

BIG **i** | INDIANA MARCH/APRIL 2024

FOCUS

A Bi-Monthly Publication of the Independent Insurance Agents of Indiana



Symington Takes the Reins
as National CEO | pg 12

ICRB Names Keathley President
and CEO | pg 8

Ruminations on Retirement | pg 10



DEDICATED TO YOUR CUSTOMERS' VISION

Your customers have their sights set on success. Our Businessowners policies combine the property, liability, and business-interruption coverages they need to help them grow. Trust in Tomorrow.[®] Talk to us today.

PERSONAL | BUSINESS | REINSURANCE

grinnellmutual.com



Trust in Tomorrow.[®]

FOCUS is a bi-monthly publication of the Independent Agents Services Corp., a subsidiary of the Big I Indiana.

Steve Duff
 Publisher

Melissa Hall
 Editor and Advertising Manager

The Big I Indiana staff has direct phone extensions, which are listed below, when you dial into either of the association's numbers: (800) 438-4424 or (317) 824-3780.

Steve Duff
 Ext. 208, duff@bigi.org

Laura Glunt
 Ext. 202, glunt@bigi.org

Melissa Hall
 Ext. 213, hall@bigi.org

Amy Miller, CPA
 Ext. 209, miller@bigi.org

Nicole Murrell
 Ext. 205, murrell@bigi.org

Mary Cady Sullivan
 Ext. 214, sullivan@bigi.org

Megan Vaught
 Ext. 215, vaught@bigi.org

Molly Young
 Ext. 211, young@bigi.org

For advertising information, questions or comments please call: (317) 824-3780 or (800) 438-4424
 Fax: (317) 824-3786

bigiinfo@bigi.org ■ www.bigi.org

Designed by
IBJ Media Content Studio
 (317) 634-6200
www.ibjmedia.com

Printed by
Johnson Press of America

Cover photo: Charles Symington
Photo credit: Maureen Porto Studios

Contents

4 Letter From your Big I CEO

Government Affairs

6 InsurPAC List of 2023 Contributors

Industry Profile

8 ICRB Names Keathley President and CEO

Technical

10 Ruminations on Retirement

Cover Story

12 Symington Takes the Reins as National CEO

Agency Management

16 Updates to Marketing Reimbursement Program

18 Data and Analytics for Sales

20 Prospecting Habits of Successful Producers

Education

19 Registration Open for Emerging Leaders Conference

Big I News

22 Quick Hits

24 Staff Q&A: Laura Glunt

Events

16 Topgolf Save the Date

Advertisers

2 Grinnell Mutual

9 Berkshire Hathaway

17 Big I E&O

5 Big I Indiana Partners

7 Burnham & Flower

28 IPEP

23 J.M. Wilson

27 Public Risk Underwriters

15 SECURA Insurance

14 SFM Insurance Company

25 Shepherd Insurance

26 West Bend Mutual Insurance Company

From the Big I CEO: Steve Duff

PACs



The world of politics has taken an ugly turn over the last decade. A combination of extremism from both parties, single-issue campaigns defeating strong legislators, and an overall lack of decorum has led to the negative view of politics and its participants. However, no matter how dire it may seem, one reality remains: it's the system we have. For those of us charged with making our industry as strong as possible, we must navigate through it. This is where our political action committees (PACs) play a vital role. Both our federal one: InsurPac, and our state one: IPAC are critical.

We use the tools at our disposal to make sure your interests are represented in the Statehouse and US Congress. Legislative advocacy can be viewed as a stool with three legs: direct lobbying, grassroots, and political action. The first two already place us among the top groups in the country, so I want to focus on the third leg: PACs.

PACs are like the New York Yankees or University of Notre Dame football—you either love them or hate them. The perception of PACs is generally negative, but the reality is they play a crucial role in the political process for organizations like the Big I. Either you are in

or you are out, and we need to be in. So, let's look at a few perceptions versus the reality of the Big I PACs.

Perception: PACs buy votes.

Reality: PACs help elect candidates, regardless of political party, that are supportive of a group's core beliefs. These candidates can help move agendas forward to the benefit of the group. There is no stronger example of this than the strength of the insurance industry in Indiana which has been bolstered by legislators from the insurance industry that IPAC has helped get elected.

Perception: PACs are only for the wealthy.

Reality: PACs allow people of lesser means to pool resources to support candidates who are supportive of them. The average contribution to the Big I state and federal PACs is less than \$100. This amount would make little impact alone but pooled it with other contributions it can make a splash.

Perception: PACs only give to candidates from one party.

Reality: We support candidates from both parties with our PACs. Because neither of our PACs are the biggest dogs on the block, we have to be judicious in helping candidates that share our views, regardless of political affiliation.

On page 6, we have a list of all the 2023 InsurPac contributors. Thank you to those who stepped up last year and will hopefully do so again in 2024. I would urge all our members to contribute what you can. There is a QR code at the top of the list of contributors to make it simple. This is a vital tool in our state and federal lobbying efforts—and we need your help. ■

partners

2024

BIG i[®] | INDIANA

DIAMOND



PLATINUM



GOLD



SILVER



BRONZE



GENERAL

Berkshire Hathaway GUARD
Grinnell Mutual
ICW Group Insurance Companies
Roush Insurance Services, Inc.
Auto-Owners Insurance Company
The Hanover Insurance Group
Celina Insurance Group
Hastings Mutual Insurance Company

Risk Placement Services, Inc.
Grange Insurance
J.M. Wilson
Pekin Insurance
AF Group
Acrisure
Buckeye Insurance Group
Amerisafe

Builders
Wolverine Mutual Insurance Company
Frankenmuth Insurance
MICA
First Insurance Funding
EMC Insurance Companies
Eastern Alliance Insurance Group

Big I Indiana gratefully acknowledges these fine companies, our 2024 Partners. They are generously supporting the annual Big I Indiana convention and other events held in 2024. Without their assistance, fees for these events would be significantly higher and/or the quality of programming would be restricted.

