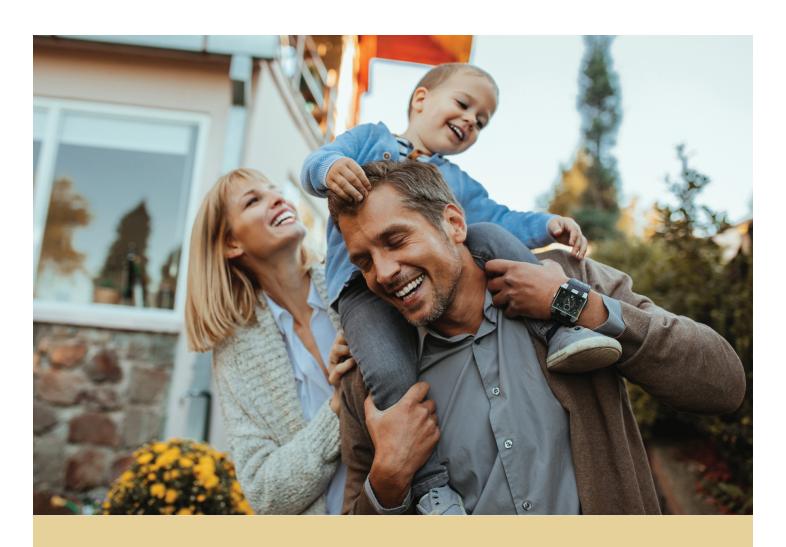
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YIPS WINTER CONFERENCE WRAP-UP P. 13-15



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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Agent's Voice

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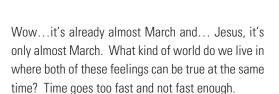
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Happy Valentine's Day (I know that's late, but it's the day I'm writing this article). Mardi Gras is on the horizon and hopefully everyone had a good one.

The highlights over the last 30 days or so:

The Legislature passed the funding for the "Insure Louisiana Incentive Program". Carriers are currently applying for the program. Thank you to all of those that were engaged in this process.

The YIPs Conference just wrapped up — Congrats to Outgoing President Eric Vocke and to Incoming President Jason DiMaggio.

I understand that if you are reading this, you are the choir, but in the immortal words of Bruno Mars, "Can I preach?"

If you aren't going to these conferences, conventions, events, get-togethers, then you should be. This is where the magic happens. Spending time with other people that understand what we're all dealing with and trusting each other enough to share information is what makes our currently difficult jobs bearable...I mean...and the money.



If you went to the YIPs Conference, then you probably know more about Fortified homes than most agents. You also probably have a new perspective on how the reinsurance market works. You've also realized that "good food" means something different in Natchez. I like Natchez a lot, but they aren't killing it on the food. However, if you like 90s music, it's the place to be. (I know that sounds like two negatives, but I miss 90s music.)

The PIA Convention is coming up soon. If you missed the YIPs, you've got another chance coming to hang out with a bunch of good people and learn some things that will make you a better agent.

The theme of the convention this year is "Saturday Night Live". I've already been told that I can't dress as my three favorite characters, but Chris Farley as a Chip and Dale dancer hasn't been ruled out yet by the powers that be. The PIA staff and the Membership Committee are all over this theme already. The show has been on the air since 1975, that's 48 years of characters; everyone should be able to find at least one that they like.

The insurance industry is going to have a difficult legislative session this year. Please stay engaged and let the PIA know what you are seeing and hearing. Your input to your reps and senators is extremely important.

Thanks for making it to the end!



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COMMISSIONER'S COLUMN

Passage of Insurance Incentive Program Brings New Opportunities

The Louisiana Department of Insurance (LDI) worked with lawmakers last year to pass several new laws that strengthened the state's insurance market following the devastating 2020 and 2021 hurricane seasons.

Another key step in stabilizing home insurance rates was taken during a Special Session earlier this month. The Louisiana Legislature overwhelmingly passed \$45 million of funding for the Insure Louisiana Incentive Program, which is aimed at attracting insurers to the state. Governor John Bel Edwards announced that he signed the bill into law on February 7.

