



Independent  
Insurance  
Agents of Iowa

# Viewpoint

M A G A Z I N E

FALL 2019 • VOLUME 38 • ISSUE 3  
INDEPENDENT INSURANCE AGENTS OF IOWA



## **In This Issue**

**Jottings from the President**

**It is time to say farewell as your IIABA National Director**

**Meet IIAI's 114th President, John Dalton**

**Convention Highlights**

**Awards**

**Best Practices for Insurance Agency Exit and Succession**

**7 Habits of Highly Successful Producers**

**Neighborhood Pride**

# WHO YOU GONNA CALL WHEN THEY SLIP AND FALL?

## **BUSINESS INSURANCE THAT'S DESIGNED TO BE WORRY FREE**

A company is a business owner's pride and joy. Help maximize coverage and protect it with business insurance from the Worry Free company — IMT Insurance.

Learn how you can represent IMT Insurance at [imtins.com/contact](http://imtins.com/contact).

AUTO | HOME | BUSINESS



**Independent Insurance Agents of Iowa**  
 4000 Westown Parkway  
 West Des Moines, Iowa 50266  
 (515) 223-6060 • FAX (515) 222-0610  
 800-272-9312 (In-State only)

**Advertising Editors**  
 Melissa Meiners & Nicole Peffers

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### President

John Dalton - Council Bluffs

### President-Elect

Steve Madsen - Marshalltown

### Treasurer

David Rowley, CPCU, CIC, AU - Spirit Lake

### National Director

Terry McDonald, CIC - Iowa City

### Directors

Scott Wirtz - Emmetsburg  
 Luke Horak - Washington  
 Chris Gentry - Ollie  
 Dave Walters - Emmetsburg  
 Steve Goodhue - Ames  
 Billy Blake, CPCU - Oskaloosa

### Past President

Tim English, CIC - Dyersville

## IIAI OFFICE STAFF

### Chief Executive Officer

Tom O'Meara  
 tom.omeara@iiaiowa.org • Ext. 18

### Director of Membership Operations & Education

Melissa Meiners  
 melissa@iiaiowa.org • Ext. 15

### Technology & Communications Coordinator

Nicole Peffers  
 nicole@iiaiowa.org • Ext. 17

### Office & Education Assistant

Cindy Grim  
 cindy@iiaiowa.org • Ext. 12

### Membership Services Coordinator

Brenda Kluger, CIC, CISR, CIIP, CRM  
 brenda@iiaiowa.org • Ext. 14

### Membership Services Coordinator

Megan Kincy, AINS, AIS  
 megan@iiaiowa.org • Ext. 16

### Membership Services Coordinator

Linda Pedersen, CIC  
 linda.pedersen@iiaiowa.org • Ext. 11

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

### Jottings from the President's Desk

It is an honor and privilege to serve our Iowa Big "I" membership as its 114th President.

**John Dalton**

Page 5

## NATIONAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT

### It is time to say farewell as your IIABA National Director....

I've come to realize that being a part of the Big "I" community is more than just sharing ideas. A group effort takes compromise.

**Terry McDonald, CIC**

Page 7

## In This Issue

### Interview with John Dalton

Page 10

### 113th Annual Convention

#### Highlights

Page 20

### Award Winners

Page 20

### Best Practices for Insurance Agency Exit and Succession

Page 25

### 7 Habits of Highly Successful Producers

Page 22

### Neighborhood Pride

Page 34

## ADVERTISERS

We would like to thank our advertisers for their support. This magazine would not be possible without them.

### THANK YOU!

- 9 Acuity
- 28 Applied Underwriters
- 12 Berkshire Hathaway Guard Insurance
- 27 Big "I" Professional Liability
- 13 Donegal Insurance Group
- 24 Eastern Iowa Mutual
- 21 EMC Insurance Company
- 32 Grinnell Mutual
- 2 IMT Group
- 30 Keystone Insurers Group
- 16 Merchants Bonding Company
- 8 NCMIC Finance Corporation
- 23 Penn National Insurance
- 4 RCIS
- 14 SECURA Insurance Companies
- 6 West Bend

**MISSION STATEMENT:** The Independent Insurance Agents of Iowa will be an unrelenting advocate of the business, professional and political interests of its members; doing so by working in the public's best interest and with the highest ethical standards.

Viewpoint is a publication of the Independent Insurance Agents of Iowa. Viewpoint is published quarterly: Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall. Viewpoint is mailed to Iowa insurance agents, Iowa Home Office Executives, Affiliate members, and other state associations and organizations.



INDUSTRY-LEADING  
TECHNOLOGY.  
SO YOU CAN FOCUS ON  
WHAT MATTERS MOST.



**CROP INSURANCE THROUGH RCIS. GREAT FOR YOU. GREAT FOR YOUR CLIENTS.**  
As a crop insurance agent, you've most likely been busy this year. That's why RCIS makes your job easier, with expanded Precision Ag and mapping capabilities, designed to save time and increase efficiency. We also provide outstanding claims service, giving your clients an excellent experience when they need it most. When it comes to weathering the storm, you've got this.

**Contact an RCIS field representative or visit [RCIS.com](http://RCIS.com) today.**

RCIS is an equal opportunity provider. In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Some products not available in all states or counties. This is intended as a general description of certain types of insurance and services available to qualified customers provided solely for informational purposes. Coverage is underwritten in all states by Rural Community Insurance Company, Anoka, MN except in Montana where hail coverage is underwritten by Tri-County Farmers Mutual Insurance Company, Malta, MT. Nothing herein should be construed as a solicitation, offer, advice, recommendation, or any other service with regard to any type of insurance product or services. Your policy is the contract that specifically and fully describes your coverage, terms and conditions. The description of the policy provisions gives a broad overview of coverages and does not revise or amend the policy. Coverage may vary by state. Coverages and rates are subject to individual insured meeting our underwriting qualifications and product availability in applicable states. RCIS is a registered trademark of Rural Community Insurance Company. © 2019 Rural Community Insurance Company. All rights reserved.



by John Dalton

# Jottings from the President's Desk



**Independent  
Insurance  
Agents of Iowa**

*It is an honor and privilege to serve our Iowa Big "I" membership as its 114th President.*

The Iowa Big "I" is recognized as one of the top insurance associations in the United States. This is not by accident, but rather a strong testament to our membership's unwavering support that has kept us strong.

I would like to take a moment to recognize some folks who have had much influence on me as a Board Member. First, Terry Friedman, our Past President, who is rotating off the board. Terry is one of those folks who is always there to give advice and counsel from his many years of board and committee service. Secondly, Tim English, my immediate predecessor who has given this Association twelve solid years of service. Tim has been very helpful to me during his tenure as President.

Terry McDonald is stepping down as our National Director. Terry has served this organization for 16 plus years as a Board Member, Past President, and National Committee Chair. He will be missed.

At the same time, I would like to welcome Eldon Hunsicker as our new National Director. Eldon has served this Association for many years as a Board Member, Past President, and

instructor for the ACT Program. He has been a personal mentor to me and one of those commonsense guys that we all come to appreciate.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Billy Blake as our newest Board Member. Billy comes to us from Oskaloosa and has been Chair of the Young Agents Committee. His excellent work as a Committee Chair made him a great choice for the Board of Directors.

Finally, I would like to thank Jane Regan, Matt Arenholz, and Teresa Hoogendoorn for agreeing to serve three-year terms as Committee Chairs of Technical Affairs, Governmental Affairs, and the Educational Committee respectively.

These folks all agreed to serve without hesitation when asked. All come from different geographical areas of the state and their travel to Des Moines requires time and distance, as

well as absence out of their respective offices.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you as your 114th President. Please feel free to contact me anytime I can be of service to you. I can be reached at 1-800-247-0646 or by email at polarbear7286@yahoo.com .



*We know what it took to build this unique business.*



*And we know what it takes to protect it.*

Underwriters who know and understand what coverages are necessary for each unique business.

Loss prevention professionals who use a hands-on approach to help develop programs tailored to each specialty business.

