



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **PICA Announces New Leadership**

INDIANAPOLIS, IN -- 2010-2011 officers and three new directors were elected during the annual meeting of Professional Insurance Communicators of America, Inc., May 26, 2010, in Las Vegas, Nev. The annual meeting culminated the organization's two and one-half day annual workshop program.

**Patrick Faherty**, public relations manager, Grange Insurance, Columbus, Oh., has been elected president of the association. **Becky Marshall**, communications manager, Brethren Mutual Insurance Co., Hagerstown, Md., has been elected vice president.

Directors continuing their service to the board are Immediate Past President, **Kirsten Amspaugh**, senior communications analyst/manager administration for The Cincinnati Insurance Cos., Fairfield, Ohio and **Carol Watson**, director of marketing and communications, Independent Insurance Agents of Indiana, Indianapolis, Ind.

In addition, three new directors have been added: **Ted Besesparis**, **Pauli Clariday** and **Amy Kraft**.

Ted Besesparis is senior vice president of communications for the National Association of Professional Insurance Agents, based in Alexandria, Va. Prior to joining PIA National in 1995, he was a reporter and radio talk show host in Palm Beach, Florida and Washington, D.C.

Besesparis is responsible for communicating PIA National's public policy positions. In addition, he is publisher and editor-in-chief of the association's magazine, PIA Connection and manages PIA National's MarCom Award-winning branding program, Local Agents Serving Main Street America.

"Effective communication is key to the success of all of those involved in the business of insurance," Besesparis said. "PICA performs a vital service to our industry by helping all of us sharpen our communications skills and leverage them to the best benefit of our carriers and trade associations. When it comes to getting our messages across effectively to agents and consumers through print publications, internal vehicles or social media platforms, PICA provides professional development, education and innovation."

Pauli Clariday, AIS, is the communications specialist for Cameron Insurance Companies, a multi-line property and casualty mutual company based in Cameron, Mo. She is responsible for internal and external communications, including marketing communications, publications, corporate communications, and event planning.

Pauli entered the insurance industry in 2006 after successfully starting up and publishing a weekly newspaper for 10 years. She has completed her INS and received her AIS designation. She has begun her course work in the CISR program, and expects to complete the AIT designation program by the end of the year.

"I think PICA is a much needed organization for small, regional companies," Clariday explained. "Our common denominators are the partnerships we have with independent agents, and the fact that we wear many, many hats."

"I hope to see PICA become a gathering place--whether it is online or at annual convention-- for those of us in communications roles," she continued. "We're in a very unique position to be the voice of our companies in an industry that should never forget that it's in the business to help people in times of loss."

A graduate of Indiana University, Amy Kraft received a Bachelor of Arts degree in journalism. After graduation, she worked for the Indiana Senate as a public information officer. She moved from there to an Indianapolis public relations firm, and now serves as public affairs specialist for Indiana Farm Bureau Insurance.

Active in her local community, Kraft is the membership director for the Hoosier chapter of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), vice president for the Indiana Rural Safety and Health Council and is on the board of directors of Professional Insurance Communicators of America, Inc. She also serves on the Elegant Vintages Steering Committee for the Indianapolis Zoo and does communications for the Indianapolis Zoo and does communications for the Frassati Society at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. She is a graduate of the Richard G. Lugar Excellence in Public Service program and recently earned her accreditation in public relations from PRSA.

Kraft describes her PICA membership as “an opportunity to interact with other communicators from around the country, and to pick up fresh concepts that have proved most helpful in doing my job. It has given me exposure to different types of communication processes that help me do my job better and enable me to explore new possibilities and ideas.”

“We’re thrilled to have Amy, Pauli and Ted as new PICA Board members,” said PICA Chairman Patrick Faherty. “We will benefit greatly from their energy, enthusiasm and different perspectives as we continue to build on our past success to make PICA, Inc. a valuable resource for insurance communicators.”

PICA is a unique organization of insurance industry communicators dedicated to the continuing education and professional development of its members and the positive promotion of the insurance industry to its many audiences. PICA is also dedicated to providing educational tools to insurance communicators to help increase professionalism and sharpen skills.

PICA was founded in 1954 by insurance company editors meeting at the annual convention of the National Association of Mutual Insurance Cos. to provide educational and networking resources specifically targeted to insurance communicators. In 2007, PICA incorporated to continue the tradition of learning from each other and providing ways for communicators of all levels of expertise to enhance their professional skills.

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