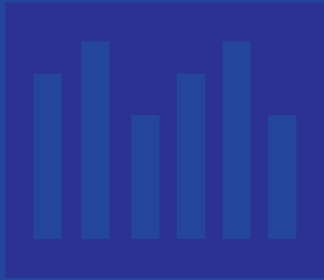




2014 NCRA

ANNUAL REPORT



NCRA is proceeding in its execution of a powerful five-year plan, Vision 2018, which focuses on key issues and opportunities in the stenographic court reporting profession. We are prepared to go into the marketplace and tell today's generation why court reporting is a career worthy of their time and consideration. The livelihood of our profession is dependent on our ability to resonate with potential students, and I am confident that we are going to make an impact with our efforts.

Our profession is not on life support. Our profession is strong. We can guarantee job placement and financial well-being for those who consider court reporting as a profession.

Sarah Nageotte, 2014-2015 NCRA President



Take Note

The year in review

Last year, NCRA launched Vision 2018, a five-year strategic plan designed to address and meet the challenges that lay ahead for the association and the court reporting profession. The plan aims to employ available resources such as volunteer capital to develop new and innovative programs to benefit members and publicly promote the industry. Vision 2018 revolves around six areas of strategic priorities:

- Awareness & Outreach
- Advocacy
- Professional Development
- Resources
- Member Value
- Education

Opportunities falling within these priority areas are often intertwined and range from altering the current landscape of court reporting education to encourage more students to enroll in court reporting programs and increase the percentage of qualified professionals emerging from those programs, to securing a strong infrastructure that ensures the governance and operations of the association are organized in a manner that provides the highest quality suite of benefits to the NCRA membership.

Awareness & Outreach

NCRA recognizes the urgency to increase the public's awareness of the court reporting profession as a viable career choice as well as educate consumers about the high value of the services NCRA members provide within the legal arena, the business world, and the lives of individuals.

In 2014, NCRA commissioned the first-ever independent study examining the current and future status of the court reporting profession. The study, conducted by Ducker Worldwide, created an industry report for NCRA and its membership that captures both the current state of the profession as well as a near-term outlook for potential demand of stenographic court reporters. The effort, while an investment of resources,

provided a solid foundation for the national Take Note campaign. The campaign, which is being captained by BowStern, a marketing and public relations firm, aims to increase the public's awareness of the court reporting profession as a valid career choice and, more importantly, one that offers those who enter it a future of vast opportunities. The anticipated outcome of the Take Note campaign, which includes targeted national advertising and programs designed to engage NCRA members and schools to join the effort, will far outweigh the initial investment of resources directed to the study.

NCRA's public relations efforts continue to keep the achievements of the association and its membership in the eye of local and state media. Press releases are consistently distributed on behalf of members who successfully achieve new certifications and certificates — an effort that targets local media outlets across the country that might be interested in the success of court reporters in the community. NCRA also announces to the media information relating to court reporting schools, state associations, and any newsworthy activities in which NCRA may be involved, including regulatory and legislative issues and its work with outside alliances and non-profits. In August, NCRA scored a major hit with national coverage of the National Realtime and Speed Contests featured in an article that appeared on the front page of

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The Wall Street Journal — a first for NCRA, its members, and the court reporting profession. An online version of the article was also accompanied by a video piece that included interviews with a number of NCRA members. The article spurred interest among a number of trade publications and other media outlets, resulting in public relations value estimated to be more than \$2 million.

The annual Court Reporting & Captioning Week has taken hold as a successful grassroots effort to further create buzz around the court reporting, captioning, and legal videography professions. During the 2014 awareness event, NCRA collected a vast number of stories about how individual members, firms, schools, and vendors marked the event. Many were simple,



some more innovative, but all were successful in generating a greater awareness of the court reporting profession. To aid with participation and involvement, these stories and other resources, including press release templates, customized logos, presentations, social media messages, and other promotional materials, are made available as an easy-to-use resource center dedicated to the week-long event. Visit NCRA.org/awareness for useful tools to prepare for the third annual awareness week, which will take place Feb. 15-21, 2015.