As with most legislation, it was not a quick and easy process, but there was strong bipartisan support in both the state House and Senate.

I urged the governor and legislative leadership to call the Special Session to expedite the process and bring relief for homeowners because time is of the essence. The governor's signature enacts funding for the program and allows the LDI to begin bringing in more insurers to write policies for Louisiana property owners.

The incentive program, which is modeled after a successful plan that was put into place after hurricanes Katrina and Rita, will award grants of between \$2 million and \$10 million to each qualified company that applies and is permitted to participate.

Those companies will provide 100% matching funds for the grant they receive, and the total new premium required to be written by each company is at least two times that combined amount.

For example, if a company receives a \$5 million grant, it would be required to write at least \$20 million in new premium, and at least half of that \$20 million would have to be written in high-risk parishes. Companies must stay on that coverage for a five-year period and will earn 20% of the grant in each of those five years.

Participating insurers will be subject to enhanced solvency monitoring, including newly increased capital and surplus requirements, monthly reporting, in-depth reinsurance program reviews and premium limits in each parish.

The \$45 million dedicated to the program will be used to attract new companies to the market and encourage existing companies to write new policies, which will depopulate Louisiana Citizens and stabilize rates through competition. Over 10 companies have expressed interest in the program so far.

We issued a public invitation for insurers to apply for the program on February 9. After 30 days, we will evaluate the applicants and determine which insurers will receive the funds. The Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget will then review and hopefully approve our recommendations in March. This would give participating insurers a three-month period to access reinsurance for their increased book of business and start writing new policies before hurricane season.

The entire state will benefit from the new competition and Citizens depopulation. Reducing the number of Citizens policies lowers the cost for Citizens' reinsurance program that renews on June 1 and makes it less likely that every policyholder in the state will be assessed as a result of future Katrina or Ida-level losses.



Commissioner of Insurance Louisiana Department of Insurnace

public@ldi.state.la.us

Though I am pleased the incentive program was passed, there is still work to be done. The incentive program is only one part of our overall plan to stabilize the homeowners insurance market. We will advocate for longer-term solutions to the insurance crisis during the Regular Session in April. One of those solutions is providing grants to homeowners who replace or retrofit their roofs to the higher FORTIFIED standard.

As we count down to another hurricane season, the LDI will remain committed to stabilizing insurance rates and weathering this crisis. I want to thank Governor Edwards, President Page Cortez, Speaker Clay Schexnayder, Senate Insurance Chair Kirk Talbot, House Insurance Chair Mike Huval and the members of the Louisiana Legislature who worked diligently to advance this priority legislation in an overwhelmingly bipartisan fashion.

The last several months have been challenging for everyone involved in the Louisiana homeowners market, from lawmakers and regulators to agents and policyholders. Your hard work to take care of your clients during this emergency has not gone unnoticed. We will continue working around the clock to stabilize rates for residents and attack this crisis head-on.





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Well, it's been a tough 2022 and it looks like 2023 is coming with its own challenges as well, but we will prevail! I'm sure of it! We've now lost another company, and although most of you have been moving any UPC accounts in preparation for the May 31 deadline, it's still another blow. We never want to hear the words "insolvency" again, right? But, I want to focus on a couple of positives.

First, we were successful in getting the funding passed in the Special Session for the Insurance Incentive Program. Commissioner Donelon talks about that in more detail in his article this issue on page 6, so I won't be repetitive, but I do want to thank all of you that helped us by either emailing your legislator as well as those that came to the Capitol when the bill was being heard at the committee level. It was a perfect example of how our grassroots efforts are effective. And, I think with our current insurance crisis, we might have gotten their attention at the Capitol. Perhaps we'll also be successful in getting some other important legislation passed this coming Regular Session. Please be sure to stay involved in the process. We're working now with other industry lobbying groups and our Governmental Affairs Committee to develop a focused plan of action. With it being a fiscal vear, we'll be limited on the number of bills that can be introduced, so we want to make sure to focus on those that are most important in helping our insurance marketplace. Again, be on the lookout for more details and be sure to respond when we send out our grassroots alerts.

