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# MWCIA News



[www.mwcia.org](http://www.mwcia.org)

**July 2001 issue**

*a publication of the Minnesota Workers' Compensation Insurers Association*



## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Bruce A. Tollefson

### Website Technology - Customer Service or a Service Looking for a Customer?

You may have noticed a recurring theme over our past newsletters. The MWCIA has made a concerted effort to publicize important or interesting things about our website. We also continue to work hard on improvements and enhancements to this technology that we hope will make our website more valuable to you. The key words in this effort are "value" and "you", our customers.

Our goal in both the short and the long term is to use this technology to make important information about the Minnesota workers' compensation marketplace available to you 24 hours a day - seven days a week. We never close. In building this system, we start with one central idea — what workers' compensation products or services do we need to deliver electronically and what tools do we need to make that happen easily and efficiently?

I guess all of us have begun to use the world wide web to investigate and purchase products and services. It seems like websites tend to fall into two types: Those that are based on a solid product or service and use technology to facilitate ordering and distribution; and those that have the best of technology but seem to be searching for a product or service they hope you would like to buy.

I may be overstating this contrast a bit, but I am sure you all know what I mean. For example, when I need to travel, I can simply log on and find airline schedules, hotels, rental cars and detailed price comparisons. If I like what I see, I can order it instantly. These websites give me value because they help me find a product I want with greater ease and less cost.

On the other side of the spectrum are those irritating e-commerce advertisements that pop up on my computer screens hoping to sell me all sorts of useless items. The technology may be there to force this advertisement in front of my eyes, but that does not mean I see any value or will do anything but resent the intrusion.

I came across an article by John Ashenhurst in this month's Rough Notes publication entitled "ONLINE CUSTOMER SELF-SERVICE". The author notes how important it is in building an online service to delegate some level of control to the customers so they can provide self-service. While this article was directed at property and casualty agencies, its point is one any online service should consider.

Mr. Ashenhurst included a list of areas ripe for his self-service concept, including: Account Information, Billing and Payment, Policy Change, Appraisals and Valuations, Contacts, Risk Management, Coverages, Pricing, Evidence of Insurance, and Policies. I agree with his concept of giving the customer the ability to service his or her needs quickly and efficiently. I also

believe that if done poorly this potential benefit can quickly turn into a detriment. A slow, complicated and inefficient website can be your worst form of customer fulfillment.

The MWCIA has attempted to design its website and total package of online services with the goal of efficient customer service in mind. On the issue of providing products and services you want and need, our goal has been and remains making more and more of our services and data available in useable forms online. We now have over 20 different products and services available online to subscribers or non-subscribers. We continue to explore expanding this menu both internally and in conversations with the Assigned Risk Plan, the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, the Minnesota Commerce Department and industry groups such as ACCCT. In addition, we have an ongoing effort to make the use of these services easier so that your use of the MWCIA website is productive and efficient. This is an ongoing process. I haven't run into an industry tool that was perfect but our goal is to always try for this perfection. So here is my question to you:

#### **How are we doing at the MWCIA?**

We will continue to work hard to provide value to you. However, to make sure we stay "on course", we need to know what you like and what you don't like. Your feedback is appreciated and really helps us determine the future direction of our website.

## FROM THE ACTUARY . . .

Congratulations to the winners of last issue's puzzle contest:

- ◆ Allison McManus, Sr. Associate Actuary – Highlands Ins. Group
- ◆ Jeremy Hall, Act. Tech. – Highlands Ins. Group
- ◆ Bill Jarvi, Act. Asst. – Milliman USA

As a special "thank you" for their participation,, each winner has received one of our MWCIA desk clocks. Enjoy!

Do you have a logic puzzle or insurance 'funny' you would like to share with our readers? If so, you can email them to our office in care of [info@mwcia.org](mailto:info@mwcia.org). Please be sure to include your name and company name, and if you're submitting a puzzle, remember to include the answer!

Did you know?

Past issues of *MWCIA News* are available online at [www.mwcia.org](http://www.mwcia.org).