InsurPac List of 2023 Contributors



Scan here to donate.

Mike Anton

Anton Insurance Agency, Inc.

John Auld

Franklin Insurance Agency

Mark Bates

World Insurance Associates, LLC

Pam Bennett Martin

Bennett & Bennett Insurance Inc.

Carrie Block

1st Choice Insurance Service

David Boedker

Keystone Insurers Group

Jackson Bogan

The Mitchell Agency Inc.

Terry Bright

Bright Insurance Services Inc.

Tom Brown

Brown Insurance Group

Matt Bryan

RME Insurance

Julie Bryndal

Barrett & Associates, Inc.

Ethan Buske

Burns & Wilcox, LTD

Jennifer Carr

Arlington/Roe

Kendra Chudzynski

The Smith Sawyer Smith Agency

Brady Claxton

McGowan Insurance Group, LLC
(Shelbyville)

Pat Conley

Meyers Glaros Group

Tina Deitrick

McGowan Insurance Group, LLC

Martin Dezelan

Arthur J. Gallagher Risk & Co.

Steve Duff

IIA of Indiana

Joel Dunham

Ovation Insurance

Cecee Emmons

Accident Fund

Josh Estelle

McGowan Insurance Group, LLC
(New Castle)

Russell Flueckiger

Bixler Insurance Inc.

Roxanne Gard

Rothschild Agency, Inc.

Bob Gredy Sr.

Bright & Williamson Ins. Agcy.

Melissa Hall

IIA of Indiana

Chad Heilman

Summit City Insurance Counselors

Mike Highum

McGowan Insurance Group, LLC

John Immordino

Arlington/Roe

Todd Jackson

McGowan Insurance Group, LLC

David Karp

Anderson Insurance

Byron Kauffman

Wetzel Insurance Agency, Inc.

Pat Kennedy

1st Source Insurance (South Bend)

Jon Kincaid

Kincaid Insurance Group, Inc.

Tom Kindell

Kindell Insurance Services, LLC

Kelley Knepper

McGowan Insurance Group, LLC

William Kozlowski

Kozlowski & Associates

Matt Lehman

Bixler Insurance, Inc.

Stephanie Marsh

WalkerHughes Insurance Group
(Indianapolis)

Lee May

Choice Insurance Agency, Inc.

Dean Mayfield

Mayfield Ins Inc dba ISU Ins Inv Grp

Connor McCarthy

McCarthy Insurance Group, Inc.

Hugh M McGowan

McGowan Insurance Group, LLC

Bill Merrill

Merrill & Merrill Insurance

Dave Mettler

Mettler Agency Inc.

Larry Meyers

Meyers Glaros Group

Mike Miley

Gibson

Timothy Miller

McGowan Insurance Group, LLC
(Richmond)

Molly O'Daniel

Lancaster Insurance Agency

Susan Ralston

Jacob Insurance Service LLC

Eric Rich

McGowan Insurance Group, LLC
(Anderson)

Kali Rodgers

DeWitt Insurance Group LLC

Jim Roe

Arlington/Roe

Patrick Roe

Arlington/Roe

Bille Romine

Underwriters Alliance of Indiana Inc

Dean Rothschild

Rothschild Agency, Inc.

Christopher Rush

The DeHayes Group

Mike Saine

The Smith Sawyer Smith Agency

Robert Sawyer

The Smith Sawyer Smith Agency

Jim Schoen

Hoosier Associates, Inc.

Taylor Schoen

Hoosier Associates, Inc.

Brett Schultheis

Schultheis Insurance Agency Inc.

Kenan Schultheis

Schultheis Insurance Agency Inc.

Scotty Scott

Sycamore Insurance Associates, LLC

Mari Shirer

Shirer Insurance Services, LLC

Brent Skelton

Epic Insurance Midwest (Lafayette)

Brett Slama

The Smith Sawyer Smith Agency

Lisa Slone

ISU/The May Agency

Glenn Smith

Callistus Smith Agency Inc.

Justin Smith

Hummel Winters Insurance

Martin Smith

The Smith Sawyer Smith Agency

Ron Smith

The Smith Sawyer Smith Agency

Terry Smith

The Smith Sawyer Smith Agency

Kyle Stoffel

Underwriters Alliance of Indiana Inc

Vickie Talcott

Morrow Insurance Agency Inc

Monte Thompson

J.M. Thompson Insurance, Inc.

Eric Trabert

Jacob Insurance Service LLC

Eric Van Vleet

Van Bar Inc dba VanVleet Ins Agency

Doug Walker

Walker Professional Insurance

Matthew Weaver

CIS-Crop Insurance Specialists, Inc.

Neal Williams

Keystone Ins & Benefits Group, LLC

Adele Wood

Brandon Wright

The Wright Insurance Company

Adam Young

Insurance Management Group

Ben Zimmer

Ethos Insurance & Risk Management

Ryan Zimpleman

The Smith Sawyer Smith Agency



BUILDING CONFIDENCE.

You Serve Others. We Serve You.

For over half a century, our team of specialists have been providing Comprehensive Property & Liability coverages to Indiana Public Entities.

At Burnham & Flower we:

- Work exclusively through Indiana Independent Agents
- Represent multiple A-rated carriers with products for all sizes of Public Entities
- Provide traditional first dollar insurance and cost effective SIR programs for larger accounts

800.748.0554 · bfgroup.com · info@bfgroup.com



ICRB Names Keathley President and CEO

By Melissa Hall

Paul Keathley wasn't expecting to settle in Indiana.

The Ohio native moved here in 2000 when his company transferred him. In June of that year, he and his wife Teresa sold their home and picked up and moved their family, including two young kids, to a new state. They bought a house and land near Frankfort and started a small hobby farm, raising sheep and

a few horses. Two months later the company laid everyone off.