Claim reps with the expertise and technology to process claims quickly and efficiently.

As an Official Supplier of the Silver Lining<sup>®</sup>, you and West Bend will find a specialized insurance plan for your valued customers. To find out more, talk to your West Bend underwriter.



*Celebrating 125 years of valued relationships with our agent partners.*





by Terry McDonald, CIC



**Independent  
Insurance  
Agents of Iowa**

# It is time to say farewell as your IIABA National Director....

*I've come to realize that being a part of the Big "I" community is more than just sharing ideas. A group effort takes compromise.*

After 3 of the best years of my professional insurance career, it is time for me to say goodbye as your National Director to the IIABA, effective January 1, 2020. Following Dean Brooks has not been the easiest job I have taken on, but being your National Director has been one of the greatest involvements I have had in the insurance industry. You all did your part by electing Eldon Hunsicker from Ottumwa to be your next National Director. I don't believe you could have chosen a better person for the job. Eldon's national experience suits him well for the challenges that lay ahead.

I may be stepping down as your director, but I plan to stay active. The wealth of knowledge I obtained will always be treasured. Working with the IIABA Executive Board and Board of Directors has been a fantastic learning experience, and I am thankful for the friends from all over this great country that I've acquired along the way. This has made me more of a complete and well-rounded insurance agent as well as a person.

I've also learned how to be open-minded on a national basis, not



just for Iowa insurance agents. When I first attended the meetings, I was dead set on taking your ideas to the national committee and expressing them with passion and conviction. However, it doesn't take long to learn how to value other states opinions and to consider other ideas along with mine, to end up with a great final result that suits all agents across our nation.

Being part of an IIABA team has taught me skills that I can use in more than just the professional area of my life. My relationships on a personal

level are in a better place than they were, thanks to some of the things I've learned from many of you.

I've come to realize that being a part of the Big "I" community is more than just sharing ideas. A group effort takes compromise. When you are on a team you have to at times lead, follow, and more often than not, meet in the middle, even when it may not be best for Iowa. If we as a national board didn't subscribe to this theory, our industry would be deadlocked, similar to what is going on in Washington today.

In closing, my wish for all independent insurance agents is to continue to experience success; to feel fulfilled in all you do at work and at home; and above all, thank God that you are in an industry that is equaled by very few other professions whether it would be economically or job satisfaction. And, I want to say thank you to our IIAI Staff, Bob Skow and Tom O'Meara, for all of their guidance from my state Board of Directors days all the way through my National Director days. I could not have been as effective without their help along the way.

It's been a pleasure being your National Director, and I will genuinely and sincerely miss it. I take with me fond memories, valuable skills, and I hope my tenure in this industry will leave an impression on others similar to the one you all have left on me.

Eldon, you are up. Good luck!

Warmest Regards,

Terry McDonald

# Better Service, Better Relationships ... NCMIC Premium Financing



Lisa Logan  
National Sales Officer

## You can count on ...

- Customized programs for niche markets
- Flexible plans, including reduced down payments and extended payment terms
- Cancellation at 30 days, not 10
- Immediate funding of premiums
- Dedicated account manager
- Financing for a variety of policies

Learn more today:



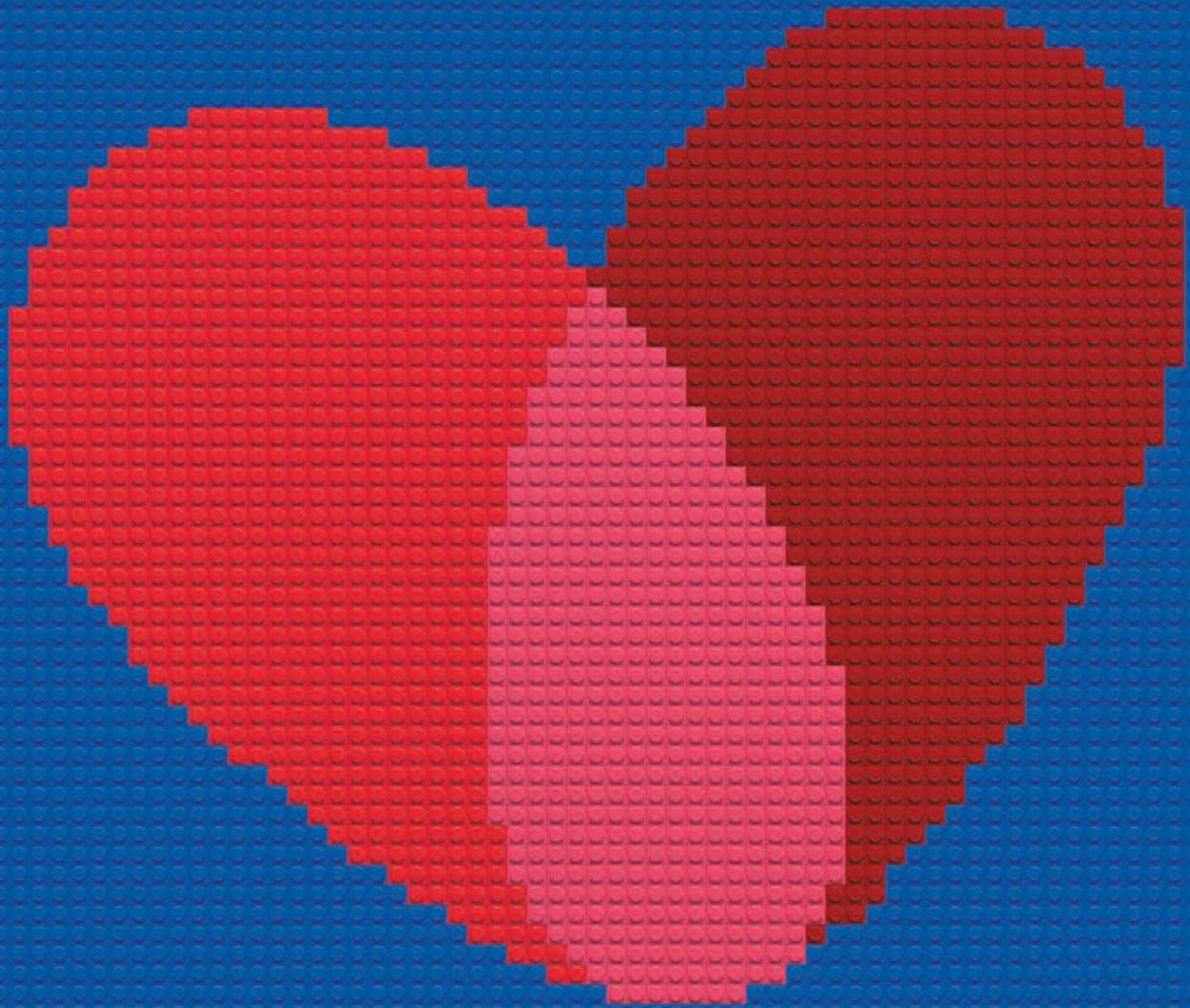
800-600-9250



[www.nfcfinance.com](http://www.nfcfinance.com)

**NFC** **NCMIC**  
Finance Corporation





## **Acuity loves you!**

We are proud of the relationships we have built  
with the best independent agents in the world!



[www.acuity.com](http://www.acuity.com)

# MEET IIAI's 114th PRESIDENT, JOHN DALTON



**VIEWPOINT:** We are in Council Bluffs, Iowa meeting with the Big "I's" 114th President, John Dalton. John, tell us about yourself and your life growing up.

**JOHN:** I was born and raised here in Council Bluffs. I have lived here almost all my life, I only moved away for three years to teach school up in Northeast Iowa. We have longtime family ties in the Council Bluffs area on my Dad's side of the family. They had lived here over 80 years, obviously my Dad and his family had a lot of community relationships. My Dad transferred for his job to California right after I finished high school. I decided to stay here to attend college at Creighton University and I graduated in 1971.

**VIEWPOINT:** What is it about Council Bluffs that made you want to raise your

family and start your business in the area?

