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THE WINE PRESS

New officers for Rutherford Dust Society

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The Rutherford Appellation growers' and vintners' organization, the Rutherford Dust Society seated a new board of leaders at their annual meeting on Feb. 2 in the Rutherford Hall (formerly the Rutherford Grange).

2017 RDS board include: President Davie Piña (Piña Vineyard Management), Vice-President Steve Tonella (S.R. Tonella Cellars), Secretary Regina Weinstein (Honig Winery), Treasurer Joel Aiken (Aiken Wines), Michelle Baggett (Alpha Omega Winery), Andy Beckstoffer (Beckstoffer Vineyards), Trevor Durling (Provenance/Hewitt), Maria Haug (Talahalusi Vineyards), Gemma Kochis (Inglenook), and three board newcomers Kathy Chaix (Chaix Wines), David DesForges (Beaulieu Vineyard), and Julie Johnson (Tres Sabores Winery).

The agenda include presentations by Laurel Marcus of FishFriendlyFarming.org, Andy Beckstoffer, and Frank Leeds on the 100 percent Napa Green initiative in Rutherford.

Key initiatives for the organization in the coming year include growing the Rutherford Experience consumer event in May, inspiring all members to become Napa Green Certified, and launching the return of the Rutherford Chili Ball in August. The meeting ended with a speech given by guest speaker Belia Ramos, 5th District Napa County Supervisor.

The board shared their appreciation for their outgoing president, Michelle Baggett (Alpha Omega Winery), who served for two years as president and will remain on the board to focus on a project that she was instrumental in launching: RDS' participation in Auction Napa Valley live auction. The board also thanked outgoing treasurer, Maria Haug (Talahalusi Vineyards) and board members Frank Leeds (Frog's Leap and Chavez & Leeds Family Vineyards) and Jeffrey Stambor (Beaulieu Vineyard) for their contributions over the past several years.

Incoming president Davie Piña has served on the RDS board for many years, most recently as vice president in 2016. A sixth-generation Napa Valley farmer, Piña is chief of the Rutherford Volunteer Fire Department and an active board member for the Rutherford Hall. He dedicated 14 years to the highly successful Rutherford Dust Restoration Team project to restore the Rutherford Reach section of the Napa River.

Steve Tonella was born in Napa Valley and grew up living in Sonoma and Rutherford. Building on a successful career in high-tech, Tonella brings a business perspective to the board.

Former president, Regina Weinstein (Honig Winery) will continue as board secretary this year and winemaker Joel Aiken will be treasurer.

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