

Passing the Gavel

By Laurie Langstraat, NCIS

The February 2018 NCIS Board of Directors meeting brought a change of leadership to the chairman's position. Jim Korin, NAU Country Insurance, became the fifteenth person to serve as Chairman of the association replacing Mike Day, Rural Community Insurance Services (RCIS) who held that position from 2016-2017.

"We appreciate Mike's efforts during his tenure," said Zacharias. "Under his leadership, NCIS accomplished several major organizational initiatives, as well as other accomplishments that serve to further strengthen the association and crop insurance."

Those initiatives included implementing a long-term Association succession plan, the successful cessation of the Association's defined benefit plan — which removed approximately \$3.5 million of liability risk from the Association's balance sheet — the institution of the Legal Affairs Board Advisory Group, and improving NCIS' role of governance by strengthening its professional conduct policy.

"It's been a privilege and honor to serve as the NCIS for the past two years," said Mike. "Working together our industry has taken great strides in developing, improving, and defending this most vital protection that America's farmers rely on. I would like to thank the valuable NCIS staff and leadership for their work, as well as recognize the efforts made by the NCIS Board and membership for their contributions in improving and expanding the crop insurance program. To say that we 'take off our company hats' and work for the benefit of program is an understatement. I would also like to thank Tom Zacharias for his



Mike Day

industry leadership and education efforts, and congratulate Jim Korin as our new Chairman. It's been a pleasure to serve."

Mike has more than 30 years' experience in the crop insurance industry. He began his career as a contract loss adjuster for Crop Hail Management (CHM) in central California and later became their Regional Manager for both California and Arizona. He went on to become President of CHM until RCIS was established in 1994. He was named RCIS Western Regional Manager, later became the Sioux Falls Sales and Service Office Manager, and then was promoted to National Sales Manager before accepting the position of RCIS Business Head, a position he held from 2009 until Zurich North America's acquisition of RCIS in 2016. He is currently Head of Crop for Zurich's



Jim Korin

North America's Alternative Markets business unit responsible for the overall direction and strategic planning for the Crop strategic business.

"Mike is to be commended for his willingness to serve and his unwavering support of the association," Tom said. "We wish him well in his future endeavors."

Each year in conjunction with the NCIS Annual Meeting, the Board of Directors at its organizational meeting elects the Board Chair and two Vice Chairs for one-year terms. The Chair and the other officers must be present members of the Board of Directors. Consistent with the NCIS Bylaws, an officer is prohibited from occupying the same office for more than two consecutive terms, thus it is customary for the elected officers to serve for two, one-year terms. Together



The 2018 NCIS Executive Committee: **Kendall Jones**, Vice Chairman, ProAg Insurance; **Jim Korin**, Chairman; and, **Michael Smith**, Second Vice Chairman, ARMtech Insurance Services.

with the NCIS President and the immediate past Chair of the Board, the Chair and the two Vice Chairs comprise the membership of the NCIS Executive Committee. The Executive Committee for 2018 includes Jim Korin, Chairman; Kendall Jones, Pro Ag Insurance, Vice Chairman; Michael Smith, ARMtech Insurance, Second Vice Chairman; and Mike Day, Immediate Past Chairman.

“We are excited about Jim coming on as NCIS Chair,” Tom said. “He is an active member of the NCIS Board and we are looking forward to his leadership.”

Jim Korin began his career in crop insurance as a young finance professional in the early 1980’s. As a member of a mid-sized regional CPA firm, Jim had the opportunity to work for NAU Country and many others participating in the Federal Crop Insurance Program.

In 2005, Jim left the CPA firm that he helped build to work full-time in the crop insurance industry.

“As CFO, then COO, and finally President of NAU Country Insurance Company, I have seen all sides of crop insurance and I am proud to participate in a program that provides such key support to America’s farmers,” Jim said.

Jim has several priorities for his tenure as

Chairman, including maintaining and strengthening relationships with agents, commodity groups, and other farm coalitions to communicate the positive messages about crop insurance in the United States.

“The program we have to protect our farmers is the envy of the world,” Jim said. “My number-one goal is to continue building on these alliances. We are truly stronger together!”

Another priority is to continue to push for clarity on program rules and operational implementations.

“All too often the rules are issued late or are left open for interpretation causing confusion within the industry and opening the door for program abuse,” he said. “The integrity of the program must be a top priority. If we allow this to get away from us, we risk scrutiny that could

negatively impact our ability to deliver a viable insurance product that the American Farmer has come to rely on.”

Jim went on to say that program complexity and tougher economics on the American farm also add big challenges.

“As an industry, we must work with our partners to be sure we are providing what our farmers need with risk management solutions. We are here for the American farmer.”

Jim looks forward to working with NCIS to continue to deliver information and thoughtful input on the program.

“Through committee participation and great leadership, NCIS has led the way in developing messaging from its ‘Just the Facts’ articles, to data input on an array of industry issues, to the recommendations that are moved forward for Board consideration after many hours of discussion within the committees. This process is working well and I will work to keep it going strong!”

“NCIS’ guidance and support of the industry has been key to taking on this enormously successful program,” Jim said. “I understand the challenges we face as an industry and as Chairman, I will work hard to further the success of the program.”

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