



August 2025 Newsletter



President's Letter

Kevin O'Harra, SRA, AI-RRS
2025 SD Chapter President

Dear San Diego Chapter Members,

As we pass the halfway point of the year and settle into the summer season, I hope you are all taking some time to enjoy the fantastic San Diego weather. It has been a busy and productive year for our chapter. We've introduced several new classes, held a joint meeting with the local chapter of the IRWA, adapted to the implementation of new accounting systems at the national level, and navigated a few controversies along the way. In May, our dedicated Vice President, Jenn Simonson, and I attended the annual LDAC Symposium in Washington, D.C., and will be sharing a recap in this newsletter.

The last five years have presented challenges—not only for our chapter but for many others across the country. The COVID-19 lockdowns had a lasting impact on in-person participation, not just for our organization but for countless professional groups nationwide. Like many, we have adapted by offering more online classes to remain competitive. Still, I firmly believe in the importance of in-person education. It fosters professional networking and creates a valuable space for members to share insights and learn from one another. Looking ahead, we will be hosting our annual Market Symposium in October and the required Business Practices and Ethics course in early December. I encourage all of you to attend and connect with fellow appraisers.

One of our chapter's great assets has been our partnership with Caltrans. For several years, they have generously provided free use of their facilities, and in return, we've allowed a number of

their employees to attend our classes at no cost. This relationship has enabled us to continue hosting in-person education without incurring significant venue expenses. This year, Caltrans requested a few basic qualifying courses for their staff and guaranteed a minimum number of attendees. Even at a reduced fee, these classes generated positive revenue—an encouraging outcome for all involved.

We are currently seeking local appraisers to develop and teach chapter education courses. No idea is too small—what might seem basic to you could be exactly what another appraiser needs to grow professionally. Even if you think your concept wouldn't fill a two-hour session, participant interaction and Q&A often extend class time significantly. If you're interested in contributing in this way, please reach out to me or any of our board members.

Lastly, please save the date for our 2026 Installation Dinner, scheduled for the second week of January. Last year's event drew the largest attendance we've seen in years, and we hope to build on that momentum. We look forward to seeing you there!

Warm regards,

Kevin O'Harra, SRA, AI-RRS
President, San Diego Chapter
Appraisal Institute



Jennifer Simonson
2025 San Diego Chapter Vice President

Vice President Message

To My Valuation Peers, Colleagues, and Friends:

Appraising can feel like a solitary profession—many hours spent behind our computers marked by occasional calls to clients and market participants. Inspecting properties is a professional bonus that breaks up the desk time. For those working from home, it's easy to feel disconnected.

Attending in-person events is more important than ever, as a means to broaden our knowledge, validate those experiences only us appraisers encounter, and find new perspectives on professional challenges we face.

The San Diego Chapter of the Appraisal Institute is trending in a positive direction, and it's an exciting time to be part of chapter leadership. I'm grateful for Kevin's outstanding leadership as President thus far. We are committed to improving our brand as valuation professionals, increase in-person networking, provide valuable and required education courses for membership "gratis," and offer higher-quality in-person events that will enrich your career and expand your network. My challenge to you is simple: Break up the monotony of the last five years and come to an in-person event. You, your peers, and the profession will be better for it. Let's reconnect at the Market Symposium in October. I'll be there, and I hope you will be too.

San Diego Chapter Attends Appraisal Institute's Annual LDAC Event

San Diego Chapter President Kevin O'Harra, SRA, AI-RRS, and I recently attended the Appraisal Institute's annual Leadership Development and Advisory Council (LDAC) event in Washington, D.C. From May 14 to May 16, appraisers from across the country came together to tackle challenges facing our profession, exchange ideas, and connect with national leadership. LDAC continues to be a cornerstone event for leaders of the Appraisal Institute, and it plays a vital role in strengthening our network and brand.

