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James Unland & Co. Receives IIA of IL Agency of the Year Award

Springfield, IL. (October 2021) – The Independent Insurance Agents of Illinois (IIA of IL) presented James Unland & Co. with the IIA of IL Agency of the Year Award during the association's annual convention held October 5-7, 2021, in Springfield.

The Agency of the Year Award is presented to an IIA of IL member agency that exemplifies leadership and innovation within the industry. The Agency of the Year demonstrates strong growth, innovative marketing strategies, creative utilization of evolving technology, top-level customer service, and dedication to the community.

James Unland & Co., with locations in Pekin, East Peoria, Morton, Metamora, and Macomb, has grown from three employees to 40 in the company's 80-year existence. The agency has a customer-first focus and a team culture that emphasizes professionalism and integrity. Customer relationships are developed in this agency by setting expectations and striving to not only meet, but exceed those expectations.

The agency has invested in technology solutions to allow some team members to access customer and prospect data and video conferencing tools from a workstation, laptop, or smartphone to provide better access for clients. The technology and ease of communication have provided efficiencies that benefit both employees and clients. James Unland & Co. shined through the pandemic when they had the tools that allowed team members to meet with clients to ensure continued services virtually.

When recruiting new talent, the agency has developed a summer internship program for producers that allows college students to experience the insurance sales and support environment first-hand. Unland also supports volunteer efforts with youth in the community to provide young adults with exposure to adults working in the industry. The agency places emphasis on hiring the most qualified and talented individuals and then cultivating a long-term employment relationship with those individuals. They host many fun activities such as cookouts, shopping trips, happy hours, and more. The agency also encourages professional development and rewards employees who achieve designations.

Unland values and supports local organizations such as Chambers of Commerce, Goodwill, American Cancer Society, St. Jude, CASA, Kiwanis, Rotary, Boys & Girls Club, Union Mission, Dream Center, OSF Children's Hospital, and EP!C. They also support team members who coach and mentor the kids in the community through youth and high school sports programs -even the agency President, Patrick Taphorn, has been coaching high school basketball for 29 years.

The Independent Insurance Agents of Illinois (IIA of IL) is an association representing Trusted Choice® independent insurance agents throughout the state. IIA of IL membership is comprised of 1,000 insurance agencies representing 10,000 licensed independent agents engaged in all facets of the insurance industry, including property, casualty, life, and health. Its members are businesses that offer customers a choice of policies from a variety of insurance companies. In addition to serving the professional needs of members, IIA of IL works for the betterment of the insurance industry through legislative and consumer awareness programs. The IIA of IL is headquartered in Springfield, Illinois. Visit IIA of IL's website at www.iaofil.org.