LLP; and Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP.** 🏠

## American Bar Association President Lauds Pro Bono Efforts of Area Lawyers



Robert Grey, Jr. © Alan Pogue



Kelly Frels © Alan Pogue

*American Bar Association President, Robert Grey, Jr. and Immediate Past President of the State Bar of Texas, Kelly Frels address pro bono business lawyers from around the country*

On May 5, 2005 leaders from the national, state, and local legal community gathered in Austin to celebrate the growth of volunteer business legal services provided by top law firms and corporations at a reception hosted by Texas C-BAR and TRLA. American Bar Association President, **Robert Grey, Jr.**, other leaders from the ABA's Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service, the ABA's Business Law Section, and Austin Bar Association President, **Michael Marin** and Executive Director **DeLaine Ward** attended the event. **Kelly Frels**, Immediate Past President of the State Bar of Texas, introduced Robert Grey, Jr. and lauded the commitment of Texas attorneys to pro bono business law services. **Terry McDonald** from **McGinnis, Lochridge & Kilgore L.L.P.** received his 2004 Texas C-BAR Community Builder Award for outstanding pro bono service to nonprofits. **Locke Liddell & Sapp, LLP**, the **ABA Section on Business Law**, **Baker Botts L.L.P.**, **ConocoPhillips, Inc.**, **ExxonMobil Inc.**, and **Vinson & Elkins L.L.P.** co-sponsored the reception. 🏠

## Special Thanks to Texas C-BAR Donors

*Donations Made Between 4/13/05 and 7/15/05*

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### Summers for C-BAR Pizza Party Gifts

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Haynes & Boone, LLP

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Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP

## 2005 Legal Workshop Calendar

Offered by Texas C-BAR in 2005. For information, call (512) 447-7707, ext. 379, or email [info@texasbar.org](mailto:info@texasbar.org)

### Nonprofit Legal Compliance

#### **August 25, 2005-Midland**

**Sponsored by the Nonprofit Management Center of the Permian Basin**

Call 432-570-7971 for more information.

#### **September 14, 2005-Austin**

**Part of Crossroads 2005: The Greenlights Conference for Nonprofit Success**

Call 512-477-5955, ext. 268 for more information.

#### **November 16, 2005-Amarillo**

**Sponsored by the Amarillo Area Foundation Nonprofit Services Center**

Call 806-376-4521 for more information.

## About Texas C-BAR

Texas Community Building with Attorney Resources (Texas C-BAR) is a statewide business pro bono project which provides community-based nonprofits with the legal tools they need to succeed in transforming distressed neighborhoods into healthy communities. As a special project of Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, Texas C-BAR currently partners with more than 55 law firms and corporations to help nonprofits build communities and ultimately better the lives of thousands of low-income families throughout the state. For more information about Texas C-BAR, or to participate in our pro bono program, please contact the staff of Texas C-BAR at:

phone: 512/447-7707, ext. 370

fax: 512/447-3940

email: [info@texasbar.org](mailto:info@texasbar.org)

web: [www.texasbar.org](http://www.texasbar.org)

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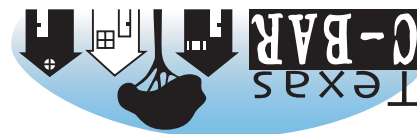
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