NCRA's outreach efforts to the audiences its members serve expanded greatly in 2014. In early summer, NCRA exhibited for the first time at the American School Counselors Association's annual conference. In addition to an information booth, several NCRA members and court reporting students were on hand to volunteer realtime captioning demonstrations, and NCRA had the opportunity to provide an

overview of the profession in a session targeting careers that counselors "need to know about." In 2014, NCRA also exhibited at the American Bar Association's Techshow and presented at

the National Center for State Courts and the National Association of Court Management conferences. In the deaf and hard-of-hearing realm, NCRA exhibited and presented at the Association of Late Deafened Adults and the Hearing Loss Association of America. NCRA will continue to move forward to strengthen strategic alliances with these and other organizations.

Advocacy

NCRA's advocacy efforts continue to make more definitive use of the legislative process to advance its agenda and support the industry. The association continues to offer time-proven tools, resources, and programs such as the Legislative Boot Camp, which has successfully prepared state leadership with the training and role-playing to simulate what they can experience in lobbying their state legislatures back home. The "Hill Day" portion of the program remains a cornerstone in its success and has provided participating members with the opportunity to meet and visit with senators and members of Congress to discuss the issues that are significant to the court reporting profession.

This year, NCRA was integral in passing the Federal Communications Commission captioning quality standards that will improve the industry and pave the way for more trained captioners in the future. These qualitative standards are the first of their kind, and NCRA's role in the process ensured that captioners were represented when the FCC finalized its regulations. Building on this momentum, NCRA presented at the Hearing Loss Association of America's annual convention on the new regulations and how captioning works. In addition, NCRA has continued to solidify its relationships with the Congressional Hearing Health Caucus and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Alliance.

While NCRA certainly has a major presence in Washington, D.C., its legislative efforts also occur on a consistent basis at the state level.



From the mobilization of efforts to adopt or strengthen state certification for court reporters, to counseling with state associations to mobilize grassroots efforts to protect the positions of officials, to governing the relationship between court reporters and their clients, NCRA plays a key role — often behind the scenes — in helping its members at the local level.

Throughout 2014, NCRA provided state specific support to multiple state affiliates on a variety of issues. NCRA provided legislative and regulatory support to affiliates in Massachusetts, Maine, North Carolina, Wyoming, Utah, Virginia, Arizona, Kansas, and Indiana, among others.

Professional Development

Tools and resources to aid in the professional development of NCRA members remains a top priority under the association's Vision 2018 strategic plan. In 2014, NCRA answered the call from members to provide increased testing opportunities with a lowered cost structure and on a more flexible schedule by partnering with Realtime Learning Systems

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(myRealtimeCoach) and ProctorU. In 2015, NCRA will begin offering members online testing for the RPR, RMR, CRR, CBC, and CCP skills test. This switch from the traditional brick-and-mortar testing sites will rely on an online proctoring model using the advanced technologies of both partners. Online testing offers members a variety of high-level benefits to ensure that professional development opportunities remain readily available.

NCRA continues on the path of consistently improving the quality of educational sessions offered at annual events such as NCRA's TechCon, Firm Owners Executive Conference, Legal Video Conference, and Convention & Expo. With a greater focus on program development for each of these events, zeroing in, particularly, on opportunities for professional development and business

growth, NCRA events have been marked with a steady rise in member satisfaction. In addition, NCRA has increased its focus on expanding capabilities to deliver first-class educational programming via the Internet and has increased its catalog of webinar and e-seminar offerings that members can purchase to earn CEUs. New webinar topics being introduced continue to offer quality content vetted to ensure it meets the needs of the marketplace.

