



KANSAS INSURANCE DEPARTMENT

Vicki Schmidt, Commissioner

Insurance Department Celebrates 150 Years of Service to Kansans

The Kansas Insurance Department was established by the Legislature on March 1, 1871, making March 1, 2021 the 150th anniversary of the Kansas Insurance Department.

There have been 26 Commissioners to lead the Department, including me. Although, they haven't always been called Commissioner and they haven't always been elected. From 1871 to 1927, the leaders of the Department were known as Superintendents. In addition, elections began in 1900. Each Commissioner has left their mark on the Department, but the lasting legacy of the Department remains its unwavering service to Kansas consumers.

The mission of the Kansas Insurance Department is to Regulate. Educate. Advocate. Each of those has taken on a new meaning as the Department has evolved.

Regulate. Many people don't realize that insurance is regulated at the state-level instead of the federal level, which means the Department is responsible for the regulation of the agents and companies that call Kansas home. Our regulatory footprint expanded in 2017, when we also became home to the Office of the Kansas Securities Commissioner and now oversee the regulation of securities, broker-dealer agents, investment advisor representatives and their firms.

Educate. This is a core function of the Department, whether we are talking to consumers, agents or companies. Learning helps us all do our jobs better and we must never stop educating consumers on things to be aware of; insurance agents, investment adviser representatives and broker-dealer agents on updated laws; agencies and firms on updated practices; and companies on regulatory requirements.

Advocate. I have found there are times where consumers, agents and companies all need an advocate. The Department serves as that important voice when consumers have disputes with insurance companies, when agents have disputes with companies and when Kansas companies need a voice at the national level.

Kansas also served as one of the 30 founding members of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners, an association that now represents the 50 states, five territories and the District of Columbia. The NAIC is also celebrating its 150th Anniversary this year!

I would personally like to thank the Department's many industry partners, agents, Kansas companies, leaders and associations for your cooperation the past 150 years. You have played an important role in making the Kansas Insurance Department a better regulator for the industry and the people we both serve.

Finally, I'd like to say thank you to the hundreds of employees that have come and gone over the past 150 years. It is because of your dedication that the Department has fulfilled its mission, effectively regulating the industry, responsibly educating consumers and fiercely advocating on behalf of both.

It is an honor to serve you and your family as Insurance Commissioner. May the next 150 years continue the longstanding tradition of service to the people of the great state of Kansas!