



## Editorial: A Tale of Two Quotes



The term Quote has been much on the TV advertisers list lately. After being bombarded with a few thousand ads about how some big TV insurance companies do quotes, you may think they invented the process. In actual fact we in the insurance industry have been doing quotes for years. There is however, a huge difference in how quotes are done. Of course this is not discussed at all on the TV ads. If you call one of these TV insurance companies for an “exclusive” quote you will be instantly in touch with an “insurance professional” or “expert.” Actually, I have been in the home office of one of these... oh so helpful...telemarket insurance operations, and I was told that most of the people doing the quotes were college students trying to earn some extra money, housewives working part time for extra income, and retirees needing some extra cash. But who knows, when you call, with a little luck, you may even get someone who is a full time person. No matter, all of them will be “experts” and all will be very good at “getting you a quote.”

However, here is where the Tale of Two Quotes begins to differ immensely. Gosh, I don’t know how your quote will go but I would expect you will be quoted state minimum coverage limits of say...\$25,000 of liability coverage per person and \$50,000 of liability coverage per accident. Possibly \$10,000 or \$25,000 of liability coverage for damage you do to property of others...gee, if you cause a new car to be totaled out because you ran a stop sign do you suppose the new car could be paid for with \$10,000? For that matter \$25,000? I expect not. What if you cause injury to some person and put them in a wheelchair the rest of their life? Do you suppose they will want to accept the

\$25,000 of coverage you purchased in trade for a life time of trouble? No. Of course with minimum limits of coverage the price will be very cheap. Why wouldn’t it be?

Most likely the “expert” will ask you what coverage you now have. Possibly you will be able to answer this, however, if you are like many folks who purchase insurance most likely you won’t be able to give a good solid speech on what type of policy you have and the limits, deductibles, and special coverages you may have in place. Therefore, without knowing exactly what coverage you are now purchasing, the “expert” you are talking to in most cases cannot possibly be comparing apples for apples on the “quote” they are giving you, even if by some freak of fate you would be talking to someone who actually really knew the insurance business. If you press the “expert” further, you may be offered coverage limits that are higher. That is most likely if YOU press further. Of course then the price will be higher. However, if you accept the “cheap” price there is a good possibility you could be vastly underinsured.

In this discussion of TV insurance “experts” there are a few other things that really need to be talked about. One of the most important is the fact that in virtually all cases the TV auto insurance policy does not cover you for the “business use” of your personal auto. Do you own your own business, or do you occasionally use your car in the job you have? What if your boss tells you to stop and pick up something on your way to work using your own car? What about car pools, being paid a few bucks to take the neighbor kid to school, selling real estate, or how about if you are selling seeds part time? I guess my point here is there are literally dozens of cases where you may have a business use exposure and not even realize it. Did the TV telemarketer know or care to ask you about business use? Did they explain it to you? Better yet did they really take the time to talk to you and try to be doubly sure they had you correctly covered? I doubt it.

Possibly I am being too hard here on TV insurance salespeople, really, my point is that ANYBODY who tries to tell

you they can give you a complete, and accurate insurance quote in a couple of minutes without sitting down and talking to you for some time, is simply not telling you the truth. Doing a good solid, accurate, insurance quote takes time and is not an instant process. Yes, here at Western Agency, Inc. we do hundreds of insurance quotes each year. It is an important and necessary part of our business. However, when our “experts” do you a quote guess what? They actually are an expert.

They will take the time, ask the questions, inspect your property, most likely meet with you in person, and be in contact with several insurance companies to be sure they not only have an **accurate** quote but that it will be a **competitive** quote.

They will print up and go over the quote with you, the consumer, so you too understand it.

They will show you the differences in the various coverage and the various companies and will let you decide which coverage you want.

And when you eventually have the loss; which most likely you will; guess what? The Western Agency, Inc. agent will be there in person, in your own home town, to see to it you get an equitable settlement.

The insurance business is one of the most competitive businesses in the world. We know you are constantly bombarded by people trying to be your agent. The object of this editorial is to point out the vast differences in quotes and how they are done. In most cases we have your entire operation insured. We are in your town, we know you and your operation. When someone shows up on your doorstep or calls you and gives you an “instant quote” I just want you to know the difference between that “insurance expert” and the Insurance Professional you will be working with at Western Agency, Inc.

