



Wilson Wisdom

Summer 2008

Wilson Insurance Management

4583 North SR 13
PO Box 314
North Webster, IN 46555

574-834-5701 phone
888-834-5701 toll free
574-834-1557 fax

info@wilsoninsurance.com

www.wilsoninsurance.com

Do You Have Flood Insurance?

“Many people incorrectly assume that regular homeowners insurance covers damage done by floods or rising waters. They don’t realize until it is too late that all basic homeowners insurance policies exclude flood,” says Terry McConnell of Erie Insurance Group.

“Only flood insurance will cover losses in the event of a flood.” Flood insurance is available solely through the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

There is a 30-day waiting period for the policy to go into effect, so it’s important to contact your agent to start the process before storms arrive.

Call now for a free quote!

Agency News

Our current economic times seem to challenge us all in one way or another. As we are all keenly aware the cost of gas for our vehicles or fuel for our lawn equipment to simply mow and maintain our property is very definitely a growing expense for most of us. And if that isn’t bad enough the latest report on fuel costs for the winter heating season appear to be grim with significant increases predicted.

If you are like me you may be asking yourself “where else can I cut back?” I can’t say I have many answers. I do try to conserve fuel by making thoughtful decisions on travel. I have also decided air conditioning isn’t necessarily a *requirement* for a happy life. Maybe it’s just as simple as not wanting to line the pockets of the

utility companies any more than necessary but I have to say we’ve enjoyed the many sounds of summer at our home this year. There are a lot of us out there that didn’t have air conditioning growing up. Surprisingly, we survived too! I know that for many people the rising fuel, energy and food costs alone has become a real burden. The working poor, the elderly or those on a fixed income are feeling great stress. Some of our clients have been affected by plant closings, downsizing and reduced hours. If your personal financial situation has changed and you are having difficulty paying your insurance premiums **please don’t hesitate to call our office.** We will do everything in our power to find an alternative payment plan to meet your needs.

We care for and about our customers...it’s what we do.

LIFE INSURANCE

Many of you have life insurance with us. For those of you that do not: I just hope you have life insurance protection someplace.....anyplace..... just so YOU HAVE IT! (Even if you have life insurance protection through your employer, it is always a good idea to have additional coverage elsewhere- in case something happens to the company or your job!)

Our agency offers life insurance for many different needs and in many very affordable options. Don’t take a gamble with the lives of your loved ones. We will help you figure out a plan you can really afford. We want your spouse and children to be able to keep their home and the lifestyle you have worked so hard for.

WHAT IF- You were left alone...

To pay the mortgage...Raise the children...Face the future...

Contact us today for an Insurance Calculator, Insurance Buyer’s Guide or to discuss the best options for you and your family.

CAR CARE

DID YOU KNOW?

Copper pipe is still seeing some slight increases +0.4% for the quarter and +2.9% for the year.

Copper wire, however, saw a slight decrease of -0.9% for the quarter and -5.1% for the year. The two-year trend for copper pipe is still an amazing +91.1% and for wire is still a hefty +49.0%.

Plywood decreased this past quarter -2.8% but is still up +10.2% for the year. Also, lumber continues to decline down -4.2% for the quarter and is down -6.5% for the year.

Drywall also continues to decline, down -4.7% for the quarter and -13.6% for the year. This is the fifth consecutive quarter where drywall has decreased.

Ready-mix just showed slight increases of +0.4% for the quarter and +1.3% for the year.

From Marshall & Swift/Boeckh

Battling months of snow and ice can leave your car desperately in need of some care and revitalization. Procrastinating with routine maintenance could cause you to miss some early signs of trouble – leaving you stranded in the warm months ahead.

Erie Insurance Group recommends the following tips to spring your car back into shape:

- **Wash** – Take time to spray the salt and dirt out of wheel wells, underneath the bumpers and underbody. Salt build up can lead to rusting and erosion. Repair any rust if necessary. A good shampoo can help remove the salt from carpet fibers.
- **Check Brakes**– One warning sign is brake noise such as grinding, squealing or screeching.

- **Tires** – Remove winter tires and rotate all season tires. Check the condition of your tires and air pressure. Having the proper tire pressure will reduce wear and tear and maximize your gas mileage.
- **Oil and fluids** – Change the oil and check all fluids. In the winter, fluids are easily depleted as your engine works harder in cold weather. Test your antifreeze. It prevents your coolant from boiling in the summer.

It's also a good idea to check your car's air conditioning and cooling system. Performing routine maintenance on your car will not only keep it running smoothly, it will help you keep your cool no matter what the weather brings.

GRILLING SAFETY

Gas grill accidents are often caused when propane tanks are hooked up incorrectly or leaks are undetected.

- Check for leaks by placing some liquid soap and water directly on the gas connections. If bubbles appear, there

is a leak and the connections should be tightened.

- You should also routinely check fittings and connections to make sure that they are properly tightened and clean the grill thoroughly at least once each season.
- Only proper starting fluids should be used to ignite a charcoal grill - gasoline or

kerosene should never be used.

- Also, adding starter fluid after the fire has been ignited is extremely hazardous as flames may jump out from the grill.
- Never place grills directly on a wooden surface such as a deck because the grill will remain hot for hours after cooking, presenting a fire hazard.

Indiana is ranked 24th for **Identity Theft** with 3,928 victims- that's 62.2 victims per 100,000 population. You can take steps to reduce your potential for becoming a candidate of identity theft by following a few simple rules.

