

How to Conduct a PAC Drive

By Mae Beth Palone

March is PAC Drive Month and IBAT staff is often asked by our members about the best way to conduct a PAC Drive. Many members would like to have one, but are hesitant to approach their employees asking for contributions. We know all too well how often bank employees are called upon to donate to various causes from the United Way to sports booster organizations. While all community fundraisers are important, perhaps none is more important to your livelihood than the IBAT PAC and FedPAC.

Each year, the number of banks conducting PAC Drives increases as more and more bankers realize the importance of the PAC in opening doors and providing IBAT a “seat at the table” in legislative negotiations.

The IBAT PACs contribute to candidates on both sides of the aisle who understand the community banking philosophy and the major contributions these institutions provide to their local and state economies. The PACs enable your association staff to help educate elected state and national officials about important legislative initiatives affecting your bank, shareholders, employees, and ultimately, your community.

So, how can you help? Many of our members, like Tom Sellers and Kevin Monk of Alliance Bank in Sulphur Springs, simply ask. “We found that if people truly understand the cause and are asked to help, then most of the time they are willing to participate,” said Monk.

Shanna Sturgeon at Founders Bank in Sugarland found fun ways to raise money. During the month of March, she came up with some innovative events to raise PAC dollars. For \$5 per event, employees could wear jeans and their favorite March Madness team shirt; wear jeans and flip flops; enjoy root beer floats and ice cream sundaes; and enjoy a catered barbecue lunch. They even had a “Throw a Wet Sponge at the CEO Day.” (Of course, that cost \$20 per participant and was made possible by a very fun-loving CEO).

“By gathering our employees for special events and perks, we were able to discuss IBAT and what they do for us,” Sturgeon said. “We’ve sent emails explaining IBAT before, but until we all discussed it, it didn’t really sink in. Once they realized the cause, they donated more,” she said.

Christy Hester of the Texas Bank & Trust in Longview attended several employee meetings and a board meeting to discuss the importance of the IBAT PAC and the bank posted information from the IBAT website to the bank’s intranet. The bank also held a random drawing to give

an employee who donated to the PAC a day off.

The IBAT website (www.ibat.org) has several tools to help you in your PAC Drive. We’ll also mail a brochure and contribution forms to you in February. And, don’t forget about the PAC video we mailed you last year! We hope you will consider showing this brief video at one of your upcoming board or employee meetings.

As a special recognition and thank you, banks that conduct PAC Drives are entered into a drawing for a BBQ hosted and prepared by your IBAT staff at a locale of your choosing. You bring the guests...IBAT staff will prepare and serve the food (and even provide the cleanup)! Whatever method works best for you, the most important thing is that you help your association help you by conducting a PAC Drive during the month of March. And remember:

“Every man owes part of his time and money to the business or industry to which he is engaged. No man has a moral right to withhold his support from an organization that is striving to improve conditions within his sphere.” ★

President Theodore Roosevelt, 1908

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