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FOCUS

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2017 Convention
Coverage
pg 29

Shepherd Insurance Wins
2017 Agency of the Year | pg 10

2018 Events Calendar | pg 28

Shepherd Insurance Named Agency of the Year

By Melissa Hall



Shepherd Insurance staff receives the Agency of the Year award at the IIAI recognition banquet.

Community, that's what it boils down to at Shepherd Insurance.

The Carmel-based agency tripled in revenues in the past four years and now has 250 employees. That incredible growth wouldn't have been possible without an emphasis on building an environment of encouragement within the agency.

"I think the culture of the organization is what attracts so many people. We create the Shepherd mojo, which incorporates community involvement, entrepreneurial

spirit, and finding a work/life balance," said Quinn Shepherd, managing general partner. "We support every single person here. That's way more important than the next sale."

The Independent Insurance Agents of Indiana's 2017 Agency of the Year winner hasn't always experienced such exponential growth each year. When CEO Dave Shepherd originally founded it straight out of college in 1977, he was new to the insurance business and was barely scraping by. His first office operated out of the garage of a tiny building off of Meridian Street. His father, the Carmel High School athletic director, sometimes sold life insurance during the summer, but Shepherd didn't truly learn the ins-and-outs

of the business until he partnered with Erie Insurance in 1981.

The business grew in the decades that followed and in the past few years they have continued to be named to dozens of prestigious lists; including the Insurance Business America's Elite Agencies 2017 and earning the #67 spot on the Insurance Journal's Top 100 Property/Casualty Agencies.

Despite the rapid growth, the agency partners work hard to maintain an atmosphere of support and teamwork. "My attention is on organic growth and we are always looking for ways to improve," explained President Jeff Kweder. "We have mentorship programs established and we are blessed to have intern programs with Ball State University, ISU, and Butler. We take pride in the future success of Shepherd and the independent agency network."

Quinn and Dave Shepherd also personally handle all merger partnerships at the agency. In addition to the Indiana locations, they currently have offices in Arizona, Illinois, Florida, and Kentucky. They are expecting to add upwards of 100 new employees in 2018 and want to make sure each one understands how important they are. The agency has 13 owners, but the majority is still owned by the Shepherd family and maintaining that family agency feel is critical to them. "Right now my continued focus is the national presence of the company," Dave Shepherd said. "I visit employees in every state to share the agency's mission. Without daily encouragement within the agency we would not have the proper culture for success."

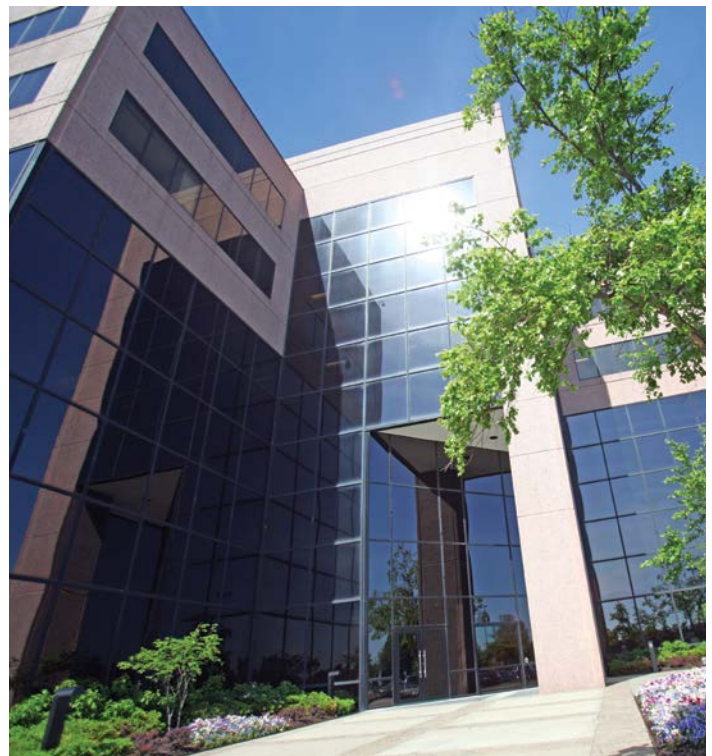
This success has given them the opportunity to give back. Through their Operation Shepherding initiative they support over 30 organizations. "We focus not just inwardly on sales, service, and marketing, but more importantly we look outwardly," Quinn Shepherd said. "We play off our name; Shepherd and we want to lead and serve in the community." ■



Founder Dave Shepherd at the original Shepherd Insurance office in the 1970s.



Shepherd Insurance's first office at 126th Street and Meridian.



The company's headquarters in Carmel.