

PRIA IN TOUCH

September 20, 2021



President's Message

Dear Members:

For those of you unable to attend the recent Annual Conference, either in-person or virtually, I want to share a summary of my State of the Association report delivered during the Annual Membership Meeting on September 1.

Fiscal year 2020-21 ended on solid financial ground after a year in which there were multiple unknowns for the Budget Committee. Although a \$22,000 loss was budgeted, the actual net gain at year-end was \$68,000, a tribute to sound fiscal oversight by the Board of Directors.

The strong fiscal year-end can be attributed to a robust membership renewal year, along with over 95 new members. PRIA entered the fiscal year with the possibility that membership would drop precipitously because of COVID budget cuts, and budgeted accordingly. There was only a slight loss of 22 members for the year.

PRIA's publications were abundant during 2020-21 with 12 papers approved and published to the Resource Library.

1. Decreasing Document Rejections – Best Practices
2. Social Security Numbers – Informational Paper
3. Ransomware – Resources
4. GIS Toolkit – How To Get Started
5. Electronic Notary: How Does It Impact Recording
6. 2018 eRecording Document Volume - Survey Results
7. 50-State Redaction Laws
8. Getting Started Guide for Recorders
9. Papering-out – A PRIA Position Paper
10. Automated Redaction Technology
11. Cybersecurity and Ransomware
12. Service Level Agreement

There were an additional three papers published in conjunction with the American Land Title Association (ALTA).

1. Record Shielding Frequently Asked Questions
2. Record Shielding Best Practices
3. Judicial Security & Privacy Act

There are eight products currently in process.



1. eNotary and RON - Frequently Asked Questions
2. GIS Case Studies
3. Interstate Recognition
4. Redaction – Best Practices
5. eRecording Best Practices for Submitters
6. Disaster Preparedness – Natural Disasters & Pandemics
7. Restrictive Covenants
8. Indexing – Names and Parties (pending)

Visit the PRIA [Resource Library](#) to find all published papers.

Ninety-nine new eRecording jurisdictions were enabled over the past 12 months with 87.3 percent of the United States population currently living in an eRecording enabled jurisdiction.

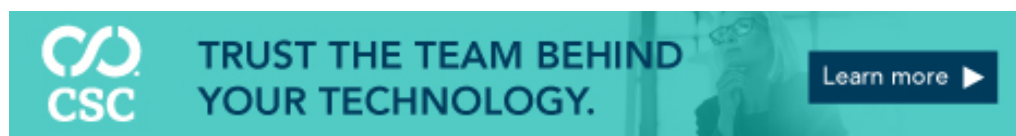
PRIA offered nine webinars and four Zooming-In sessions during the past year covering topics from the effects of forbearance on the industry to what new recorders need to know.

Undaunted by COVID distancing protocols, the PRIA Board of Directors held a series of five virtual strategic planning meetings addressing the effects of COVID on the industry and the association, advocacy efforts, board transparency, a certification program, board and committee roles and responsibilities, succession planning and board diversity.

My first term as your president was both busy and fulfilling.

Have a great month and don't hesitate to contact me at any time.

Jerry Lewallen
President



Two Papers Published to Resource Library

PRIA's Ransomware Work Group announces the publication of two companion papers. The *Cybersecurity and Ransomware Paper* recognizes organizations are being targeted by ransomware and the attacks are increasing in frequency and sophistication. With these attacks comes the risk of confidential information obtained by the perpetrator being sold or released. The potential for ransomware attacks is a threat to government and business entities of every size and in every physical location. This paper provides background information and sets a knowledge-based level playing field. It includes best practices to protect against an attack and procedures to follow when an organization is attacked by ransomware or other cybersecurity threats.

A companion piece, *Service Level Agreement (SLA)*, outlines the important terms of a contract between a service provider and a client. To create an effective SLA, centered on backup and restoration (not circuits or software hosting), questions need to be answered and incorporated into the contract. This paper will guide you through that process.

Visit the PRIA [Resource Library](#) to access these two new papers.

Membership Elects New Board for 2021-22

During the recent Annual Conference, PRIA announced the election of seven directors in three categories to serve two-year terms on the Board of Directors.

Sharon Blount Baker, clerk & ex-officio recorder, Crawford Co., AR; and Teresa Kiel, clerk, Guadalupe Co., TX, were both elected to their first two-year term in the government

category. Sharon Martin, register of deeds, Washington Co., WI, was re-elected to a second two-year term.

Brian Ernissee, vice president of document production, Nationwide Title Clearing; and Dan Shmukler, regional account manager, Harris Recording Solutions, were both re-elected to a second two-year term, while Penny Reed, senior vice president, Wells Fargo Home Lending Division, was re-elected to a third two-year term, all in the business category.

Gerald Smith, recorder, St. Louis Co., MO, was elected to a second two-year term in the at-large category.

Continuing on the 2021-22 Board of Directors are Annette Hill, associate commissioner/city register, New York City Department of Finance; and Brandon Krause, register of deeds, Bay County, MI, both in the government category.

Elizabeth Blosser, vice president of government affairs, American Land Title Association; and Jana Miyasaki, senior project manager, CSC, continue on the board in 2021-22 in the business category.

Jerry Lewallen, president, eRecording Partners Network; and Kyle Quackenbush, manager of official records, Orange Co., FL, continue on the board in the at-large category.

Larry Burtness, manager of customer operations at Figure Technologies, will serve as ex officio immediate past president.

The new board convened on Wednesday, September 1, to elect officers for one-year terms. Lewallen was re-elected president, Hill will again serve as vice president, Ernissee and Smith will continue in the roles of treasurer and secretary, respectively.



