

Associate Member Profile



Introducing Oakland Companies

From left to right: Barry L. Hunt, John G. Growney, Cory French and Rochelle H. Miller.

Oakland Companies recently went above and beyond the call of duty to achieve a prestigious certification that emphasizes its commitment to customer service.

The insurance agency, based in Troy, achieved International Organization for Standardization (ISO) certification, which places the agency in an elite position of being not only the first full-line insurance agency in the state to achieve this certification, but also one of less than six insurance-related firms in U.S. to embrace the ISO operating system.

“With increased importance placed on risk management and the need to provide assurance of ‘best in class’ insurance services, we used this standard to identify and integrate best practices in our company,” said John Growney, president of Oakland Companies. The agency provides specializes in providing corporate insurance, surety bonds, personal insurance and employee benefits to construction companies.

The ISO certification process was undertaken by Vice President of Operations Rochelle Miller to help Oakland Companies go above and beyond the expectations of their customers.

“This process was also a way for us to manage growth and foster a

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continuous improvement,” said Barry L. Hunt, vice president. “It also provided us a way to develop a structured plan that allows our young, vibrant staff to meet the changing needs of our customers.”

The ISO process did not end when Oakland Companies became certified, Growney added. In order to maintain the certification, each company employee goes above and

beyond the call of duty on an ongoing basis. Being ISO certified is not just a plaque, it is a lifelong commitment, and requires the company to have a performance audit every six months, he said.

“It means each employee is not just doing his or her job,” he said. “They are seeing how they can improve their job, the office as a whole, and coming up with positive enhancements that are tied to customer benefits.”

Construction Specialist Cory French, who interacts with MITA members on a regular basis at golf outings and other events, said the company surveys customer satisfaction once a year with a random, electronic, anonymous survey.

"We ask our customers to tell us what we are doing right and what we are doing wrong," said French, who joined Oakland Companies in 2004 after managing the state of Michigan for Merchants Bonding in Iowa.

Apparently Oakland Companies has been doing a lot of things the right way since it was founded in 1969 by John Growney's father, who retired in 2000. His father's company, John Thomas Mayfair Insurance, was located in Birmingham. The younger Growney followed in his father's footsteps and became a licensed agent at the age of 18 before graduating from Michigan State University. He and Barry Hunt (a University of Michigan graduate), bought the agency in 2000 and changed the name to Oakland Companies. In 2005 the company moved to their current office on the corner of Crooks Road and West Big Beaver Road in Troy.

With a staff of just 13 employees in 2000, the company rapidly grew to its current force of 43 employees, including 38 licensed agents. All of this growth, Growney said, has

been possible without merging with or buying other companies.

The commercial insurance department has tremendous background handling claims, risk management and loss prevention programs in 44 states, French said. "We know how insurance costs affect the bottom line," he said, "and we help our customers control costs. On the bond side, we know what it takes to manage a large bond account and are among the top five companies in the state for bond volume."

As an associate member of MITA, Oakland Companies wants to be more than just "another member," French said. "We don't just pay our dues and run our advertisement in the magazine. We try to become a critical part of the association by being as active as possible."

MITA BUYER'S GUIDE CATEGORIES:

**07(Bonds, surety); 54
(Insurance, Self Insured
Programs, Administration)**

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MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission at Oakland Companies is to increase each client's profitability and financial security by delivering professional and meaningful insurance and surety services.

To accomplish this mission, we maintain a highly trained, professional staff to market a wide range of quality products and services, and provide an unsurpassed level of service to our clients. Each associate at Oakland Companies is dedicated to serving you.

ISO CERTIFICATION

Oakland Companies proudly maintains ISO certification. This process ensures that our customers receive state of the art customer service. Our quality management guidelines reinforce our commitment to providing our customers with premier service, security and satisfaction.



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We serve MITA as labor counsel

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