



IN FOCUS
FEBRUARY 2019

IT'S ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS



DELIGHTING
INDEPENDENT AGENTS

AGENTS AGREE: UNDERWRITER RELATIONSHIP IS KEY TO SUCCESS

Last August, we highlighted many of the ways Acuity is already working to build strong partnerships with agents. We continue to conduct research into our ongoing initiative to delight independent agents, and one message has come through loud and clear from our agency force.

“Independent agents confirm that the relationship with their underwriter is of the highest importance to their success in building a book of business with a company,” says **Ben Salzmann**, President and CEO.

In an era when more carriers are moving to a “pool” underwriting approach, Acuity’s strategy of assigning each agency a dedicated underwriter stands out.

“Agents tell us one of the things that frustrates them most in working with pool-underwriting companies is they never know which underwriter they will be dealing with,” says **Wally Waldhart**, Vice President - Sales and Communications. “Knowing they can call their Acuity underwriter is something agents value about their relationship with Acuity.”

One on One

Part of Acuity’s service goal is also to keep a dedicated underwriter with an agency for a long time.

With our sustained business growth generating new hiring in underwriting and creating advancement opportunity for existing staff, this is a challenging goal, but one that we strive to achieve in both personal and commercial lines.

“This business was built on relationships. No matter how much automation we add to the process to make it easier for agents and customers to do business with us, relationships will be at the foundation of what we do,” says **Shane Paltzer**, Vice President - Personal Lines and Marketing.

“People do business with people they like,” says **Ed Warren**, Vice President - Commercial Lines. “For our underwriters, it’s not all business—it’s also about taking the time to get to know agents on a personal level.”

In both personal and commercial lines, Acuity has experienced underwriting talent. For instance, in personal lines, over two-thirds of our staff have 20 years or more underwriting experience.

“Independent agents are central to everything Acuity has achieved,” Salzmann says. “We are incredibly thankful to our agents and remain focused on being the best partner we can be.”

The underwriters featured here are just a few of the long-term, experienced professionals who make delighting independent agents part of their mission.

Senior Personal Lines Underwriter **Wendy Smith** joined Acuity in 1978 as a Records Clerk. She became an underwriter in 1998 and has served agents in Utah since Acuity first entered the state in 2008.

I believe the agent and underwriter relationship is critical to achieving great outcomes. We work to maintain that relationship through positive transactions daily, and also understand that face-to-face visits are key to the success of both the company and the agency.



It is huge to have a dedicated underwriter. Not all personal lines business can fit into a box, and having a dedicated underwriter like Wendy allows us to work outside that box and write good, profitable business with Acuity.

—**Jason Burraston**, Agent,
Eastern Utah Insurance

Senior Commercial Underwriter **Barb Davis** joined Acuity in 1988 as a Switchboard Operator. She moved into claims in 1990 and became a Commercial Underwriter in 2002.

The relationship between the underwriter and agency is key because people do business with people who know their business and people they like and trust. We are a team and share successes as a team. I have worked with some agency people for over 10 years. You also build relationships that go far beyond business when you work with someone that long. You know about families, weddings, births—you become friends.



I have 19 trucking fleets insured with Acuity, and the relationship we've built with Acuity is integral to my retention of these fleets. Barb is an invaluable resource as a valued partner to our transportation division. Without her excellent time management, organization, communication on renewals, and ability to answer coverage questions, we would not be where we are at today with Acuity. I consider Barb not only our trusted partner but also a friend.

—**Scott Herring**, Vice President, Transportation Group, Cottingham and Butler

Senior Personal Lines Underwriter **Mark Goodman** has been with Acuity since 1995 and has spent his entire career here in underwriting.

The underwriter/agency relationship is huge. Just knowing what to expect from the agency and the agency understanding Acuity's appetite and processes makes for greater efficiency. I know the quality of risks my agents send and that follow-through will occur when promised. Agents know that we will do what we can to help them and be prompt in our response, which helps make their jobs easier as well.



Senior Commercial Field Underwriter **Jeff Corcoran** joined Acuity in 1996 as a Commercial Underwriter and became a Commercial Field Underwriter in 2001.

I've been privileged to have been given the responsibility to work with and grow some of our largest agencies. Our success together stems from our ability to trust each other. This trust comes from our long-term relationships and friendships that have built over a long period of time. In addition, the trust affords me the confidence that I'm being given accurate underwriting information to allow me to understand the risk and offer an accurate, aggressive quote to allow my agents and Acuity to win the business. In our business, we're often placed in highly competitive and stressful situations. The ability to rely on our long-term relationships and past successes from both the agency and carrier side is so very important.



Working with Jeff has made renewals and new business rewarding because of the trust we have in one another, the clear and open and proactive communication, and his consistency in underwriting. He is also fantastic in front of clients and is a tremendous problem solver. He is an underwriter that is allowed to think and understand deals and do deals that are good for Aon and Acuity. It is underwriters like Jeff that give Acuity a big advantage in the marketplace.

—**Christopher Kondrick**, Vice President, Aon Risk Solutions

Acuity's approach to underwriting never loses sight of the goal of writing profitable business within their appetite at a level that is sustainable. When I work with Jeff, I feel like he really looks at it as a partnership and looks for ways to get deals done, rather than looking for reasons not to. He's always accessible and quick to respond, and he is not afraid to pick up the phone if he has a question.

—**Christopher Rasmussen**, CIC, CWCA, Commercial Insurance Advisor, Ansay & Associates

Mark Goodman is really viewed as one of "us" in our agency. We collaborate and try to arrive at decisions that are a win-win-win for the client, Acuity, and the agency. That happens often, and the results of our long-term relationships speak for themselves in the stellar results we have had with Acuity. Insurance by its very nature is built on trust and relationships, and working with Mark for as long as we have has proved that this model works!

—**Dan Wolfram**, Executive Vice President, R&R Insurance

NEW COVERAGE DESIGNED FOR **PERSONAL CYBER EXPOSURE**

People are more connected today than ever before. Our smartphones, tablets, and personal computers are all connected via the Internet. In our homes, our televisions are “smart,” security and monitoring devices are web-enabled, and even our appliances can connect to the home Wi-Fi. While this continued connectivity brings many benefits to our lives, it also means that we are potentially introducing new cyber threats into our homes.

