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New Legislature Takes Office

by: David Tatman

On January 14, 2008, the new Louisiana Legislature took the oath of office at the Louisiana State Capitol. Along with a new Governor and Attorney General, this new legislature embarks on doing the business of the state.

The 2008 legislature is noted for having the largest turnover of membership since reconstruction. With the implementation of term limits, many long time legislators termed out. This left an unusually large number of open seats that were ripe for the taking. Many sitting representatives who termed out sought open Senate seats from Senators who termed out. Those House members seeking Senate seats were met with mixed results.

The largest turnover was in the Louisiana House of Representatives. There are 59 new State Representatives, with over half of those 105 Representatives having little or no legislative experience. The drain of institutional knowledge is significant. The new Speaker of the House, Jim Tucker, will have his hands full with major issues like the \$30 billion state budget. In addition, every committee will have a new chairperson in this term in the House of Representatives.

In the Senate, there are 18 new Senators. There is less of a drain of legislative experience here since 14 of the 18 new Senators have legislative experience. The new President of the Senate, Joel Chaisson, has a little more knowledge base to work with.

Governor Bobby Jindal also took the oath of office on the steps of the State Capitol on January 14, 2008. His first priority is to call a special session on ethics. The Governor has also indicated that he will call a second special session to address spending the state's \$2 billion surplus through tax breaks. Of course the Regular Session will begin on March 31, 2008. The Regular Session will be a session of general jurisdiction where all matters other than taxes can be decided.

It is important for our industry to get to know the new legislators and to be in contact with members of key committees. You can find more information on your legislators by visiting www.legis.state.la.us. Please take the time to learn about the new legislators and new committee structures. This is the best way for us to provide information on issues important to our industry and the people we serve.

2007 Annual Convention...Great networking, Great ideas, Great time!



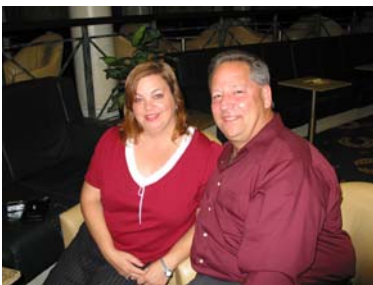
The 2007 LAW Convention was very successful and everyone seemed to enjoy taking a cruise Cozumel, Mexico! The convention was held aboard the Carnival Fantasy Cruise Ship on December 6-10, 2007.

cigarettes and we amended it to protect the wholesalers. It will not be effective until 2009. HB 271 was heard in committee but the committee deferred the legislation. This bill dealt with excise tax on moist snuff.



The convention began with a welcome reception on Thursday evening, where everyone received a beach towel as a welcome gift, sponsored by Conwood Sales Co. All attendees also received an on-board credit, which was sponsored by RJ Reynolds. Our keynote speaker at the convention was Nik Modi with UBS Investment Research. Mr. Modi works in the consumer group of UBS, specializing in coverage of tobacco companies.

David Tatman also noted that there will be 2 special sessions in 2008 before the regular session. The first special session will deal with ethics and the second will deal with taxes. The first special session begins on February 10, 2008.



Nik Modi spoke about demographic changes and the pace of change in tobacco consumption in the United States. He discussed FDA regulation and excise taxes. Other topics that were discussed were: the increasing growth in consumption of Smokeless Tobacco, the effect of positioning in retail stores, brand loyalty, and tobacco pricing in the U.S. Thank you to our speaker sponsor, Altria.

On Friday and Saturday night, all attendees received gifts in their rooms. Friday night gifts were sponsored by Altadis USA and the gifts on Saturday night were sponsored by Lorillard Tobacco Co. On Saturday, the ship docked in Cozumel, where some people did excursions, some people went to the beach, and some people went shopping. The weather was great, and pretty warm for December!



On Friday, David Tatman gave a legislative update. He noted that we had a very successful session in 2007. We passed SB 255, which dealt with tobacco tax discounts to out-of-state wholesale tobacco dealers. HB 579 dealt with fire safe

Our closing reception on Sunday evening was sponsored by US Smokeless Tobacco Co. Thanks again to our sponsors and to everyone who attended the convention. Membership involvement is key to keeping our organization strong and continuing to protect our industry. We look forward to seeing you again next year!



2008-2012 Committee Appointments

House Commerce Committee Members

Arnold, Jeffery - Chairman
Waddell, Wayne - Vice Chairman

Badon, Bobby G.	Marchand, Charmaine
Barrow, Regina	Monica, Nickie
Chandler, Billy R.	Ponti, Erich E.
Hardy, Rickey	Pugh, Stephen E.
Henderson, Reed S.	Roy, Christopher J.
Jackson III, Girod	Simon, Scott M.
Jackson, Michael	Talbot, Kirk
LaFonta, Juan	White, Mack "Bodi"
Lopinto, Joseph P.	

House Ways & Means Committee Members

Greene, Hunter - Chairman
Smith, Jane H. - Vice-Chairman

Badon, Austin	Honey, Avon
Baldone, Damon J.	Nowlin, Rickey L.
Barras, Taylor F.	Perry, Jonathan W.
Burrell, Roy	Richard, Jerome
Carter, Stephen F.	Richmond, Cedric
Danahay, Michael E.	Ritchie, Harold L.
Guillory, Mickey J.	Robideaux, Joel C.
Henry, Cameron	Templet, Ricky J.
Hoffmann, Frank A.	

Senate Revenue & Fiscal Affairs Committee Members

Robert Marionneaux, Jr. (Chairman)
Robert Adley (Vice-Chairman)

Senator Yvonne Dorsey
Senator Reggie P. Dupre, Jr.
Senator Dale M. Erdey
Senator Cheryl A. Gray
Senator Robert W. "Bob" Kostelka
Senator Gerald Long
Senator Dan "Blade" Morrish
Senator Neil Riser
Senator B.L. "Buddy" Shaw
Senator D. A. "Butch" Gautreaux

Senate Commerce Committee Members

Ann Duplessis (Chairman)
A.G. Crowe (Vice-Chairman)

Senator John A. Alario, Jr.
Senator "Nick" Gautreaux
Senator Robert "Rob" Marionneaux, Jr.
Senator Michael J. "Mike" Michot
Senator Stephen J. Scalise

**Know Your
Legislators!**



**REPRESENTATIVE
NEIL ABRAMSON**

Representative Neil Abramson serves District 98, which includes Orleans Parish. Rep. Abramson was elected in 2007. He is vice-chairman of House Judiciary Committee and he serves on the Civil Law and House and Welfare Committees.

Rep. Abramson is an attorney and resides in New Orleans. He attended Episcopal High School and graduated from Dartmouth College.

*To contact Rep. Abramson:
abramson@legis.state.la.us*

Please plan to attend the

Louisiana Association of Wholesalers *2008 Legislative Reception*

This event provides members the opportunity to network with legislators, wholesalers and vendors. Members, Associate Members, Legislators, and other regulatory officials will be present.

More information coming soon.

*Thank you to the Sponsors of the
2007 Annual Convention!*

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