PASSING IT ON!

By Jody M. Boudreaux, CAE, CIC, CISR

Second, we're revitalizing an old program we had in the past, the Business Link, which will help us get our agency members in front of any new companies that come into the state. By the time you read this, you should have received a survey from us to complete so we can have some basic agency data to present to these companies. If you have not seen this be the time you read this article, please contact me so we can make sure to get the survey to you. We'll also be sending communications out with general information on any of these companies as they are approved with DOI.

Third, our Young Insurance Professionals remain very active. As I attend national meetings, I'm always proud of our YIPs when so many other states are struggling to get young people involved with their associations. Well, that's one problem we don't have here in Louisiana. Our YIPs just recently held its Annual Meeting in Natchez, MS and we had a great turnout, especially considering all our market issues of late. Thankfully, our members see the importance of staying connected and continue to support our programs. Check out our centerfold for a recap of the YIPs Conference.

The YIPs is also planning once again the Casino Night prior to the PIA of Acadiana Crawfish Boil. We had such a successful first event, with right at 100 people, that they're expecting to possibly double it! That's a hefty goal, but we think we can do it! Check out the details and QR code with how to register on page 16.

And, the YIPs also partnered with Dale Carnegie last year to offer a Professional Sales and Customer Service Series, offering our members a VERY MUCH discounted rate. We've had a slow start with it, because we know everyone's been busy this past year just moving accounts, but I would urge you

to take a look at it this year. Don't under estimate the importance of your employees having the proper sales and customer service skills right now. I would even say it's MORE important than ever! So, take some time to invest in your people and see how it pays off!

I also want to just make sure you're taking advantage of another wonderful member benefit. We have always been known for our networking opportunities, and if COVID brought us anything good, it was the ability to offer those same networking opportunities virtually. If you're on Facebook, be sure to follow our PIA of Louisiana Peers Group Page. I'm so excited to see more and more people taking advantage of this incredible resource. As a member, you can post a question that you have and then let other members share their answers and/or experience with whatever your issue is. It's also the fastest way for us to put out information, such as any DOI directives or company concerns and/or updates that we become aware of.

And, I want to point out one last positive for us. It's kind of a bittersweet positive. Because we've had so many struggles of late, we've actually experienced membership growth the past year. Unfortunately, many people don't see the benefit of an association until they are faced with challenges and realize they need to join forces with like organizations. While we hate that it takes that, we are very thankful to see our membership numbers grow and we welcome all our new agency members. We also want to thank all you that have been long-time members — so many of you that have always been so supportive through the years and make our organization what it is...as we often say, a family. Together, we'll get through this difficult time.





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Your First Conversation with a Prospect

By John Chapin

I was recently in a sales meeting for a company that I just started working with. One of the subjects that came up was how to handle the first interaction with the prospect. By first interaction, I'm referring to the first conversation with someone who seems to have some interest and has decided to at least give you a few minutes of their time. In sales meetings, I'll usually ask if someone has an example of what they do in that situation and if they could share it with the group. In this case, Wayne volunteered. He's a veteran at the company having sold for them for about 17 years. He started speaking and after about 90 seconds of verbal diarrhea, I stopped him.

What came out of his mouth was a monolog about their company and their products. It amazes me how much this happens. Most lectures, like the one Wayne was giving, last five to ten minutes, or more, and the salesperson does not ask one question or get any input from the prospect, they just drone on hoping they'll say something the prospect will find interesting.

