

How One Small Nonprofit Reinvented Itself Through Multimedia Storytelling—and Earned National Recognition



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The Surplus Line Association of California →

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SAN RAMON, Calif., June 30, 2025 /PRNewswire/ -- The **Surplus Line Association of California** (SLA) is showing that even niche nonprofits can transform how they educate and build trust—by putting human-centered video and digital storytelling at the center of their strategy.

This month, the SLA earned top honors at the 2025 American Business Awards (ABAs), taking home two Gold and two Bronze Stevie Awards for its broadcast-quality video, livestreaming and multimedia content serving stakeholders across California's complex insurance market.

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A brake light fix sparked a decade of change in how the Surplus Line Association of California communicates.

For CEO Benjamin J. McKay, the wins reflect a decade-long bet that paid off.

"Frustrated over a simple brake light I couldn't fix, I found the answer on YouTube—and that changed how I thought about the future of our work," McKay said. "If our members and partners learn like this, why wouldn't we deliver information the same way? Storytelling builds trust, and trust is everything when you work in an insurance market as complex as California."

That 2015 insight sparked a digital transformation. In 2020, the SLA launched the first broadcast studio of its kind among the nation's stamping offices and surplus line associations. Today, the team produces original programming year-round, including livestreamed events, on-demand continuing education courses and a new push into video journalism to cover emerging E&S insurance trends.

Award Highlights:

- **Gold—2025 Annual Meeting: Live from the Surplus Line Association of California**
- **Gold—2024 Annual Report Video: A Year of Transformation**

The SLA also received Bronze Stevie Awards for its 2024 Annual Report and for its weekly employee news broadcast, which keeps staff connected and informed in a remote-first environment.

The full case study video is included with this release and available to embed and share.

"This is only the beginning," McKay added. "We'll keep investing in authentic, human-centered storytelling to serve our stakeholders because that earns trust, and trust builds the relationships our market depends on."

About the Surplus Line Association of California

At the **Surplus Line Association of California** (SLA), we don't sell insurance—we protect access to it. Appointed by the California Department of Insurance in 1994, we serve as the state's official surplus lines advisory organization, overseeing regulatory compliance, monitoring global insurers through the List of Approved Surplus Line Insurers (LASLI) and providing trusted market data and continuing education to our members.

www.slacal.com

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