To help protect our customers from the growing number of cyber threats, Acuity began rolling out an enhancement to the existing Identity Fraud Expense endorsement in January. The new and improved coverage is called Identity Fraud Expense and Cyber Protection. This cyber endorsement helps protect insureds and members of their households from financial loss caused by a cyber or identity fraud related event, including:

- **Identity Fraud Expense.** Similar to our previous identity fraud endorsement, this coverage reimburses for expenses incurred as a result of recovering one’s identity
- **Data Recovery and System Restoration** coverage reimburses the cost to recover lost data and/or repair personal devices after a hacking attack

- **Cyber Crime** coverage can apply to a variety of criminal activities such as wire transfer fraud, credit card fraud, and phishing attacks.
- **Cyber Extortion** coverage reimburses in a situation where an insured is denied access to a device until paying a ransom amount.
- **Cyber Bullying** coverage provides reimbursement for financial loss caused by online harassment or bullying. This is a first- and third-party coverage.
- **Data Breach of Others** coverage provides reimbursement for necessary costs associated with notification of others in the event a cyber event causes a breach in the personal information of others.
- **Legal Expense and Damages Reimbursement** is available if someone claims the insured is responsible for the loss of their personal information.

This coverage will also be available to homeowners who operate a home business and carry the Home-Biz Endorsement.

Acuity is committed to delivering innovative solutions that provide comprehensive cyber protection coverage to our personal insurance customers. Contact your territory director with questions or for more information.



BEST PRACTICES FOR **SMALL AND MEDIUM BUSINESSES**

It seems a major cyber security breach is a weekly event in our world. You might find it surprising that over half of all cyber attacks occur at businesses with fewer than 100 employees. Your small and medium business customers have put too much blood, sweat, and tears into their business to risk losing all of it in a cyber attack. Your customers should protect their business against cyber loss just as strongly as they protect their business against fire, theft, or accidents.

Small and medium businesses need to remember the electronic information in their possession is just as valuable to a crook as the information from the Marriott Hotels and Facebooks of the world. The Federal Communications Commission and the Department of Homeland Security are two of many respected sources for cyber security information. Some of their best practices include:

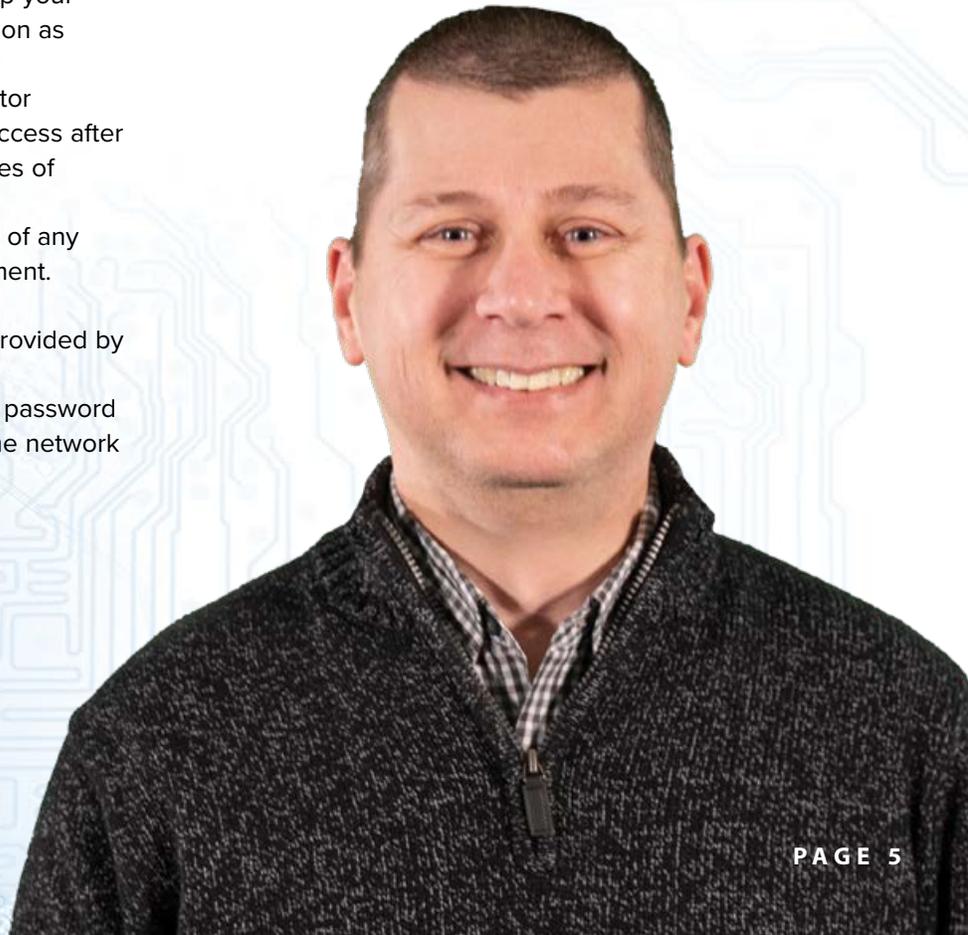
- Document your cybersecurity practices, including an incident response plan. The ability to respond logically and quickly to an attack can go a long way in helping your customers reduce the damage.
- Regularly back up your data. This can help your customer return to normal business as soon as possible.
- Combine strong passwords with multi-factor identification, which only allows system access after successfully presenting two or more pieces of evidence or credentials.
- Immediately terminate the system access of any employee when they leave your employment.
- Use secure Wi-Fi networks, including:
 - Changing passwords from the default provided by the manufacturer.
 - Creating a separate guest network and password so guests are unable to access the same network as employees.

- Create a mobile device policy if you provide a phone, tablet, laptop, or computer to an employee.
- Use a firewall to protect your systems from unauthorized access.
- Install anti-virus software, which detects and removes viruses, and keep it up to date.
- Keep abreast of the developments in the rapidly changing world of cyber security and encourage your employees to do the same.

Acuity wants to help you keep your customers protected against all forms of risk, including cyber. Check back each month for information in our new Cyber Coach column.



BY **STEVE MALIBORSKI,**
SENIOR PRODUCT ANALYST





There are many great reasons to Sell Acuity! Each month we'll highlight sales tips, important coverages, and Acuity differentiators across the retail, manufacturing, construction, trucking, services, and personal lines market segments, written by different members of our Customer Focus Teams.

Construction

Did you know that Acuity writes insulation contractors? From cellulose insulation to mineral insulation to spray foam insulation, Acuity can consider all these insulation contractors in addition to steam pipe or boiler insulation risks.