Founders Award Presented to Jim Harper

PRIA presented the Carl R. Ernst Founders Award to Jim Harper, Kofile Technologies Inc., in a surprise announcement, made during the group's Annual Membership Meeting, on Wednesday, September 1, during the Annual Conference. Former recipients of the Founders Award, Carol Foglesong (Retired) and Mark Ladd (ICE Mortgage Technology), provided the award's background, while Ladd made the presentation.

The PRIA Founders Award was created to honor an industry member who not only reflects the association's core values, but who has provided proven, unparalleled leadership in addressing specific industry needs and standards.

PRIA President Jerry Lewallen noted following the announcement that, "Harper has been a tireless volunteer, having served in numerous capacities on both committees and work groups, as both chair and volunteer member, and has contributed significant intellectual resources and limitless energy to PRIA through the years. He's never said 'no' when called upon to serve."

Harper's company PFA Inc., which was founded in 1976 and owned with his brother, broke the mold using new technologies and methods to improve business processes for both business and government. PFA Inc., was purchased by Kofile Technologies in 2016.

Harper has served as a leader and educator throughout his association with PRIA and he has proven repeatedly that he embodies the qualities and values on which this award is founded.

His ability to bridge the public/private perspectives on particularly complex issues to assist PRIA in achieving highly successful policy decisions is most valuable. He has a deep understanding of the needs and challenges for both the public and private sectors within

the property records industry.

Through his devotion to the real property industry, he has carried on the high standards and enduring legacy established by the late Carl Ernst, encouraging us to aggressively tackle industry issues in a collaborative effort with government and business working together.



eNotarization FAQs Posted for 30-Day Comment

The PRIA Board of Directors, during its August 30, 2021, meeting, approved the release of the *eNotarization FAQs* paper for a 30-day comment period.

The FAQs paper was drafted by a small taskforce of the Interstate Notarization Work Group, co-chaired by Staci Hoffman, Jefferson Co., WI; and Rene Alberty Hunter, Notarize. The taskforce has been meeting every two weeks for more than a year to define a comprehensive set of questions and corresponding answers.

To access the document, click [here](#). Please submit your comments directly to [Stevie Kernick](#), PRIA chief staff officer, no later than 5 p.m., ET, Wednesday, October 13, 2021.

Calling All Volunteers

A new PRIA work group is forming to address *Indexing – Names and Parties*. PRIA originally published a *Best Practices: Indexing Names & Parties* in February 2015, which was itself an update of a similar paper on indexing grantor/grantee names from 2002.

Since 2015, technology has advanced, auto-indexing has improved, document imaging has spread across the country, conversions of microform to digital images has become normalized and privacy concerns have become more complicated.

The new Indexing Work Group will review, update, and modify the existing paper, while considering today's best practices for information to include and exclude from a recorder's index.

[Carrie Kilgore](#), Crawford Co., AR, and [Kim LeGate](#), eRecording Partners Network are the co-chairs and invite you to join this work group. Contact either of the co-chairs or [Stevie Kernick](#), PRIA chief staff officer.

Legislative Page on the Website Provides Valuable Resources

Several updates have been posted to the Legislative News page on the members-only side of the PRIA website.

CSC provides legislative updates weekly during the state legislative sessions and intermittently in between. A new update was posted on Friday, September 17, 2021.

Notarize Inc. provided an updated chart on the U.S. Interstate Recognition Statutes for Notarial Acts: State Law Compliance, as of August 27, 2021.

Pennsylvania Association of Notaries tracks the progress of legislation around notaries, electronic notarizations, RON, eSignatures and blockchain with the most recent updates posted on August 19, 2021. See page 37 for a map depicting the status of electronic notarization and RON across the United States.

This Week in the PRIA Community Forum

Are you a registered "user" on the PRIA Community Forum? There's no time like the

present to sign on.

- Visit www.pria.us and click “Members” from the main menu. From the “Members” page, you can either click on the “Community Forum” tile or the “My membership” tile. Either option will get you to the community.

You will be prompted to insert your login credentials to gain access.

- After logging in, you will see a “First Time Visitor” page, assuming this is your first time to log into the forum, and will be asked to read and agree to the Communities Code of Conduct. Be sure to read the “rules” and the “etiquette,” a guide to posting messages for maximum results.

Once you scroll through the Code of Conduct, check the box beside “I have read and agree to the Communities Code of Conduct” and click “Proceed.”

The next page will ask you to update your profile, your interests and other settings.

- Please note that you can only change your display name the first time you login. Once you have changed it, the system will not allow you to make further updates. If you haven’t already done so, be sure to upload a picture in the profile section. Profiles with pictures make connections more personal.

Now that your profile has been updated, you are ready to explore the forums.

There is a forum for General Discussions where you can ask questions or offer comments to the PRIA membership. Leverage the PRIA Community to get answers about your most pressing industry concerns. Start a “Thread” on a specific topic, like “redaction legislation,” “RON” or restrictive covenants.

This week’s thread on “Plats – Mylar or Velum” was posted by Deb Young, Davison Co., SD, and elicited several practical responses. It’s not too late for you to contribute your ideas.

Each of PRIA’s committees and work groups has a Forum where drafts of working documents are posted for review and where comments can be added.

Welcome New Members

PRIA welcomed three new members in August 2021.

Government

Prentiss Co., Booneville, MS
Putnam Co., Greencastle, IN

Business

Doma, San Francisco, CA

Total paid membership in PRIA, including renewals and new members, as of August 31, 2021, is 498.

MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS 2021-22

PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE

CSC
eRecording Partners Network
ICE Mortgage Technology.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

American Land Title Association

GOLD MEMBERS

Black Knight - Ernst Fee Service
Computing System Innovations
Esri Inc.
Fidelity National Title Group
Nationwide Title Clearing
Wells Fargo
Westcor Land Title Insurance Co.

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