**JOHN:** It is a great area to live in, part of the Omaha Metroplex and we have just about everything you would ever want here. Great job opportunities exist in the metro area with several large companies headquartered here. We have a good transportation hub here with Eppley Airfield. By air, you can get to just about anywhere in the U.S. in about 3 hours from here. Or, if you are sports fan you can be in Kansas City in 2 ½ hours to see the Chiefs or the Royals. If you are a college football or basketball fan, we have Creighton University or the University of Nebraska. This is a great place to live. With the family ties and our long-term relationships, it just made sense to stay here. My wife is from Omaha, graduat-



ed from Cathedral High and has lived her whole life in the Omaha/Council Bluffs area, so we have many friends and acquaintances here.

**VIEWPOINT:** In high school and college what activities were you involved in?

**JOHN:** In high school I was involved in most sports, drama activities, and was on the speech and debate teams. In college I was in golf for a couple of years until the time got to be just too big of a factor. My wife and I got married when we were in college. Next thing I knew we had a kid on the way, was going to school full-time and working full-time, so I had to give up golf.

**VIEWPOINT:** Those who know you, know that you love to fish. What are some of your favorite areas to go fishing?

**JOHN:** I love to hunt and fish. Several of my friends and I make three junkets to Canada each summer. We go up there and chase the “Big Ones.” We make two trips up to Lac Seul, which is

in Ear Falls, Ontario. It is an easy drive about 200 miles north of the border.

We have been going there to that same resort since 1983. The first trip we take in June usually has as many as 15 local business guys from here that want to get away from the telephone or the madness of business for a few days. About a half a dozen guys make another trip up there in the fall and sometime during the summer we make a fly-in trip clear up north about 500 miles from nowhere. We have been going to that place for 15 years. It is one of those lakes that is 81,000 acres of water with four cabins and the resort is open about 12 weeks out of the year. The reason we go there is because the fish will probably die of old age before they ever see a lure or a fisherman, they grow large, and are relatively easy to catch; we really have a good time.

We are blessed to have a home up on Big Spirit Lake in the Iowa Great Lakes Region where we spend a lot of time on the weekends, and during certain

times of the year I do a lot of fishing up there.

**VIEWPOINT:** How did you get in the insurance business?

**JOHN:** When I started teaching school, we had an acquaintance that was a claims manager for the Hartford Insurance Company, and he knew what an outdoor kind of guy I was. He also knew I had my summers free and told me he had a job that he really thought I would like adjusting crop and storm losses on farms. Wow, that sounded interesting, so I was an independent contractor for five summers doing that. I enjoyed every minute of it, almost hated to go back to school in the fall, so at the end of five summers they offered me a full-time job managing a division in the Iowa, South Dakota, Nebraska Region. When they started talking to me about money, at the time I was teaching seven different classes every day, was the head coach in three sports, helped run the speech department, ran the drama activities, and the money was about twice as



much as I was making while teaching. I went home and told my wife I am not a math teacher, but if I was, and I had kids that stupid I would flunk them, I had better take this opportunity. My goal had always been to be a school administrator, but they offered me this job and I decided we would try it for a year or two to see if we liked it. If not, I would go back to classroom teaching and finish what I started to do. Well, I fell in love with the insurance business working claims. Then, I got involved in more administrative duties, etc. later. Eventually, as with many big companies, they want you to move here or there, and I wasn't too excited about moving anywhere. I told my wife we had been offered a couple transfers I didn't think we wanted, and I said I think we should start an insurance agency. She was ready to call the guys in the white jackets worrying we didn't have any customers, I told her it was alright I would find some. That is

how we got started.

**VIEWPOINT:** Have you always had the same agency name?

**JOHN:** Yes, we started out with Agril-and Insurance.

**VIEWPOINT:** What companies do you currently represent?

**JOHN:** Auto-Owners, AAA, Grinnell, North Star, American Reliable Employers, SAFECO, CHUBB, PRO Ag and NAU, Great American, Farmers Mutual, RCS and a couple county mutuals. We are diversified.

**VIEWPOINT:** In your opinion, John, what is your key to success as an independent agent?

**JOHN:** First, you have to care about people, to listen to them, to sympathize with them and understand them. Second, you need to love the business and love working with people. If you don't have those qualities, it sticks out right away. I am a firm believer to be in this

business you have to be passionate about it and look forward to going to work every day, because it shows to your clients.

**VIEWPOINT:** Do you use an agency management system in your office?

**JOHN:** Yes, we use Applied.

**VIEWPOINT:** Tell us about meeting your wife Rose.

**JOHN:** Rose and I met in a foreign language German class at Drake University. Our desks were together, we got to know each other and started dating. One thing led to another, we got married and started a family. We both still had a couple of years of college left when we were married, but we made it all work. I graduated and she later went back and finished her degree in Communications. It is funny how things bring you together.

**VIEWPOINT:** You mentioned family, tell us about your children.



Are You Standing Out  
or Standing Still?

Berkshire Hathaway GUARD will help you rise above the competition.

Apply now at [www.guard.com/apply/](http://www.guard.com/apply/)



Berkshire Hathaway  
**GUARD** Insurance  
Companies

AmGUARD • EastGUARD • NorGUARD • WestGUARD

The Security You Need. The Name You Trust.

[www.guard.com](http://www.guard.com)

There when it matters most with...

# Commercial Insurance



Local businesses are the backbone of this country. At Donegal, we are proud to offer quality commercial insurance solutions to small to mid-size businesses.

We understand that every business is unique and can tailor coverage to fit your commercial clients needs. With strong underwriting standards, we focus on quality risks and providing excellent customer service to you and your commercial clients.

It's just another way that Donegal is **"There When It Matters Most"** for independent insurance agencies.

To learn more, visit [DonegalGroup.com](http://DonegalGroup.com) today!

## LEXIE

- Born into an insurance agency; worked at two of them
- Loves the Green Bay Packers, music, her toddlers... in reverse order
- A decade of insurance experience

# Has walked in your shoes

Meet Lexie, one of our Commercial experts. Agents call her first because she's worked at an agency and knows what they want. She's quick to reply, open-minded, and knows her stuff; just like her colleagues. She may even trash talk football or the latest breakout rock band. High standards you can rely on from real people. Plus, they're backed by our caring claims group who will get your clients back on their feet.

SECURA Commercial. It's how you get ahead.

 **SECURA**  
INSURANCE COMPANIES  
Commercial | Personal | Farm-Ag | Specialty



**JOHN:** We have one daughter, Jeanne. She graduated from St. Mary's College in Omaha. She has many degrees but has worked in the agency ever since she got out of college. She loves the insurance business, has no desire to own the place, but enjoys working with people. Anytime you have a relative in the agency, you are probably tougher on them than anyone else, but she is good as what she does and has done a great job for us.

**VIEWPOINT:** Are you involved in community activities?

**JOHN:** I am chairman of the Pottawatomie Civil Service Commission, and I serve on the County Compensation Board. I am on the Board with the All Care Community Health Center here, the health center that takes care of everybody even those who do not have insurance or Medicare. I have been on that Board a long time, served as Chair two times and five years ago we were able to build a new facility. Every year our services expand, and we see

more and more patients all the time. Obviously, insurance for health care is a tough nut; a lot of people just flat out can't afford insurance and we take care of those people. I am also heavily involved in Pheasants Forever; the Chapter started here 32 years ago, and I was the guy who signed the original Charter. I promote an outdoor show every year in January which attracts several thousand people. It is held at the MidAmerica Center and has become an important event in town that people look forward to each year.

**VIEWPOINT:** What value do you think a trade association such as the Big "I" brings to its members?

**JOHN:** Number one is the educational part of it. You get out of something what you put into it. The Big "I" has great education programs and I try to utilize them.

