

Incoming President: Patti Kernaghan

As Patti Kernaghan looks forward on her year as president, the first order of business is to look to stakeholders to help change the focus of the association.

BY LAURA KUPCIS

As she prepares to embark on her year as president of the Canadian Independent Adjusters' Association (CIAA), Patti Kernaghan has already begun working on a Creative Strategic Plan (CSP) intended to help focus the association over the next five years.

The plan begins with a survey — which is currently in the works — that will be sent to members, non-members, insurers, suppliers, self-insureds and stakeholders. The intent is to solicit feedback in terms of what they believe the CIAA should be providing in the marketplace.

"It's something that I feel is an important step for the association in order to take a look in the mirror and see where we should be," Kernaghan, who is the president of Kernaghan Adjusters, says. "(To) work on bringing continuity to the association year over year, continuity with these initiatives."

Essentially, she is looking to the stakeholders to provide an updated mandate for the CIAA — the very people affected by the mandate will have a say in its creation.

"I expect certain things will come up, but I think it's important that we shape what we do from the outside in," Kernaghan says.

She anticipates that a large focus of the new mandate will be on the continued pursuit of professionalism within the claims industry. "As independent adjusters we need to exude professionalism, we need to protect our area in the industry," Kernaghan says. "We're a relatively small group in the property and casualty industry . . . and if we are such a small group within the industry, I feel that it is critical that we work together as one voice."

Additionally, Kernaghan says she believes harmonization of licensing will be of importance to stakeholders. This is an area that Miles Barber, a past president of the association,

began working on when he was president. He has continued to work towards licensing harmonization since he completed his term in August of 2007.

The continued recruitment, education and mentoring of new people in the industry is also something Kernaghan says she anticipates will continue to be a priority in the new strategic plan. As the shortage of new people coming into the

industry still remains a cause for concern, not only in the field of adjusting but throughout the insurance industry as a whole, working towards a focused and committed recruitment strategy is essential. The CIAA has already formed a career recruitment planning committee dedicated solely to finding new ways to pique the interest of potential candidates into the field, as this area has been the main focus for current president, Reno Daigle.

Focusing on value-added services for members is also essential, Kernaghan says. This includes

such avenues as further educational opportunities, both in print and online, or providing a vehicle for catastrophic services. Currently the CIAA has excellent working relationships with Emergency Measures Organization (EMO) representatives in Newfoundland and New Brunswick and the Emergency Management Organization in Nova Scotia.

The association is also in talks with people in EMO offices in Ontario and Manitoba and has previously worked with the EMO office in Saskatchewan.

"I think that's a very important thing to continue with," Kernaghan says.

Additionally, the CIAA has a member services agreement in place with the National Association of Independent Insurance Adjusters (NAIIA), where CIAA members can register to be on a contact list for catastrophe work in the U.S. if NAIIA requires assistance.





Finally, members can also enroll for adjuster assistance within Canada.

"There's an opportunity through CIAA for members to assist in catastrophe claims," Kernaghan says. "We need to make sure our members are reminded of this."

After the results of the initial survey are obtained, an updated mandate will be created as part of the CSP. From there, it will be up to Kernaghan and the rest of the CIAA national executive to look for accountability measures to ensure these things are done.

"Whatever falls out of the creative strategic planning process will be the most important issues for the association and we'll need to update our stakeholders on our progress — probably through our website and through our magazine (*Claims Canada*)," Kernaghan says.

Kernaghan is quick to note that she is not starting from scratch during her term — nor is she disregarding all that was done before her — she is building on what presidents before her began. Because of their dedicated efforts, initiative and hard work, she has a pad from which to launch.

She says she has looked to the last 10 years of presidential mandates to ensure that she is not missing something, to see where the CIAA was heading and to determine exactly how she should be focusing her term. "It is a building process on what the past presidents have done there's absolutely no question," Kernaghan says. "We've had some great people."

Harmonization was essential to Miles Barber, communication with insurers and brokers was a strong point for Fred Plant, and Reno Daigle has been focused on attracting and mentoring new recruits, Kernaghan points out. "What I want to ensure is that we don't lose any of these things as we move forward," she notes. "It's that CSP that is going to tell us where we need to put our emphasis. It all comes back full circle and then putting the accountability in place to ensure that we don't lose the focus."

When Kernaghan takes the helm on Aug. 29 in Montreal during the annual conference, she brings with her 22 years of adjusting knowledge and wealth of volunteer experience. She is a past president of the Canadian Insurance Professionals of Vancouver (CIPV), past president of the Insurance Institute of British Columbia (IIBC), she has served on various councils for and was the recipient of Award of Merit from the Insurance Institute of Canada, she sat on the Insurance and Risk Management advisory board for the University of Calgary, is on the Advisory Board of the Insurance Dispute Resolution Services of British Columbia, also sits on the advisory for the British Columbia Institute of Technology's new insurance program and was awarded Insurance Person of the Year in B.C. in 2006.

"All that experience collectively I hope will help develop the CIAA," Kernaghan says. "Through experience one always brings new perspective and I hope I bring a slightly new perspective." 🍁