"This was before LinkedIn and my whole network was in Ohio," Keathley said. "We decided to trust God and we were here for a reason. It all worked out and I quickly got a job at Liberty Mutual."



Keathley and his wife.

That hiccup, which could have felt like a disaster, instead helped the Keathley family plant deep roots in the Hoosier community. Now, almost 25 years later, Keathley has taken the position as the president and CEO of the Indiana Compensation Rating Bureau (ICRB). He's now been a part of the Indiana insurance community for decades, specializing in workers' compensation. Before joining the ICRB as vice president in 2020 he'd served on the organization's board as the Accident Fund representative since 2016.

When Keathley transitioned into his new role, he hired Scott Lerew as the new vice president of the ICRB. The two have worked together in the past and when it came to finding his replacement, Keathley knew the perfect person for the job. The new team is working on strengthening their training programs and making sure they are outward facing as an organization.



Keathley with his wife, kids, and their spouses on a recent trip to Scotland.

What Can the ICRB Do for You?

There is a wealth of resources available at icrb.net including a reference library with articles on every imaginable workers' comp question. As an independent bureau, the staff is also available to answer questions or audit a dispute resolution. Just call (317) 842-2800. Their rulings are final and carriers must defer to their decision. The ICRB annual report is also posted on the website each year. These resources are free and offered to all Indiana independent agents.

For more information about the ICRB, you can reach out to Jennifer Cox (director of finance and operations) at JCox@icrb.net, Scott Lerew (vice president) at SLerew@icrb.net, or Paul Keathley (president and CEO) at pkeathley@icrb.net.



Cox

"Right now we're working on reestablishing our relationship with agents, the Indiana Department of Insurance, the workers' compensation board, state representatives, the Insurance Institute, and others.



Lerew

With our leadership changes and Covid those have suffered, and we want to focus on improving them," Keathley said. "We want to be more active in the Indiana insurance industry as we connect with people." ■



We have an appetite for small business.

- The traditional coverage your clients need.
- The customized options your clients desire.
- The affordable price your clients deserve.

We've been successfully protecting small businesses since 1983.



Browse all of our products at www.guard.com.

Ruminations on Retirement

By Richard S. Pitts

“Res Gestae,” I write.

“Great way to start,” says my intrepid editor. “Obscure Latin, having nothing to do with the topic.” “There is a connection I promise,” I insist.

For our purposes the connection is that Res Gestae is the Indiana State Bar Association’s magazine. Think of it as Focus for lawyers. In its latest edition there’s an article by Ted Waggoner titled, “Planning for Retirement.”

I’ve been working for years now with agencies on succession plans and sales of their agencies. Often retirement is baked in as a part of those transactions. So, I’d been working around the edges of the retirement question, but never really confronted it head on the way Ted did. He graciously agreed to an interview and liberal excerpts from his article as there are many similarities between our fields.

Let’s examine your options.

A. Die at the desk. Some lawyers plan to die with their boots on. If their health, memory, and analytical skills stay strong, this possibility works for them and their clients. Most lawyers do not get to win the trifecta of health, memory, and analytic skills, though. As one falters, the lawyer’s production and output also falters, and the client suffers.

B. Deal with unexpected health issues. Issues of health increase as lawyers age. According to the Council for Disability Awareness, 5% of adults suffer from short-term disability annually, with that rate rising with age. And 25% of adults will suffer a long-term disability during their work life.

C. Create a retirement plan, start on the road to retirement, and live out the plan.

Mr. Waggoner’s perspective favors “C” for myriad reasons, and mine does, too, for producers. Despite that, over the years, I have encountered senior producers (often agency owners) who decide upon option “A.”

For some, it is seen as a matter of economics—the agency or the agent’s production and compensation formula will generate more income the longer the producer stays at it (and even if the agency’s overall value erodes). For others, it is a matter of lifestyle: they enjoy all of the perks of their position and the ability to pick and choose to do the “fun” stuff and leave the rest to others.

Before I turn back to Mr. Waggoner’s thoughts on the matter, I want to point out a little sleight of hand here. I mentioned agency value in the preceding

paragraph. That’s normally a huge consideration in mergers, sales, and succession planning. Really, though, agency value is only collateral to the retirement question—the deeply personal, but also important professional, decision. Both agency sale or succession planning can be the cause of or the effect of retirement, but it is neither fair nor accurate to equate agency sales with retirement.

Agency owners find it difficult at best to unscramble that egg, though. Why? Ted’s got some great answers from the attorney side:

Lawyers approaching retirement are often in the most exciting parts of their careers, after all. They are involved in interesting matters that took decades to attain. Larger estates, more critical business plans, or more important litigation matters have finally landed on the caseload...

...Turning hard fought cases over to younger lawyers who have not put in the time to ‘earn’ the case seems inappropriate, for instance. And even if these new lawyers have the skills, they have not invested the sweat equity in building that client relationship...

I see echoes of this sentiment on the agency side. Many times, it gets expressed in words such as “I want the agency to go on. I want the ‘kids’ to succeed, but I’m afraid they’ll lose

clients. And, I'm not going to just hand the place over to them for a song."

To me, the expressions of concern about diminished business and value may be proxies for a different concept: what I do for a living, and how I do it, are just too much a part of who I am as a person to let it go. If that's true, then it can be a huge impediment to a serious consideration of retirement.

In my interview with Ted, I claimed that I personally can't consider retiring yet. I said I still get too enthusiastic when I get a new matter or a new client to be able even to think about it.

Mr. Waggoner said to me, yes, but that's about you. "What about the client? Can you still serve the client well?" Ted is part of a working group on retirement issues at the State Bar Association. Instead of competency tests or set retirement ages, the working group has a tenet that it will rely on:

The intelligent and understanding of competent lawyers to make decisions that recognize the fiduciary duty to clients and the obligations they have to others, including family members, law firm members, and themselves.

That struck me as an important part of the equation here that I had been overlooking. When contemplating the decision to retire, what consideration does a producer (owner or not) owe to the

insureds? To the companies? To the colleagues inside the agency?

