

'Being able to sleep at night'

Insurance agency helps businesses manage risk

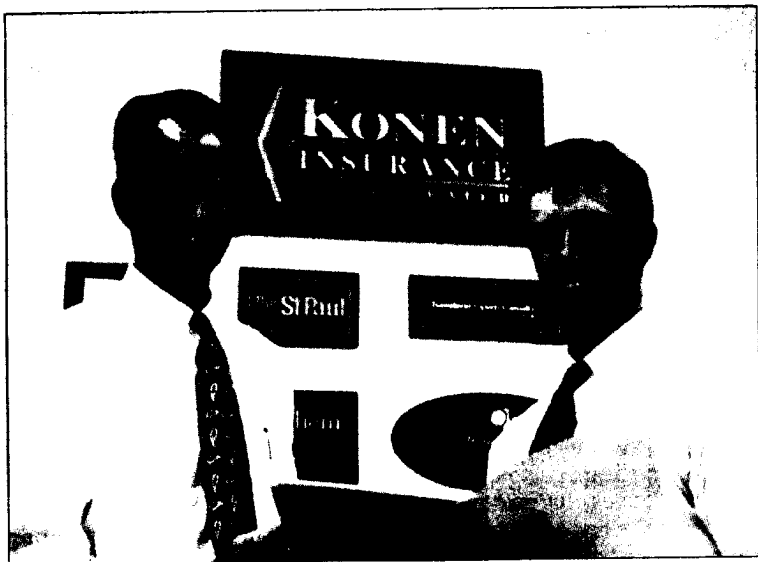


Photo By DON HINDS

Brian Konen, CIC & Vice President and Jerry Knudtson, President of Konen Insurance

By Pucky Zimmerman

AURORA, Illinois -- Brian Konen loves his profession. After briefly testing the waters in sports broadcasting, he determined that his true calling is in insurance.

For more than 37 years, the Konen Insurance Agency has been helping families and businesses protect and plan for their future. The agency was founded in 1963 by Konen's father Vincent, and has become a fixture in the Fox Valley area ever since. What began as a downtown Aurora agency selling home and auto insurance, it has developed into a full-service company providing all lines of insurance coverages, employee benefits, and retirement planning services.

"We're an independent agency," Konen said. "Others are captive, representing only one insurance carrier. We work with a number of insurance companies. We can pick and choose from them and tailor services to our customers' needs."

Konen Insurance specializes in working with small to mid-sized commercial accounts. Clients range from a single hair salons to companies with between 50 and 75 employees. With commercial accounts, the primary coverage is

for property, casualty and workmen's compensation, Konen explained. Businesses need to be protected from loss to buildings and equipment, as well as injury to employees.

Konen's agents use a consultative style to find solutions to their client's risk-management problems. "We provide personal service with a hands on approach," he said. "We sell the account, service it, and build relationships.

"We have more than 2,000 clients, 500 of them commercial," he continued. "The construction industry is one of our strong suits." Accounts include one-man carpenter operations; drywall, concrete and paving companies; and road construction.

"Our business is predominately referred. We do some proactive marketing in the construction industry. If we find we're particularly good in some area, we proactively market to others in that arena."

In 1969, the agency moved to its current location in the West Aurora Plaza. Konen and his partner Jerry Knudtson are the second generation of ownership, having purchased the agency in 1994. Knudtson, with a

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