As always: Thanks for your business!

P.S....one more time... We never did and do not now represent GEICO, and are almost done moving what business we had with Progressive Insurance to other companies.

## Westy Hat Contest

Smith youngest ever “Westy Hat” winner. Andrew Smith, son of Nathan and Jennifer Smith, RR Minot was spotted this spring by the ever vigilant, but always unknown Westy Hat Contest judge.



Andrew, it is reported, hardly leaves the farm without his Westy Hat perched proudly on his head. However, after talking to Andrew we discovered a major flaw in our hat program when we found out that kids are being forced to wear sized down hats that were meant for grownups. This is causing a hardship on them and they are not getting the custom fit that the grownups are used to. Therefore, as of immediately we have ordered a special batch of hats for our younger wearers and we will see to it that Andrew will get the very first one when the hats arrive. Our thanks to Andrew for wearing his Westy Hat and pointing out this problem to us. Of course he and his parents will receive a \$50 gift certificate to Perkins here in Minot (try the grilled Tillapia), and a new (custom fit) Westy hat. Other winners this newsletter are Ron Boughton, of Kenmare who was spotted with his new Westy hat while seeding his crop this year, and Jay Abernathy, RR Lansford who was seen with his brand new classic white hat earlier this year. Boughton will receive a \$50 gift certificate to Homesteaders here in Minot and Abernathy will receive a \$50 gift certificate to Sammy's in Minot. Of course they too will get a brand new Westy hat and a trusty Westy jackknife.

**BE SURE  
TO CHECK  
WITH US  
FOR YOUR  
INSURANCE NEEDS.**



## Westy Shorts

**Surrey Senior Class Makes Donation:** Wow! What a deal! These things really make parents proud! The 2006 senior class of Surrey donated \$500 to the Surrey Senior Citizens this past month. The money will be put to good use as the Seniors are building a new center in Surrey as this goes to print. The donation was much needed and appreciated, but more than that, the thoughtfulness of these young people will be remembered long after the money is gone. Thanks and hats off to all of you!!!

**Driver's License Cancellations:** We have had two insureds in the past few months who ended up driving on an expired license. How did this happen? Both of them had previously had a “bus drivers endorsement” added to their license. Since neither one of these clients had desired to keep this endorsement due to not using it, they just let it lapse. However, allowing the “bus driver endorsement” to lapse without having a discussion with the Motor Vehicle Department caused both of their drivers licenses to cancel. Not only that but neither of them realized it had happened and only found out about it by accident. If you have any endorsements on your license and decide to just let them lapse, it may be a good idea to call the Motor Vehicle Department to make sure this doesn't happen to you.

**GPS and Auto-Steers:** Guess what? One more thing that needs to be discussed on farm insurance is the fact many farmers are purchasing portable GPS units and auto-steers for tractors. In some cases, if this equipment is factory installed there are few insurance ramifications. However, if the unit is portable and many are, most companies require the unit to be specifically insured on the policy. The cost to do this is very low but if you have such a unit be sure and get in touch with us so we can have it properly insured. Apparently there is a market for stolen portable GPS units as we have already had several thefts of this type of property recently. Give us a call.

**Custom Trailers:** I end up mowing a lot of grass these days, when I'm not mowing it seems I am loading up the four-wheel drive Kawasaki Mule to go spray some more spurge patches, or hauling the tractor somewhere, piling on some firewood, or loading some furniture, or some tools, or some junk...you get the idea. It seems that every time I turn around I am loading something on my super trailer from Prairie Truck in Minot. They built the trailer to my exact specifications in just a matter of days, and this trailer would be one thing on the farm we literally couldn't get along without. Curt and Mylan listened to what I needed and when they got done they had crafted the perfect trailer. You all know how I am constantly telling everyone when I find something that works. Well, this SUPER TRAILER certainly does. Thanks go out once more to Prairie Truck for crafting a product that really works.