## A request from the DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### Are Your MN Forms Accurate?

As the main filing season approaches, the Department of Commerce wishes to encourage members to file as early as possible, so that they have their approved rates available in time for marketing purposes. Due to an increase in the number of form filings being received by the Commerce Department, we have been asked to remind membership that MWCIA has been given the authority to file forms & endorsements on their behalf under Minn. Rule 2705.3200.

Each year Commerce receives a number of unacceptable or unnecessary form and endorsement filings that do not fall within the exception language contained in Minn. Rule 2705.3200. This rule provides that members may only use forms and endorsements filed by MWCIA unless there is a special form or endorsement required by a carrier's specific rating plan that they need to file. This exception is very narrow and only endorsements related to dividend plans and additional credits, such as managed care, collective bargaining, or drug-free workplace have been approved since the creation of the

Minnesota forms and endorsement list in 1999. **Any carrier filed forms or endorsements approved prior to 1999 should be reviewed for their continued approval in Minnesota.**

Commerce staff would also like to remind membership that forms and endorsements filed by MWCIA on their behalf are to be used exactly as approved and may not be altered to add or delete information or to revise specific language. Members who believe a need exists for an additional form or endorsement not on the approved list or an amendment to an existing form or endorsement should contact MWCIA's Member & Customer Services Department to discuss the possible need for a filing in Minnesota. It is also important to note that it is not necessary for members to file specimen copies of their policies with the Commerce Department each year. Membership is also reminded that they do not need to re-file any forms or endorsements MWCIA has filed with Commerce on their behalf.

A link to the Department of Commerce website and their current filing instructions is available by logging onto our site at [www.mwcia.org](http://www.mwcia.org). A listing of all currently approved forms and endorsements is available in the Minnesota exception pages of the *Basic Manual* or by logging onto MWCIA's website.

### **Remember . . .**

Commerce's new location & fax number:

Minnesota Department of Commerce  
85 Seventh Place East, Suite 500  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-2198

Fax number: 651.284.4106  
Phone number: 651.296.4026 (unchanged)

## UNDERWRITING ALERT

### FEIN & UI NUMBERS

#### **Why Do We Need Them?**

Recently, MWCIA staff has been inundated with calls from members in response to our beefed up efforts to collect employer UI Codes and FEIN Numbers. Many callers believe this is a new requirement. It is not. Since the early 1990s, Minnesota has required carriers to include employer's FEIN Numbers and UI Codes as part of their proof of coverage information on all policies. These numbers should be obtained from the policyholder when they apply for workers' comp. insurance. In cases where the employer does not have a UI Code or FEIN Number at the time of policy issuance, policies may

be issued without these numbers and endorsed once the information is obtained.

The following excerpts from the August 2000 issue of *MWCIA News* explain Minnesota's requirement for collecting UI Codes and FEIN Numbers:

"FEIN is the Federal Employer Identification Number and the UI is the Minnesota Unemployment Account Number . . . Minnesota Rules Chapter 5222 outlines the rules specifying the form, content and place of filing for all proof of coverage items. DOLI has contracted with our office to provide them proof of coverage information through our data collection system."

"Minnesota Rules are very specific with respect to the information for each employer that must be filed. . . [Minnesota Rules Chapter 5222.2001] contains the requirement that "Every employer's federal employer identification number (FEIN) and unemployment account number" (UI) shall be collected with each insurance policy.

Circular Letters No. 93-1183, 93-1184, and 93-1192 provide additional information regarding the filing of UI Code Numbers and FEIN Numbers electronically and in paper format. Should you have further questions concerning this Minnesota state requirement, please feel free to send them to us via email at [info@mwcia.org](mailto:info@mwcia.org).

### ATTENTION MWCIA SUBSCRIBERS

Has your email address changed recently? To assure continued service, please report changes to your contact information promptly. Please remember to include your MWCIA Individual User Account Number when providing us with your corrected information.