When I teach insurance ethics classes for continuing education, I often emphasize doing what's best for the client or customer or company as a cornerstone of professional ethics, which is not a surprise to anyone. I stress that sometimes actions in the client's or company's best interests are not in best interests of the producer.

It may be that the retirement decision can be a part of that discussion. Back to Ted's earlier observation: "Most lawyers do not get to win the trifecta of health, memory, and analytic skills...and the client suffers." A large part of making a responsible decision to retire is to consider the question of whether the physical stamina is still intact and whether the mental acuity is present.

That's way easier said than done. Ted and I had a discussion about using "partners" to work with a senior firm member, or the prospect of enlisting unaffiliated, objective third party observers to report lapses in judgment or the like. It sounds great to have one of those people (inside or outside the agency) be tasked with letting someone in charge know when a producer has "lost the hop on the fastball".

The reality is that affiliated people—co-owners or up and comers in the agency, maybe—can have their motives improperly questioned, and unaffiliated people



Richard S. Pitts is general counsel to the Independent Insurance Agents of Indiana. As counsel to the Big I, Rick speaks annually at the association's "Agency Compliance" seminars and teaches various seminars on insurance and employment-related matters.

are reluctant to report what they know. It's tough to criticize a cornerstone of the agency, even in private.

Ultimately, the responsibility falls back to the producer. A candid assessment of skills and acuity, must take place alongside the recognition that the producer's continuing satisfaction is not the yardstick. The constituencies of agency, clients, companies, and family have to figure prominently in as well.

Ted's article ends with a great quote: "If you want to go out with a reputation for planning like a lawyer, then you should plan for yourself as well as you plan for your clients." It's easy for me to substitute "lawyer" with "good risk manager, insurance market navigator, and trusted client adviser."

I can't thank Ted enough for his kind and generous assistance, both personally and professionally. ■

Symington Takes the Reins as National CEO

By Melissa Hall



Photo credit: Maureen Porto Studios

Years before Capitol Hill's siren call got its hooks in Charles Symington,

the new president and CEO of the Independent Insurance Agents and Brokers of America (IIABA), he thought he might follow in his father's footsteps as a police officer. Symington thought federal law enforcement might be the perfect fit for him. He moved from his Long Island home to attend the University of Virginia and chose classes with an eye on law school. "Many FBI agents first get law degrees," he explained. "But the longer I studied, the more I became interested in the traditional practice of law. I really loved litigating and all the classes that prepared me for the courtroom experience."

After graduating from Emory University in Atlanta with a law degree, he took a position with the firm Drew, Eckl & Farnham practicing insurance defense litigation. He was able to be in the courtroom and focused on workers' compensation defense. "As a young lawyer I was in front of administrative law judges immediately, it was a great way to cut your teeth as a litigator," he said. "That's where I established my foundation of knowledge of the insurance industry and how it works."

After a few years, he moved

back to Virginia where he worked at a generalist firm. But by then his gaze was wandering to Capitol Hill. He'd interned for Senator Alfonse D'Amato (R-New York) during law



US Senator Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Symington



Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-New York) and Symington



Symington and US Senator Tim Scott (R-South Carolina)

school and loved it. He was hired to work on the US House Committee on Energy and Commerce and then for the US House Financial Services Committee. During that time, he worked solely on insurance legislation, including TRIA and other policies that impacted the property & casualty market. “As a young person, it was exciting to be involved in policy making. I was rubbing elbows with the leaders of the country,” he explained. “Combining my insurance experience with creating public policy was really rewarding.” And after nearly five years working on Capitol Hill as an insurance counsel, Symington was hired by the Big “I” as its top federal lobbyist in 2004.

Much has changed since those early days, but for years *The Hill*, a prominent Washington, D.C. political newspaper, has named Symington one of the top trade

association lobbyists in the country. In September 2023, he was promoted to president and CEO of the IIABA, taking the reins from Bob Rusbuldt. After 20 years with the association, it was a natural succession.

