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County Wide Insurance Receives Prestigious Award

JANUARY 21ST 2014 BY DEE LOFLIN

County Wide Insurance Receives Prestigious Award

*Submitted Article to
news@showmetimes.com*

Dexter, Missouri - County Wide Insurance Agency of Dexter, Missouri recently received a prestigious achievement award from Columbia Insurance Group (Columbia). Sharon McCord of County Wide accepted the Pinnacle Agency Award on January 20, 2014 from Mike Bullock, Territory Manager for Columbia.

The Pinnacle Agency Award is earned by an elite group of independent insurance agencies who partner with Columbia. These agencies demonstrate consistent professionalism, profit and growth with Columbia, specifically in commercial lines.

County Wide Insurance Agency was founded in 1978 and provides professional insurance and financial services to Southeast Missouri and surrounding regions. They have represented Columbia in their office since 2001.

For nearly 140 years, it's been the mission of Columbia to build enduring relationships with customers by providing value and exceptional service in fulfilling the promise of all their insurance products.

Columbia is rated as "Excellent" by A.M. Best, the leading financial analysts for the insurance industry. This rating is only assigned to companies that have an

excellent ability to meet their ongoing obligations to policyholders.

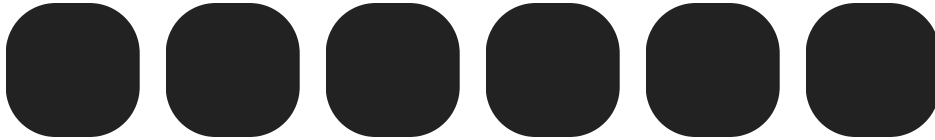
Columbia has five branch locations: Atlanta, GA; Austin, TX; Columbia, MO (Home Office); Omaha, NE; Salina, KS. The Columbia Branch office serves select independent agents and policy holders in Arkansas, Illinois, and Missouri.

Shown in the photo are County Wide Insurance Agents Sharon McCord and Tracy Horton. Congratulations County Wide!

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Winter Weather Impacts Blood/Platelet Collections

JANUARY 09TH 2014 BY DEE LOFLIN

Winter Weather Impacts Blood/Platelet Collections

Missouri - As severe winter weather begins to subside, the American Red Cross is asking all eligible blood and platelet donors to help offset a weather-related shortfall in donations.

Approximately 300 blood drives across 25 states were cancelled across the U.S. due to snow and extreme cold. The blood drive cancellations resulted in a shortfall of nearly 8, 800 blood and platelet donations since Jan. 2. In the Missouri-Illinois Blood Services Region, severe winter weather forced the cancellation of nearly 30 Red Cross blood drives, resulting in about 875 fewer than expected blood donations over the past five days.

“It’s the blood products already on the shelves that help save lives when severe weather hits,” said Scott Caswell, CEO of the Red Cross Missouri-Illinois Region. “Thanks to generous Red Cross blood and platelet donors, blood products were available for patients who still needed transfusions despite the weather. Now we invite those previously ‘frozen out’ from giving blood or platelets to come in soon.”

Platelet donors, as well as blood donors with the most in-demand blood types — O positive and negative, A negative and B negative — are urgently needed to give blood in the days and weeks ahead to offset the shortfall.

Platelets, a key clotting component of blood often needed by cancer patients, must be transfused within five days of donation, so donations are constantly needed. Red blood cells, the oxygen carrying component of blood, are the most widely transfused blood product and must be transfused within 42 days.

How to donate blood

Simply call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit redcrossblood.org to make an appointment or for more information. A blood donor card or driver’s license or two other forms of identification are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age (16 with parental consent in some states), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements.

About the American Red Cross

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies about 40 percent of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; provides

international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a not-for-profit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit redcross.org or visit us on Twitter at [@RedCross](https://twitter.com/RedCross).

Upcoming Blood Drives in Stoddard County

Jan. 11 from 12-4 p.m. at American Legion Post 59, 620 W. Oak St. in Dexter, Mo.

Jan. 16 from 1:30-6:30 p.m. at Fraternal Order of Eagles, 13583 Old Highway 25 in Dexter, Mo.

Jan. 17 from 1:30-6:30 p.m. at Fraternal Order of Eagles, 13583 Old Highway 25 in Dexter, Mo.

Jan. 18 from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Fraternal Order of Eagles, 13583 Old Highway 25 in Dexter, Mo.

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Motorists Advised to STAY AT HOME!

JANUARY 05TH 2014 BY DEE LOFLIN

Motorists Advised to STAY AT HOME!