Also, I think the Legislative value is something we do not do a very good job at really letting our people know what we do legislatively. The Associa-

tion is on top of everything that comes by that deals with insurance; not just on a local level, but also a National level. One thing I have learned is that our people, especially our Board Members, are engaged in talking to the people who make these decisions in Washington and on a State level on a regular basis. I don't think our membership truly understands the value that they get for their membership. It's been a great experience to be involved with the Big "I" and to serve on this Board and previous committees.

**VIEWPOINT:** As an agent, what keeps you awake at night?

**JOHN:** One of things that really concerns me is the changing appetites of insurance companies. I hear it over and over from friends and competitors - companies come in and want your business, take good care for a while, then decide they don't want to be in the product line anymore and they pull the chain. In the last year we have seen companies do some funny things

maybe over volume requirements or just coming to a halt on a product that we have over \$300,000 worth of business in. I had a competitor tell me one time that he didn't worry about his competition, he worried about his companies. I think what he said had some real meaning.

**VIEWPOINT:** What is your favorite food, favor color, favorite, T.V. show or movie?

**JOHN:** I am a fan of Mexican and Chinese food which sounds crazy being an all-American guy, but I like those kinds of food. My favorite color is probably blue; I am a Creighton basketball fan and being a graduate keeps me rooting for the blue. My wife claims I am kind of a political junky, so I watch CNN and FOX every day, to which she just shakes her head. I really like to watch those to know what is going on in the world, and I enjoy watching college and pro football on T.V.

**VIEWPOINT:** You have been very active with the Big "I" and on the

Board for several years, tell us how this evolved.

**JOHN:** Norm Nielsen, a Big "I" Past-President, and I got to be pretty good friends and I have always gone to Convention and Rural Agents. My background in crop insurance kind of made me a go to person for questions about crop insurance and some of the companies. Norm asked me if I would be interested in becoming a Board Member and I said I would think about it. Joe Weinman was the current Board President at the time, and he called me and told me it was only 4 meetings a year. What Joe didn't tell me on that call (I discovered later) was that as a Board Member your attendance is expected at two Conventions, Insurance Day on the Hill, the May Planning Session, the Legislative Conference in Washington, DC, at National Task Force meetings, as well as, numerous conference calls. Keeps one busy and being a Board Member has been one of the best experiences I've ever had. I thank Norm for recommending me

and appreciate Joe Weinman for asking me. The people you work with and the expertise that is on that Board is unparalleled as far as I am concerned. No matter what comes up, we have someone on the Board who is knowledgeable, or knows someone to contact. From that angle alone, I value the Board experience as much as anything.

**VIEWPOINT:** As you look back on your insurance career, what advice do you give our readers about being in the insurance business?

**JOHN:** You must love it and be

passionate about it. When you care about people you have to realize the things that happen to them are not just everyday things, it may be a once in a lifetime fire. As agents we may see it every day and could become callous, but customers rely on our expertise, our knowledge and our sympathy to help them get through some of the worst times in their life. Listening to people and honing in on that to help them is very important.

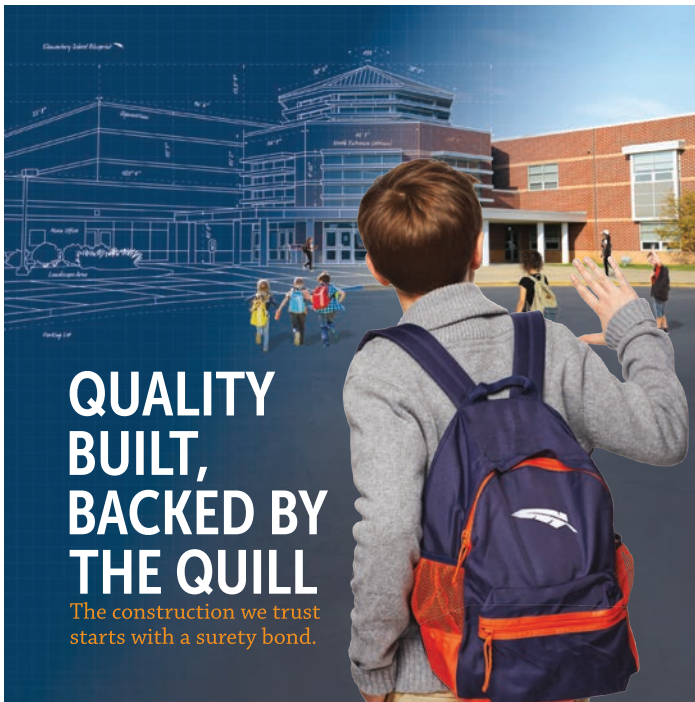
**VIEWPOINT:** Tell us about the mix of business in your agency and do you have multiple locations?

**JOHN:** We have multiple locations with a service office in Sioux City, a crop office in Treynor, an office in Neola, and our home base is here in Council Bluffs. When I started the agency business, I had a good background on the company side and the crop/farm business. I thought I would start an agency and dwell on that, but it didn't take long for me to figure out that farmers also need business coverage, truck coverage, etc. Consequently, over the years we have been heavy in agricultural type risks. We have a large volume of crop insurance, ag risks, and farm insurance, with it being the largest part of our business. Our P&C business is about a 50/50 mix of Commercial v. Personal. It's a good mix and we have been very fortunate.

**VIEWPOINT:** Do you find value in the Rural Agents Conference, Convention and engaging young agents in the Young Agents Conference?

**JOHN:** Yes, I do. I think they are all important. Getting to know people at the events and sharing concerns helps us learn. I encourage people to get out of their office and go to these events to find out what is really going on outside the walls of an office. It can be extremely helpful in their career. Often, I do see the same people at the events and wonder why more agents don't attend; maybe they don't understand what really goes on at the events. I think these events are extremely important.

**VIEWPOINT:** Over the years your town has changed, and the insurance



**MERCHANTS**  
BONDING COMPANY  
COMMON SENSE SURETY SINCE 1933



1.800.678.8171 | www.merchantsbonding.com

Merchants Bonding Company™ (Mutual), Merchants National Bonding, Inc. & affiliated companies | 6700 Westown Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50266





business has changed, how has your agency adapted?

**JOHN:** The one big thing I have seen in Council Bluffs, is the lack of independent agents in this town. We have about 6 players and we have tons of captive agents (State Farm, American Family, etc.) on every street corner. For us, that has been a plus since there are many people who really want to talk to an independent agent who sells multiple companies. We have adapted to that and we realize there are great opportunities for the independent agents in this town. Not a lot of advertising is necessary because people know who we are, we have a good following and we are blessed with good referrals. Our agency people are active in the community and we have been able to adapt. I have found people who shop online to buy insurance still want to talk to someone. People will stop in and ask about companies who are quoting online and want more information; a cheaper quote online doesn't tell them what they are getting. People want service. Independent agents have to adapt to the changing times and people are more knowledgeable about this than they used to be.

**VIEWPOINT:** What is the best way to contact you over the next year?

**JOHN:** Our toll-free number at the office is 800-247-0646, my cell number is 402-669-9671, and my email address is polarbear7286@yahoo.com. You can reach me at any of those and I promise I will contact you back.

**VIEWPOINT:** John, Congratulations on being the 114th President. Do you have a message for our membership?

**JOHN:** I am honored and humbled to be the 114th President, be active in your community, be sincere with people, take advantage of your membership in the Big "I" through educational opportunities, legislative opportunities, be active professionally and reap the rewards.

**VIEWPOINT:** Thank you and once again Congratulations.

# 113TH ANNUAL CONVENTION

The 113th IIIAI Convention, Trade Show, and Expo was held September 18 & 19 at Prairie Meadows Convention & Conference Center in Altoona. Nearly 100 golfers participated in the Golf Tournament at the Briarwood Golf Course in Ankeny while others made their way to the convention



# CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

center for some great educational events. A great turnout of attendees, fantastic speakers, and tradeshow capped off by the Dave Rowley & Friends Band, made the entire event a success. Below are some photos from the event.



# AWARD WINNERS



Terry McDonald, CIC,  
of Iowa City was the H.H. "Red" Nelson  
Agent of the Year.



