



Kansas Insurance Department

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Department accomplishments highlight term

By Ken Selzer, CPA, Kansas Commissioner of Insurance

Topeka, KS — As we near the end of my elected term as Kansas Commissioner of Insurance, we made a list of the accomplishments of the Kansas Insurance Department during the past four years. It turned out to be quite lengthy.

Our department staff is as talented and consumer-oriented group as I have ever known in the insurance industry. Their work under my stewardship for the past four years has been outstanding. Let me expound on some of their successes.

The Kansas Insurance Certificate – The need for quality, work-ready employees in the insurance industry in our state was the direct motivation for developing this public-private program involving institutions of higher learning throughout Kansas. We have set in motion a program that recognizes college graduate certificate holders for their insurance knowledge as they enter the work force. Learn more about the program at www.ksinsurancecertificate.org.

Don't Text and Drive initiative – The need to emphasize driver safety through a no-texting-while-driving pledge contest had nearly 40,000 people throughout the state signing on to the program, all the while having fun by supporting their favorite state university. KID coordinated the pledge drive with the cooperation of the various universities, the Kansas Department of Transportation and insurance companies. This program undoubtedly reduced accidents and perhaps saved lives.

Financial Services Summit – Business leaders throughout the state met annually to discuss regulations and initiatives involved with financial services, especially insurance. Again, this is a public-private partnership program that attracted major players in the industry to collaborate on ideas and issues that would strengthen Kansas initiatives.

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Integration of Securities Office with KID – KID proposed, and the Kansas Legislature passed, legislation that placed the Office of the Kansas Securities Commissioner under the jurisdiction of the insurance department and strengthened the enforcement activities of both agencies. The move streamlined state government and provided economies of scale in both operating budgets, with more yet to come.

Increased Health Insurance Choices – With the continued concerns over the Affordable Care Act and its consequences, KID has been able to work with prospective health insurance companies to add new carriers to the federal government marketplace. Unlike many areas of the United States, Kansas has been able to offer choices in health care coverage during the past four years, providing competition in both pricing and services. The KID Health and Life Division personnel deserve a huge thanks for aggressively recruiting carriers to serve Kansas consumers, with more likely to join in the future.

Consumer refinements – Our Consumer Assistance Division added programs that help reinforce our department’s mission to educate and advocate for Kansans. We were on the cutting edge of a Life Insurance Locator Service, which has now expanded into a national database through the National Association of Insurance Commissioners. We also added a website chat feature on our home page, which is staffed Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. This allows consumers to get a quick response for insurance concerns. It also created efficiencies in serving them.

Captive Legislation – We successfully sponsored legislation that would increase the number of businesses who could originate their own captive insurance companies, thereby enhancing current Kansas businesses. Originally, the captive statute was only for the aircraft manufacturing business.

Consumer Safety and Less Regulation – The Department initiated a fingerprinting requirement for new agents, helping to ensure the safety of Kansas insurance consumers. We also have worked hard to reduce the regulatory burden for companies operating in the state, so they can offer consumers more competitive products.

Workers Compensation Cleanup – Through much hard work in our legal division, we were able to reduce the caseload of backlogged workers compensation filings, closing more than 2,000 cases, some dating back to 1985. We were also able to oversee the reduction of workers compensation insurance rates for Kansas businesses for four consecutive years.

Improved Coordination with Other State Agencies – Our increased transparency and interest in working closely with other state agencies to better serve Kansans has benefitted consumers across the state.

A Leaner, More Efficient Agency – Through retirements and attrition, we reduced the number of department employees by more than 20 while improving our efficiency and keeping our responsibility to Kansans at a peak level. We successfully consolidated several divisions, providing even better service and more efficiencies.

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NerdWallet Award – The NerdWallet website recognized KID as one of the most responsive and consumer-friendly state insurance departments in the United States. Our employees deserve a big round of applause for earning this recognition!

There are many other accomplishments I could list that benefit Kansans, but those noted stand out. I have been privileged to have worked with such a conscientious, talented group of insurance professionals who will continue the department’s mission to “Regulate, Educate and Advocate.”

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The Kansas Insurance Department, established in 1871, assists and educates consumers, regulates and reviews companies, and licenses agents selling insurance products in the state. More about the department is online at www.ksinsurance.org or at www.facebook.com/kansasinsurancedepartment.