*Submitted by
Dee Loflin, SMT Manager/Editor*

Missouri - High winds and blowing snow across much of the state means motorists are advised to stay home and avoid travel until this storm ends.

The Missouri Department of Transportation has issued a "no travel advisory" for the duration of this storm, which is expected to continue through the day on Sunday, Jan. 5 and through the night.

"For your safety and the safety of our crews, we ask everyone to avoid travel once this storm begins, unless it is an emergency," said Ed Hassinger, MoDOT Chief Engineer. "Strong winds are blowing the snow around, and it's creating a whiteout effect that makes it very difficult to see and makes travel extremely hazardous."

The snowfall, coupled with 35-40 mph wind gusts, can create drifts that will seriously challenge even four-wheel drive vehicles.

"With the snow, high winds, and extreme cold, it's going to be a challenge for MoDOT to clear our state routes," said Hassinger. "If there are no other vehicles on the roadways, we have a much better chance of making progress so traffic can get moving again."

When temperatures dip this low, getting stranded on the side of the road can be very dangerous. Before you head out, equip your vehicle with an emergency kit and let a friend or family member know when and where you're traveling. If you do become stranded, stay with your vehicle and call 911. Be aware that emergency responders may have difficulty reaching you.

One of the best ways to prepare for winter travel is to check MoDOT's Traveler

Information Map, located at www.modot.org. The map offers real-time views of road conditions for Missouri's interstates and major highways.

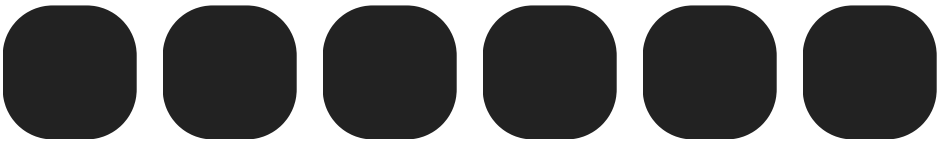
For smartphone and tablet users, MoDOT's Traveler Information App brings the same information to your mobile devices. Users can select road condition and work zone options from the map's legend, and view the same cameras and message boards found on desktop version of the map. The app is available for free at the iPhone App Store and Android Marketplace.

Travelers can also pick up the phone and call MoDOT's toll-free customer service center at 888-ASK-MODOT (888-275-6636). Customer service representatives are available to give road conditions updates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

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Amtrack Missouri River Runner Decreases Fares

JANUARY 03RD 2014 BY DEE LOFLIN

Amtrak Missouri River Runner Decreases Fares

*Submitted by
Dee Loflin, SMT Manager/Editor*

Missouri - The weather outside might get frightful, but this winter, savings on Amtrak travel are delightful. Missouri River Runner passengers can save 20 percent on adult fares for travel January 2 through March 31.

Book your seat using discount code V539 effective January 1, 2014. Reservations are required at least one day in advance of travel on the route between Kansas City and St. Louis, which includes stops at Kirkwood, Washington, Hermann, Jefferson City, Sedalia, Warrensburg, Lee's Summit and Independence.

Complete your plans now for the lowest fares. Savings are possible by booking through the "Deals" tab at Amtrak.com or by calling 800-USA-RAIL. You can also purchase tickets using Amtrak eTicketing and simply print your boarding documents from any printer or present them on board electronically via your smartphone.

Terms and conditions vary. Some blackout dates and other applicable restrictions apply, including advance reservation and purchase requirements, which are displayed on Amtrak.com. The offer is valid for coach seats and is dependent upon availability.

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Don't Become a New Year's Eve Statistic

DECEMBER 31ST 2013 BY DEE LOFLIN

Don't Become a New Year's Eve Statistic

*Submitted by
Dee Loflin, SMT Manager/Editor*

Missouri - There are no excuses for driving drunk. The consequences are known: fines, jail time or even death.

As you prepare for your New Year's Eve, top your list with a designated driver. The Missouri Department of Transportation wants to remind those who plan to drink alcohol to designate a sober driver or call a cab.

Statewide, law enforcement is on the lookout for impaired drivers. Many municipalities will be shoring up their patrols with a focus on intoxicated drivers.

"Don't become a New Year's Eve statistic," said Dave Nichols, MoDOT director. "Last year, 12 people were killed and 63 were seriously injured in Missouri traffic crashes over the New Year's holiday."

Nichols noted that four of the fatalities and 11 of the serious injuries involved a substance-impaired driver.

"We are making a special effort to reach motorists with reminders to plan ahead if they're going to drink tonight," Nichols said. "This is a time of celebration, but it's also a time to use forethought and common sense."

Light snow is also forecasted for many parts of the state over the next 24 hours, adding to the need for caution when operating a vehicle.

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