Spray foam insulation contractors must be in business for three or more years and a loss control survey including a job-site visit is required for this more specialized segment of insulation contractors. They are also required to have a documented and enforced written safety program that is OSHA-compliant in addition to standards for property ventilation, safe entry, re-entry and re-occupancy.

A few additional things to keep in mind for insulation contractors:

- Acuity is still not a market for any fireproofing or asbestos-related work.
- Different general liability class codes apply dependent on the material being installed.
- Insulation contractors are also eligible for E & O coverage—ask your underwriter if your risk qualifies.

BY **AMY HUGHES**,
MANAGER - COMMERCIAL UNDERWRITING



Manufacturing

When a manufacturer has a claim—whether workers' compensation, liability, or property—it has a big impact on the business. Acuity knows that manufacturers want to concentrate on their business operations and not be burdened with the claims process.

Acuity's claims representatives are focused on your insureds' businesses and claims. From the initial contact to the end of the claim, a dedicated claims representative is given the resources and power to make cost-conscious decisions while providing a fair and reasonable resolution to each claim.

The reporting process is easy. A customer can report a claim online or call us. A claim's status can be tracked online for up-to-the-minute, accurate information. For workers' compensation claims, a nurse hotline (M.A.S.H.) is available to give medical advice to injured workers.

At Acuity, we actually have increased customer satisfaction after a claim. This is just another reason to look to Acuity for your manufacturing insureds. For further information about manufacturing insurance, visit acuity.com/manufacturing.

BY **RYAN BIRENBAUM**,
CLAIMS REPRESENTATIVE



Personal lines

Did you know there are about 38 million businesses being run out of people's homes in the U.S. and that number is growing all the time? Just because people are operating their businesses out of their own homes doesn't mean they don't need to insure it like a regular freestanding store.

Unfortunately, many people don't realize the need for separate insurance and mistakenly assume their homeowners insurance will cover their business too. Acuity built the Home-Biz Endorsement specifically to fill the gap left by regular homeowners insurance.

When you add the Home-Biz Endorsement from Acuity, your clients receive:

- **Protection for their business**, including personal property used in the business, and protection for business assets such as accounts receivable, valuable papers, and software.
- **Protection for their liability** if they are sued for injury or damage to property. They'll also receive coverage for risks such as advertising injury and product liability.
- **Protection for their customers**, so if someone gets injured at their home, Acuity will help pay their medical bills. We'll also cover customers' belongings if damaged while in their care.
- **Protection for their lifestyle** to keep the business running and ensure they still get paid even if something unexpected happens to put the business on hold.

Acuity's Home-Biz is available for most offices, retail stores, service operations, arts and crafts, and day care services, and can be added to an HO-3, HO-4, or HO-6.

BY **VERONIKA LAU**,
SENIOR INSIDE CLAIMS REPRESENTATIVE



Services

Acuity wants to write auto repair shops!

Every day, garages make important repairs and tune-ups to customers' vehicles in their care. This opens them up to a wide range of exposures that require special coverages. Acuity understands these exposures and has the coverages necessary to protect garages.

We offer coverages auto repair shops need, such as:

- **Garagekeepers' Coverage**, which protects a customer's vehicle in the shop's care.
- **Coverage for Property Damage to Your Work** coverage for damages that occur due to the work you perform.
- **Limited Pollution** coverage for environmental damage.
- **Hired and Nonowned Auto** protects when driving a customer's vehicle away from the insured location.
- **Portable/Employee Tools** coverage.

Acuity also has a special businessowners package (Bis-Pak Car Care) tailored specifically to auto repair shops. You can download an auto repair brochure outlining our program at acuity.com/brochures.

Talk with your auto repair insureds to make sure they have the coverages necessary to protect them from the added exposures they face in their line of work. And remember that Acuity offers great coverage combined with expertise in the auto repair industry.

BY **PAIGE K. NELSON,**
PRODUCT ANALYST



Trucking

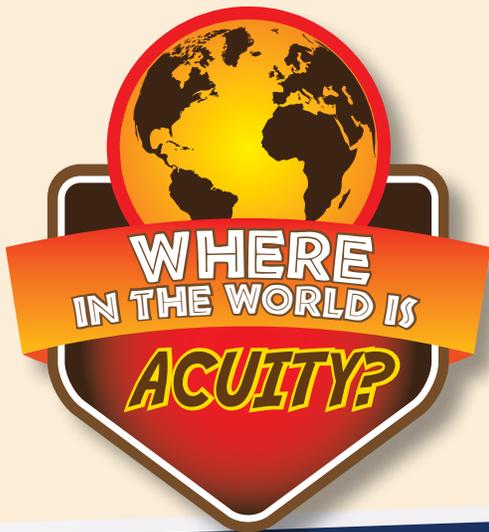
Do you have a trucking customer looking to update some of their vehicles? While the operation of each of your customers is unique, there are some common items to be considered.

- Make sure the equipment fits your operational needs and is spec'd accordingly.
- Ask your customer, "What can you afford?" and "What do you want to afford?"
- Consider potential maintenance costs. CSA violations will add to the cost of operation.
- Many new trucks come with standard 5-year or 500,000-mile warranties.
- Fuel prices. Truck technology has improved miles per gallon such that near 8 miles per gallon is considered good.
- Good equipment can be a determining factor in your customer being able to retain current drivers and recruit new ones.