Derrick Parsons, CIC,  
of Dyersville, Iowa received the C. Daniel Fulwider  
Young Agent of the Year Award.

## 2019 Presidential Citations



Tom Ahlers  
from Denman & Company in Des Moines

Not pictured  
Congressman  
Dave Loebsack

# Elevate your clients' coverage.



EMC offers comprehensive, tailored insurance packages designed specifically for wholesalers and distributors, including coverage for delivery errors or omissions and employment practices liability. And now, valuable coverages are automatically bundled together instead of elected separately—meaning choosing the right insurance for your clients just got a whole lot easier.

**Give your clients a higher level of insurance they can count on.**



[www.emcins.com](http://www.emcins.com)

©Copyright Employers Mutual Casualty Company 2019. All rights reserved.



# The 7 habits of highly successful producers

*Here are some specific strategies producers should put into play so your firm can start achieving more sales goals.*

By Curt Vondrasek



New business is what separates the great producers from the good ones — and consistently growing a book of business by 15% each year is what differentiates high-performing producers in successful firms from the average.

Producers who adopt these seven habits can stay on top of their game.

- Know your numbers. Be prepared by staying up to date on the following numbers: annual revenue goal, closing ratio, average sales cycle length, and average account size.
- Have a “robust” pipeline. What is a “robust” pipeline? It is when you have enough prospects based on your closing ratio. For example, if your close rate is 25%, your sales target is \$100,000/yr., and your average sales cycle is 90 days, you’ll need a 90-day pipeline of \$100,000 to stay on target. Focus on successfully keeping a full pipeline so you can close enough deals to predictably achieve your goals.
- Have a written plan. How are you going to build that robust pipeline? Have a written plan that includes your ideal account profile, how many prospects fit that profile, what level of prospecting activity you need, and how you will obtain your self-development goals for the year.
- Get a commitment for the next step. What happens after the meeting with a prospect? What’s the next step? If the answer is, “I’ll call back in a couple of

weeks to check in,” then you don’t really have a plan. Get a commitment before leaving a meeting. If the prospect agrees to a follow-up, set a date, and send a calendar invite then and there. Always leave the meeting with a defined next step!

- Trade up. Successful producers perform an annual book analysis and “graduate” their smaller accounts so they can free up time and resources to focus on new, larger clients. Consider shedding the bottom 10 to 20% of your accounts every year so you can concentrate on “trading up” and earning new business.
- Shoot for 25%. You’ll naturally experience account leakage of about 10% annually — so in order to achieve 15% book growth, aim for earning at least 25% new business. If you do, you can double your book size every five years.
- End on a high note. Your attitude is so important. Make sure your last experience of the day is always positive. If you’re ready to head home, but a prospect hangs up on you, make one more call that goes well. (Even if it’s to your mom!) Ending your day with a good feeling will send you home with the right attitude and prepare you mentally to tackle the next day of hunting new business.

Curt Vondrasek is a senior vice president at Marshberry. He can be reached at 630.315.9031 or Curt.Vondrasek@MarshBerry.com. Opinions expressed here are the author’s own.



# Local Roots. Regional Strength.

## Partners Mutual Insurance is now **Penn National Insurance**

In 1919, A group of Pennsylvania farmers founded Penn National Insurance to provide affordable workers' compensation insurance.

Today, Penn National Insurance sells property-casualty insurance in 11 states by partnering with more than 1,200 independent agency operations. As one company, we bring the personal attention and local focus of a regional carrier, along with the quality of products and services of national carriers.

Interested in partnering with a thriving insurance carrier with superior customer experience? We are looking for select commercial lines-oriented agencies in Iowa.

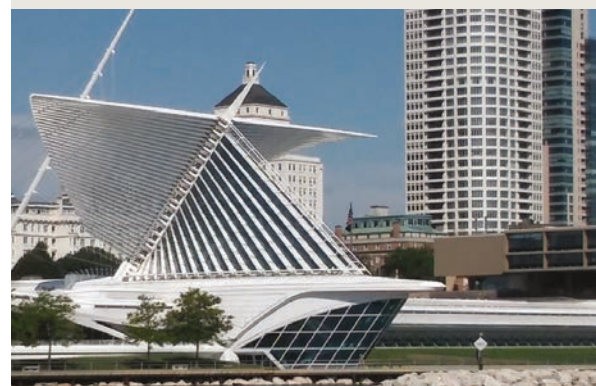
Contact Chuck Becker at:  
262.798.5060 x3484  
cbecker@pnat.com



**PENN NATIONAL  
INSURANCE**

*Feel Secure*®

- Strong financial performance and A.M. Best Financial Strength Rating of A-
- Expanded Commercial Lines product and services with competitive pricing and comprehensive coverages to help our agents grow profitably.
- Comprehensive Personal Lines product offerings, including Homeowners Equipment Breakdown and additional protection plans.
- State-of-the-art quoting, processing and self-service tools, making is easier and faster to meet your customers' needs.
- Local experienced underwriting, claims and management staff



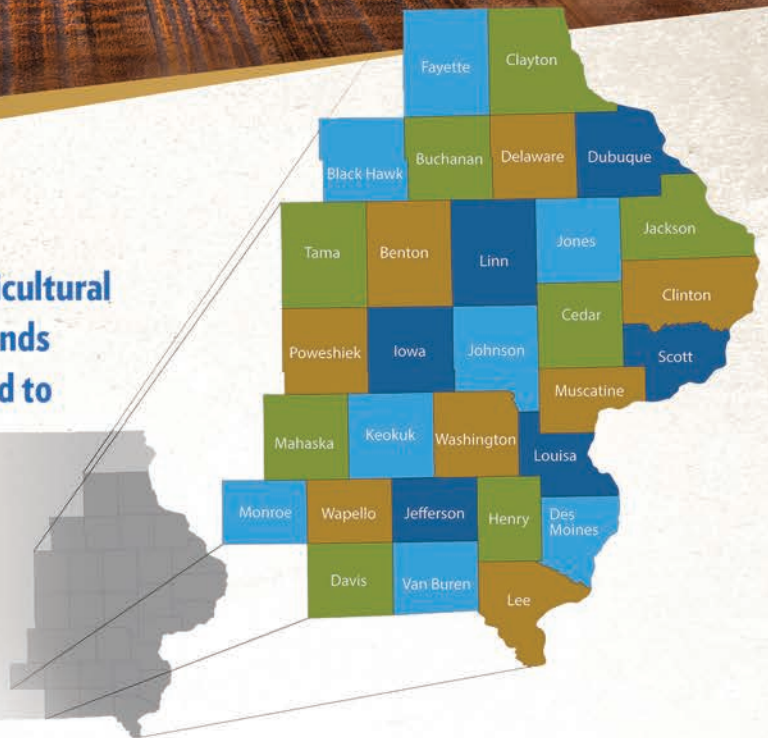
# EASTERN IOWA MUTUAL FOUNDED BY FARMERS, FOR FARMERS

*Since 1879.*

**Eastern Iowa Mutual knows that today's agricultural producers demand a company that understands their business and provides coverage tailored to fit their ever-changing needs.**

*EIMIA has been meeting the needs of Eastern Iowa farm families since 1879, and today is one of the strongest farm mutuals in Iowa. Eastern Iowa Mutual services clients in 30 Eastern Iowa counties.*

*We can help you offer your farm customers the right coverage at a competitive price point.*



Learn More Online  
**EIMIA.COM**

**CONTACT US TO DISCUSS HOW THE EASTERN IOWA MUTUAL ADVANTAGE CAN HELP YOUR AGENCY.**

506 1ST AVENUE SOUTH  
MT. VERNON, IOWA 52314

Toll-Free: 800-894-8417 Local: 319-895-8417

Email: [eimiastaff@eimia.com](mailto:eimiastaff@eimia.com)

An Affiliated Partner Of





# Best practices for insurance agency exit and succession

*The right plan is essential when you're ready to move on from your insurance agency, whether it's into retirement or to another business.*

By Rosalie L. Donlon

There are lots of reasons to think about a [succession plan](#), and it's not all about an agency owner choosing to retire. Life happens. Serious illness, the unexpected death of an owner or divorce might be reasons to sell your interest in the agency. Or you could get lucky, win \$100 million in the lottery and move to Tahiti.