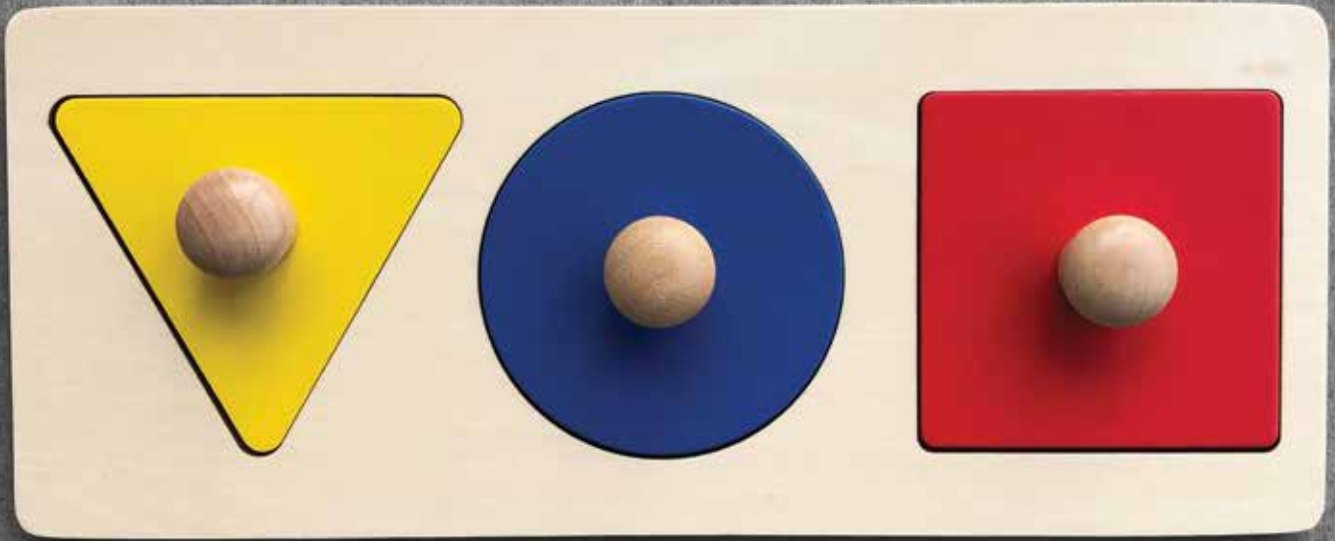
Looking to the Future

As Symington embarks on his first full year as the CEO, he plans to approach the role with transparency. “We’ve got to communicate clearly, concisely, and frequently what we’re doing on members’ behalf,” he explained. His goals for 2024 include dealing with the nationwide hard market that is at the forefront of agents’ minds. “We’re doing a major upgrade of our Big ‘I’ market access programs. We’re working with state and federal legislators on ways that they might be able to ameliorate some of these market conditions. And we’re having some very honest conversations with the leadership of our carrier partners to explain to them how their decisions are impacting our members. It’s extremely difficult for agents out there right now,” Symington said.

The association has updated the Trusted Choice Hard Market Toolkit, which is available to members. There is a new association management system in the works, and Trusted Choice will be announcing some new improvements as well. “We’ve got a number of major projects in the pipeline,” he said. “I’m really excited to see some of this come to fruition in 2024.”

His free time is limited, but for nine years, he served as a board member and then chair of the National Down Syndrome Society. His youngest son was born with Down syndrome and the organization holds a special place in his heart. “It’s really rewarding work to advocate on behalf of the special needs community,” he said.

Symington will be traveling to state conventions around the nation in his new role. Each day, no matter where he is, his goal is to move the needle forward for members. “Sometimes it’s hard to establish the tangible value of an association, but we want to give them a valuable return on investment,” he explained. “Every day I wake up and I think of ways that I can make our members’ lives easier.” ■



The right fit for your clients.
The right fit for you.

Now appointing
Indiana agencies

Select Indiana work comp
pool accounts welcome

No premium
volume commitments

Delivering positive, long-term results for employers.



sfmic.com

SFM[®]
The Work Comp Experts

Call or email
to get started

952-838-4433

appointments@sfmic.com



Merik M.
Specialty Lines
Underwriter



Carolyn S.
Indiana
Sales Manager



John T.
Farm Lines
Underwriter



Jamie S.
Commercial Lines
Underwriter

Honest relationships

SECURA's team of insurance experts is making insurance genuine. They are here to support you and your clients. Our underwriting teams are quick to reply, open-minded, and know their stuff. Plus they are backed by our caring claims group who will get your clients back on their feet.

Interested in building a relationship?
Contact us at secura.net/IN-agents.

Hear from our experts.

Want to learn more about what SECURA has to offer? Scan the QR code or visit secura.net/IN-agents for more information about the SECURA team.



Updates to Marketing Reimbursement Program

by Mia McGowan

Trusted Choice® is excited to share some updates regarding the Marketing Reimbursement Program (MRP) for 2024.

MRP funds are now available for eligible expenses incurred throughout the year.

Trusted Choice is introducing a new incentive to encourage collaboration with multiple vendors and maximize marketing potential. Big “I” member agencies can now only receive a

maximum reimbursement of \$500 for services from one vendor. However, agencies still have access to \$1,000 in total. Also, as of 2024, funds for vendor reimbursement are only available to new customers and renewals are not eligible.

These changes will incentivize

agencies to diversify marketing strategies and unlock fresh opportunities for success.

Trusted Choice® understands the importance of co-branding efforts in establishing a strong brand presence. Members can continue to utilize up to \$1,000 in reimbursements for traditional and digital co-branding initiatives featuring the Trusted Choice logo. This investment will help members strengthen their brand identity and reach a wider audience.

Contact Ambrie Jones at Ambrie.Jones@iiaba.net with any questions. ■



BIG **i** | INDIANA

EMERGING LEADERS
TOPGOLF NETWORKING EVENT

April 25th from 2-4 pm

Limited space!
Register Now!



Mistake. Blunder. Gaffe. Error. Happens to the best of us.



Mistakes happen and protecting the future of your agency is a major priority. You trust us to represent your interests at the highest level and we want to provide you with the best E&O coverage in the marketplace - not just a policy, but a comprehensive program.

Mistakes are inevitable. Let us protect you.



www.bigi.org/eo
Mary Sullivan
sullivan@bigi.org
317-228-3020

Corporate Solutions  **Swiss Re**


The Big I Professional Liability program offers members with leading edge agency E&O products and services through Swiss Re Corporate Solutions, insurance products underwritten by Westport Insurance Corporation, Overland Park, Kansas, a member of Swiss Re Corporate Solutions, and other providers.

Data and Analytics for Sales

By Jeni Wehrmeyer, COO & CMO

If you look beyond the surface and dissect the performance of your producer team, it is often an eye-opening experience.

Uncovering the data and analytics for your sales team is an essential practice in building a high performing sales team. Most insurance sales leaders report on year over year results, sales YTD against plan, how their team is doing against other sales divisions or peers in the industry, and new business. What isn't typically discussed (and metrics your agency should take a close look at) is:

- Over 90% of results are probably coming from 36% of the producers.
- The bottom 36% of the sales team is responsible for less than 4% of total sales.
- Of the last four hires - only one of them is doing better than the people they replaced.
- The company could eliminate the bottom 36% and increase profitability significantly.
- Many senior producers are not performing nearly as well as some of the newer salespeople.

The challenge most insurance firms have is the answer to the question: Are we growing and acquiring new relationships from existing clients and

“The challenge most insurance firms have is the answer to the question: Are we growing and acquiring new relationships from existing clients and new clients?”

new clients? If that answer is no or not enough, it needs to be addressed.