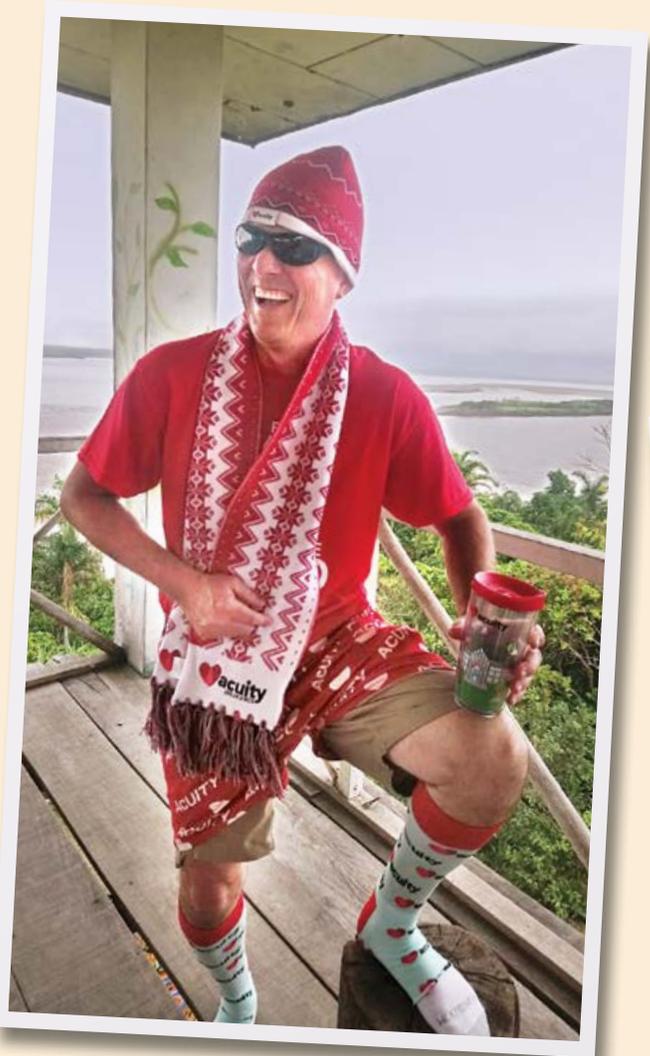
These are a few items you can use to assist your trucking customers who are looking to upgrade their vehicles. Acuity remains focused on trucking. Visit acuity.com/trucking for more information.

BY **SHANNON VAN ROO,**
REGULATORY ANALYST





Paul Clements, Commercial Lines Agent at EM Ford, poses with his Acuity gear in Independencia, Peru, overlooking the mouth of the Amazon River.



While on a break from hiking the 110-mile Tour du Mont Blanc, **Jennifer Faoro Weller** of Arrow Insurance Management rode up the Skyway Monte Bianco tram up to 11,372 feet above sea level to get an up-close look at the highest mountain in the Alps. Mont Blanc is the white peak over her left shoulder.

Would you like to win \$100? Email a picture of you or your family with Acuity logo gear featuring an interesting location to infocus@acuity.com and include a brief description of Where in the World Acuity has been. If we use your picture, we'll send you \$100! This offer is open to all employees of Acuity and our independent agencies.

To increase your chances of being selected, consider these tips for a winning shot:

- Prominently display your Acuity swag—and the more the better!
- Location, location, location! Photos taken in exotic, amazing, and breathtaking locations catch the reader's eye.
- Send high-resolution images that have good lighting and focus.
- Send multiple pictures of your trip, even if they are taken at the same location.
- Keep in mind that all recognizable people will need to agree to a photo release if your picture is chosen.
- Have fun!



Nichole Starner of the Naught-Naught Agency in Concordia, Missouri, married **Cody Meyers** at "The Point" at Fort Zachary Taylor State Park in Key West, Florida. They decided to do a photo shoot in Acuity swag in front of the iconic Southernmost Point Buoy, and the other tourists around loved the socks!



Haiden (left) and **Landon**, sons of **Heather Short** of Ansay & Associates, looked "Acuity cool" on a trip to the Badlands of South Dakota.



George Patterson of Williamson Insurance brought Acuity along for the ride on Expedition Everest at Disney's Animal Kingdom park. He got a few puzzled looks in the ride queue when he started putting on his hat, scarf, and gloves on a 96° day! George is pictured with his wife, **Kelly**.

DIVERSITY AWARD ADDS TO ACUITY'S WORKPLACE RECOGNITION

Acuity is named to the Forbes list of The Best Employers for Diversity 2019, identified from an independent survey of more than 50,000 U.S. employees working for large companies and organizations.

In collaboration with Statista, Forbes ranked the top 500 employers across all industries in the United States, based on surveying thousands of employees and examining employer diversity policies, as well as diversity in executive suites and on boards. Employees who took part in the survey were not contacted through their employers but, rather, did so on their own through several online access channels.

This latest award adds to recognition Acuity has received for its employee-focused workplace.

"In 2018, we were honored to be named to the Forbes list of America's Best Mid-Size Employers as well as The

Best Employers for Women. Today, we are grateful to be recognized as one of The Best Employers for Diversity," says **Ben Salzmann**, President and CEO. "This recognition is particularly rewarding because a company cannot apply for the Forbes awards. These awards come from a grassroots effort of our employees feeling so strongly about Acuity that they took the initiative to share their thoughts on their own accord."

"We strive to create a great workplace where everyone can feel welcome and supported," says **Joan Ravanelli Miller**, General Counsel/Vice President - Human Resources. "Creating a positive work environment is important to every one of the more than 1,300 people who work for Acuity."



ERIN TOWNSEND PROMOTED TO SERVICES MANAGER



Erin Townsend is promoted to General Manager - Shared Services. In her new role, Erin will support the Imaging, Mailroom, Policy Assembly, Reception, Switchboard, and Support Staff managers and teams.

Erin earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Lakeland College. She spent nine years at the Kohler Company in various roles, most notably providing customer service in a call center environment and earning the role of Supervisor of National Accounts in 2012. Erin joined Acuity in 2015 as a Commercial Lines Underwriter and became Manager - Services Billing in May 2017.

J. G. ELLIOTT NEARS 100 YEARS OF FOCUSING ON THE CUSTOMER

A lot has changed since the J. G. Elliott agency wrote its first policy in 1920, but one thing has remained constant over nearly 100 years.

“Our people have always been our strength because of their focus on the customer,” says agency President **John Massey**. “Our customers know that our people will take care of them, which is very important to our relationship-based focus of doing business.”

J. G. Elliott also has tremendous staff longevity, with several people having been with the agency 30 years or more. “We have a very experienced staff, combined with a number of younger people to ensure we are positioned for perpetuation. We also have a great mix of people who are interested and invested in the local community,” John says.

Storm Tested

The agency was founded as the Wakefield Insurance Agency in Scottsbluff, Nebraska, where it still maintains its headquarters. **Jack Elliott** joined the agency in 1925, eventually purchasing the business and changing the name to what it is today. In the 1950s, John’s father, **Jim**, joined the firm. Jim purchased the agency in 1974, an event that marked the beginning of rapid growth.

“My father started a process of acquiring smaller agencies in the community,” John says. That continued for 20 years, ultimately making J. G. Elliott the largest agency in the region. For the past 18 years, the agency has focused on organic growth.

