

# 2005 ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

## TDNA Board of Directors Meeting July 28, 2005 - Headliners Club, Austin

Only one person called to ask why the post-convention billing was not lower, and that publisher accepted the explanation that ... well, it just didn't work out that way.

Promotional materials touted a 33% reduction in the cost to attend the 2005 Annual Meeting. The end result was \$645.32 per person, which was 5.86% lower than last year's \$685.50 per person.

Low attendance – roughly the same attendance as for 2004 – did us in again. The promise of lowered cost was partly based on higher attendance. But, although TDNA built a new Sunday evening event structure, they did not come. With no more people to divide expenses among, there was no relief in cost.

Low attendance also triggered another problem – fewer hotel rooms booked than the hotel had counted on, and had outlined in our contract. Therefore, the Driskill hotel added \$4,394 in room attrition penalties onto its bill, which further inflated the cost to be divided among not enough people.

Perhaps cost should not be the focus when assessing such an educational and fun convention. Program speakers covered the timeliest technical and political issues of concern to newspaper executives. In one short convention, members were introduced to technology to lure visitors to newspaper websites, opportunities to expand circulation with Spanish-language publications, and a lively discussion of Texas politics.

The Sunday evening on-site buffet was a real winner, offering the freedom to mingle and chat while a sketch artist and magician entertained and a pianist played harmony to busy conversations.

The new Sunday night event structure was welcomed by attendees, but it did not offer the cost relief it was designed to do. Although transportation and facility rental fees were done away with, the per-person food cost for the buffet was almost twice that of a sit-down dinner, hiking up the food cost for that night by almost \$2,000. Finally, we paid almost \$1,000 to Three Ring Service for the balloons, magician and sketch artist.

The philosophy for stating that costs would be at least 30% lower this year was legitimately based on two known cost cuts:

- Slashing the usual \$10,000 budgeted convention profit to only \$1,000, eliminating \$9,000
- Eliminating at least \$5,000 in buses and rental costs for Sunday evening

Since total convention costs have been averaging around \$40-50,000, cutting out \$14,000 would result in a 30% reduction in costs at the very least. But, despite those cost cuts, and for the attendance and cost reasons stated above, the final tally did not translate to a 30% reduction in billings to members.

## **Annual Meeting Report - 7/28/05 Board of Directors Meeting**

Detailed expense and income breakouts are attached, along with a comparison of convention costs over the past few years.