

December President's Message

Hello from the Sunshine State President...

December has arrived and 2007 is just around the corner. I hope you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving. Christmas and the holidays are special times for me. Although we're all busy with the hustle and bustle of shopping and entertaining, there seems to be an air of friendliness and excitement during this time. Throughout the state, FAMB chapters are all making plans for wonderful holiday celebrations. Enjoy the fellowship of your colleagues and attend your chapter's holiday party.

One of the most action-packed election seasons in recent memory is now behind us...but the fun is just beginning. The newly elected state legislators were sworn into office on Tuesday, November 21, 2006. The new Legislature, under the leadership of Speaker Marco Rubio (R-Miami) and President Ken Pruitt (R-Port St. Lucie), will then begin committee meetings. The 2007 Session begins on March 6th. Governor-Elect Charlie Crist and the Cabinet will be sworn into office on January 2, 2007. The Cabinet will have a new look for the next four years. Former congressman Bill McCollum (R-Winter Park) will take the oath to be Florida's next Attorney General and former bank president Alex Sink (D-Tampa) will serve as Florida's Chief Financial Officer. Sink will be the first Democrat to serve on the Cabinet since 2002. Important issues to our industry will be addressed in either a Special Legislative Session in December and/or in the 2007 Legislative Session. Insurance reform, portability and an increase in the homestead tax exemption are among issues that FAMB will be watching. Our involvement with this year's election night parties was a huge success. Chapter members throughout the state, wearing their FAMB and NAMB buttons, were out in full force. Thank you to all who participated in this statewide effort and the Government Affairs Committee for organizing the effort.

The Executive Committee attended the NAMB Delegates Council meeting in early November. The meeting was held in Orlando at Shingle Creek, the site of our July 2007 Annual Convention. The meetings all went well...each committee doing the work it needed in order to keep our National Association running well. Shingle Creek is a beautiful resort and I am positive our convention attendees will enjoy this wonderful facility. Make plans to attend FAMB's convention July 11 – 14, 2007.

With the national elections ending with the Democrats controlling both the House and Senate, we will undoubtedly see a lot of change in the upcoming session. In the United States Senate Banking Committee, Chris Dodd is expected to be elected as chairperson. Subject to his election, it is too soon to tell what his agenda will be. However, we can assume there may be an effect on the mortgage community due to the Democratic takeover of the US House. Presumptive chair Barney Frank has already commented on predatory lending proposals, which would change Section 129 of TILA (Section 32 of Regulation Z). Changes would involve lower triggers, increased consumer protections and expanded applicability, thereby expanding the number of mortgages being covered under Section 32. Will mortgage brokers be subject to an undefined "Suitability Standard"? Will there be a level playing field? Congressman Frank has already noted his support of comprehensive support of GSE legislation which would allow expanded portfolio limits and a super regulator for FNMA and FHLMC. Privacy issues will be addressed under Chairman Frank and it is our hope in the upcoming legislative session that he will address the critical issue of trigger lead

sales in the context of consumer privacy.

How a Democratic Congress will work with the President Bush is yet to be determined. The relationship with President is a factor on everyone's mind; however, Congress' relationship with Secretary Jackson, a cabinet level official, may be quite different. Will the continuation of CSBS's efforts to create a broker-only registry and the appeal for funding move forward? We remain hopeful that FHA reform will be enacted by the US Senate during the lame-duck session. This session starts December 4, 2006 and will run through Christmas. Only budget issues will be considered. Already enacted by the US House, improvements to the FHA product allowing mortgage brokers to originate FHA loans without audited net worth is being discussed in the appropriations committee. If the senate does not pass this pending legislation, the effort will start over again when the new congress is seated in 2007. Your Government Affairs team, lead by Paul Halter (FAMB) and Joe Falk (NAMB) with support from each chapter, remains hard at work. They are keeping a vigilant watch on pending legislation that affects each and every one of our businesses.

Thank you to each of you who voted in this year's election.

I am looking forward to our 2nd quarterly board meeting in Jacksonville, January 12 & 13, 2007. The Jacksonville Chapter has sponsored a Texas Hold 'em tournament as a PAC fundraiser. Don't forget to sign up. There will also be a golf outing Saturday afternoon after the board meeting at Eagle Harbor Golf Course (my home course).

I will enjoy the holidays with my family. My son, who is in the Air Force, will be home for Christmas this year. During the past few years, he hasn't been able to come home for the holidays and I am looking forward to us all being together. We will leave right after Christmas for a skiing trip, then return for New Years to start experiencing the challenges and adventures that 2007 has to offer.

Please take a moment to remember those serving in our Armed Services during this holiday season. Call your local USO. If our Chapters adopt a squadron in Iraq during this season, it will brighten up the world of many soldiers.

I wish all of you a happy, healthy and prosperous holiday season and new year.

Patrice Yamato, CRMS
President FAMB