A key focus of the event is a day dedicated to meeting with members of Congress to advocate on behalf of appraisers. Kevin and I met with staff from California Senator Adam Schiff's office to discuss two important issues:

- Requesting the reintroduction of the Portal for Appraisal Licensing Act (PAL Act) to create a nationwide appraisal licensing system and simplify multi-state licensing.
- Advocating for the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) to enforce AMC Fee Transparency in residential appraisals, as mandated by the Dodd-Frank Act.

A Dynamic and Challenging Conference

The conference itself was dynamic and, at times, tense. Spirited debates over issues stemming from the Cindy Chance New York Times article and pending lawsuits related to Craig Steinley often took center stage. However, this led to national leadership presenting a clear path forward for members and chapters to take action. As a post-script, it's worth noting that since the conference, Craig Steinley was removed as Vice President and National has settled its lawsuit with Ms. Chance.

Actionable Content

One significant takeaway we're already implementing is a plan for free Continuing Education course offerings for current San Diego Chapter members, which will be detailed in our Treasurer's announcement. We're excited to provide more value, increase in-person attendance, and build on our chapter's recent momentum.

Best Regards,

Jennifer Simmonson
Vice President San Diego Chapter
Appraisal Institute





San Diego Market Symposium

October 10, 2025
Longfellow
5897 Oberlin Dr.
San Diego, CA 92121

Pending Approval: 8 hours of BRE A CE

[REGISTER HERE](#)



Barak A. Baruch, MAI
2025 San Diego Chapter Treasurer/Secretary

Treasurer/Secretary Report

Dear Members,

As we approach the final quarter of 2025, I'm pleased to report on our chapter's strong financial position and exciting upcoming opportunities for professional development.

San Diego Market Symposium - October 10, 2025

Our annual Market Symposium is just around the corner, and we have assembled an outstanding lineup of speakers who will provide valuable insights into San Diego's dynamic real estate market. This year's symposium will be held at Longfellow (5897 Oberlin Dr., San Diego CA 92121, see attached venue photos) and is pending approval for 7 hours of BRE A CE credit.

Featured Speakers Include:

- Nathan Moeder from London Moeder Advisors, presenting "San Diego Real Estate Market - Economist Perspective"

- Zach DiSalvo, Associate Research Director at CBRE, covering "San Diego's Office, Life Sciences, and Industrial Markets - Key Data, Transactions & Trends"
- Scott Peterson, Vice Chairman at CBRE, discussing "Debt & Structured Finance"
- Matt Pourcho, Executive Vice President at CBRE Capital Markets, exploring "San Diego Office Market - Who are the buyers and sellers?"
- Gary London from London Moeder Advisors, presenting "The Big Picture: San Diego's Economy & Drivers"
- Joshua Ohl from CoStar, covering "San Diego's Retail & Multifamily Markets"

This comprehensive program will run from 7:30 AM to 4:15 PM, including networking breaks and a catered lunch. Please visit AISANDIEGO.ORG to register. Check out the new facility we will be using this year for the Market Symposium in the picture below.



Exciting News: Free Courses for 2026

Building on the insights gained from our recent LDAC conference attendance, I'm thrilled to announce that next year we will be offering two essential courses completely free to current San Diego Chapter members:

- 1. USPAP (Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice)**
- 2. California Laws and Regulations**

This initiative represents our commitment to providing enhanced value to our membership while supporting continued professional development. This is made possible through the dedicated hard work of our current President, Kevin O'Harra, and Vice President, Jenn Simmonson, who have diligently worked to secure the necessary funding to make these courses available. These courses are typically among the most requested and necessary for maintaining licensure and staying current with industry standards. More details regarding scheduling and registration will be announced in our fall newsletter.

Financial Health

Thanks to successful partnerships like our arrangement with Caltrans and strong attendance at recent educational offerings, our chapter remains in excellent financial standing. This solid foundation allows us to invest in member benefits like the free course offerings mentioned above.

while maintaining our commitment to high-quality, in-person education.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the Market Symposium in October and encourage you to take advantage of these upcoming educational opportunities.

Best regards,
Barak A. Baruch, MAI
Treasurer/Secretary San Diego Chapter
Appraisal Institute



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