



Today

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The Newsletter of the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission

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FROM THE DIRECTOR



by Sherry Cook
TABC Executive Director

Welcome to your 'new' newsletter!

Greetings,

It's been a while, but I'd like to personally welcome you to the latest edition of 'TABC Today,' the official newsletter of the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission.

If you've been here a while, you've no doubt become familiar with previous editions of the newsletter. The all-new 'TABC Today' looks to expand on that publication's outstanding writing, photography and design, while making it more accessible and reader-friendly than ever before.

Our goal is to make this newsletter about you, our TABC employees. In these pages you'll read about the latest accomplishments by your Agency peers, issues important to the alcoholic beverage industry, and new laws, policies and procedures that are important in our day-to-day operations.

That's not to say every story will be serious. We'll include plenty of good news and department updates, just like the newsletters of years past.

Most importantly, we want to tell your story. If you have news you'd like to see in 'TABC Today,' please submit it to your section manager, who will forward it to the editor.

And, if you have any questions or comments, please e-mail our Public Information Officer at chris.porter@tabc.texas.gov. Thank you for reading!

★ ACCOLADES

TABC honors outstanding employees

Members of the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission honored a trio of TABC employees during the March 24 meeting.

TABC Auditor Reynaldo Santos and Sgt. Nick Gutierrez received the Jose

Cuevas Jr. Gold Star Award, while Ports of Entry employee Mary Rivera received the Sherry Cook Leadership Award.

Congratulations to all three 2014 TABC Employees of the Year!



TABC Auditor Reynaldo Santos (center) was honored as the 2014 Civilian Employee of the Year during the March 24 Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission meeting.



Ports of Entry employee Mary Rivera (center) was named the 2014 recipient of the Sherry Cook Leadership Award at the March 24 TABC Commissioners' meeting. (Photos by Kayla Bridgewater, Education & Prevention Division)

Inside:

Steen confirmed by Senate - 2 ■ Admin Professionals Day - 2 ■
New Tax-ID Stamps - 3 ■ EPD Film Award - 4



★ HUMAN RESOURCES

TABC places third in state wellness contest

Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission employees placed third in the State of Texas’ “Get Fit Challenge,” a statewide initiative designed to promote good health in state employees.

TABC’s participants used the GetFit-Texas online app to track their physical activity and eating habits throughout the contest. In all, 20 TABC employees took part in the competition, which was won by the Texas General Land Office. TABC participants each received a TABC lunch bag and water bottle.

In other Human Resources news, the TABC Wellness Committee has announced the beginning of the TABC ‘Brown Bag’ event. Throughout the month of May, TABC employees are asked to eat at least three healthy meals a week for four weeks.

Healthy meals include:

- one 4-6 ounce serving of protein and
- one serving of a fruit or a vegetable

Participants are asked to fill out a Tracking Log to track their meals. The log is available for download on the TABC Employee Intranet site.

Employees who complete the challenge will receive a TABC lunch bag. Employees with questions may contact Wellness Coordinator Monica Ross.

TABC honors administrative professionals

The last week of April is Administrative Professionals Week, and TABC offices across the state took time out to show their thanks for the highly skilled and dedicated work provided by their administrative professionals and executive assistants.

At TABC, administrative professionals are charged with keeping the office environment running smoothly, ensuring

task deadlines are met, having materials on-hand and monitoring statewide developments which could affect each Agency employee.

TABC could not function without the valuable support of its administrative professionals.

We owe our thanks to each and every one of them for their dedication, professionalism and support.

★ HEADQUARTERS

Commissioner Steen confirmed by Texas Senate

TABC Commissioner Ida Clement Steen was officially appointed to the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission by a unanimous vote of the Texas Senate April 28. She appeared before the Senate Nominations Committee earlier that month.

Commissioner Steen, a former teacher

and school administrator, hails from San Antonio. She was appointed to the Commission in July 2014. She is also a member of the Frost Bank board of directors.

Congratulations, Commissioner Steen!



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TABC Today is an external publication of the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission. We welcome your comments, suggestions and questions. You may contact us via e-mail at questions@tabc.texas.gov.

To report a possible violation of the Alcoholic Beverage Code, call toll-free 1-888-THE-TABC.

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★ **MARKETING PRACTICES**

TABC begins issue of updated Tax-ID stamp design

■ Stamps may now be ordered online via third-party vendor

The Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission has begun issuing newly designed tax ID stamps to package stores across the state, alongside a new online ordering system designed to make it easier than ever for package stores to ensure the stamps they need are on hand.

The new stamp design includes several new security features which make tampering with or counterfeiting the stamps more difficult, according to Thomas Graham, TABC Director of Excise Tax and Marketing Practices. Among the enhancements are color-changing ink, special wording which appears under ultraviolet light, and a new adhesive which prevents stamps from being illegally re-used.

The stamps are used by TABC auditors and officials from the Texas Comptroller's office to ensure bottles of alcohol used by mixed beverage permit holders, such as bars and restaurants, were purchased

legally and properly taxed. The stamps are affixed to the bottle by package store employees upon sale to mixed beverage permit holders, and can be tracked both by the store and state officials. Mixed beverage permit holders

caught selling alcohol from a non-stamped bottle could be found in violation of state law and face a suspension of their TABC permit.

Graham said the new stamp design accompanies a new system which allows package stores to order the stamps online. TABC began issuing the new stamps April 20. Graham said the new and old designs will coexist until all of the old stamps are depleted and removed from circulation.