The Importance of Ongoing Sales Training

The importance of ongoing sales training can be substantiated by the data and analytics of your sales team noted above, but how does an effective insurance agency leader and coach go about addressing these problems? Here are three methods

to implement ongoing sales training immediately.

- **Speed to failure**—With new agents, sales managers must find out quickly if both of the producer and the manager made the right decision. In the hiring process, the sales manager making the offer must let the new hire know everything they are going to have to go through, what numbers they will be managed to and what is expected in the first 90 days and the following 6 months. That is the basis of ongoing sales training and coaching. New producers should be followed closely for both effort and execution so that any gaps can be addressed and coached.
- **Conversation is KING**—Despite all the technology that is available to help agents create opportunities, nothing yet has replaced the value of quality conversations, sales coaching, and training. Agency leaders must have a very high standard for training, practice, and preparation before they put people out into the market. The importance of ongoing

sales training starts on day one establishing regular one-on-one coaching sessions, demonstrating and observing the new hire in sales scenarios, prior to being in the field.

- **Sales technology** should make it easy for salespeople to communicate to suspects, prospects and clients. It should be easy to use and provide extremely useful information for the sales manager as well as producers. It should drive salespeople to consistently follow the company sales process and it should provide the sales leader with the sales data and analytics to coach that person to improvement.

Sales technology is an important component of effective ongoing sales training. It is substantiated that top “elite” producers follow a stage-based selling process. This allows the producer and the coach to identify if there are areas needing improvement and coaching.

Taking a close look at the data and analytics of sales and then implementing ongoing sales training, whether it is in house or with an external sales training firm, it will go a long way to helping companies improve their sales environment and productivity of the entire team. ■



Jeni Wehrmeyer, CMO & COO, began her career in advertising sales, transitioned to financial marketing, and now heads up the inbound and outbound marketing efforts for Anthony Cole Training Group. ACTG has been helping insurance agencies and banks sell, coach, and hire better for 29 years. Our Mission: Grow People. Grow Organizations. For more information visit: anthonycoletaining.com

BIG 1 | INDIANA

EMERGING LEADERS CONFERENCE

**JUNE 19–20
BELTERRA**



INFO & REGISTRATION



SPONSORED BY:



Prospecting Habits of Successful Producers

By Tony Cole, Founder & CLO,
Anthony Cole Training Group

In analyzing those insurance producers who are successful year after year,

we find significant consistencies in prospecting behavior and practice management. These top sales producers adhere to the fact that prospecting is an “A” priority. Successful agents service accounts just like everyone else. They also have fires to put out and meetings to attend. But nothing gets in the way of consistent outreach to build new relationships.

4 Best Practices for Building Relationships:

1) Schedule a time each day to make phone calls and stick to it.

First thing in the morning works well. The longer you procrastinate, the better chance there is of something getting in the way of this critical activity. You don’t have to like prospecting; you just have to do it. Every day. The more of this activity you do, the more proficient you will become.

2) Don’t look, act, or sound like every other insurance agent.

Create a unique approach—Don’t

just say that you are different. Put yourself in your prospect’s place. Would you take your phone call and be responsive? If not, work on your strategy and script. For example, when you get your prospect on the

“Successful agents service accounts just like everyone else. They also have fires to put out and meetings to attend. But nothing gets in the way of consistent outreach to build new relationships.”

phone, say “Hello Tom.” and be silent. Wait for the prospect to respond. They will typically say something like “Hi, what can I do for you?” They have engaged.

Buyers are conditioned to hear “Hello. This is Joe from ABC Company

and I am calling you to” Prospects hear this, immediately recognize a sales pitch, and quickly disconnect.

How do you make your opening call unique and compelling? Do your homework on changing personal insurance concerns or the company, their industry, trends, and challenges. Your opening positioning statement could make mention of one of those areas to quickly demonstrate that you are knowledgeable in the subject and understand their personal concerns or industry. A reference to a problem you have solved for a similar client is also a strong point of credibility.

3) Successful producers understand that the purpose of a call is to set an appointment with a qualified candidate.

Stop selling on the phone. Stop seeing just anyone who will see you. Make sure the prospect qualifies or has a potential reason to do business with you. On the phone call identify that the prospect has a problem and ask them to invite you to come and talk about it.

The quality of the phone call determines the quality of the appointment. At this point, your goal

is to identify if your prospect has a problem that you can solve. Ask questions like “Can you tell me about the problems you are experiencing?”

Ask the question “Why is this problem a problem?” so that the prospect reinforces, in his own mind, that this is something he needs to address. If he can’t answer this question, chances are the problem isn’t big enough for him or her to spend time and money on it.

Ask the question “How much is this problem costing you?” or “How much could it cost you?” Asking this will make the potential prospect put dollars into the problem. If the money involved is more than or equal to the price of your product, he is more apt to invite you to visit. Establish that he would like to fix the problem. At this stage, you are trying to see if they have enough information and “pain” to justify a meeting.

Keep the following questions handy when you are on prospecting calls. They will help you discover if a prospect is really a prospect.

- Tell me about your current problems... with your current coverage...
- How long has this been a problem?
- What have you done to fix it?
- When you spoke with your current insurance agent what did she say?
- What has he done to make this problem go away?

- What happens if you don’t fix this?
- How much is it costing you?
- Is that a problem?
- Do you want to fix it?

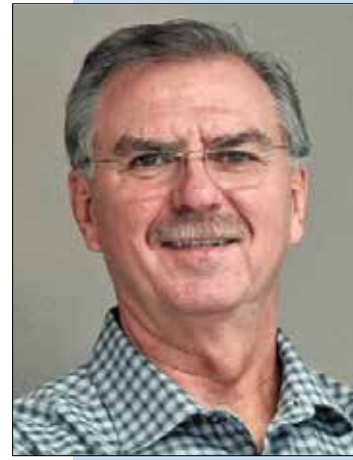
4) Always ask for introductions as your first prospecting strategy.