“We still look for acquisition opportunities, but we are also positioned well both geographically and in our mix of carriers to grow our new customer base,” says John.

Along with its Scottsbluff headquarters, the agency has locations in Torrington and Wheatland, Wyoming. In addition

to maintaining steady growth in its book of commercial lines business, the agency has seen a dramatic increase in personal lines business over the past half-decade, which John credits to the agency’s storm claims service.

“A few years ago, we had some major storms. People who had placed business with direct writers found that those insurers’ service suffered after the storm. Afterward, some of those direct writers then raised prices or pulled out of the market,” he says. “We became an agency of choice for people who were tired of that poor direct-writer relationship.”

Growth Goals

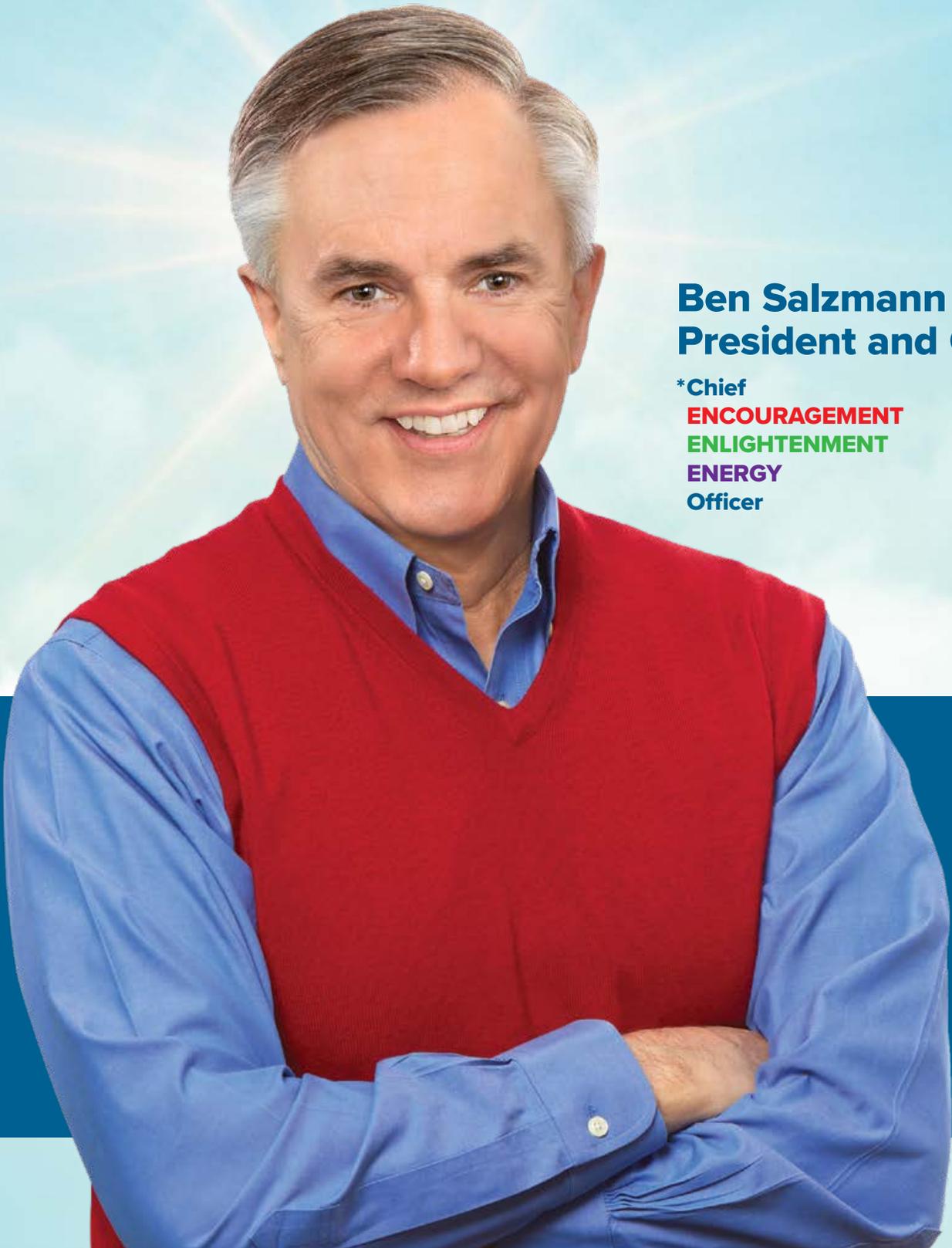
As J. G. Elliott approaches its 100th year of business, it plans for continued growth, including opening a new branch in Casper, Wyoming. With several staff members nearing retirement, the agency is also engaged in succession planning, ensuring that it has people who are well-trained to continue its tradition of customer service.

“Education is tremendously important. We provide the resources and time so that people can get additional education, not just in insurance but also in leadership and sales,” John says.

“Throughout our history, when we write new business it’s often because that customer has not been taken care of elsewhere and is looking for a relationship, not just a product,” John says. “We often tell people that we may not be the cheapest price, but we will do our best to provide them the best service and coverage they can find.”



20 YEARS O

A portrait of Ben Salzmann, a middle-aged man with short, light brown hair, smiling warmly. He is wearing a blue long-sleeved button-down shirt under a red V-neck sweater. His arms are crossed. The background is a bright blue sky with soft, wispy white clouds and a sunburst effect behind his head.

Ben Salzmann
President and CEEEO*

*Chief

ENCOURAGEMENT

ENLIGHTENMENT

ENERGY

Officer

F AMAZING!

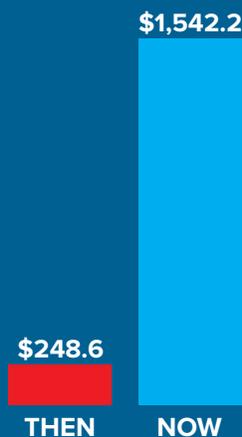
On January 25, 2019, Ben Salzman marked his 20th year as Acuity's President and CEO!

Over the past 20 years, Acuity has experienced a period of growth and financial strength unparalleled in the industry. We have grown at more than twice the industry average rate, from less than \$250 million in 1998 to over \$1.5 billion in revenue under Salzman's tenure. Our policyholders' surplus, a key indicator of financial strength in the insurance industry, has grown at nearly three times the industry average and surged from under \$190 million in 1998 to over \$2 billion at year-end 2018. This growth has led to robust hiring, including plans to hire more than 160 employees in 2019 alone. Over that same period, Acuity has nearly tripled our geographic footprint.

