

RENEWAL NOTICE
FOR
ALABAMA CERTIFIED COURT REPORTERS
LICENSES EXPIRE ON SEPTEMBER 30, 2010

Renewal notices are being sent early this year and we encourage all licensees to please renew early as well. The ABCR is in a financial crisis and needs your early 2010 renewal in order to continue the operation of the Board. Although, the ABCR has a history of being financially responsible and eliminating all but the absolute necessities to operate a strong consumer protection agency, the ABCR is completely out of funding. This is due to the low number of licensees. Basically, we have a licensee population that is half of what was anticipated. This Board does not receive any State funding and must be self-supporting by collecting license fees as allowed under State law. If the ABCR cannot fund itself on these fees, there will be no ABCR. Therefore, as a last resort, the Board has had to increase licensure fees to provide for the continuation of the program. It is unfortunate in this economic environment, but after much research, thought, and deliberation, license fees have had to be increased to \$200. The following is a list of steps the Board had already taken before even considering a fee increase:

- Board members receive no compensation for service to ABCR;
- Administrative Services of the Board are obtained through the State bid process. After researching the most cost effective manner to administer the Board, the bid was released and required Administrative Services to include office space, office furniture, office equipment, and personnel. Therefore, the ABCR was able to contract with the lowest bidder. This reduced the costs that would have been involved in paying a lease, buying furniture and equipment, and hiring state employees and benefits.
- Staff has continued the work of ABCR even though they have not been paid since January of this year.
- The Attorney General's office has waived the cost of legal services provided by our Assistant Attorney General until the Board is financially stable.
- Between the combined work of the Attorney General's Office and Staff, we have been able to delay hiring an investigator for the Board.
- ABCR has reviewed all invoices and reduced all costs down to the nickel and dime wherever possible.

We will continue to take every action possible to reduce costs now and in the future. Also, if we can increase our license population, we could reduce license fees in the future.

The on-line renewal link is now on this web site for your convenience. Again, please renew now and we thank you in advance.

GENERAL RENEWAL INFORMATION:

All Alabama CCR's expire on September 30, 2010. In order to renew your license, please go to www.abcr.alabama.gov and click on the renewal option on the homepage. This is the on-line application for renewal and you will be guided with onscreen instructions. In order to login you will need your CCR # and the last four digits of your social security number. You may pay for your renewal by credit card, debit card, or e-check (see renewal fee below). This is a secure site and much more safe than sending checks through the USPS. You will then receive immediate confirmation of renewal acceptance and be able to print your renewed certificate on-line. Please make sure to update your e-mail address so that you receive regular board broadcast e-mails.

CONTINUING EDUCATION INFORMATION:

CEU'S ARE DUE FOR YOUR RENEWAL. In order to renew, you will need five (5) CEU's received anytime from September 30, 2007, thru September 30, 2010. (A CEU or Continuing Education Unit is fifty (50) minutes of actual clock time spent in attendance or completion of an approved CE activity.) Any CEU's obtained from NCRA, ACRA, or NVRA are accepted. Also, with Act #2010-554, any CEU's approved by the Alabama State Bar for Continuing Legal Education after the effective date of April 21, 2010, are acceptable. For CEU's not approved by these organizations and that pertain to the practice of court reporting, you may request case by case approval by completing a Request for CEU Approval Form. This form is located on the board web site at www.abcr.alabama.gov.

The on-line renewal will prompt you to input the CEU's you have received. You will not need to send in your CEU documentation unless you are randomly selected for audit. If selected, you will be immediately notified and provided with on-screen instructions for sending in copies of your

CEU certificates or other form of documentation verifying your CEU's to the board office. For your convenience, we have included Chapter 257-X-6 on Continuing Education in its entirety below:

Chapter 257-X-6 - Continuing Education

257-X-6-.01 Continuing Education Requirements

- 1) Beginning with the September 30, 2008 renewal and every renewal thereafter, every licensee who applies for renewal of a license shall complete five (5) hours of continuing education (CE) relevant to the practice of court reporting. Additional CE Hours obtained may be rolled over to the next renewal up to thirty six (36) months.
- 2) A Renewal Period is the twelve (12) months preceeding September 30 of each year.
- 3) A CE hour means a minimum of 50 minutes of actual clock time spent by a licensee in actual attendance at and completion of an approved CE activity. After completion of the initial CE hour, credit may be given in one-half hour increments.
- 4) A renewal applicant shall not be required to comply with CE requirements for the first renewal of an Alabama license.
- 5) Non-Resident Licensees shall comply with the CE Requirements set forth in this Section.

