



NCALERA NEWS

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

FEBRUARY – 2005

ERA HIRES RICH RUST AS NEW CEO

The Electronics Representatives Association (ERA) has announced the hiring of a new top administrator to succeed retiring Executive Vice President and CEO Raymond J. Hall. On Jan. 28, the association's board of directors unanimously approved a three-year contract with Rich Rust, 52, CEO of Thorson Rocky Mountain, Inc. of Highlands Ranch, Colo., an ERA member representative firm. (The picture below was taken at the recent National Management and Marketing Conference in Phoenix.)

Rust's contract as CEO of ERA took effect Feb. 1. He is in the process of selling his rep company and will carry out his new responsibilities from an office in Colorado. The ERA headquarters will remain in Chicago.

Hall's 35-year tenure as CEO of ERA officially concluded on Dec. 31, as specified in a three-year succession agreement signed last March. During this second year of the succession plan, Hall will serve as vice chairman/industry for the ERA Board of Directors and will support Rust as he assumes his new post.



Rust's experience as a professional field sales rep extends over 24 years. He joined Thorson Rocky Mountain, Inc. in 1981 as a sales engineer and became managing partner in 1987. The firm has operations in Colorado, Utah and Idaho. Rust holds a mechanical engineering degree from the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology and held several positions with Westinghouse Electric Corporation before joining Thorson. He's chaired rep councils for a number of manufacturers and is the current vice president of the board of the Electronic Distribution Show and Conference (EDS). For ERA, Rust has served as chair of the Large Rep Firm Special Interest Group and has been a frequent contributor to ERA conference programs. His most recent presentation, titled "Thriving on Chaos," was delivered at the 2004 ERA National Conference in Phoenix last September.

"I'm very excited about the opportunity to join the ERA team," Rust says. "Ray and his staff are incredibly dedicated to supporting the professional field sales function. ERA has

NCALERA NEWS
is published by the
**Northern California Chapter of the
Electronics Representatives Ass.**
R.W. (Bob) Parsons, editor.

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played an important role in my
development as a business owner,
providing me with the tools and insight to
enhance my company's success. Today's
global marketplace presents us all with
many challenges. I'm looking forward to
working with our members, both reps and
manufacturers, and industry associates to
meet those challenges and create new
opportunities."

ERA President Michael Kunz, CPMR, of
R. W. Kunz & Associates in St. Louis,
Mo., led the search for the new CEO and
comments, "It was very tough to find a
successor for an industry icon like Ray
Hall. In Rich Rust, ERA gains the
experience of a highly successful rep
who's been active in our industry. We are
confident that Rich's perspective and
commitment will benefit ERA's

membership retention and recruitment among both reps and manufacturers. And having
Ray Hall available for the next two years to help guide Rich in all facets of association
management is an important plus."

Hall adds that his successor "brings to ERA a unique combination of general business,
industry experience, technical background and rep knowledge of the professional field
sales function." The veteran association executive also notes, "It is rare that an association
looking for succession in its chief staff level gets the opportunity offered ERA. Our
Executive Committee spent half a year examining this decision and working out the details
with Rich. I look forward to helping coordinate the transition and assisting Rich as he
assumes the reins of CEO to direct the future of ERA. Like so many associations, ERA is in
the throes of transition. Rich's involvement will bring new ideas, views and approaches. It
will be an exciting time!"

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