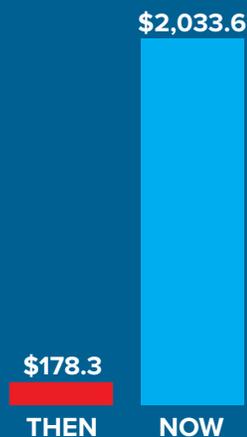
Over the past 20 years, Acuity has also consistently been ranked as a top employer, including by *Forbes* magazine, *Fortune* magazine, and the American Business Awards. We have been featured in national publications for innovations in recruiting and employment and maintain an average voluntary turnover rate of just 2%.

"It is an honor and a privilege to serve Acuity," Salzman says. "We have a tremendous team of staff and agents who are committed to doing what is right for our customers and working toward our mutual success. I simply could not ask to work with better people, and I am truly thankful each and every day."

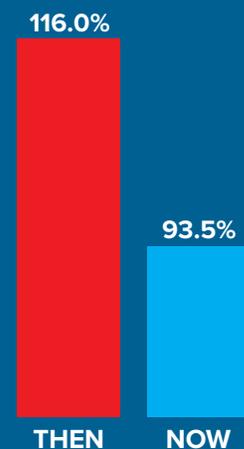
Total Premium
in millions of dollars



Total Surplus
in millions of dollars



Combined Ratio



Underwriting Profit
in millions of dollars



AGENT LOWELL SOMSEN EARNS SOUTH DAKOTA TRUCKING ASSOCIATION HONORS

Lowell Somsen, Truck Account Executive at Fischer, Rounds & Associates in Pierre, South Dakota, received the Chairman's Award from the South Dakota Trucking Association. The Chairman's Award is presented to a person who has made a positive and recognizable impact on the transportation business and who has contributed immensely to the trucking industry and South Dakota Trucking Association.

"I congratulate Lowell for being selected to receive the prestigious South Dakota Trucking Association's Chairman's Award. Lowell has been a strong supporter of the association in many ways," says **Myron Rau**, President of the South Dakota Trucking Association.

Chris Rounds, agency CEO, says that the recognition is well deserved. "Lowell's top priority is taking care of people," Chris says. "He truly cares about his trucking customers

and has been a driving force in making Fischer, Rounds & Associates the leading truck insurance agency in South Dakota."

Lowell has been in the trucking insurance business for 37 years and joined Fischer, Rounds & Associates in 1986. He has seen many changes over time and enjoys solving the challenges the ever-changing industry presents.

"The trucking industry is a very specialized business. Today, you have to be a safety director, an HR consultant, and have a good understanding of FMCSA regulations. And when you're working with truckers, you can't be bashful talking to them to make sure they stay in compliance," Lowell says.

Over the past few years, Lowell has transitioned his book of business to two new producers, but he still maintains a regular presence at the agency. After years of hard work building up a book of trucking business, he is taking the time to enjoy life, chasing his passion of hunting and fishing. Lowell has been waterfowl hunting from Argentina to northern Canada and fishing in Costa Rica, Lake Erie, Canada, to Kodiak Island.

"I've seen a lot over the years," Lowell says. "It's been a roller-coaster ride, but I've enjoyed it all."



YOU'RE INVITED

MARCH 20

Acuity invites you to a special agent town hall event on March 20, 2019. You can attend in person or online.

If attending in person, please visit acuity.com/townhall and register for the amazing town hall event.

If viewing online, there is no need to RSVP, but you will need your normal Acuity username and password. On the day of the event, simply log on to acuity.com and click the banner at the top of the Agent Center or visit acuity.com/townhall. If you don't have an Acuity username and password, contact the Acuity Help Desk at 920.458.9131 x4357 as soon as possible (please do not wait until the day of the event).



12 chances to win \$1,000!
\$40 Acuity Merchandise Store gift card
for all agents who attend!



Acuity U is for You!

EDUCATION YOUR WAY

Acuity provides both in-person and online continuing education (CE). Our in-person CE courses, delivered by one of our many experienced territory directors, are typically two-hour, two-credit courses. Our online courses, first launched in 2013, now feature dozens of videos

covering numerous topics across personal lines and commercial lines, claims, ethics, and more.

Check out some of the feedback received from agents who have taken our courses. Visit acuityu.com to learn more or take an online course, or contact your territory director to schedule a class.

“These are the most fun continuing ed hours I have done in 37 years :)”

“I really appreciate that Acuity provides free CE!”

“I enjoy your online courses and find it easy to acquire needed continuing education credit hours.”

“LOVE Acuity U!”

“Very valuable tool in my continuing education! Thanks, Acuity!”

“The courses offered are very well done, with good content. Well organized and interesting. Good job. Acuity is the only company we represent that offers courses of this caliber.”

“Thank you for the wonderful online courses you offer!”

AGENT-RECOMMENDED EDUCATION



When asked if they were satisfied with the Acuity U program and if they would recommend it to others, agents rated Acuity over 4.8 on a 5-point scale.

Unlimited Possibilities in CE Education

Continuing Education Course Catalog

ACUITY U *update*



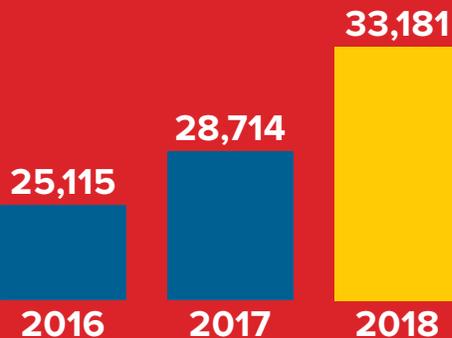
American Fraud	Ethics: Divergent Dilemmas
<p>In person only 1 CREDIT</p> <p>In person AZ, CO, IA, IL, IN, MI, MN, MO, ND, SD, TN, TX, UT, VT, WI, WY</p> <p>Online AZ, CO, IA, IL, IN, MI, MN, MO, ND, SD, TN, TX, UT, VT, WI, WY</p>	<p>In person & Online 1 CREDIT</p> <p>In person AZ, CO, IA, IL, IN, MI, MN, MO, ND, SD, TN, TX, UT, VT, WI, WY</p> <p>Online AZ, CO, IA, IL, IN, MI, MN, MO, ND, SD, TN, TX, UT, VT, WI, WY</p>

“One of the best CE classes I have taken. I now understand why we have certain rules in place. Thank you!!!”

