

We have a mutual interest - **you**.

December 2023 Edition

Welcome to our annual newsletter!

To say 2023 has been a challenging year seems to be an understatement. I am sensing a theme year over year since coming out of the Covid hibernation. 2022 was driven by global unrest from war and political uncertainties and of course, a dramatic shift in prices due to inflation. As we entered into 2023, our focus for Mutual of Wausau Insurance Corporation (Mutual of Wausau) was to respond to the inflationary pressures and address the need to review coverages to better protect you, our policyholders, if a devastating loss would occur.



Although the related cost of doing business seems to have stabilized, they remain over 25%-30% higher, compared to pre-Covid times. Widespread global and US claims continue to impact the insurance industry. The cost of the protection that Mutual of Wausau purchases, which is similar to all other insurance companies, rose dramatically in 2023. Our respective insurance carriers that further protect both Mutual of Wausau and indirectly, you, our policyholder, have all asked for their customers to retain more of the risk inhouse. In similar fashion, we have asked that of you in the form of higher deductibles. This trend will continue into 2024. In addition, we, as

is the case with many of the carriers in WI, have increased our rates in 2023 to combat the rising cost of doing business.

Challenging times indeed. But we as a corporation, as policyholders, and as fellow citizens have seen this happen before. Inflation was constant and high in the mid to late 70's. This led to incredibly high interest rates in the early to mid 80's when you actually earned money on a savings account but paid dearly for it in your mortgage rates. Does any of this sound familiar?

If there is a silver lining in "version 20.0" of our current economic environment, unemployment has remained relatively low which has helped reduce some of the pain that we are experiencing in our respective households. Another recent relief point is that we have seen a significant drop in the price at the pump but this, too, will change. As we enter once again into the holiday season, we are thankful for what we have and are optimistic heading into a new year.

We are thankful for you, as policyholders. We are thankful for the agents that work with you and for us in earning your business. Our optimism for 2024 is simple. We, as policyholders, and as your insurance provider, have been here before and we have proven before to be resilient. We learn and adapt to what life throws us and I am confident we will continue to do just that.

We wish you a blessed Holiday Season and a safe and happy New Year in 2024!

Todd Lentz, President and CEO



Merger Announcement

Effective December 31, 2023 we are pleased to announce that Yorkville & Mt. Pleasant Mutual Insurance Company of Union Grove, WI will be merging into Mutual of Wausau Insurance Corporation. Yorkville represents over 600 policyholders writing over \$600,000 in Premium in southeastern Wisconsin. Yorkville was founded in February, 1874.

In addition, and also effective December 31, 2023 we are pleased to announce that Fall Creek Mutual Insurance Company of Fall Creek, WI will be merging into Mutual of Wausau Insurance Corporation. Fall Creek represents over 1,100 policyholders writing over \$1.1 Million in Premium in west central Wisconsin. Fall Creek was founded in January, 1875.

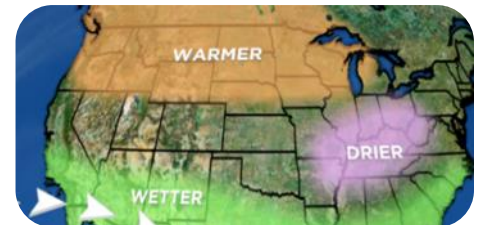
We are excited about both mergers as they complement and expand our current territory. Both companies are well capitalized and combined will provide \$4.2 Million of additional capital to support the increase in premium of \$1.7 Million.

We welcome the policyholders of Yorkville and Fall Creek to Mutual of Wausau! We are excited and honored to continue the long tradition of providing protection for almost 150 years!

Claims & Loss Control

So far, and I emphasize “so far,” 2023 has not been the year of repetitive storms like 2022. We’ve only had a few hail storms that affected several concentrated areas. One such storm hit the Rice Lake area in July. The hailstones were so large that multiple big box stores were forced to close because their skylights were destroyed by the hail. A late fall hail storm hit Marshfield in October and brought the “storm-chasers” back to Central Wisconsin.

Storm-chaser contractors are becoming more and more prevalent when these wind and hail storms occur. These contractors are usually not local and can have a major impact on the industry as they inflate their prices and possibly take advantage of their customers by taking their insurance settlement funds and not even doing the work. The state of



Wisconsin has established laws to try and protect the consumers from being taken advantage of. In 2013, the state passed Assembly Bill 81 which included Wisconsin Act 24. This law was designed to protect consumers from being manipulated by contractors that are after money and not concerned about well-being. It is reassuring to know the State of Wisconsin has taken these steps to protect its own! Doing your research and taking the time to find an experienced reputable contractor will have the best

reward.