## When to start planning

Often, independent insurance agencies are family-owned businesses, and [the dream of the founder is to pass the legacy on to family members](#). "My business partner and I always thought we might get one of our five sons into the business," says Stuart S. Durland, vice president of operations for Seely & Durand Insurance in Warwick, N.Y., an agency founded by his grandfather in 1934. "That never transpired so we had to start thinking about the alternatives."

Durland joined the agency in 1990 after a stint at Travelers Insurance Company. He notes that there is four years' difference in ages between the partners, which puts one [closer to retirement](#) than the other. Does the older owner retire first? Or does he stay longer to accommodate a departure year for the younger owner? They started thinking about this 20 years ago and developed a buy/sell plan, which is funded by life and disability insurance.

Matt Naimoli and Zack Gould, founders of G&N Insurance, which opened in 2010 in Southborough, Mass., aren't ready to start thinking about a succession plan or exit strategy. "Most entrepreneurs say that [the day you open your business](#), you should have a plan to exit," Gould acknowledges. "We tend to adhere to the notion of 'If



you enter with an exit plan, you're not enabling yourself to reach your true potential."

Naimoli adds that, as young agents who started from scratch, "We're still focused on growing and creating impact and we have very little experience with succession planning. Likely to our own fault, we're too focused on expansion."

U.S. Army veteran Robert Klinger, president and CEO of the Klinger Insurance Group, disagrees strongly. He believes that agents need to start planning from day one, saying "Begin with the end in mind." He advises agency principals to consider succession and exit strategy as part of their [annual business plan](#), noting that insurance agents need to do a better job of their own risk management. He recommends having a road map that is a working document subject to modification annually.

Andrew Harris, CEO of Liberty Insurance Associates in Millstone Township, N.J., started planning when

his son expressed an interest in being in the insurance industry. Harris gave his son an online career aptitude test as a gift to see what industry he might have an affinity for. It turned out that his son (also named Andrew) had [a strong correlation for insurance and business](#). Harris Jr. worked at another insurance company for 10 years, and when it was sold he joined his father's agency, where he's been ever since, learning the ropes.

## More planning at larger firms

Tom Doran, a partner at Reagan Consulting in Atlanta, Ga., counsels larger firms with three to five owners or more in strategic planning. For such larger firms, he notes, succession and exit strategies are part of [the annual planning process](#), which he notes should be an ongoing exercise to ensure the perpetuation of the business that's not dependent on any one person. It should be a continual process, not event driven.

Doran advises agencies to look at the "ages and stages" of [the agency](#)

owners and potential owners down the road. For larger organizations, you need an ongoing dedication to succession planning to ensure that there's a steady stream of incoming men and women who will serve as agency owners in the future. It's as important as the agency's growth strategy, producer recruitment strategy and market expansion strategy.

Robert "Bob" Pettinicchi, executive vice president and chief lending office, InsurBanc, based in Farmington, Conn., advises independent insurance agencies and notes that prospective buyers often hope that no one has a succession plan so they can swoop in. He also believes that the agency's plan shouldn't be a "succession" plan; it should be a "success" plan. Every action should be about creating value.

"It's a people question," Doran says. To transfer a business, you need a buyer and a seller. "It's too late when you're getting ready to sell to look around and find out that there are no buyers internally. At that point, you may have no choice but to sell to an outside buyer," he adds.

#### **Key items to consider**

Durland believes that you need to be comfortable that the person or entity purchasing your agency or your share will be reliable and conscientious, especially if it's a loan-based deal. He urges agency principals to think of the staff and ensure that they won't be impacted too significantly. "And you have to accept that business may be done differently under the new ownership, which isn't necessarily a negative," he says.

"Set up a plan with guidance from accounting, legal and industry professionals," Harris says. He recommends having a funding plan in place — either external or internal. Agents need to look at their cash flow and profitability to see whether it can support any internal perpetuation plan.

An important question from the outset is whether anyone in the family wants to be part of the business, Klinger says. "If so, can they run it? Does someone in my company want it? Do I want to sell outright? Do I want to bring partners in?" He recommends

meeting with a business broker experienced in selling insurance agencies and asking what they look for in terms of financials. You may need a few years to get the business in shape to sell. He adds, "There's been heavy merger and acquisition activity in the last three to four years, but will that continue for the next five years?"

Steven J. Aronson, president of 100-year-old Aronson Insurance, an Acrisure partner Agency, in Needham, Mass., thinks that quality of life is an important consideration for designing an exit strategy. "Many buyers will pay you a handsome price for your agency, but how happy will you be the day, week, month or years after the deal is done? If you want to walk away, will your client be well cared for — the same way you did? If you want to stay, but not "manage", will you be happy working for the other next owner? If you want to stay and manage, which might be the best opportunity to maximize your financial deal, will your style fit into the buyer's culture?"

"If you will stay," Aronson adds, "you can earn substantial additional dollars by caring for and continuing to grow your old agency or book." He believes this option is particularly important if you are younger, or if you have children in the business.

"Three key things are setting value expectations, determining who the buying group would be, and laying out projections of what the deal would look like to both buyer and seller," Doran says. This should be done about three years in advance so when the time comes to execute the plan there are no surprises to either party.

As soon as you have more than one owner, Doran adds, depending on the owners' ages, you should have a shareholder or partnership agreement in place. It should spell out how equity would be transferred in the event of death, permanent disability, termination of employment or retirement of one of the owners.

#### **Seek trusted advisors**

It's important to get advice from trusted professionals, whether you're a sole proprietor or a larger organization. You need a good accountant, a

tax specialist (who may also be your accountant), an attorney experienced in succession planning for independent insurance agencies similar to yours, and a valuation specialist. Klinger suggests that you also talk to your carrier partners. "Some might want to approve the buyer, especially if buyer isn't appointed with the same carriers," he observes.

Harris had been a member of MarshBerry, a consulting firm that provides intellectual capital, strategic consulting, and merger and acquisition advice to clients within the insurance industry. "MarshBerry or similar firms look at your agency from a board of directors point of view, asking what is your value, what are you doing to increase the value, and what is your long-term plan, are you going to keep it or sell it?" Harris explains. He believes that it's important to maximize the profit and efficiency of the agency. "If you do that you don't have to sell it," he says. "You can perpetuate it. It will run without you."

#### **Ease on down the road**

To everything there is a season, but how do you know when it's the season of life for you to move on from the agency? "It depends on the circumstances," says Durland. Most purchasers want the seller to stay on for a certain amount of time to ensure transparency and a smooth transition.

Harris notes that there's an intuitive aspect to easing out of an agency; there are no hard and fast rules on timing. He agrees that transition is important, but some overlap is best. In his case, his son is gradually taking over the agency. He has stepped down as president, but he's the CEO.

"I want to see more senior people slowly transition out of the business," Harris says. "But it depends on whether you want to stay active in the business but not in the same role with the same responsibility. You shouldn't want seasoned professionals to leave abruptly. They still have tremendous relationships and ability to add value to the company.

"The exit strategy isn't really about the money," says Barry Seigerman,

Continued on page 29

# GET WISE ABOUT YOUR AGENCY RISK MANAGEMENT.



Swiss Re Corporate Solutions policyholders: Don't miss out on the invaluable risk management resources available exclusively to you. Log in to [www.iiaba.net/EOHappens](http://www.iiaba.net/EOHappens) to access claims statistics, prevention tools, insightful articles and more.

## THE BIG "I" PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY PROGRAM

### **Prevent.**

Our exclusive risk management resources help your agency avoid making common preventable mistakes.

### **Protect.**

Our superior coverage through Swiss Re Corporate Solutions and our experienced claims teams are in your corner in the event of a claim.

### **Prosper.**

When you know you have the best agency E&O Protection, you can focus on growing your most important asset—your business.