“LOVED, LOVED this class. I cannot wait for the rest of the agency to view this baby!”

CE CREDITS SET RECORD IN 2018

Agents earned more than 30,000 CE Credits from Acuity for the first time in 2018.



KRYSTAL KATH TURNS TRASH INTO **GARDEN-ART TREASURE**

Artists gain their inspiration from all kinds of sources. In creating her garden art, **Krystal Kath** is inspired by the shapes of common, discarded objects and upcycles them into new and interesting creations.

Several years ago, she began creating flowers from old dishes. The process, which involves using a diamond drill, does involve a little trial and error.

"The process tends to result in a lot of broken glass in my garage," says Krystal, who is a Mailroom Clerk at our headquarters.

World of Possibilities

Last year, Krystal took a "Welding for Women" class at Lakeshore Technical College, where she is also pursuing an associate's degree in accounting. Learning to weld opened a new world of possibilities in terms of materials she could use. She began creating ornamental owls out of broken shovel heads.

"The owls really started because my father, who worked in construction, would bring me home broken shovels," she explains. "I started selling them on Facebook as a way to make some money for college, and ended up making dozens of them."

Krystal's friends also provide her with a steady stream of supplies. "I have no shortage of materials!" she says.

Seeing Potential

For Krystal, part of the fun of creating garden art is looking at common objects and "seeing" something else in the shape.

"Sometimes an idea just comes to me. Other times, I might see something interesting that other people created at a show or on the web and use that design as a starting point, trying to make it even cooler," she says.

"It's a good way to relax—a good stress reliever," says Krystal. "Some people run, some people sew. I like to sit in the garage and create things."



Industry Insider

Surveys from Marshall & Swift/Boeckh find that about 60% of homeowners nationwide are underinsured by about 17%. That means that they would be short about \$34,000 on an average \$200,000 home.

Be sure your customers maintain proper insurance to value (or, better yet, have guaranteed replacement cost coverage) to avoid coinsurance penalties and coverage shortfalls.



Q. Is Acuity a market for antique and special interest vehicles?

A. Yes, we are! Acuity will write these older and highly valuable vehicles.

Q&A ACUITY

Q. How does Acuity define an antique or special interest vehicle?

A. Antiques are private passenger vehicles at least 25 years old and driven exclusively in exhibitions, club activities, or parades. Special interest vehicles are private passenger vehicles at least 10 years old with a market value significantly above average for its age.

Q. Why should I insure these vehicles with Acuity?

A. Acuity does not have mileage restrictions for special interest vehicles. Also, antique and special interest vehicles automatically receive the Agreed Value Endorsement, which pays the agreed amount in the event of a total loss.



Searching for a Job?

Headquarters

Business Analyst
Building Maintenance/Fleet Specialist
Building Security Specialist
Commercial Lines Underwriter
(Entry Level)
Commercial Lines Underwriter
(Experienced)
Programmer
Senior Research Statistician -
Data Scientist
Systems Engineer - Data Base
Technical Support Analyst

Field

Commercial Field Underwriter
Dallas, Texas
Illinois
Field Claims Representative
Colorado
Illinois
Indiana
Field Premium Auditor
Pennsylvania
Rochester, Minnesota/Western Wisconsin
Loss Control Representative
Waco, Texas
Territory Director
Virginia

For more information, contact Joan Ravanelli Miller, General Counsel and Vice President - Human Resources, at 800.242.7666, extension 1666.

Acuity provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, ancestry, national or ethnic origin, marital status, and all other protected categories in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws.

THE FUTURE OF CARS AND CLAIMS

Most of you have probably read about the upcoming age of self-driving cars and how it will affect the personal lines auto market. Whether you side with Elon Musk who famously said in a 2015 interview that human-operated vehicles “could be illegal someday,” or the more skeptical folks like Christian Wolmar of *The Spectator* who has called the prospect of a driverless car future a “fantasy,” most people agree that autonomous car technology will be a significant market disruptor for personal lines insurers in the upcoming years.

There have been countless articles written about how personal lines premiums may plummet as fewer people drive and accidents are less frequent. Others talk about how companies will struggle with pricing and underwriting in this brave new world. What hasn't been written about much is how claims adjusting will be affected.

Discussions of liability focus on how liability for accidents caused by self-driving cars should be shifted to the manufacturers. What is not explained is how P&C claims professionals will get manufacturers to investigate these claims quickly and take responsibility. Do we truly expect companies like Tesla, Google, Volvo, or Mercedes

Benz to send out rapid response teams to investigate all claims involving self-driving vehicles? Perhaps in a serious incident, but for moderate or minor intersection accidents? Furthermore, will they allow access to local experts to download and view their proprietary data?

Lack of access to vehicle technology after accidents is an obstacle claims professionals

already face today, such as when attempting to analyze data from air bag modules and electric on-board recorders (EOBRs). Once a vehicle has been worked on by a shop, data can be changed or compromised.

That's why a rapid response to claims is so important. Obtaining vehicle data is essential to defend a customer who is not at fault and fight manufacturers' attempts to blame intervening causes in an effort to negate their liability.

The debate about whether vehicle accidents involving autonomous technology belong under automobile or product liability also raises another question. Are monoline adjusters who only handle auto claims equipped to deal with product liability challenges or, conversely, are monoline general liability adjusters equipped to deal with auto liability challenges?

At Acuity, we are prepared for the future of automobile technology, regardless of what that future holds. Our multi-line adjusters both in the office and in the field are trained to handle both auto and general liability product claims and are able to seamlessly complete a comprehensive investigation while still delivering our best-in-class claims service. Additionally, our focus on the first 24 hours following a serious crash allows us to better gather and retain data from control modules, data records, and vehicle sensors, as well as evidence from the accident scene.

The challenge of handling claims involving self-driving cars is one that Acuity is equipped for in a way that most carriers simply are not. This is just another example of how, as Charlie Gall of Ward Benchmarking observed, “Acuity's claims operation is the most efficient and dynamic of all the companies in the Ward's Top 50.” We are committed to delivering world-class claims service regardless of what the future holds.



BY KELLY C. CAVANAUGH,
GENERAL MANAGER – FIELD CLAIMS



Acuity partners with Trustpilot, an independent, Google-certified review platform that provides verified reviews from people who do have a service experience with us. See all our reviews at trustpilot.com/review/acuity.com.

