Professional of the year installed as president of AAIP

The Austin Association of Insurance Professionals conferred both honors and responsibilities on Janie Frias, an underwriter with Risk Placement Services, with over 20 years in the insurance business. Frias was named the 2015-2016 Insurance Professional of the Year and moved up from president-elect to president during the AAIP's installation ceremony on May 17 at Texas Land and Cattle Restaurant in Austin.

Frias said her previous service to AAIP, a charter association of the 60-year old Federation of Insurance Women of Texas, included terms as secretary and director, as well as service on many committees. Being honored as Professional of the Year was a bit of a surprise, she said of the award which often follows a presidential term.

For her term, Frias has adopted a previous FIWT theme as hers: Blast from the past and into the future. With membership of AAIP currently at 73, Frias plans to build on the professional and personal growth opportunities that the association has offered. Expanding class and scholarship offerings, attracting new young members, and supporting non-profit community associations are just part of her plan for the year.

She has been calling area agencies to attract young members into the local association, which she said is "like a family." She hopes to engage new young members by incorporating some of their ideas into updating the organization. Already she has some of the young members planning updates to the AAIP website and transforming the monthly electronic newsletter into more thorough means of communicating with the members.

With her term formally beginning on June 1, Frias has already presented AAIP's $750 contribution to Color Cancer, a patient assistance association, and $1,000 to Wooten Elementary, which tragically lost one of its young students in May when the five-year-old was struck by a van shortly after being picked up from school.

Two main fundraisers make AAIP's generosity possible, Frias said. Each October, the association hosts a Top Golf fun tournament and, in the spring, a raffle. This year, the raffle raised $4,600 for local charities.

Like so many in the insurance field, Frias landed in it by accident. While she was attending St. Edward's University, she found part-time employment with a seasonal tax service as a bilingual interpreter. When tax season ended, the accountant's brother recruited her to join his insurance agency as a bilingual customer service representative. From there, Frias went on to full time work, spending eight years on the personal auto side at several retail agencies before moving into the commercial side with a general agency.

While she did not complete her college degree program, Frias has only one year remaining and hopes to return after her daughter graduates from college. In the meantime, Frias has earned the CISR, AIS and CIC designations.

Immediate past president Tiffany Way, All Risks, Ltd., hosted the May installation. Also installed as officers were Bonnie Love, Higginbotham, president-elect; Danny Journeay, Specialty Insurance Mangers, vice president; Lindsey Burton, also with Specialty Insurance Managers, recording secretary; Tamra Johnson, Wortham Risk Management, treasurer. Way will continue as a director along with directors installed for the new term, Kimmi Cantwell, McGowan, Donnelly and Oberheu, LLC; Nelda Dunlap, State Auto, and Rhonda Whoolery, also with Risk Placement Services.

AAIP hosts its meetings every third Tuesday of the month at the Texas Land and Cattle Restaurant. For more information, visit the association's website.

Tiffany Way, All Risks, Ltd., left, and Janie Frias, acknowledge the sponsors who, along with raffle participants, helped raise $4,600 for AAIP to distribute to local community service organizations over the coming year.

NEWS IN BRIEF

FROM PAGE 6

ban development on U.S. coasts, and the rest is attributed to climate change.

As the six-month hurricane season began in June, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicted a better-than-average likelihood of four to eight hurricanes with winds of 74 miles per hour, with one to four of them sustaining 111 miles per hour or more. With at-risk residents from Texas to Maine not hit by storms in recent years, hazard-risk scientist Tom Jeffrey, with California data and analytics firm CoreLogic, warns against "hurricane amnesia." Hurricanes have the potential of harming more than 6 million residences along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts. Texas ranks third in potential residential losses, behind Florida and Louisiana.

FRAUD

According to a news release from the U.S. Attorney's office in the Southern District of Texas, two Mexican physicians from a family medical practice in the border town of Reynosa pleaded guilty in federal court in

See NEWS IN BRIEF Page 12