

News Release



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Workers' Compensation Appeals Commission Sworn In

JUNEAU – Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development Commissioner Greg O'Claray officiated a swearing in ceremony today, Wednesday, Nov. 23, 2005, for the five members of the new Alaska Workers' Compensation Appeals Commission. Kristin Knudsen, a state assistant attorney general who has practiced workers' compensation law in Alaska for more than two decades, will serve as chair, along with fellow members John Giuchici (Fairbanks), Jim Robison (Eagle River), Marc Stemp (Bethel) and Phil Ulmer (Eagle River).

The commission is part of the workers' compensation legislative reforms proposed by Governor Frank Murkowski and passed last session. A five-member panel of individuals experienced in workers' compensation issues will hear appeals from the Alaska Workers' Compensation Board that were formerly reviewed by the Alaska Superior Court.

Appeals of commission rulings go directly to the Alaska Supreme Court. The new system is similar to the approach used in many other states.

"With today's swearing in of the appointments made by the Governor last week, the vital work of this commission can begin," said Commissioner O'Claray. "Workers and employers deserve a process of fair, uniform and expedient handling of their workers' compensation claims, and the Appeals Commission will ensure that process."

Knudsen was sworn in for a five-year term. The other four appointments are subject to confirmation by the Alaska Legislature. The regular commission term is five years, however, staggered terms are provided for the initial appointees as follows: Giuchici, three years; Robison, one year; Stemp, two years; and Ulmer, four years.

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