The most important part of a first conversation with a prospect is to get them talking as much as possible. The 80/20 Rule applies here. Now depending upon whom you're talking to, what kind of initial impression you've made, when you catch them, their personality type, etc., you may or may not achieve 80/20, but that's the goal: them speaking about 80% of the time, you speaking about 20% of the time. And, when you do speak, most of that will be in the form of asking well-thought-out questions that both separate you from your competitors and help you determine the prospect's needs, wants, and desires. Near the end of your first meeting, you may mention some ways you, your company, or your product might be a good fit for what they are looking for or make some comments on some of what they shared with you but this first conversation, even though you are controlling it, as you control all sales situations, the prospect is the star of the show.

The best way to open this conversation is by asking why they decided to meet with you. It can be simple as asking, "So, why did you decide to meet with me?" Or, "Why did you decide to give me a few minutes to-day?" If they reached out to you, you want to ask why, but you also want to find out why they reached out to you specifically now versus a month ago or a month from now.

If they open the conversation by asking any questions about you, your company, or your product, you can address those briefly, but you want to get them talking. Later you can fill them in on you, your company, and your product based on the information they shared with you about what they may or may not be looking for. For example, if they say something like, "So, I've heard about your company, but really don't know a lot." Come back with, "Well, I'm happy to share some details about our company and why many in your industry currently do business with us and a lot of that will depend upon your current situation and what you're looking for. Is it okay if I ask you a few guestions about your current situation?" After getting an affirmative response, you can ask your diagnostic questions to determine needs, wants, problems, and desires, and determine whether or not you have a solution for them.

Questions you ask will revolve around why they've decided to meet with you, what their current situation is, if they have any wants, needs, or problems and how bad and urgent are they, when they looking to make a decision, how they make a decision, what would make them decide to do business with you or someone else, are there any rules or parameters within which they'll make a decision, what are the most important factors in making a deci-

sion, what kind of resources do they have to invest in a solution, etc. Basically, your questions will focus on how ready, willing, and able they are to invest in a solution that involves you and your company. Of course, you also want to make sure you listen well to the answers and get details documented.

Here are some other things to consider in this first interaction:

- Verify important information.
- Make a note of their words and phrases, so you can "speak their language."
- You need to be scripted and you need to practice questions and what you're going to say ahead of time; be prepared. I'm not going to point-counter-point the whole script thing. The best teams, movies, shows, and performances are all scripted and all the best players practice them and know them cold.
- Close during the call, whether that be a sales attempt, a next meeting or call, or gracefully bowing out because you realize this is not a good prospect for you. You must close on all calls.

Above all else, remember, especially in this first meeting, to let the prospect talk more than you and make sure you listen well. If you catch yourself talking for a couple of minutes or more at any point, it's probably time to ask a question or simply shut up and let them speak.

John Chapin is a motivational sales speaker and trainer. For his free newsletter, or to have him speak at your next event, go to: www. completeselling.com John has over 35 years of sales experience as a number-one sales rep and is the author of the 2010 sales book of the year: Sales Encyclopedia. You can reprint provided you keep contact information in place. E-mail: johnchapin@completeselling.com.

YIPS ROLLIN' ON THE RIVER

The Young Insurance Professionals bid farewell to the big city to slow down in the lovely Natchez, Mississippi as they went **Rollin' on the River** for their 2023 Winter Conference. The conference was held at The Natchez Grand Hotel & Suites from **February 9 – 10, 2023.**

At this year's conference, YIPs started off nice and easy with education and networking. Then they kicked things up a notch during an exciting off-property event. The conference events were streamlined to best maximize attendees' time out of the office. The two-day conference concluded on Friday afternoon with the YIPs Annual Business Meeting.

CE SESSIONS

YIPs members and guests honed in on their skills with six hours of continued education sessions. We want to thank our speakers, Alexandra Cary of the Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety, Julie Shiyou-Woodard of Smart Home America, Noel Bunol of Gulf States Insurance Company, Ron Henderson and Chuck Myers of DOI.



EXHIBIT HALL

This year's conference showcased 13 exhibitors. It offered a great networking opportunity between agents and company reps. Booths were setup as small high tops to keep an intimate networking ambiance.