## MWCIA'S MEMBER & CUSTOMER SERVICES' STAFF 'HIT THE ROAD'

If you are an independent agent, you may have met one of MWCIA's staff recently at one of MIIA's Membership Summit III meetings during May and June. Gary Bauer attended the Rochester, Mankato, Marshall, Duluth, and Hibbing meetings, while Jeff Kvam attended the meetings in St. Cloud, Mahanomen, and Alexandria. Tom McCarty even helped out by attending the Bloomington and St. Paul meetings. Why did MWCIA's staff attend MIIA's Membership Summit III seminar meetings? To show our support of MIIA's

Educational Foundation and to inform agents who may be unfamiliar with MWCIA or our website of some of the products we produce that are of great value to the agent community.

MWCIA staff always enjoys opportunities to meet with representatives from our industry. Just as importantly, we enjoy opportunities to share information about MWCIA and to remind agents and carrier representatives about the advantages of using MWCIA's website. We know having access to good, reliable information is important and getting this information in a timely fashion (especially for those in rural areas and out of state), is not always easy. MWCIA's staff have worked hard developing a website we believe is user friendly to assist our member insurance companies and agents who write work comp in obtaining key information necessary to doing business in Minnesota in an easy to access format. Whether you are an agent or a carrier representative, if you write work comp in Minnesota you'll want to familiarize yourself with MWCIA's website. If you decide to become a subscriber, you'll also have access to employers' experience modification data. And by submitting your application today, you can still take advantage of our current annual subscriber fee of \$30.

**Remember. . .**  
MWCIA's Area Code Is Now 952

**DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS**

**DLI has New Phone Numbers**

On July 2nd, the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) flipped the switch on a new Voice Over Internet Protocol phone system. This system runs through the existing computer network at DLI and consolidates all phones into one system. Prior to the switch, the Department had at least five separate phone systems, which were not always compatible.

The new system consolidates the whole Department and makes customer contact with DLI much more accessible. Additionally, costs for outside phone lines have decreased by a factor of eight!

Here are new DLI numbers for some frequently contacted areas:

Compliance Services —	651.284.5030
Special Comp. Fund —	651.284.5045
Insurance Verification —	651.284.5047
Commissioner's Office —	651.284.5010
General Information —	651.284.5000
General DLI toll-free number —	1.800.DIAL.DLI (1.800.342.5354)

**ASSIGNED RISK PLAN NEWS**

Do you have a copy of MWCIA's brochure entitled "*How to Complete Minnesota's Workers Compensation Assigned Risk Plan Application*"? This is a handy little brochure MWCIA staff created as a quick reference guide to help agents in the field who may need to place business in the 'Pool'. This single page document is full of useful tips to smooth out the application process as well as basic information on the Assigned Risk Plan rules and procedures and also general contact information for the 'Pool'. The "*How to Complete Minnesota's Workers Compensation Assigned Risk Plan Application*" brochure is **free!** To obtain your copy, log on to our website at [www.mwcia.org](http://www.mwcia.org) or call us at 952.897.1737.

A single ARP application with an **original** employer's signature is now acceptable in the Pool! Copies of ARP's applications are available on MWCIA's website and can be easily downloaded and printed.

**A special note to Agents**

Look for additional brochures and web fact sheets from MWCIA on a variety of wcomp topics in the months to come. If you have ideas for future topics, please email them to [marie.johnson@mwcia.org](mailto:marie.johnson@mwcia.org)

**MWCIA Website Update**

MWCIA's staff is busy revamping our current website to make it even more 'user-friendly' than it is today! Based on staff and outside user feedback, our new site will be easier to navigate and will eliminate the current log-in process for 'free' products that many users find annoying. Class Code Search and Assigned Risk Rate Search will become available from our home page, and products requiring a fee will be easier to access using a simpler log-in process. MWCIA's new website will also feature more direct links to information from our home page creating more of a 'one click'

environment.

MWCIA's new website is being designed with the 'novice' user in mind, and should be available this fall. Keep your eyes peeled and let us know what you think of our new look! Your feedback and suggestions are always welcome. Please feel free to send any comments you may have about our website or requests for further enhancements to [info@mwcia.org](mailto:info@mwcia.org). Be sure to include your business name and phone number in case we have questions.