Understand that business owners want to meet professionals through introductions, not cold calls. Ask your best client advocates the simple question “If you were doing what I do, who would you talk to?” Then ask them if they would be willing to make a call on your behalf.

We all know that prospecting is essential to finding and building relationships. And you know that you can’t consistently grow your business unless you consistently prospect. You can’t count on market conditions or new products or low premiums to create opportunities. You must find prospects that fit your profile, call them, and see if they qualify to do business with you.

So, ask yourself which of the above might help you most today. Implement this change for the next 30 days, until it comes naturally. Commit yourself to changing one prospecting behavior or business practice that will dramatically impact your business.

For more information visit anthonycoletraining.com.



Tony Cole, Founder & CLO, Anthony Cole Training Group

Quick Hits

Indiana Agents Attend National Meeting in Puerto Rico



Indiana was well represented by Todd Jackson, McGowan Group Insurance, Chris Rush, The DeHayes Group, and Ryan Zimpleman, Smith Sawyer Smith, and their spouses at the IABA Winter Meeting in Rio Grande, Puerto Rico.

The MJ Foundation Awards Grants to Local Non-Profits



MJ Insurance Charitable Foundation (The MJ Foundation), has awarded three \$10,000 grants to non-profits in the Indianapolis, Phoenix and Denver communities marking the first grant cycle for

the Foundation. The MJ Foundation is the nonprofit arm of MJ Insurance. The grant recipient in Indianapolis is Indy Book Project. The local organization was selected

in part for its alignment with the four cornerstones of The MJ Foundation mission: overcoming poverty, fostering diversity, advancing education and embracing humanity.

Kriens Named Rockford Insurance 2023 Associate of the Year

Rockford Mutual Insurance Company (RMIC) named Assistant Vice President of Claims Ann Kriens its 2023 Associate of the Year Award. She joined Rockford Mutual as a claims manager in 2014 with over 20 years of experience as a claims manager for MetLife. She was promoted to director of claims in 2020, and most recently received a promotion to AVP of claims in 2022.

Acuity Employees Donate \$660,000 to Charitable Organizations



Acuity employees determined the distribution of \$500,000 among six different charitable organizations. Those organizations included Conquer Cancer, the ASCO Foundation; Fresh Meals on Wheels; Mental Health America; Safe Harbor; The Salvation Army; and Sharon S. Richardson Community Hospice. Based on employee votes, Safe Harbor received the largest allocation of nearly \$150,000. The other five groups

each received donations ranging from nearly \$36,000 to more than \$112,000. This is the 11th consecutive year that Acuity employees have directed a special year-end contribution, which adds to the company's longstanding tradition of philanthropy.

SECURA Insurance Promotes Cousineau and Ferris



Cousineau



Ferris

Insurance promoted two company leaders: Christine Cousineau, senior vice president and chief financial

officer and Dan Ferris, senior vice president, chief legal officer, and corporate secretary.

Christine Cousineau joined SECURA in October 2021. She currently serves on the board of directors for

the Hope Clinic and Care Center, and the Community Foundation of the Fox Valley Region. Ferris joined SECURA in 1990 as the corporate attorney. He oversees the corporate legal, compliance, internal audit, and government relations functions at SECURA, and is also corporate secretary. He currently serves as Board President for the St. Francis Xavier Catholic School System Foundation.

West Bend Mutual Holding Company Plan Passes

West Bend held a special Meeting of Members to consider a plan to convert to a mutual holding company. The plan passed on December 8, 2023, with over 90% of the votes cast in favor of conversion. Effective January 1, 2024, the company officially became West Bend Insurance Company and now operates as a stock insurance company under West Bend Mutual Holding Company. West Bend Mutual Holding Company is still owned and governed by its shareholders.

JM WILSON
MGA AND E&S BROKER | EST. 1920

**Confident. Reliable.
Solutions in a
Hard Market.**

JM Wilson marine underwriters have long-standing relationships with many A+ rated carriers. We provide the expertise, service and coverage you can depend on.



COMMERCIAL TRANSPORTATION | BROKERAGE | MARINE
PROPERTY & CASUALTY | SURETY | PERSONAL LINES

(800) 666-5692 | JMWILSON.COM



Staff Q&A: Laura Glunt

Age and Hometown: 39, born in Portland, Ind.

Family: Husband: Jared; Twin 11-year-old sons: Landon and Jacob

Education: Studied marketing and sociology at the University of Indianapolis

Q: Tell me what your position entails in your own words.

A: As the Director of Education, I am responsible for making sure our members have access to educational opportunities that will not only meet the required CE credits, but also provide them technical and sales information that will help them succeed in their careers.

Q: How long have you been with the Big I?

A: I started October 2023 right before the annual convention. It was a busy time but a great way to jump in feet first and meet so many wonderful Big I members!

Q: What's something unique about yourself?

A: Our family raises show pigs and travels the country competing at a national level. It has been an amazing way to raise our sons.

Q: Hobbies?

A: I love to read, be outdoors, and travel with my family.

Q: Bad Habit?

A: I tend to be sensitive and wear my heart on my sleeve. But I know it has helped me to be empathetic and understand others.

Q: Pet Peeve?

A: When people make unnecessary sounds. Tapping fingers, clicking pencils, humming....it's like fingernails on a chalkboard.

Q: Farthest place you've traveled to?

A: Taizé, France. It was absolutely stunning!

Q: Favorite Holiday and why?

A: I love Christmas! I love everything about it: twinkling lights, peppermint mochas, Christmas carols, spending time with loved ones, and the most important reason for the season which is celebrating the birth Jesus Christ.



Glunt and her family at a friend's wedding.



Hiking at at Turkey Run State Park with her family.

Q: Favorite restaurant in Indy?

A: We seem to frequent Culvers way too often as a family, but my favorite place is The Italian House on Park in Westfield. So good!

Q: Favorite movie/TV show?

A: While You Were Sleeping with Sandra Bullock.

Q: Something others don't know about you?