1. Watch your mail- if your mail comes to a mailbox, retrieve it promptly. Be concerned if you expect a bill by a particular date but don't receive it. Remove yourself from mailing lists by contacting: 1 888 5OPTOUT or Mail Preference Service- Direct Marketing Association, PO Box 643, Carmel, NY 10512 or www.dmaconsumers.org/cgi/offmailinglist
2. Protect your social security number- don't list your SS# on your license, checks or carry it in your wallet. Question if some other form of ID can be used.
3. Shred, shred, shred- anything that has identifying information! (See page 4 for discounts on shredders)
4. Check all accounts regularly. Review statements and check your credit reports annually. Legislation now

allows a free report every 12 months from each of the three consumer reporting agencies. www.annualcreditreport.com or 1-877-322-8228 or Annual Credit Report Request Service, P.O. Box 105281, Atlanta, GA 30348-5281.

5. Watch your computer- use quality spy-ware and virus protection. Don't download files from unknown sources and don't open suspicious emails. If you receive fraudulent emails, forward them (without extra text) to spam@uce.gov
6. Never give information over the phone unless you have initiated the contact first or you can confirm the authenticity of the caller/company.
7. Ask your agent about Identity Recovery coverage as an endorsement to your homeowners or renters policy.

To submit to the national do not call list: www.ftc.gov. For the Indiana do not call list, contact 888-834-9969 or www.in.gov/attorneygeneral

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Weather or not: Be Prepared

Weather hurricanes, tornados or floods, severe weather is possible in every state.

“It can’t be stressed enough how important it is for families to be prepared before a severe storm strike,” cautions Terry McConnell of Erie Insurance. “There are many things that you can do ahead of time to prepare yourself, your family and property.”

First, discuss with your family how you will respond after a natural disaster. Contact your local emergency management office or American Red Cross chapter and ask for the community disaster preparedness plan. Prepare a kit of disaster supplies now so that you have it in a safe place if you ever need it. For more information about preparing for disasters, visit www.erieinsurance.com

Business

I believe you will find value in setting aside 30 minutes twice a year to sit down with your insurance agent to review your business insurance needs. It is an excellent opportunity to review how your business may have changed. Are the services and products being

offered still the same? Have you added equipment or even an addition on an existing building? What about your gross sales and payroll amounts? If they have changed it is likely these changes will impact your insurance premiums. Like individuals and families many

Here are some items you may want to include in your disaster supply kit:

- Flashlights
- A portable, battery-operated radio
- Extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Emergency food and water
- Non-electric can opener
- Essential medicines
- Cash and credit cards
- Personal hygiene items
- Sturdy shoes
- A waterproof container for important documents
- Infant formula, diapers, medicines, etc.
- Pet supplies
- Important documents- birth certificates, identification, etc.



business operations have undergone change in order to remain competitive in trying times. It’s really very simple, as your business changes so do your insurance needs.

Call us for an appointment today. **We meet you where you are...wherever that happens to be.**

I am pleased to report that A.M. Best Company has affirmed the A+ (Superior) rating for the property/casualty affiliates of Erie Insurance Group and the A (Excellent) rating for Erie Family Life. Rating outlooks remain stable for all of our companies. The affirmed rating keeps Erie Insurance Group in the highest category (Superior) for financial strength. Only 9.8 percent of approximately 2,000 property/casualty insurers have earned this high rating.

Representing Erie Insurance, recipient of J.D. Power and Associates’ “Highest in Customer Satisfaction with the Auto Insurance Purchase Experience.”

Erie Insurance received the highest numerical score among auto insurance providers in the proprietary J.D. Power and Associates 2008 Insurance New Buyer StudySM. Study based on 8,452 total responses, measuring 19 providers and measuring the opinions of consumers purchasing a new auto insurance policy. Proprietary study results are based on experiences and perceptions of members surveyed in April 2008. Your experiences may vary. www.jdpower.com

As your agent, we want to make sure that you are adequately protected.

One method by which we do this is our Annual Review program. Periodically the agency will contact each policyholder to confirm that the information we have is accurate and up to date.

It is not uncommon for us to call a policyholder only to find out that the number has been disconnected. Or we receive a notice from the postal service indicating there has been a change of address.

Having correct information is vital to be sure that you receive important notices and contact. You are welcome to request an Annual Review or home reevaluation at any time. Simply contact the office!

Perils, Loss and Misunderstanding

A sailboat's stolen from your yard. Covered? A motorcycle's damaged in your driveway. Covered? Your home is damaged due to a sewer line break. Covered?

The answers in brief are depends, depends and depends, based upon specific policies and circumstances. But a recent survey by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners reveals that many homeowners misunderstand what's included in their homeowners policies. For instance, despite extensive media coverage on Hurricane Katrina victims whose claims were denied because they lacked flood insurance, 33% of respondents incorrectly believe flood damages would be covered

by a standard homeowners or property and liability policy.

The survey revealed a number of misunderstandings relating to common losses:

- 35% of respondents think damages from earthquakes are covered. Most homeowners policies exclude earthquake-related claims. An endorsement can be purchased for losses that arise from an earthquake event.
- 34% of survey participants think damages from mold are covered. Moisture damage such as rust, rot, mold and mildew is specifically excluded in most standard homeowners policies. Mold contamination is

only covered on a limited basis, and only if it is the result of a covered peril.

- 22% of respondents think pets stolen from or injured on their property are covered. This is another "depends" situation; there is no coverage for theft of a pet under most policies, although injuries may be partially covered based upon policy specifics.
- 31% of people who took the survey think damages from termites or other infestation are covered. Most policies do not cover such claims.

Not sure what your policy covers? Ask your AGENT!

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Management
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