



# Taum Sauk Fund Board sends apology letter to 2009 grant applicants, awardees

A letter of formal apology has been sent to 2009 Taum Sauk Fund grant applicants and awardees after a newspaper reporter allegedly misinterpreted provisions of the Sunshine Law to a board member in order to gain information from a closed session discussion.

The letter, written by Taum Sauk Fund President Kurt Homeyer and sent to The Mountain Echo for publication, reads as follows:

Dear Editor:  
The Board of Directors of the Taum Sauk Fund (TSF) would like to issue a formal apology to all of the 2009 Grant applicants and awardees for the method by which the grant awards were announced.

We were very surprised and extremely disappointed this week when we learned that the Reynolds County Courier had printed information, some of it incorrectly, about the 2009 grants. The reporter used a false interpretation of provisions of the Sunshine Law to entice a TSF Board Member into disclosing the proceedings of a closed session discussion about the granting cycle and awards after previously being told that the requested information was not available to the public.

We understand that web pages and document requests aren't the best tools to communicate with the public in every instance. Thus, in our communities, the weekly newspapers serve a critical role in getting information out. We've been grateful for their cooperation and assistance in helping us spread information about our work

and our accomplishments. However, inappropriately gained information does not serve anyone's interest and violates the trust of the Taum Sauk Fund Board and the people of the community. It may even cause harm if private information is disclosed to the public.

Closed sessions are available by law and the discussions from these closed sessions are not required to be made available to the public. They are meant to facilitate honest and evaluative discussions that would otherwise not take place if open sessions were required for discussion of sensitive topics. In this particular instance, grant applicants and recipients learned about the Taum Sauk Fund's granting decisions by reading it in the newspaper before being contacted directly by the Taum Sauk Fund. Standard procedures for announcement of the grant awards are to notify the recipients prior to publication in the media.

We hope this letter is received by the Courier in a professional manner with an understanding of our concerns for compliance with the Sunshine Law, our by-laws and our respect to our local communities. In the future we will strive to do our part to to better educate our board on what the Sunshine Law requires and the importance of keeping closed session information closed, as the law allows. It is our hope that the media will respect our procedures and work to disseminate information with accuracy and integrity.

Sincerely,  
Kurt Homeyer, president  
Taum Sauk Fund

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