With the hail season now hopefully behind us, we now focus on keeping safe throughout the winter months. This starts with the maintenance of our heating systems. Unfortunately, we see several fires over the winter months as people use their heating systems vigorously without maintaining them well enough to stay efficient. Things as simple as just changing the air filters, keep the furnace flue clear of obstructions and scheduling annual maintenance can have an impact on the life of your furnace as well as prevent dangerous events such as a flame rollout. If the weather predictions are accurate for the winter, we might not even need to use the heat!

Everyone across the meteorology industry is predicting a strong El Nino is already forming. What does that mean for us? Strong El Nino’s typically bring warmer and drier weather to the Northern half of the country and provide a wetter scenario for the Southern half. All we can say at this point is, “I’ll believe it when I see it,” and move on.

Have a great winter everyone; we’ll see you in 2024.

Sean Sarver, Vice-President of Claims

Your Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting is scheduled to be an in-person meeting on March 12, 2024 at the Central Wisconsin Convention + Expo Center in Rothschild, WI. Please check our website regularly. Any changes to the meeting will be posted on the main page.

The meeting will include the financial review of 2023, election of three Directors of the Board, and any other business that is presented.

<u>CURRENT DIRECTORS</u>	<u>TERM EXPIRES</u>	
JON PETROSKEY	2025	CHAIRMAN
CHARLIE LANG	2024	VICE-CHAIRMAN
BRUCE BARTELL	2026	SECRETARY-TREASURER
GREG NOWICKI	2026	
FAYE ZERNICKE	2024	
BILL RAUEN	2025	
MARK ELLENBECKER	2026	
TODD TOPPEN	2024	
ALFRED NAKHLA	2025	



Underwriting

The insurance industry is undergoing a rapid transformation as the market changes. If you haven't been affected by this already, there's a likelihood you will be in the future. To ensure you are properly covered, it is important to review your coverage with your agent on a regular basis.

You will want to review the amount of coverage on your property as inflation has been increasing building costs significantly. It's also important to discuss any updates or remodeling done to your property as these will increase the cost to replace your property in the event of a covered loss. Increasing your deductibles and reviewing available discounts are great ways to keep your premiums down.

It is also crucial for policyholders to maintain their properties to prevent losses. Mutual of Wausau performs property surveys periodically to help reduce and prevent potential losses; however, you as the policyholder play a significant role in protecting your property. Here are some ways to protect your assets:

- Clean your chimney on a regular basis and perform routine maintenance on your heating system.
- Ensure you have working smoke detectors in your home.
- Trim overgrown vegetation and overhanging tree branches away from your home and detached structures.
- Keep gutters and downspouts free of debris, ensuring proper drainage away from your foundation.
- Spring may feel far away, but it's not too early to check your sump pump. Installing an alarm system or battery back-up could be the key to preventing water damage.

Additionally, it's important to maintain coverage on your property by paying your bill on time. During times like we are experiencing, allowing your coverage to cancel or lapse may come at a cost and could be detrimental to establishing coverage again in the future.

Our goal at Mutual of Wausau is to continue to provide excellent customer service to our policyholders and assist them if/when disaster strikes. We recognize that while insurance is often purchased with the hope of never needing it, if you do, you want to feel confident your coverage is sufficient, and you will be taken care of. Just know that you as a policyholder play a role in that. It cannot be emphasized enough to contact your agent to review your coverage and notify them as changes are made to your property. As policyholders ourselves, we know the importance of being proactive in reviewing our own policies, reaching out to our agents, and preventing unnecessary losses.

Enjoy the holidays!

Michael Moore, Vice-President of Underwriting

Giving Back to the Communities We Serve

Did you know that Mutual of Wausau provides many grants to the communities that we live and work in and to the people that we provide service to?

Recently, we added a Young Farmer Grant program and a leaf blower reimbursement program in addition to the programs that we have below. If you are interested in learning more about these programs, please visit our Community section on our website, <https://mutualofwausau.com/community-involvement/>.

Scholarships: Mutual of Wausau provides a Scholarship Program for the children of our policyholders who continue their education beyond high school. In the past 27 years, we have proudly awarded over \$297,500 in scholarships. In 2023, we awarded \$13,500 in scholarships to our policyholders' graduating seniors.