The Big "I" and Swiss Re Corporate Solutions are committed to providing IIABA members with leading edge agency E&O products and services. The IIABA and its federation of 51 state associations endorse the comprehensive professional liability program offered by Swiss Re Corporate Solutions.



Big "I"  
**PROFESSIONAL  
LIABILITY**



**Swiss Re**  
Corporate Solutions

**Visit [www.iiaba.net/EOContact](http://www.iiaba.net/EOContact)  
to connect with your state association today.**

Insurance products underwritten by Westport Insurance Corporation, Overland Park, Kansas.

Westport is a member of the Swiss Re group of companies and is licensed in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. © 2014

**EXPECT BIG THINGS<sup>®</sup>**  
**FROM APPLIED UNDERWRITERS**



Expect big things in workers' compensation. Most classes approved, nationwide. It pays to get a quote from Applied.<sup>®</sup>  
For information call (877) 234-4450 or visit [auw.com/us](http://auw.com/us). Follow us at [bigdoghq.com](http://bigdoghq.com).

©2019 Applied Underwriters, Inc. Rated A (Excellent) by AM Best. Insurance plans protected U.S. Patent No. 7,908,157.



an independent broker/producer with more than 50 years' experience in the industry as an agency founder and chairman and CEO of a multi-line agency. "It's all about the quality of life you want, what you will do after the sale and how you feel about what you've achieved versus what you set out to do."

There's a delicate balance when easing out and challenges in transitioning a family-owned business. As Harris observes, the successor may be looking over his or her shoulder to see whether Dad or Mom approves. At the same time, the agency staff may be looking at the parent as if to say "Is this decision your [son/daughter] made right?" But, he adds, "When things are right they tend to fall into place."

Aronson finds the question of when to move almost impossible to answer. He's 65 and he wants to work full-time for another five years and then ease out over the following five years. Why? "Because I love what I do," he responds. "And, as my wife reminds me, she married me for better or worse — but not for lunch." If he were 75, the answer would be different. "I might like to get out almost right away," he adds. "But at 40 or 50, or even 60, I'd be looking for a very long term opportunity to continue to work, in a meaningful way, with the new agency."

Klinger: Need to have a play book with "what if" scenarios and a plan for dealing with each one, e.g., what if I get sick, what if I get injured, etc. Who are people that my spouse or firm can turn to? Go to carriers, local associations, fellow agency owners to help you template some scenarios. That becomes working document.

#### **When to let staff know**

Depending on the confidentiality agreement you end up with, Durland says that you should let your key staff know as soon as you can that you're planning to transfer the business. "Being honest and up front is the best policy," he believes.

Seigerman concurs. "Always keep staff informed on long-term strategic goals and the various options you're considering," he advises.

Harris informed his staff from the

time he brought his son into the agency. "My son is my perpetuation plan," he told them. Keeping the staff informed tells them you're going to be a legacy agency, and it's not for sale. It helps to keep the staff motivated when they know you have a perpetuation plan. They're not as worried about job security so they won't leave when you do. Harris recommends positioning the conversation this way: Not only do I need your help to keep the agency going, but so does my son. He also recommends having this conversation with your carrier partners.

In his agency, Harris has stepped down as president, but is still there as CEO. His son does more and more of the day-to-day running of the agency. "It's happening easily and naturally," He says.

Klinger advises having confidential conversations with your team when you start thinking about easing out. See what their interests are, what their plans are. Do any of them have aspirations of owning their own agency? [Are they happy just being employees?](#)

If you get sick, Klinger adds, be sure you let the staff know that you have insurance in place to keep the firm going. You need to know your staff and how committed and loyal they are to you. That's going to dictate the timing of when you tell them that you're thinking of selling. Also, what is the prospective buyer likely to be like? Reassure them that they'll still have jobs. Shortcut rumors with good communication. Employees can tell when owners are cutting back, for example, losing carriers, not growing the business, and so on.

Klinger is setting up his business like a law firm or accounting firm. He's growing junior producers to see which ones have the maturity and vision to be able to step up into the organization. "If you show them a career path, they'll work harder," he says.

#### **Final words of wisdom**

Succession planning is a complicated process with lots of moving parts, says Doran. "Most agency principals make the mistake of waiting too long to start the conversation." Don't let that be you.

Pettinacchi notes that communication seems to be missing in most plans. And it's the most important component.

"Have an outside consulting group work with you to look at your business and business plan and give you guidance. You're too close to the situation to look at it critically," Harris says. With all the changes facing the insurance industry, he still sees a bright future for the independent insurance agency. "It's going to be a challenge to attract people into it," he observes. There's a large opportunity for the next generation to flood into the industry as the [baby boomers retire](#). "Recognizing that is the challenge, I firmly believe there is still a role for agents. It might be different, and the way we sell might be different, but consulting, advising and guiding people to make the right decisions on important topics will always be there. Right now, artificial intelligence can't look at all the permutations of your life and business. We need to do a better job as industry to focus collectively on what our future is going to look like."

"If you think [your son or daughter is interested in the business](#), have them go to work for someone else first," Klinger advises. I want you to go out and make mistakes first. Learn from hard times. Start at the lowest level. Best officers were enlisted. They understand all the aspects of the operation and appreciate the hard work it took to get there. Better leader and earn more respect among your peers and subordinates. I'll do what it takes to make us successful. It's all about the team.

"Your team helped get you here — [you did not build this alone, so take care of your team](#)," Aronson says. Consider not only a nice bonus at the time of the transaction, but, if you are staying, consider stay-bonuses for 12, 24 and even 36 months out. They are your key to future success and happiness. "For your top people, these could be the largest checks they will ever see in their lifetime."



# Fact vs Fiction

**Contact Mark Maurer:**

570.473.4332 | [mmaurer@keystoneinsgrp.com](mailto:mmaurer@keystoneinsgrp.com)  
[keystoneinsgrp.com](http://keystoneinsgrp.com)

 **KEYSTONE®**

©2018 Keystone Insurers Group ®. All rights reserved. This does not constitute an offer to sell a franchise in any state in which the Keystone Insurers Group franchise is not registered.

# Independence works better together.

**L**ike today, in 1983, independent insurance agents faced a difficult marketplace. Determined to become even stronger, four Pennsylvania agencies banded together, and Keystone was born.

From its humble beginnings, Keystone now covers more than 25% of the U.S. through its 278 franchise partners across the Mid-Atlantic, Southern and Midwest regions. With 15 divisions of resources, the company is attracting the country's most successful agencies.

While it's predicted within the next few years that over 80% of the independent agency channel will be generated through an alliance/affiliation, what distinguishes Keystone from other organizations is outcomes. Keystone exists to increase the value of its agency participants. They assist agencies to increase and diversify their revenue streams, and improve operating efficiencies thereby enhancing their EBITDA returns.

With success often comes misperceptions and sometimes disinformation. Fighting FICTION with FACT:

**FICTION:** Keystone buys your agency and changes its ownership or identity.

**FACT:** Keystone does not want to buy your agency. In fact, Keystone is owned by its agency partners and employees. Over 70% of agencies have chosen to be equity partners.

**FICTION:** Keystone is just an aggregator with market access.

**FACT:** Aggregation is simply a by-product of Keystone's business endeavors due to its size and profitability with carriers. Keystone's business model is to provide exclusive and unique competitive advantages in the pursuit of expo-nential growth in value for its agency participants. This is delivered through the almost 200 individuals employed by Keystone, its subsidiaries and

related entities who get up every business day with "one objective"—to help agency partners dramatically increase the value of their firms.

**FICTION:** Keystone changes an agency's operations and requires you to move business.

**FACT:** Keystone doesn't interfere with an agency's day-to-day operations. They enable their agency partners to provide local presence with global capabilities. When an agency aligns with Keystone, their staff increases by almost a factor of 200! Keystone empowers its participants with the resources to compete on any account, of any size, against any firm IN THE WORLD!

