

TAPEIT Then and Now

The first T.A.P.E.I.T. conference brought together 27 property technicians from across the state to learn about and share their experiences and knowledge of property management.

In 2004, attendance rose to over 115 and in 2005, TAPEIT broke the 200 mark with over 215 attendees, then in 2015 TAPEIT broken even that record with an attendance of over 400. Wow! What a feeling.

The success of TAPEIT, however, is not the number of technicians who attend the conferences. The success of TAPEIT comes from the main purpose established in 1997 by our *Founding Fathers* and continues to remain our focus – to promote professional education, laws, rules and guidelines for maintaining the integrity, chain of custody, and disposal of property and evidence. Increased attendance numbers is the result of TAPEIT staying true to this purpose. And to prove that, TAPEIT is becoming the state association that everyone is emulating. Each year, more agencies from outside Texas are sending representatives to learn what we are doing. We have had representatives from Arkansas, Georgia, Nevada, Oklahoma, Virginia and Florida.

Each year, TAPEIT has taken the conference to the next level, always improving from the previous years. In doing so, the format of the conferences has changed, as well as the length of the conferences. In the beginning, conferences were two days, then two and one-half, and now a full three and one-half days. In 2006, we offered the first eight-hour Basic Property Management course the day before the conference. Over 75% of that conference attendees registered for the Basic course. 2007 marked the first year that TAPEIT offered the 16-hour Evidence Technician Basic Certification Course. TAPEIT's Board put many hours of work and dedication in this program to make it a model program. Work began almost immediately to expand the program to include an Advanced Certification. TAPEIT's Certification Program has proven to be a model now for other States to use for their Certifications. TAPEIT then moved to lobby the Texas Legislature to include these certifications in the Occupations Code, making it mandatory for anyone working in the property and evidence management profession in Texas, this is still an ongoing process.

From the beginning, members sat together throughout the entire conference. Due to the size and the topics offered, this was the best method for reaching everyone. As time passed and the conferences grew, new topics were added, but not everyone wanted to hear all the topics. Through critiques submitted by members, we began offering limited breakout sessions on a test basis. The concept went over so well with the members that the conference agenda does now offer breakout classes each year with various topics to continue the training.

Other improvements over the last nineteen years include:

- **Social night** – a time for members to meet and chat with each other in a relaxed atmosphere. And believe it or not, it all began one night in Huntsville 2004,

poolside, with a keg of beer. It has now grown to a lavish buffet meal, but the objective remains the same – to meet members and network with others in the profession!

- **Website** – TAPEIT joined the web in 2002 launching the first website, this allowed us to reach across the globe to spread our mission. The message board on the site allowed questions to be posted from members. The first official chat dialog then began.
- **Awards Banquet** - Corpus Christi 2006 Conference marked the first Annual Awards Banquet. Awards were given to Anthony Weaver, San Antonio Police Department as the *Property Technician of the Year* and the *President's Choice Award* to Kolene Dean, founding President. This is a way for TAPEIT to honor exceptional members who go above and beyond.
- **Scholarship Fund** – this program began in 2005. The original purpose was to reward those individuals desiring to pursue their education at the next level. In 2007, eligible applicants were extended to include TAPEIT members, not just their families.
- **Grant Fund** – this program began in 2005 and was designed to assist agencies in obtaining equipment that they would not otherwise have received. Funds are obtained through various fund raisers, i.e. gun raffles, vacation raffles.
- **The Property Times** – TAPEIT's official newsletter received a new "face" in 2007. The new "face", coupled with stories of interest and heavier stock paper, gave the newsletter a more professional look. The Property Times took another leap in 2015 it is now a fully digital media available to our members online through our website.
- **Vendor Sponsorships** – vendor sponsorships were first offered in 2005 and approximately \$4,000 was received to help offset the cost of the conference. The 2006 Conference saw over \$12,000 in sponsorships and in 2007, that figure rose to over \$20,000.

TAPEIT continues to grow each year. While we have added programs and improved on other programs, we have remained focused on the most important objective – property management education and training! Our motto remains the same – ***"We need YOU and YOU need Us"!*** ***Together, we can make a difference...***and we have

Respectfully

Your TAPEIT Officers / Board