Congratulations to the 2023 winners: Ethan Lally, Suring; Kate Mohr, Chippewa Falls; Josephine Ertl, Auburndale; Tanna Luchterhand, Neillsville; Jaylenn Artac, Greenwood; Macey Jo Weix, Merrill; Ryan Neumann, Medford; Ethan Lindner, Loyal; Zachary Kolodziej, Stevens Point; Paige Reeves, Wausau; Ryan Bartig, Elk Mound; Jessica Mucha, Edgar; Lydia Burrows, Merrill; Hallie Aumann, Loyal; and Jolene Bentz, Merrill.



FFA & 4-H: Mutual of Wausau's FFA Chapter and 4-H Club Grant Program supports these organizations in agricultural education, youth development, and promotes civic and leadership responsibilities.

We only had one application this year.

The 2023 recipient of a \$400 grant was: Team Green 4-H Club, Lena, WI.



Fire Department Grants: Supporting our local fire departments is important to Mutual of Wausau. One way we do this is by awarding fire department grants each year. Selections are based on the needs outlined by the fire departments in applications submitted to the company. Since 2003, we have awarded over \$135,000 to volunteer fire departments that protect our policyholders. For 2023, seven volunteer fire departments were awarded grants of \$1,000 each. They were: Town of Antigo FD, Town of Hamburg FD, Town of Pine River FD, Reedsville FD, Rudolph FD, Stratford FD & White Lake FD.

Pictured: White Lake FD with Chief Brandon Tegen.

Retirements

"Often when you think you're at the end of something, you're at the beginning of something else." -Fred Rogers.



Pam Dietrich

Pam joined the Mutual of Wausau team via a merger with Manitowoc Mutual, where she started in 2001. She has been a vital team member throughout her time with the companies.

New Employees



As mentioned in last year's newsletter, Pella Mutual merged with Mutual of Wausau effective 1-1-23, and this is the fabulous crew that joined us.

L to R: Nick Yaeger, Jakie Sperberg, Cindy Dean, Ginny Boehmke, Deanna Guetschow, and Lori Bartz

Front: Diane Blashe, Retired in April after almost 22 years of service at Pella Mutual.



Crystal Aguirre

Crystal joined the Mutual of Wausau staff in February. She moved from one of our affiliate companies, Ellington Mutual, as a loss control inspector. Crystal started with Ellington Mutual in 2017 as a claim rep and loss control inspector. The move to Mutual of Wausau allows her to focus on one area.



Jamie Rogan Lerch

Jamie has worked at Mutual of Wausau since June. She joined the company as the Finance Manager. Prior to joining Mutual of Wausau, she was at Aspirus Health as a Senior Accountant for just over a year and at Liberty Mutual Insurance Group as Senior Accountant in the Reinsurance Department for 23 years.

Shaun Shimek

Shaun just started working at Mutual of Wausau as an IT Analyst. He hit the ground running and we haven't even gotten his photo taken yet. Shaun started as a temp at our affiliate, Homestead Mutual, doing data entry and programming for BriteCore. Prior to joining Mutual of Wausau, he was an Escalation Support Engineer for Microsoft, and has over 20 years experience in IT Operations.

Role Changes/Promotions



Paul Splinter

Paul made a switch from the Loss Control Dept. to the Claims Dept. as a Claims Rep in January.



Gerry van der Westhuizen

Gerry made a switch from the Loss Control Dept. to the Claims Dept. as a Claims Rep in May.



Tyrrell Wirkus

Tyrrell was promoted to Vice President of Finance in early November.



Jakie Sperberg

Jakie was promoted to Director of Marketing in mid-2023. Jakie came to Mutual of Wausau via the Pella Mutual merger.



Jess VanderPloeg

Jess's role changed from VP-Operations to VP- HR & Administration in mid-2023.



Steve Brenner

Steve's role changed from Marketing & Auto Product Coordinator to Business Analyst in mid-2023.

Mailing Address Line 1

Mailing Address Line 2

Mailing Address Line 3

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Mailing Address Line 5

Calendar

Dec 25-26	Office Closed
Jan 1	Office Closed
March 12	Annual Meeting 10 a.m.



The Staff and Board of Directors
of Mutual of Wausau Insurance
wish you a
Happy Holiday Season!

This will be our final printed newsletter mailing. Future newsletters will be posted on our website, on our social media pages, and emailed to policyholders.