



TITLE NEWS & VIEWS

NEW MEXICO LAND TITLE ASSOCIATION

December 20, 2019



Todd Russell, from Land Titles of Ruidoso and NMLTA's current Agent Section Director of the Board, gives us a rate hearing update with his perspective on how things are going, what to expect in the upcoming year and how you can help.

Dear fellow members:

This is my first year on the board and my first time through the dreaded rate hearing, and what a rollercoaster it has been!

The most important news is that OSI and the NMLTA Board have agreed to a 2% decrease in the basic premium rate effective July 1, 2020. The attorneys are still working on the settlement agreement, but we expect it to be completed soon. OSI argued for a 6.7% decrease and NMLTA for a 2.4% increase, and the board reluctantly agreed to the settlement to avoid a negative decision from a new and unknown hearing officer.

The board has been working diligently this year for a freeze on any rate changes and to institute a plan to review and change the rate making process. The hearings and expert testimony are very expensive for all parties and have provided results that do

not make sense to anyone. With the support of the Title Bureau, we made a number of proposals relating to the rate process, the regulations, and forms, but all were rejected by OSI staff and attorneys during the 2019 hearing.

At the point we thought our efforts this year had been wasted, the Superintendent issued an Order on December 4, opening a new rulemaking hearing to consider broad changes to the title insurance rules, including our proposals. Click here for a [copy of the Order](#). The hearing officer will set a schedule for workgroups to meet and discuss all proposals and make recommendations to the hearing officer. This is a fantastic opportunity and the Board will continue its work to try to make the rate hearings simpler and more fair in the future. Any decision will be made by the new Superintendent whose term begins in January, so there are lots of unknowns, but the board is committed to make the best of this new opportunity.

The workgroups will involve NMLTA staff and the board, but we really need you – the members -- to step up and have your voices heard. Stay tuned for future announcements for dates of these meetings; your participation is essential.

I know many of you will have questions and concerns about all of this. Know that you can [contact me](#) or any of the [members of the board](#) and we will be happy to discuss what has happened this year.

Todd