



16th ANNUAL CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS



Several members of the Board of Directors lead the way to a Renaissance of Risk management. Joe DePalma, Melissa Sullinger, Gary Urban, Alan Smith, Martha Rider, and Cindy Kirk.

From November 16th through the 18th, nearly 500 public entity risk management professionals, sponsors and exhibitors journeyed to Austin, Texas, on a Quest for Enlightenment. Their respective travels were fraught with peril...budget constraints almost stopped the journey before it began...Mapquest tried to foil our valiant warriors by sending them off on trails that did not exist...and of course, the dreaded, never ending litany of voice mails and emails sought to distract.

But despite it all, Texas PRIMA's 16th Annual Conference and Exposition succeeded in helping the attendees experience the New Renaissance of

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

| | |
|---|---|
| From the President's Desk | 2 |
| Thank you to Platinum Sponsor .. | 2 |
| Risk Management Achievement Awards | 3 |
| 2005 Board of Directors | 3 |
| 2005 Risk Manager/Associate of the Year | 4 |
| 2005 Diamond Sponsors | 4 |
| 2005 Conference Photos | 5 |
| Important Dates | 6 |

Risk Management. They left Austin armed with the networking, partnerships and education necessary to succeed in the every changing arena of Risk Management.

At the extravagant King's Feast Opening Night reception, there were many fair maidens, wizards and valiant knights who donned their Renaissance finery and danced into the wee hours of the night. At the closing session, nearly 250 attendees heard newly appointed Commissioner of Workers' Compensation, Albert Betts, Jr., provide us with intelligence on the many changes to the Workers' Compensation system in Texas.



Albert Betts, Jr., Commissioner of Workers' Compensation, Texas Department of Insurance, was introduced by Regan Rychetsky,

Risk Manager, Health and Human Services Commission. Mr. Betts provided comments about the future of the Division of Workers' Compensation.

Mike Conduff, City Manager for Denton, and our keynote speaker, set the tone for the conference with his energetic and thought-provoking talk on the Renaissance of public entities and risk management. Mike provided an excellent framework of the skills and abilities we need to master in order to serve our respective entities in the most effective manner.



The educational sessions were well attended and offered a plethora of topics in the areas of general risk management, safety, workers'

compensation and benefits, with sessions on everything from Employee Health Clinics to Accident Investigation. At the end of the closing session, the King's Tournament was held.

Of the nearly 60 brave warriors who completed the arduous challenges in order to enter the Tournament,



Judyann Robinson, Safety Officer for Mesquite ISD, was the Tournament Runner-Up and Norma Jean Rivera, Human Resources Director for San Patricio County, won the Grand Prize and was crowned Tournament Champion. All hail Norma Jean!!!

A special "thank you" goes out to all of our wonderful sponsors, our generous partners in our Quest for Enlightenment...***we could not do this without you.*** Thanks also to all the many volunteers who helped fetch costumes, braved hot glue guns to make table decorations, manned welcome tables and guarded door prizes.

While the memories of our time in Austin are still fresh on our minds, plans are already underway for the 17th Annual Conference and Exposition to be held in Corpus Christi, Texas, November 8th through 10th, 2006. Hope to see you there as it will be a "roaring" good time!!!

From The President's Desk...



Gary Urban as King

Wow! What a year! With just days to go as Texas PRIMA President, it is fun to reflect on 2005. There were plenty of good times and a few challenging moments too. Perhaps the largest challenge was replacing board members in midstream. When Linda Comeaux and Bill Cody left the board of directors, we immediately missed their contributions. But, true to form, Regan Rychetsky and Mark Barta promptly stepped up and filled their shoes. That is what being on the board and being in our profession is all about. Through the help of our peers, our staff members, legal advisors, our brokers, TPAs, and consultants, there is usually a way to stare down challenges and get the job done for our employers.

2005 was a great year for us. Due to the combined efforts of our members and supporters, Texas PRIMA was able to put on timely and informative training sessions both within our Regions and at the annual conference in Austin. Since Scott Payne is providing you an eloquent Conference Wrap Up, I'll refer you to his article. But, before that let me just say, "Scott and his Planning Committee did a superb job putting on another winning conference for Texas PRIMA." The training sessions, networking opportunities via the King's Tournament, and special events were superior. Even the Golfer's showed their grit in overcoming the weather conditions. On

behalf of the board, I offer a special thank you to the Sponsors and Exhibitors for providing a theme-orientated exhibit hall and a place to compete for "Tournament Champion".

The success of our organization is due to the combined efforts of Members, Volunteers, Corporate Sponsors and Exhibitors, plus a dedicated Board. This was very evident this year. My thanks to all of your contributions in 2005. Be it being a generous Sponsor, faithful Exhibitor, active Member, tireless Volunteer, understanding Employer, or contributor in some other way, we are blessed to have such superb support for our profession.

Before closing, let me extend a special Thank You to Scott Payne, Alan Smith, Linda Spacek, Tina Paquet, Martha Rider, Mark Barta, Shannon Morgan, Regan Rychetsky, Melissa Sullinger, and Cindy Kirk for a job well done this year. Also, many thanks to Y. Etta McCutcheon and her committee for providing the creative table decorations. Finally, I want to welcome a long time Texas PRIMA asset to the Board of Directors, Joe DePalma.

We are already busy preparing for the upcoming conference in Corpus Christi in 2006. If you want to take part in putting on another fun and education filled conference, please contact a board member. I've heard things will be "roaring" on the coast.

Have a safe and productive 2006.