**Seasonal Insurance Discussion:** Well, it's summer, and thus it's time to discuss summer toys and insurance. We can be brief here. No...boats, jet skis, four-wheelers, motorcycles, mopeds, boat docks, boat lifts, and many other recreational items are not always automatically covered. Yes...it's relatively easy and not very expensive to insure them. Remember, we do not have any idea if you have purchased any of these items. If you have, just give us a call and we can be sure they are properly insured. Claims do happen on these things. Last year's storm at Lake Metigoshe saw many pontoon boats damaged and some along with the lifts they sat on were completely destroyed. If that little voice in your head is saying give Westy a call: Do it. We want to be sure we have you correctly insured.

## Heads Up: Loan Releases

With banks, insurance companies, and virtually everyone else looking for perfect credit ratings, another way to make sure you have the best one has shown up. You can count on having most loans you take out recorded. The problem is when you pay off a loan, many times the financial institution does not let the Register of Deeds at the county courthouse know about it. Since the various credit bureaus check with the Register of Deeds to see how many loans a person has recorded it is a very good idea to check and be sure you are not listed as still owing money on a bunch of loans that you paid off years before. In checking my own credit information I found I was still listed on a house loan that I hadn't owned for years.

## Crop Corner

**MULTI-PERIL CROP INSURANCE:** 1. Certified Acres: Well, it's that time for the recording of crop acres. If we haven't already been out to see you and get yours done, be sure and give us a call to let us know when it would be a convenient time for you. All acres have to be recorded and in by 6/30/06. Also, be sure and take our acres recorded sheet with you when you certify. Compare this amount of seeded acres by crop to the total certified seeded acres for each crop and be sure they match. If not give us a call immediately and we can get them corrected. This is one thing that really needs to be done right away: Telling us about it after a claim can in many cases jeopardize being able to collect on the loss.

2. Losses: **IF YOU EVEN THINK YOU MAY HAVE A LOSS...**let us know. Don't wait, let us know immediately. It seems every year we have a couple of people who thought maybe they had a loss and didn't tell us about it until after harvest. The problem is that many times this may be too late. It costs nothing to file a loss—we are happy to do it and if it turns out you didn't have a loss, no harm. This turning losses in right away is the same with all companies and all crop insurance. If you think you may have a loss or any problem for that matter, call us—now.

**HAIL INSURANCE:** Again, most companies will stop writing hail insurance 7/1/06 at 12:01 a.m. as has been the case for several years now. There are a few companies who may be writing hail coverage at a later date but none of them will put the policy in force right away. In order to prevent not being able to get your coverage in force while there is still time, give us a call. The price to insure the crop is the same. In most cases the price is the same as last year or lower: Why wait and maybe suffer an uninsured loss. Give us a call and we will get out there and get your coverage in place.

## Scholarship Winners Announced

Western Agency, Inc. has been doing scholarships in many towns across North Dakota for many years. We are proud and happy to do this. It seems we are in a time where higher education is simply becoming essential for our young people and this is our way of trying to make this happen. The following were winners this year:

Oakes ....Kelly Brademeyer, Brandon Skjefte	Sawyer .....Megan Whitted
Berthold .....Gwendalyn Mollerud	Westhope .....Tiffany Matteson
Surrey .....Amber Jo Jundt	Towner/Granville .....Adam Hermanson
Bottineau .....Elizabeth Kornkven	Garrison .....Shanda Wilcox
Kenmare .....Erica Pullen	Glenburn.....Laci Cunningham

## Western Agency Inc.'s Bond Girl

Agent, 007 is not the only person who has a Bond Girl. Western Agency, Inc. has their own Bond Girl



in Brenda Vollmer. Brenda's specialty is getting difficult payment and performance bonds put together in short order. She makes getting a bond look simple but like so many things the bonding process is far from that. Brenda is contacting her clients every year and throughout the year to keep their financial bond information up to date so they are able to bid jobs requiring bonds and know their bond line is in place. Brenda, Lu Hanson, and Commercial Manager, Casey Tompkins all work in the business of getting our contractors performance bonds in a hurry. To do this they meet in advance with our clients, their bankers, and in many cases their accountants to be sure the maximum bond line is obtained at the best possible price. This bond team is as expert as any 007 ever put together. If you have any questions on your bond line or would like to set one up give our Bond Girl and her team a call.