A: I mentioned that we raise show pigs and we also have goats, rabbits, and one male barn cat named Sandy on our farm. But I am not a dog person. Give me all the livestock but please, no dog breath. There, I said it! ■



Glunt with a baby goat that their family raised.



Shepherd
INSURANCE

Commercial
Personal
Benefits
Financial



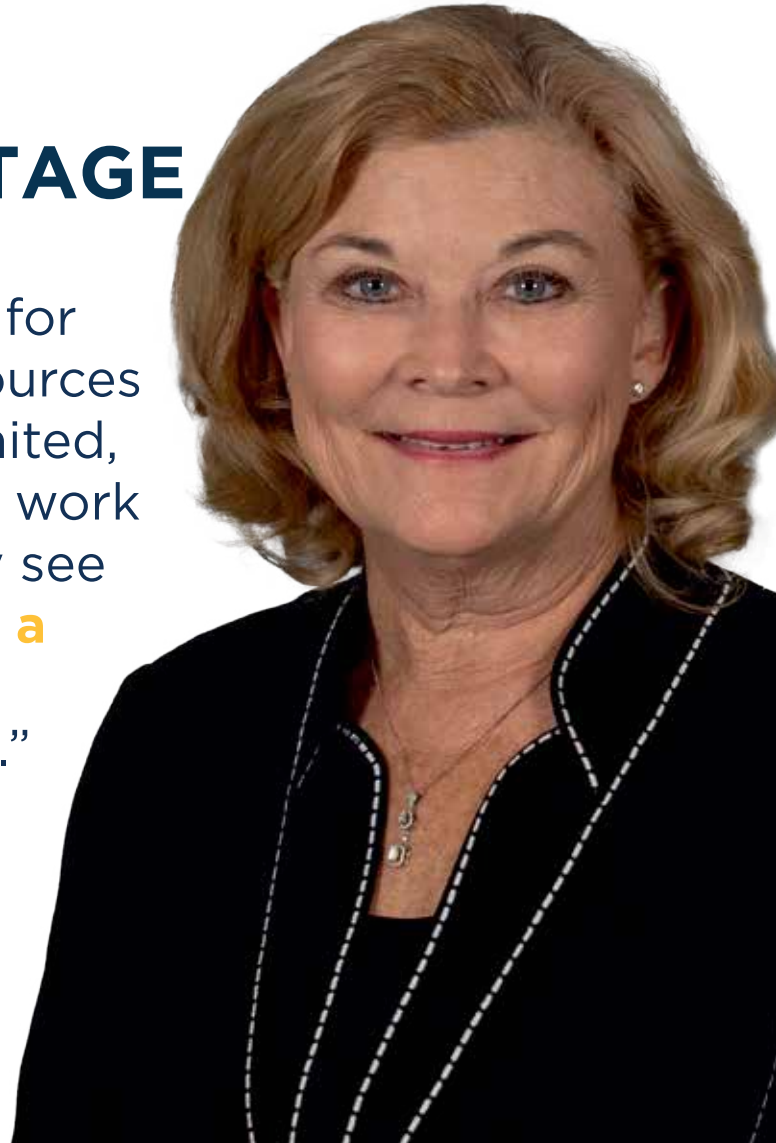
Inc.
5000

DISCOVER THE SHEPHERD ADVANTAGE

“It’s going to be a great thing for our local community. The resources Shepherd has, where I was limited, will be wonderful. I do a lot of work with nonprofits, so I can really see where **we can partner and do a lot of really great things for local nonprofit organizations.**”

Pam Bennett Martin

Bennett & Bennett Insurance
Partnered in 2021



Shepherd Merger Partners have access to:

- Expanded market access
- Support team in all business lines
- Enhanced ability to recruit and develop staff
- Amplified brand recognition
- Training through our internal education program
- Career opportunities for team members looking for advancement

Sound like a good fit?

Contact us for more information.

shepherdins.com | 317.846.5554



When Main Street is the main focus.

Running a successful small business is hard work, but finding the right insurance program for your client is easy with West Bend.

Our business insurance program covers liabilities and expenses specifically designed for small business operations.

- Great pricing and exceptional coverage
- Experienced claim representatives
- Convenient options for reporting losses – available 24/7

Learn more about the variety of business line coverages available through West Bend by visiting thesilverlining.com.



The worst brings out our best.®



**PUBLIC RISK
UNDERWRITERS**

OF THE MIDWEST, LLC

PART OF THE
BROWN & BROWN TEAM



When you need to protect your school, your students, your staff and the public, look to Public Risk Underwriters.

Insuring with PRU's School Program means you receive comprehensive coverages and tailored loss control services, plus competitive, stable pricing.

PRU's School Program also includes Vector Solutions™ online training for our clients.

Contact us to learn more:

Eric Ackerman
eackerman@ipep.com

Craig Barnhart
cbarnhart@ipep.com

Visit us online at <https://www.ipep.com/public-risk-underwriters>





IPEP Anthem Health Insurance is a full range of employee benefits tailored for your clients.

Agents work with the IPEP Employee Benefits team to secure quotes for clients then continue with them as the Agent of Record, while IPEP serves as the broker for the program.

Public entities with two or more full time employees are eligible to apply for health insurance. This includes but is not limited to cities, towns, counties, airports, fire departments, utilities, and municipal housing authorities.

Health insurance quotes are medically underwritten and have a variety of plans with deductible levels available starting at \$250. We offer integrated dental, vision, and life insurance and clients do not incur additional membership fees.

Contact the Employee Benefits Team at 765.252.3019 or visit us online at <https://www.ipep.com/employee-benefits>



Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield is the trade name of Anthem Insurance Companies, Inc. Independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. © ANTHEM is a registered trademark of Anthem Insurance Companies, Inc. The Blue Cross and Blue Shield names and symbols are registered marks of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

PRSSRT STD
U S Postage
PAID
Pontiac, IL
Permit No. 592