

# Notice: Online CLE Books Proposal

At its 2005 meeting the OSB House of Delegates will decide whether to increase OSB active membership fees to cover the cost of making CLE books available online. The books would be available and searchable on the bar's website. The estimated annual cost would be \$70 per active member, beginning January 1, 2006. The fee increase reflects the actual break-even cost of making the books available online.

The Board of Governors has been working for the past year on this proposal, which was presented to the House of Delegates at its October 2004 meeting. The house held a lengthy discussion, and ultimately deferred a vote on the proposal until 2005. It also directed the board to conduct an advisory vote of the membership to assess overall support before a final vote of the house.

The advisory vote will take place in April as part of the annual elections for the House of Delegates. The ballot will include a summary of the online CLE proposal, and the ultimate question from the house: Should the OSB CLE library be accessible online to all active members for 5 years, funded by a \$70 membership fee increase beginning January 1, 2006 (prorated for 2006 admittees) and ending December 31, 2010?

## CLE BOOK LIBRARY

The bar's CLE library contains about 50 titles. These range from 100-page booklets to five volume treatises, and cover topics from "A" (Administering Oregon Estates) to "W" (Workers' Compensation). The library does not include CLE seminar materials.

CLE books are distinguished from those of national publishers because they are specific to Oregon, and written by Oregon practitioners. The focus is on Oregon statutes, cases, administrative rules, forms and legal traditions. The books also provide practice tips, caveats, queries and notes. Many titles include practice forms on computer disk, and the entire library is currently available on CD-ROM. In membership surveys, CLE books are rated as one of the bar's top membership benefits.

The pros and cons of the proposal that will be considered by the house in October are:

### PRO:

- All CLE Publications available to all active members
- Accessible 24/7 through the Oregon State Bar's website
- Costs less than the price of any one book
- References to cases, statutes, and rules may be linked to Casemaker™
- Search mechanism customized for OSB website
- Affordability for solos and public-service practitioners

- Possible future expansion of CLE Publications into specialized areas (currently no CLE Publication for such areas)

- Possible template for future inclusion of CLE Seminars

### CON:

- Members in highly-specialized areas may not benefit (no CLE Publications for their areas)
- Members not in private practice may not want or need CLE Publications
- Makes total Oregon State Bar dues higher than those of other states
- May not be feasible to link with Casemaker™
- Costs for larger firms would exceed current CLE Publications outlays
- Expectations for more timely updating cannot be met in the near future

### COST EXPLANATION

The per-member cost of \$70 is calculated from the CLE Publications department's 2005 budget, subtracting most marketing expenses. The largest cost factor is staff, who perform editing, word processing, citechecking, and coordinate the production process. Other costs include volunteer recognition, contract services, and office supplies. Indirect costs such as a share of bar facilities, accounting and computer support expenses are also included, as is standard for all bar programs. Expected reductions in costs for printing and paper will be offset by new costs associated with coding for electronic publication and linking.

The Board of Governors had initially included a fee reduction for large firms and organizations. The House of Delegates voted to remove that feature of the proposal.

### DECISION PROCESS

Ballots will be sent to all active bar members on March 31, 2005. Members who list an e-mail address with the bar will receive ballots and voter information electronically. Those who do not list an e-mail address will receive ballots and voter information by U.S. mail. Completed ballots must be submitted by April 15, 2005.

Results of the advisory vote will be reviewed by the Board of Governors and shared with the House of Delegates. The Board will then draft a resolution for vote by the House at its October 1, 2005, meeting in Portland.

More information on the online CLE proposal, including financial details, is available on the bar's website at [www.osbar.org](http://www.osbar.org) under the heading Bar News. Beginning April 1, 2005, a prototype of the database containing several sample chapters and search function will also be available at the bar's website. ■