+ Free Web Access +

MWCIA's website provides quick access to:

- + Assigned Risk Rates
- + Employer ID Numbers
- + Class Code Search
- + Carrier Rates (limited)
- + Circular Letters
- + MWCIA News
- + And more . . .

For information on all of MWCIA's products & services, check out our website at [www.mwcia.org](http://www.mwcia.org)!

**RECENT CIRCULARS, ETC.**

As a quick reference tool for our members and subscribers, the following list indicates all MWCIA Circulars published since the release of our last newsletter:

- Circular Letter No. 01-1362**
- 08/02/01 – Basic Manual Minnesota Exception Rule I.G. – Anniversary Rating Date
- Circular Letter No. 01-1363**
- 08/02/01 – Basic Manual Minnesota Exception Pages – Excess Insurance

MWCIA's Circular Letters are available online at [www.mwcia.org](http://www.mwcia.org).

The following list indicates NCCI Items that are **not** approved for use in Minnesota.

**U-1355** – WCSP Pension Table Revisions (89-91 Mortality) – See MWCIA Circular Letter No. 99-1326

**R-1356** – 1999 Update to Retrospective Rating Plan – See MWCIA 2000 Annual Ratemaking Report

**E-1357** – Experience Rating for Self-Insureds – ERM 6 Forms

**B-1351** – Workers’ Compensation Premium Algorithm

**U-1358** – WC Statistical Plan Claim Grouping Option

**U-1360 & U-1360A** – URE Workers’ Compensation Statistical Plan – see Minnesota’s Statistical Plan Manual

**U-1368** – URE WC Statistical Plan Revision

As the data service organization, MWCIA is the only company authorized to file manual rules, standard forms & endorsements, and classification & statistical codes relating to workers’ compensation insurance on behalf of member companies in the state of Minnesota.

*MWCIA News* is a periodic publication of the Minnesota Workers’ Compensation Insurers Association as a service to its members and the workers’ compensation industry. Please direct any questions, comments or suggestions you may have concerning this publication to Marie Johnson, editor of *MWCIA News*, % MWCIA: 7701 France Avenue South, Suite 450; Minneapolis, MN 55435. You may also contact her by phone (952.897.6410), fax (952.897.6495), or by emailing her at [marie.johnson@mwcia.org](mailto:marie.johnson@mwcia.org).

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## MWCIA PURPOSE

**As the preferred provider of quality Minnesota Workers’ Compensation information, we are committed to developing products, services and markets that meet our customers’ evolving needs, and to providing a work environment rich in opportunities for personal and professional growth.**

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

# MWCIA GOLF OUTING 2001

On July 26th MWCIA was the proud sponsor of Golf Outing 2001, held at Crystal Lake Golf Club in Lakeville, Minnesota. This annual MWCIA event is another great opportunity for MWCIA's members and subscribers to meet and get-to-know our staff and the staff of some of the state agencies that interact with our organization on a daily basis and have a real impact on work comp in Minnesota. If you were unable to join us this year, please mark your calendars to join us next summer.

HERE ARE A FEW HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR DAY:

On your mark, get set, GO!



A Perfect Day . . .  
A Beautiful Course!



Taking a break so soon?  
(left to right) Matt Clysdale of  
Maguire Agency;  
Peggy Hengen & Pat Johnson of  
State Fund Mutual; Dick Marshik-  
State Fund Board Chairman

sandtraps, sandtraps, & more sandtraps. . .

Isn't 'above par'  
a good thing!?



Hey Gary. . .Would  
you classify this as  
'Sand Digging' or  
'Excavating'?

TIME FOR THE BBQ/SOCIAL & 'AWARDS'!



(left) Stacy Kurash  
of State Fund  
Mutual accepting  
the 'Tigress Woods'  
award



(right) Bruce Henry of  
Advance Insurance  
struts his stuff after  
being awarded the  
infamously pink  
MWCIA Golf Outing  
'Master's Jacket'!



(left) Dick  
Marshik  
accepting the 'Off  
Season/  
All Season'  
award