"The new features on the ID stamps

New TABC stamps include anti-counterfeit measures



Source: Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission

The redesigned TABC Tax-ID stamps include several features designed to defeat counterfeiters:

- Texas shape printed with new color-changing ink
- Stamp designed to self-mutilate to prevent illegal re-use
- 'VOID' wording appears after stamp is removed from bottle, also appears in ultraviolet light
- New background harder to accurately reproduce

aid our permit and license holders to stay in compliance with state law," Graham said. "The new ordering system will make it easier and quicker for package stores to order the tax ID stamps, reducing the amount of paperwork they need to fill out."

For more information about the TABC, or to learn more about ordering stamps online, visit <http://tabc.texas.gov>.

★ **ENFORCEMENT**

Agency honors Rappe for 37 years in law enforcement

The Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission wished a fond farewell to Agent Wes Rappe, who retired on April 30 after 11 years with the Agency.

Rappe began his career in law enforcement with the United States Air Force in 1978, where he served four years as a Security Police Officer Canine Handler.

In 1982, Agent Rappe joined the El Paso Police Department and served in many capacities including seven years as a patrolman, three years as a canine patrol and explosives detection officer and eight years as a narcotics detector dog handler with the El Paso Drug Enforcement Agency Task Force.

During his time with the DEA Task Force, Agent Rappe initiated 222 felony narcotics arrests and was affiant on more than 500 narcotic search warrants.

Officer Rappe's overall seizures include \$2,760,664 in drug-related currency,



18,947 pounds of marijuana, and in 1999, the single largest cocaine seizure in El Paso Police Department history: 3,864 lbs. of cocaine bound for Chicago.

Agent Rappe regularly instructed federal, state and local police officers throughout the country in many areas of drug

interdiction, including airport, bus, train, hotel/motel, parcel and ground-freight narcotics interdiction.

In 2000, Officer Rappe was promoted to the grade of Sergeant and supervised police officers and detectives in various other capacities, including the patrol division, anti-gang unit and vice unit.

Sgt. Rappe retired from the El Paso Police Department in December 2003 and soon joined the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission as an enforcement agent at the El Paso District Office.

During his time with the Agency, Rappe was innovative in his work and was always willing to share his knowledge and techniques with others in the Agency. He also received the TABC's Agent of the Year Award for 2011.

Upon his retirement April 30, Agent Rappe had served in law enforcement for more than 37 years.

★ EDUCATION & PREVENTION

Agency takes top film festival award for PSA video

The Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission's Under Age Drinking video "What Really Happened" received a Platinum Remi award at the 48th Annual WorldFest Houston International Film Festival on April 18, 2015. The public service announcement (PSA) is an educational video, which showcases a family who with the best intentions plans a birthday party in their home for their soon to be college-bound daughter. Jennifer is under 21, but her parents agree to allow a few friends over knowing alcohol will be available. Her parents leave with a reminder to drink responsibly.

The carefree party quickly turns into a nightmare due to the consequences of underage drinking. By the end, friendships are lost, and the family is left with the legal responsibilities of providing alcohol to minors. The PSA stresses the importance



The TABC's Education & Prevention Division staff was honored with a platinum Remi award at the 48th Annual WorldFest Houston International Film Festival April 18. EPD staff pictured above are (back row, left to right) Ashleigh Jons, Toni Hale, Kayla Bridgewater; (front row, left to right) Jacki Jackson, Ruby Gonzales and Julie Davis. Not pictured is EPD Director Mindy Carroll.

of talking to minors about alcohol and not encouraging them to consume alcohol under 21. The video can be viewed

from TABC's YouTube Channel at www.youtube.com/tabchannel.

★ BUSINESS SERVICES

BSD to introduce new digital timesheets

The Business Services Division is excited to announce that our electronic MTA is almost ready! The company we are working with on this project is Replicon, and they have clients that range from smaller than our agency to as large as FedEx, Domino's Pizza, and Prudential Insurance. Replicon and our project team, including some key IRD members, have been working hard to get this project off the ground.

Once this is live, you will no longer need to print and sign a hardcopy MTA; all work hours and leave taken will be automatically calculated, and EIS statements will no longer be delayed. How great does that sound?

Our pilot group will begin production testing in a couple of weeks, and we are hopeful that they will work out any major issues before it is rolled out agency-wide September 1, 2015. We hope you all are as excited as we are to get this great new feature rolling!

★ INFORMATION RESOURCES

Helpdesk changes bring better service

The Information Resource Department has replaced its previous Help Desk software with a new program called Zendesk.

Zendesk is a cloud-based helpdesk solution. Being cloud-based, the majority of backend administration, such as maintaining the servers, has now been outsourced to Zendesk. This allows IRD to focus more on solving tickets.

Zendesk is easier to use for TABC employees. Tickets can be submitted through the TABC intranet, via email, or even via voice mail. The requester is automatically notified via email that their ticket has been created and given a reference number. The requester is also notified upon every update of the ticket, so they are kept informed through every step of the process.

When IRD closes a ticket, the requester receives a final notification. If the requester is unsatisfied with the resolution, they simply respond to the email to re-open the ticket.

IRD has already received numerous compliments of the ease-of-use of the new system and the improved responsiveness of IRD.

Zendesk contains new, powerful tools designed to enhance ease-of-use for TABC users. The automation tools also help automate repetitive tasks that consume a considerable amount of time.

With the automation of these tasks, IRD spends less time administering the system or processes, and more time addressing tickets, further reducing the helpdesk backlog.

The second phase of the project was to utilize the automation, macros, dashboards, and advanced reporting to improve the efficiencies of IRD staff.

Cody Esser, Network Specialist III, implemented Zendesk, including configuration, views, macros, dashboard reporting, and metrics. He also integrated the software with Panorama9, TABC's inventory tracking software.

Now, when an employee contacts the Help Desk, we already know the equipment they are using so we do not spend time requesting such technical information from the end-user.