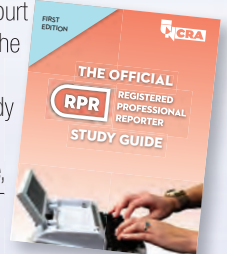
NCRA celebrated in 2013 the addition of the Legal Video Conference to the annual



in-person offerings of the association. Designed for both entry-level and advanced legal videographers, its second showing happened just this past October. In addition to live, in-person programming, new content for legal video has been added to the online catalog at NCRA.org/eseminars. NCRA and the CLVS Council remain committed to the long-term professional and educational needs of legal videographers, and even more opportunities are on the horizon for 2015.

Resources

NCRA recognizes that one of the most valuable aspects of membership is the robust and extensive certification offerings available to interested court reporters. By year-end, the association will roll out a first-of-its-kind RPR study guide. More than a year in the making, this guide, styled much like the SAT study guide used for college entrance exams, will serve as a road map to help reporters know what to expect on the RPR written knowledge test, as well as where to find the necessary information. The guide also includes practice questions and tips on how to prepare for the skills test, making it the most comprehensive one-stop resource for preparing to earn the coveted nationally recognized professional certification of RPR.



NCRA has never been more committed to providing its members with the resources they need to succeed. One such resource is the Firm Owners Economic Benchmark Survey, which each year becomes more refined to identify the latest trends happening in the field. NCRA produces the report in order to gather information key to the success of firm owners and freelancers on a large scale basis, analyze that information, and provide it to members to aid them in growing and succeeding in their businesses.

NCRA's committees have also become more focused on new product development under the challenges carved out in the Vision 2018 strategic plan. The 2014-2015 committees have pledged to work diligently to deliver new and improved products and services to benefit NCRA members and the industry as a whole.

continues to prove a vital member resource to members and end users alike. The publication is distributed not only to the entire NCRA membership, but also to attorneys and other participants of the legal community, the deaf and hard-of-hearing community, and other end users at industry events.

Perhaps the most vital resource at NCRA's disposal, however, is its volunteer capital. As a volunteer-driven organization, NCRA exists due to the time, effort, and expertise of an endless line of members who step up to fulfill key roles within the association. The reorganization more than a year ago of the association's committee structure to focus on the general areas of finance and planning, education and schools, and communications and outreach has resulted in high returns and has further streamlined the work of NCRA's committees, subcommittees, and task forces.

NCRA's monthly billing policy for annual dues has resulted in a greater number of student memberships, as well as membership by those just starting their professional careers. This change in policy clearly reflects NCRA's commitment to recruiting and retaining new members in all categories.



In an effort to facilitate stronger connections with state associations, NCRA developed a program that puts a member of its Board of Directors at more state conventions, allowing attendees at the state level access to someone who can speak directly on the national association's behalf. Further, NCRA launched a new outreach initiative in 2014 to position an NCRA membership booth/tabletop exhibit on the expo floor of many state conventions, which has garnered an amazing amount of positive feedback from members. The outreach effort has also been successful in helping to generate an increase in student member sponsorships and new members.

Member Value

NCRA continually seeks ways to enhance and expand its suite of member benefits. In a push to keep members better informed, the association invigorated its *Journal of Court Reporting* brand by expanding it to include *TheJCR.com*, an online newsfeed, and the electronic newsletter, the *JCR Weekly*. Through *TheJCR.com*, members are provided the latest in news related to the court reporting industry, new technology, and more. For the first time ever, members were also able to follow on-site coverage of events at the 2014 NCRA Convention & Expo as news stories and photos were uploaded throughout the event to *TheJCR.com* and social media outlets.

Education

In addition to the Court Reporting Industry Outlook Report, NCRA's big-picture educational efforts include the development of a massive open-sourced online course, also known as a MOOC, intended to expose would-be students with a small taste of what court reporting is all about.

NCRA is also focused on the importance of quality instruction and how the school community collectively can do more to increase the graduation rates in the profession. NCRA recently fielded a survey of court reporting programs that will establish best practices for court reporting schools. The survey results will be analyzed by a blue ribbon task force that will make recommendations to the NCRA board on what specifically can be done to increase graduation rates. With an overarching goal of getting more students into court reporting programs, and more new court reporters entering the field, NCRA remains committed to supporting the profession's long-term growth.