257-X-6-.02 How to Acquire CE Credit

- (1) CE hours may be earned from:
 - a) Verified attendance at or participation in a program, activity or course through the National Court Reporters Association or ACRA.
 - b) Verified attendance (e.g. license of attendance or license of completion) at or participation in a program, activity or course ("program") presented by a continuing education sponsor in subsection (c) below,
 - c) Verified attendance at a program that is of general information value to court reporters but does not directly relate to the reporter's ability to produce an accurate and timely transcript. A maximum of 2.5 (two and one half) hours credit may be counted during a prerenewal period for such programs, which include:
 - i.) Professionalism, including knowledge and application of standards of professional responsibility, impartiality, public relations, attire; and
 - ii.) Office procedures, record-keeping, health, including a reporter's approach to personal tax management, planning for retirement or changing careers within reporting, maintaining the individual reporter's health and emotional adjustment, ability to listen, to concentrate, to communicate, to cope.
 - d) Verified personal preparation of educational presentations pertaining to the profession of court reporting and serving as an instructor, speaker or panel member at an approved course will be allowed as CE credit for actual presentation time, plus actual preparation time of up to 2 hours of each hour of presentation. Credits for preparation time shall not be allowed for repetitious presentations. No more than 5 hours of credit can be earned under this category in any one renewal period.
 - e) Writing articles to the profession of court reporting and published in a state or nationally recognized professional journal of court reporting or law. No more than 3 hours of credit can be earned under this category in any one renewal period. Credits will not be allowed for the same article published in more than one publication.
- 2) Courses completed that are a part of the curriculum of a university, college or other education institution. One semester of course work is equivalent to 5 hours of CE and one quarter of course work is equivalent to 2.5hours of CE.

257-X-6-.03 CE Sponsors and Programs

- 1) Sponsor, as used in this Section, shall mean the following:
 - a) The National Court Reporters Association;
 - b) The National Verbatim Reporters Association;
 - c) The Alabama Court Reporters Association (ACRA) or any state court reporters association whose course or program has been approved for CE credits under the guidelines of the National Court Reporters Association;
 - d) Any computer users group whose program or course has been approved for CE credits under the guidelines of the National Court Reporters Association;
 - e) A city, county, state or federal judicial body responsible for coordination and presentation of CE courses or programs for its employees;
 - f) A university or college course or adult education program that contributes directly to the Court Reporter's knowledge, ability or competence to perform his/her duties; and
 - g) Any other school, college or university, State agency, or any other person, firm or association that has been approved by ACRA to coordinate and present CE Courses and programs in conjunction with this Section.
 - h) All courses approved by the Alabama State Bar for continuing legal education.
- 2) All programs shall:
 - a) Contribute to the advancement, extension and enhancement of the professional skills and knowledge of the individual licensee in the practice of court reporting;
 - b) Include one or more of the following subjects directly related to the court reporter's ability to produce accurate and timely transcripts:
 - i) English, including grammar, punctuation, general principles, spelling, vocabulary, etymology, usage, semantics, regional and minority dialects or colloquialisms, English history, transcript styles;
 - ii) Medical, including Greek and Latin derivatives, homonyms, abbreviations, surgical procedures, pharmacy, anatomy and physiology, specialized medical fields, (i.e. neurology, dentistry, radiology, gastroenterology), with emphasis on terminology and techniques or concepts likely to be encountered during litigation;
 - iii) Legal, including terminology, research techniques, presentations on the various subdivisions of law (i.e., criminal torts, domestic relations, corporate, admiralty, patent, environmental) and procedural law (i.e., depositions, trials, administrative proceedings) presentations by legal specialists or experts in the field, history of the American/world legal system;
 - iv) Technical subjects presented by experts with emphasis on terminology and concepts encountered by the shorthand reporter during litigation (i.e., accident reconstruction, chemistry, construction, geology, insurance, maritime, aerospace, products liability, industrial and environmental pollution);
 - v) Technology related to new developments in the field of reporting (i.e., computer technology, computer techniques, video, telecommunications, equipment maintenance);
 - vi) General litigation procedures as they relate to court, deposition and administrative proceedings (i.e., reporting depositions, court hearings, arbitrations, conventions and the court reporter's responsibility with regard to these proceedings, notary responsibilities, making exhibits, reading back, going on and off the record, review of statutes, rules related to the reporter);
 - vii) Transcript preparation, including indexing of witnesses, exhibits, formats, dictating, editing and scoping, reference libraries and research techniques, proofreading; and
 - viii) Management, including financial, marketing, personnel, equipment maintenance, time and stress management;
 - c) Be relevant to the needs of court reporters and also to the reporting service needs of the users;
 - d) Be developed and presented by persons with education and/or experience in the subject matter of the program;
 - e) Specify for whom the program is primarily designed, the course objectives, course content and teaching methods to be used; and
 - f) Specify the number of CE hours that may be applied to fulfilling the CE requirements for renewal of the license.
- 3) Each CE program shall provide a mechanism for evaluation of the program by the participants, the evaluation may be completed on-site immediately following the program or an evaluation questionnaire may be distributed to participants to be completed and returned by mail. The sponsor and the instructor, together, shall review the evaluation outcome and revise subsequent programs accordingly.
 - a) An approved sponsor may subcontract with individuals and organizations to provide programs.
 - b) Continuing education credits may be awarded for home study courses and correspondence courses, provided they are courses administered by approved sponsors.