"PROUD MARY" SPECIAL BREAK

To go with our Rollin' on the River theme, attendees got a little creative...and competitive...as they concocted their own version of the traditional Bloody Mary. The winning team not only had the best tasting "Proud Mary" but also had to come up with the best drink name and jingle. The winners of our "Proud Mary" Cocktail Contest were **Jessica Miller, Naomi Fields, Russ Vegas, Britt Grieme and Daniel Netterville**. And, special thanks to our judges, **Casey Lane, Nick Farley and David "Moose" Bulloch.**



DOWNTOWN EVENT

The YIPs Conference Attendees always love a good Pub Crawl and downtown Natchez provided the perfect setting for this crowd favorite event.



GENERAL SESSION & FAREWELL

To close the festivities, the new Board members were sworn in and we heard from our outgoing President **Eric Vocke** and incoming President **Jason Dimaggio**. We thank them both for their time and commitment to our great association. And, we also expressed our gratitude to our retiring Board member, Immediate Past President **Ryan Page**. We look forward to another great year and we hope you join us in 2023!



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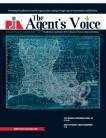








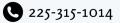






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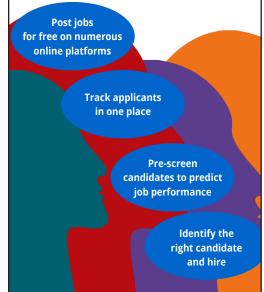
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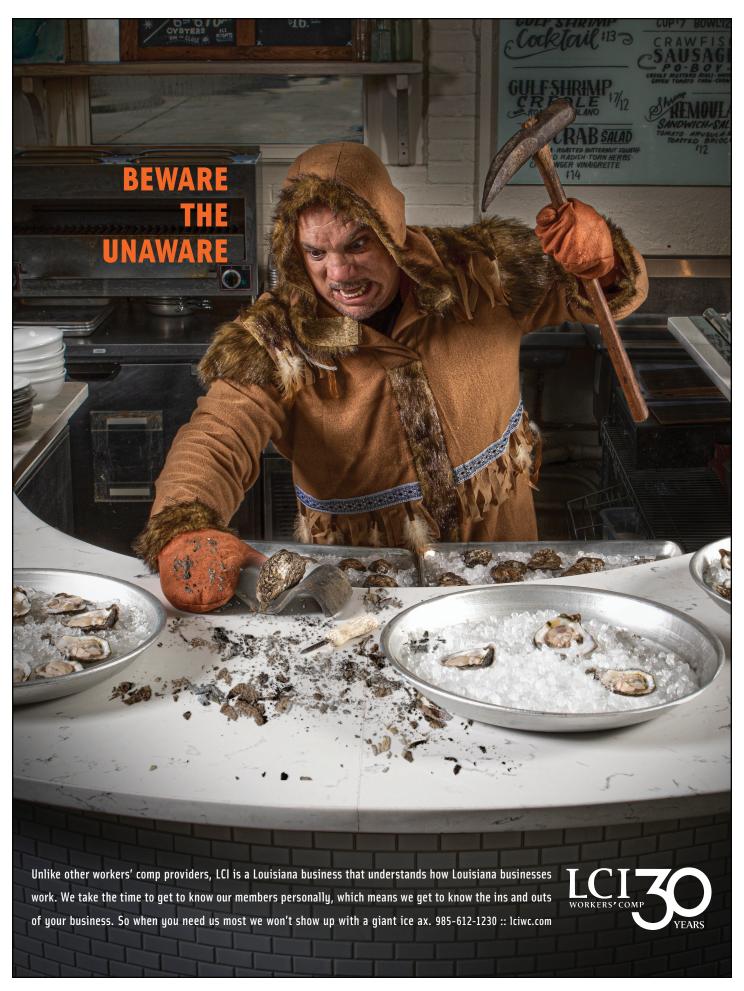
- The overview of the PIA cyber insurance program
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