



News Release

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For Immediate Release

March 3, 2016

SLA Elects Chris Houska Chair of the Board

Members Also Elect 2016 Board, Reappoint Judge Harry Low As Mediator

SAN FRANCISCO—The members of the Surplus Line Association of California (SLA) have elected **Chris Houska**, Western Region managing director of R-T Specialty LLC, as the new chair of the SLA Board of Directors. Houska's election was finalized after the SLA tallied the final ballots from members who were unable to attend the SLA Annual Meeting, which took place Feb. 16, 2016 and Feb. 18, 2016, in San Francisco and Los Angeles, respectively.

Also elected to leadership were **Tom Ciardello**, senior executive vice president of Worldwide Facilities, Inc., who becomes vice chair, and **Robert Gilbert**, director, underwriting and production with Markel West Insurance Services, who becomes secretary/treasurer.

Houska takes over from **Denis Brady**, president of Burns & Wilcox Brokerage, who completed his 2015 term as chair and was elected to a seat on the board.

Completing the 13-member board are the following individuals who also served on the 2015 board:

- **Janet Beaver**, HCC Casualty Insurance Services
- **Ian Fitt**, Catalytic Holdings, LLC
- **Rupert Hall**, M.J. Hall & Company, Inc.
- **Chris Kiley**, AMWINS
- **Davis Moore**, Worldwide Facilities, Inc.
- **Terri Moran**, Vela Insurance Services
- **Pam Quilici**, Crouse & Associates Insurance Services of Northern California, Inc.
- **Les Ross**, Wholesale Trading Co-Op Insurance Services, LLC
- **Gerald Sullivan**, The Sullivan Group

Additionally, SLA members reelected the Honorable **Harry Low**, a former insurance commissioner and retired presiding justice of the California Court of Appeal, as mediator.

All individuals elected to the 2016 board will serve until balloting is completed following the next SLA Annual Meeting in February 2017.

Continued

"I look forward to working with this outstanding group of well-respected industry leaders in the coming year," said SLA Executive Director **Benjamin McKay**, J.D., M.P.A. "Our Board of Directors has strongly supported the SLA's efforts to evolve, innovate, and provide first-class service to our members and the California consumers we serve. We look forward to continuing our progress this year under the dynamic leadership of our new chairman, Chris Houska. Together, we will help foster a fair, healthy and competitive surplus lines market for the state of California."

ABOUT THE SLA:

Based in San Francisco, the Surplus Line Association of California (SLA) operates as a self-governed private organization. Appointed by the Commissioner in 1994, the Association serves as the statutory surplus line advisory organization to the California Department of Insurance (CDI) and facilitates the state's capacity to monitor and direct surplus line brokers' placements of insurance with eligible nonadmitted insurers. Working with its members and the CDI, the Association assists its members' compliance with California laws and regulations; helps maintain a healthy, fair, and competitive surplus line marketplace in California; and strives to protect the interests of California insurance consumers.

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