**FICTION:** Keystone is a cluster for small agencies; anyone can get in.

**FACT:** Keystone does not partner with agencies solely seeking market access, protection or start-up assistance. Every agency in Keystone has been personally referred by a trusted source who understands Keystone's model. Every agency must pass the same stringent underwriting process in order to qualify.

**FICTION:** Once you're in Keystone, you can't get out with-out penalties.

**FACT:** Keystone does not hold its agency partners "hostage," nor subject them to punitive financial costs should they find Keystone is not a fit for them. If an agency wants to with-draw from Keystone, why should the agency be penalized for Keystone failing to meet the agency's expectations?

This year Keystone celebrates its 35th year in business. They launched their 12th state, Wisconsin, in June, and anticipate ending the year with revenue from benefits and financial services in excess of \$100 million, and property casualty premiums approaching \$4 billion.





# TRUST US TO CATER TO THEIR BUSINESS

Our restaurant package offers a menu of options that cover the risks of running a successful dining establishment, from food spoilage to cooking equipment protection, and more. That way, restaurant owners can focus on their bread and butter — customers. Trust in Tomorrow.<sup>®</sup> Contact us today.

AUTO | HOME | FARM | BUSINESS

[grinnellmutual.com](https://grinnellmutual.com)



Trust in Tomorrow.<sup>®</sup>

"Trust in Tomorrow." and "Grinnell Mutual" are registered trademarks of Grinnell Mutual Reinsurance Company. © Grinnell Mutual Reinsurance Company, 2019



# UPCOMING >>>> >>>>>>>>>> events

FEB  
13

Insurance Day on the Hill

Young Agents Conference

TBD

MAY  
21

Annual Planning

Convention, Trade Show & EXPO

SEPT  
16&17

# NEIGHBORHOOD PRIDE



by Tom O'Meara

Recently my wife and I attended a party which was held in the garage of one of our neighbors. It was labeled as a “block party,” however, it was clear that my neighbor wanted to show off his new TV in the garage during a college football game. He had every right to do so given the fact that his garage was equipped better than any room inside our house. I will admit, I did not know the neighbor very well personally, but I got in on the conversation about his new TV and all the functions it could perform. It truly was amazing and made me want to head right to Best Buy for an upgrade of my own. The conversation turned a bit when the neighbor referred to his garage as his “man cave” one too many times. My wife decided to chime in and ask if that meant his wife was not allowed in the garage. I still do not know if his response was meant as a joke or not since he responded that she is allowed in the garage but not allowed to use the TV. I will be honest, as proud as he was of that TV, I have to believe he may have been serious. I began to feel a little tension in the air, so I guided my wife away from the conversation and into the house to visit with others.

After a short time inside, I found myself back in the garage to watch the football game while my wife remained inside. What does this article and a TV

have to do with insurance? Well, as I stood alone in the corner of the garage watching the game and working on a beer and a couple of chicken wings, my neighbor came over and joined me. The conversation turned to small talk and he asked what I did for a living. Instead of going into detail with him, I simply replied that I work in the “insurance world.” As many of you are aware, this reply is often enough to have people quickly change the subject in fear of being quoted for policies. This however was not the case. The neighbor asked questions about insurance, quickly went to the high cost of premiums and began filling me in on a claim he was involved with many years ago in which he felt he was not treated fairly. Apparently at a prior residence, a branch from his next-door neighbor’s tree snapped off during a storm and damaged his fence. The neighbor’s insurance carrier denied the claim and he was told that he would have to turn it in under his homeowners policy. He clearly was not happy with this especially hearing that his deductible would be included.

As much as I wanted this conversation to end at this moment, I asked him who his current homeowners policy was with. I wish I could say his answer shocked me; however, I think all

of us know “a neighbor” like mine. He did not have any idea of who his agent was nor the company writing the policy. He got the policy when he moved in about 3 years ago and the premium comes out of his mortgage payments. I probably should have dropped the conversation, but I went right back to the new TV that he was so proud of. I asked if he realized that he clearly spent much more time talking to a salesperson about a \$2,000 TV than he did with an insurance agent about protecting all of his assets (including the TV). He said, “I understand TV’s and use it often, but I do not understand insurance and hopefully never need to use it. I pay my premiums and if I ever have a claim, I will simply call it in.” I inquired how he plans on turning in a claim when he does not even know who his carrier is. His response was simple and predictable, “I have it somewhere in one of my drawers.”

Thankfully my wife came back outside and gave me the “let’s go” look. I gladly obliged and while walking home I began to explain my conversation with the neighbor to her. Her response was short but appropriate as she asked me, “What do you expect from a guy who won’t let his wife watch his new TV?”

# sponsors

2019

PLATINUM

**PROGRESSIVE**



**GRINNELL**  
MUTUAL

**ufg**  
INSURANCE



**Nationwide**

**Independent Agents  
Service Corp.**

**EMC**  
INSURANCE



**IMT** INSURANCE

GOLD



**CAMERON**  
— MUTUAL —

**CWG**  
| a Berkley Company



**SECURA**  
INSURANCE COMPANIES

SILVER

Crop Risk Services  
Diversified Crop Insurance Services  
Encova Insurance  
Farmers Mutual Hail Insurance Co.  
GuideOne Insurance

Liberty Mutual/SAFECO Insurance  
Merchants Bonding Company  
NAU Country Insurance  
Partners Mutual Insurance Company  
Pekin Insurance

BRONZE

Accident Fund Ins. Com./United Heartland  
Acuity  
ARMtech Insurance Services  
Auto-Owners Insurance  
Columbia Insurance Group  
Delta Dental of Iowa  
Donegal Insurance  
Encompass Insurance Company  
Great American Insurance Companies  
Hastings Mutual Insurance Company

Keystone Insurers Group  
MJ Kelly Company of Iowa  
Markel Specialty Commercial  
North Star Mutual Insurance Company  
ProAg  
Rain & Hail  
SFM Mutual  
Society Insurance  
West Bend Mutual Insurance Company  
Western National Insurance  
Westfield Insurance



**Independent  
Insurance**  
Agents of Iowa

## INDEPENDENT INSURANCE AGENTS OF IOWA

4000 Westown Parkway, Suite 200  
West Des Moines, Iowa 50266

PRSRT STD  
U.S. Postage  
**Paid**  
Des Moines, IA  
Permit No. 2538

Local relationships mean quick and easy access to a live human being when you have a question, a need, or a claim. Insurance is all about service, which is provided by people, not advertising gimmicks. People do business with people and the relationship we have with our customers differentiates our programs from all of the other agent E&O options in the market.

## Why IIAI for your agency E&O?



### PROGRAMS "BY AND FOR THE AGENTS"

Our E&O programs are created with the input of independent insurance agents. We continually gather feedback from agents, making improvements based on emerging issues and needs.



### UNDERWRITER ACCESSIBILITY & EXPERTISE

Our underwriters are always available for conference calls with our member clients or prospective clients. They are committed to providing you timely and knowledgeable information, making your E&O experience a pleasant one.



### CARRIER BRAND & FINANCIAL STRENGTH

Our top carriers have A- to A+ A.M. Best ratings. They have been in the E&O insurance business for over 100 years combined and remain solid in their credentials as providers, offering some of the broadest coverage available.



### CLAIMS EXPERTISE

Our carriers have experienced teams exclusively focused on E&O claims. Because of the long history in the E&O business, our carriers have relationships with expert law firms that specialize in E&O cases. You will never have to worry about being assigned an inexperienced panel lawyer to handle your claim. And, you continue to have the support and resources of IIAI behind you.

### Meet our team

Our insurance department is ready and willing to help you with your professional liability for your agency.

### Start doing

Get a quote today by contacting our insurance department, or find out more on our website at [iiaaiowa.com/Products/Pages/default.aspx](http://iiaaiowa.com/Products/Pages/default.aspx)



Brenda Kluger



Megan Kincy



Linda Pedersen



4000 Westown Parkway, Suite 200  
West Des Moines, IA 50266

515-223-6060

[www.iiaaiowa.org](http://www.iiaaiowa.org)