

# MESSAGE

*from the Interim Executive Director*

## Change and New Year's Resolutions

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LET ME BEGIN by wishing everyone a Happy New Year, extending my hope that 2009 is a good year and hoping that all those New Year “resolutions” are still in place.

For two years, President-elect Barack Obama criss-crossed this country preaching the need for “change.” On January 20, he became the 44th president of the United States. Our nation will surely see considerable change. There will be change in the approach to addressing our nation’s fiscal crisis; change in foreign policy; and, change at the top of many of the federal agencies that directly impact domestic policy.

The new leadership in the White House also means a change in attorney general. NDAA was the first organization to openly and publicly support President Obama’s choice of Eric Holder. A new attorney general presents NDAA with an opportunity to forge closer, stronger and a more productive relationship with the nation’s attorney general and the administration’s new appointments to the many Department of Justice grant-funding agencies with whom NDAA receives grants.

Change, however, often requires patience and perseverance. It presents opportunities, as well as challenges. While the core training, education, technical assistance and research mission of NDAA will remain paramount, 2009 will also be a year of significant change for NDAA as well. Not unlike our nation, NDAA faces the impacts and challenges a weak economy presents to our training and course attendance. There will be a leadership change. At their March meeting, the Board of Directors will be selecting a new executive director. NDAA will have a new, heightened presence at the Capitol with the hiring of our legislative advocate. There will be a new APRI director, new program directors for the National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse and the National Center for the Prosecution of Violence Against Women, four new staff attorneys, a new IT manager and the creation and staffing of an office administrator position. There are at least six new grant proposal initiatives that will either be expanding our working relationships with existing partners, partnering with new colleagues or agencies or partnering with the private sector.

While the leadership and financial challenges of 2008 are now firmly behind us, we remain constantly reminded of the painful lessons learned and the pitfalls overcome. The year

2009 will see many challenges and opportunities for NDAA’s internal growth and re-focusing on its missions and goals. It means meeting the challenges and opportunities implicit in completing the operational merger and consolidation of NDAA’s three divisions into a single, cohesively functioning organization. There will also be the challenges and opportunities associated with not just replicating or reinstating the organization’s prior administrative framework, but instead rebuilding and creating a centralized and efficient administrative approach to address the association’s human resources, fiscal oversight, IT and other management needs.

The reality is that all our goals and the importance of our missions will fail if we do not continue to have a strong and active membership base. So the challenge I propose in the form of another New Year’s resolution to each of you is to resolve to give someone the opportunity to be a new member of NDAA. NDAA needs to constantly recruit and expand its membership base. It is not just the membership dues, although that is certainly important, but is rather the ability to say that we truly do represent America’s prosecutors. Make a resolution to contact a colleague or elected prosecutor and encourage them to join NDAA. Who is better qualified to do that than you the membership?

Lastly, I would be remiss if I did not publicly thank the staff of NDAA’s three divisions for their help, patience and continued commitment and loyalty to NDAA. They helped make my stay here an enjoyable and productive one. Secondly, I would like to thank the triumvirate of NDAA’s leadership past, present and future, Jim Fox, Joe Cassilly and Chris Chiles for their help and guidance during my tenure here. I must also add that during these tough fiscal times, NDAA was blessed to have such a knowledgeable and dedicated treasurer in Jim Reams.

For me, it is now time to play ball, go back to golf and, as General MacArthur phrased it, to once again “fade away,” but knowing full well it is with a richer treasury of memories and friendships.