- c) All programs given by approved sponsors shall be open to all licensed court reporters and not be limited to members of a single organization or group.
- d) Continuing Education credit hours used to satisfy the CE requirements of another jurisdiction may be applied to fulfill the CE requirements of the Alabama Board of Court Reporting.
- e) License of Attendance. It shall be the responsibility of a sponsor to provide each participant in a program with a license of attendance or participation. The sponsor's license of attendance shall contain:
 - f) The name, address, and license number of the sponsor;
 - g) The name and address of the participant;
 - h) A brief statement of the subject matter;
 - i) The number of hours attended in each program;
 - j) The date and place of the program; and
 - k) The signature of the sponsor.
- l) The sponsor shall maintain attendance records for not less than 5 years.
- m) The sponsor shall be responsible for assuring that no renewal applicant shall receive CE credit for time not actually spent attending the program.

257-X-6-.04 Activities Not Qualifying for CE Credit

- 1) Certain activities that shall not be considered acceptable for continuing education credits include, but shall not be limited to, the following:
 - a) Attendance or participation at professional or association business meetings, conferences, general sessions, elections, policymaking sessions or program orientation;
 - b) Serving on committees;
 - c) Entertainment and recreation;
 - d) Tours, visiting exhibits;
 - e) Any function for which the registrant receives remuneration as part of his/her regular employment;
 - f) In-house training on office equipment; and
 - g) Courses with a main thrust of teaching nonverbal skills (i.e., golf, tennis, dancing, basket-weaving).

257-X-6-.05 Certification of Compliance with CE Requirements

- 1) Each renewal applicant shall certify, on the renewal application, full compliance with the CE Requirements set forth in subsections (a) and (b) above.
- 2) The Board shall conduct random audits to verify compliance with CE Requirements.
- 3) The Board may require additional evidence (e.g., license of attendance). This additional evidence shall be required in the context of the Board's audit. It is the responsibility of each renewal applicant to retain or otherwise produce evidence of compliance.
- 4) When there appears to be a lack of compliance with CE Requirements, an applicant shall be notified in writing and may request an interview with the Board. At that time the Board may recommend that steps be taken to begin formal disciplinary proceedings.

257-X-6-.06 Waiver of CE Requirements

- 1) Any renewal applicant seeking renewal of a license without having fully complied with these CE requirements shall file with the Board a renewal application along with the required renewal fee, a statement setting forth the facts concerning non-compliance and request a waiver of the CE requirements on the basis of these facts. A request for waiver shall be made prior to the renewal date. If the Board, finds from the documentation submitted that extreme hardship has been shown for granting a waiver, the Board shall waive enforcement of CE requirements for the renewal period for which the applicant has applied.
 - a) Extreme hardship shall be determined on an individual basis by the Board and be defined as an inability to devote sufficient hours to fulfilling the CE requirements during the application prerenewal period because of:
 - i.) Full-time service in the armed forces of the United States during a substantial part of the prerenewal period;
 - ii) An incapacitating illness documented by a statement from a currently licensed physician;
 - iii) A physical inability to travel to the sites of approved programs documented by a currently licensed physician;
 - iv) Being retired from practice and not performing reporting services, or
 - v) Any other similar extenuating circumstances.
- 2) Any renewal applicant who, prior to the expiration date of the license, submits a request for a waiver, in whole or in part, pursuant to the provisions of this Section, shall be deemed to be in good standing until the final decision on the applicant is made by the Board.

RENEWAL FEE INFORMATION:

Licenses renewed by the deadline of September 30, 2010, will have a full-year license expiring on September 30, 2011. For each month a license is renewed late, a late fee of an additional 20% will be added as listed below. Court Reporting Services may not be performed in Alabama with an expired license.

- Renewal Fee:
- \$200.00 License Renewal Fee (if renewing by September 30, 2010)
 - OR**
 - \$240.00 Late Fee (if renewing in October, 2010)
 - OR**
 - \$280.00 Late Fee (if renewing in November, 2010)
 - OR**
 - \$320.00 Late Fee (if renewing in December, 2010)
 - OR**
 - \$360.00 Late Fee (if renewing in January, 2011)
 - OR**
 - \$380.00 Late Fee (if renewing in February, 2011)
 - OR**
 - \$400.00 Late Fee (if renewing in March, 2011)