*Gary J. Urban, MA, ARM,
President, Texas PRIMA*

Thank You To Platinum Sponsor Harris & Harris



Herb Harris at the Harris & Harris exhibit booth

Thank you to Platinum Sponsor Harris & Harris for their long time support of TX PRIMA and congratulations to them as they celebrate their 25th anniversary this month. In that time, Harris & Harris has become the firm which represents more public entities in Texas workers' compensation than any other. That illustrates both their commitment to the public sector as well as the big part Texas PRIMA has played in their growth as a firm.

For Harris & Harris, this relationship with Texas PRIMA has always been a two-way street and that's why you see them as a sponsor, speaker, and exhibitor. Harris & Harris and Texas PRIMA are proud of that partnership. Harris & Harris continues to focus on the latest in workers' compensation - from training on changes in the law to its legal research site for its clients. Harris and Harris knows the public sector and how to be a successful advocate without unnecessary antagonism.

Risk Management Achievement Awards

Congratulations to the Texas PRIMA 2005 Winners:



To the **CITY OF CORPUS CHRISTI** for their Risk Management Safety Workshop Promoting Safety Excellence. This program is designed to provide a comprehensive safety-training opportunity for all employees. The annual workshop provides topics such as ergonomics, personal safety and workers' compensation documentation, accident photography, traffic control, and driver safety. Safety awards are presented and participation is advertised through the creation of a poster, the City Newsletter, and a brochure containing "Safety Workshop" details and other pertinent safety information. The workshop is held every June in conjunction with the National Safety Month campaign. As a result the City is experiencing the lowest number of work related accidents in the past five years. For more information about this program contact Donna James, Risk Manager at 361-826-3680.

To the **GARLAND INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT** for their video on "Slips, Trips & Falls". The video is approximately ten minutes long and was produce in-house. It portrays a news reporter addressing the problem of costs related to slips, trips and falls among professional employees. It is done very professionally and holds the attention of the viewer. It can be reproduced and edited to fit almost any entity. The beauty of the video is its relatively low cost. Of the 4,000 Garland I.S.D. professional employees there is an average of 150 injuries annually, costing the District over \$500,000 from slips, trips and falls. This videotape is designed to raise awareness of slip, trip, and fall injuries. It was distributed to each principal and department director who in-turn was asked to show it to their staff. For more information about this program contact Henry Kaplan, Risk Management specialist at 972-494-8382.



To **TRAVIS COUNTY** for their Travis County Book of Owned Property. After the September 11th disaster, property insurance became a hard market for coverage and stable premiums. In response to underwriters' concerns, Travis County developed a "step in the Travis County" concept where underwriters could "visit" their buildings without leaving their office. The book identifies insured property; its construction, maintenance, safety and security, fire control, and location of each property owned by the County. The book has many uses such as documentation for future Request For Proposals. For more information about this program contact William Paterson, Risk Specialist at 512-854-9650.

2005 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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2005 Risk Manager of the Year is Robby Neill

Texas PRIMA's 2005 Risk Manager of the Year is Robby Neill, Director of Risk Management for the City of Garland. He oversees and manages their property and casualty coverage, medical and other health benefits, claims administration, workers' compensation, fleet services, and civil service for 2,000 employees. Robby has been with the City of Garland for eleven years.

Robby has served in several positions with Texas PRIMA, including President, Vice President, Treasurer, Director, Regional Coordinator, and committee chairs. He is a frequent speaker at the Texas PRIMA conferences and the State and Local Benefits Association, North Texas City Managers Association, Innovation Group, and individual cities and City Councils. He has also served the Board of Trustees for the Texas Political Subdivisions Joint Self-Insurance Funds for almost 15 years, serving 5 years as Chairman of the Board.

Robby has been a mentor to many of the Texas PRIMA members. Several of his employees and others he has mentored have gone on to be Risk Managers, Officers with Texas PRIMA and other positions in the insurance industry.



2005 Risk Management Associate of the Year is Cindy Purinton



Texas PRIMA's Risk Management Associate of the Year for 2005 is Cindy Purinton. Cindy has served Travis County for seven years as Benefits Administrator to 4,000 employees and a total of 6,704 participants.

Cindy is responsible for weekly, quarterly and annual claims experience auditing, reporting, and oversight. Cindy works with formulating, and setting policy for retiree benefits. This is critical because each policy formulated will impact the amount of the GASB 45 accrual. And the accrual will impact the benefit plans offered in the future.

Cindy has been active as a chair on the Combined Charities Campaign for Travis County HRMD for the last two years. She is a charter member of the CommUnity Toastmaster and has been an officer since its inception. She is a member of PRIMA and of SALGBA, and earned the CGBA designation in 2003. She has held the Health Insurance Association of America designation of HIA since 1994.

**Thank you
to our...**



**2005 Diamond
Sponsors**

- Left:* JI Companies
- Top:* United Health Group
- Right:* McGriff, Seibels & Williams with Guests
- Bottom:* AS&G Claims Administration, Inc.

2005 Conference Photos



Texas PRIMA Press is the official newsletter of Texas PRIMA and is published by the Texas Institute of CLE, Association Manager for the Chapter. All correspondence should be sent to:

IMPORTANT DATES

TEXAS PRIMA: 2006 Events

November 8 - 10 Texas PRIMA Conference & Exhibition (Corpus Christi)

NATIONAL PRIMA ANNUAL CONFERENCES:

June 11 - 14, 2006 Las Vegas, NV
June 10 - 13, 2007 Boston, MA

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About This Newsletter

This newsletter is the official newsletter of Texas PRIMA. It is produced quarterly. The opinions expressed in the newsletter are those of the writers and do not necessarily represent the views of Texas PRIMA. We want this newsletter to provide information to you -- our members -- about chapter events and risk management issues. We encourage you to contribute so that this effort is successful. Please send your news, information, comments, etc. to your regional coordinator, to the editor, or to the chapter address. **The deadline for the next newsletter will be announced via email.**

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