Court reporters make up a community like no other. To celebrate this professional family, NCRA has launched the first in a series of feel-good "Chicken Soup for the Soul"-type publications. The initial book in the series, *Court Reporter Survival Guide: School Success Stories*,

debuted at the 2014 NCRA Convention & Expo. The book includes a collection from the trenches submitted by freelancers, officials, CART captioners, and current students, who were asked to look back on the teachers who challenged them, the friends and family who inspired them, and the drills, tests, and hours of practice that nearly did them in, until they reached their ultimate goal of becoming a keeper of the record. The book not only offers students a glimpse of what court reporting school is like, but also gives working reporters a reminder that no matter how challenging it might have been to get through their education, the wait and struggles were well worth it. NCRA has already sent a call-out to members for its next book, which will garner a glimpse of how working reporters balance their personal lives with the often crazy schedules their professional lives throw at them.

In the second version of its revised, contemporary format, the *NCRA Sourcebook*

The *JCR Weekly*, delivered electronically to members via email, provides more in-depth coverage of the news that means the most to NCRA members, including the comings and goings of NCRA and state associations. This tiered method of keeping members in the know has also generated a healthy increase in advertising revenue for the association.



INDUSTRY STUDY LEADS TO TAKE NOTE CAMPAIGN

This fall, NCRA launched a national campaign aimed at increasing the public's awareness about the court reporting profession and targeting potential students seeking a career that offers a future of employment opportunities.

The Take Note campaign promises a once-in-a-generation opportunity to change the perception that court reporting is an antiquated profession thanks in part to the 2013-14 Court Reporting Industry Outlook Report, an independent study produced by Ducker Worldwide. This research, combining extensive industry exploration with existing data and coupled with Ducker Worldwide's internal analysis, resulted in a future-looking model that highlights ample opportunity for the next generation of stenographic court reporters.

MAJOR FINDINGS

The supply of court reporters is currently balanced with overall demand in the United States. However, the demand for court reporters will exceed available supply within five years, creating an expected 5,500 new jobs throughout the United States.

The Take Note campaign targets the top media markets across the nation including key states expected to face the largest shortfall of professional court reporters within five years. The year-long campaign started with an aggressive launch in the fall of 2014 and will continue with a wide-reaching focus on paid advertising, free

publicity with local and national media, and a comprehensive social media campaign.

TAKE NOTE CAMPAIGN**A powerful nationwide effort backed by:**

- ➔ Public relations efforts targeting national media including television, newspaper, radio, magazines, industry publications, blogs, and more
- ➔ Comprehensive and aggressive paid marketing/advertising campaign showcasing the profession
- ➔ Social media
- ➔ Branded graphics
- ➔ Dedicated website: crTakeNote.com
- ➔ Special events

GRASSROOTS EFFORTS

- ➔ Online resource center with ads, press release templates, and more
- ➔ Speakers' bureau of trained spokespeople
- ➔ Instructions for how to place online ads, contact media, and more
- ➔ Presentations, career day booths, and fact sheets
- ➔ Marketing co-op that provides NCRA-certified schools with matching funds for outreach efforts

The Take Note campaign features edgy advertisements created specifically to include graphics and strategic messaging as it relates to each of the key audiences identified.

While the publicity campaign is widespread, the Take Note campaign's target audiences include:

- ➔ Current college students exploring options
- ➔ High school students
- ➔ Individuals seeking a career change or re-entering the workforce
- ➔ School counselors
- ➔ Parents

**NCRA EVENTS****PLAN TO ATTEND**

2015 NCRA Firm Owners Executive Conference, Feb. 8-10, Palm Desert, Calif.

2015 NCRA TechCon, April 10-12, Denver, Colo.

2015 NCRA Convention & Expo, July 30 - Aug. 2, New York City