Chip



My experience with Acuity has always been positive. Everyone is very friendly and responsive. I am impressed with the tools and services offered to help companies be safe and compliant.

FOCUS ON INSTRUCTION

Congratulations to Acuity staff members who recently completed insurance courses:

- Justin Bingham**, Commercial Underwriter – CPCU 520
- Monika Boswein**, Claims Consultant – CPCU 520
- Tony Brent**, Programmer Analyst – AINS 24
- Alex Buchholz**, Programmer – AINS 24
- Bridget Diedrich**, Senior Inside Claims Representative – AINS 21
- Drew Guillien**, Programmer – AINS 24
- EJ Gutzmer**, Programmer – AINS 24
- Samantha Hyde**, Programmer – AINS 24
- Amy Kostac**, Commercial Underwriter – AU 61
- Derrek LeMahieu**, Commercial Underwriter – AU 61
- Brennan Linse**, Programmer – AINS 24
- Gen Mervyn**, Manager - Services – AIC 30
- Corey Newhouse**, Programmer – AINS 24
- Nathan Tesch**, Commercial Underwriter – CPCU 530
- Kari Wachter**, Commercial Underwriter – CPCU 500



ASK THE SPECIALIST

ASK AARON

Are there coverages you recommend for retailers?

When it comes to insurance for a retail business, I've found there are coverages retailers need but many don't have. Retailers understand the need for the basics—liability and property coverage. But once you look deeper into the risks that retailers face, additional coverages should be considered.

This month's "Sell Acuity" column (see page 7) highlights the need for hired and nonowned auto coverage. Additionally, here are five other coverages that retailers should consider:

1. Cyber Security Coverage

Because cyber attacks against large retail businesses make headlines, small merchants or businesses that don't do online sales mistakenly think they aren't at risk. However, retailers of all sizes and types are at risk of cyber crime. In fact, 74 percent of small businesses reported a security breach within the last year. Acuity's Cyber Suite for business provides coverage for cyber liability, data breach, and identity theft.

2. Peak Season Coverage

Many retail businesses experience times when they may carry more than the average amount of stock for their business. It's easy to overlook those temporary spikes when setting a limit of insurance on a property policy. Peak season coverage increases the limit of business personal property during those times without needing to carry a higher limit all year.

3. Business Income and Extra Expense

Business income covers income lost between when a loss happens and a business is able to reopen. Extra expense coverage pays for additional costs needed to resume operations. Business income is particularly important if a covered loss happens during a peak season.

4. Employee Dishonesty

Statistics show that 75 percent of all employees steal at least once, including cash, merchandise, and business property. Studies have also shown that businesses lose 20 percent of every dollar due to employee theft. Employee dishonesty coverage protects against employee theft of money, securities, or property.

5. Equipment Breakdown

Small retailers have a wide variety of equipment they depend on, including computers and phone systems, coolers and freezers, HVAC systems, registers, and more. Acuity's Equipment Breakdown coverage covers losses from short circuiting, electrical arcing, power surges, mechanical breakdown, motor burnout, operator error, and boiler damage. Additional coverage in Acuity's form includes product/inventory lost due to spoilage, lost sales (business income), and extra expenses incurred during time of outage.

Small businesses often feel their business is too small for these coverages and certain risks don't apply to them. In some cases, the business owner may not realize they might not be covered for these risks. To support our retail business customers, we understand these risks and want to ensure each business owner has the coverages they need.

Aaron Stamm is Acuity's Retail Specialist. You can reach him at aaron.stamm@acuity.com.



Find the Flagpole



Our December flagpole was hidden on page 3. The three winners of \$100 chosen from among those who found it are:

Sue Oddo	Tower Insurance and Risk Management	Lombard, IL
Debbie Hageman	L Calvin Jones and Co	Canfield, OH
Carol Baggett	Union City Insurance	Union City, TN

To enter this month's contest, find the  hidden elsewhere in this issue, then send an email with its location to contest@acuity.com by March 15, 2019. This contest is open to agency staff only.



IMPOSSIBLE

WHAT A LOAD!

Acuity writes contractors' vehicles, but this overloaded, pavement-scraping contraption with a sledgehammer hanging off the left side and shovels and electrical cords off the right isn't exactly what we had in mind. Let's hope the zip ties and bungees "securing" the tools, electrical cords, and other supplies hold!

Do you have an "Impossible Insurable" to share? Send your pictures to infocus@acuity.com. Pictures must be original photos taken by an employee or agent, cannot be of a prospect, insured, or claimant, and the subject of the photo must be in a public location. If we publish your photo, we'll send you \$100.



CYNDI FRY PUTS CUSTOMERS FIRST

Commercial customers of The Reilly Company know that **Cyndi Fry** has their best interests at heart.

“Cyndi has been a top associate for over 25 years,” says **J.R. Reilly**, Principal Agent. “Her knowledge, discipline, organization, and experience are frequently commented on by our customers and carriers alike. She is very loyal and honest with her clients, and they always know that she is doing the best she can to protect their interests. We are very lucky to have her on our team!”



Cyndi began her career in accounting at the Leavenworth, Kansas-based agency and moved to commercial lines after four years.

Today she is a CISR and Commercial Lines Account Manager and says that putting the customer first is what great service is built on.

“Particularly because I work with a number of contractors, it’s important to get back to them quickly with certificates and

other requests. I have developed great relationships with my customers and have come to consider many of them friends over the years,” she says.

Cyndi has seen many changes at The Reilly Company over the past 25 years. “Starting my career, we had one printer and computer in the office, used only for writing checks. We gradually added computers on every account manager’s desk and had them play solitaire because most had not even used a mouse before! We now have computers, dual monitors, and are paperless,” she says, adding that the agency’s focus on service has been constant over those years.

“One thing that has not changed here is a commitment to our customers and our partnerships with our insurance companies,” she says. “Whether it was back in the days of typing certificates or policies on a typewriter, or today’s era of quoting and issuing online and emailing a policy to an insured, the bottom line here is and always will be customer service.”

Congratulations to Cyndi Fry, an Outstanding Service Professional!



WORD OF MOUTH

facebook

One simple item could make the process of replacing your items much easier—a home inventory checklist. Learn about this and other tips you can share with your customers at facebook.com/AcuityInsuranceCompany.

