

MJSA Sustaining Members

Jewelers Mutual Insurance Group, Neenah, Wisconsin

Editor's note: *Earlier this year, MJSA announced the formation of the MJSA Sustaining Membership, a special membership level recognizing those companies that, through their enduring financial support, help MJSA to continue in its mission of advancing professional excellence and furthering the industry. Over the next few months, we will introduce you to all of these Sustainers; this month we focus on Neenah, Wisconsin-based Jewelers Mutual Insurance Group.*

ESTABLISHED BY JEWELERS FOR JEWELERS, Jewelers Mutual Insurance Group (JM) has grown quite a bit since its founding in 1913. During its initial decades, it focused on insuring retailers, wholesalers, manufacturers, and designers, perfecting its Jewelers Block insurance (to protect a business's stock merchandise) and Businessowners Policy (to protect a business's personal property, building, income, and non-jewelry inventory).

In the 1950s, JM branched out, adding insurance for stand-alone personal lines and offering coverage for single items, such as engagement rings and high-value bracelets.

Today, JM is still exploring new areas of business. Its recent introductions include such innovations as the JM Care Plan, which covers jewelry and watch repair (and drives traffic back to its jeweler customers); JM Shipping Solution, which provides a



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—Scott Murphy, CEO, Jewelers Mutual

selection of discounted shipping options for jewelers; and Jeweler's Cut, which pays jewelers for providing descriptions of their customers' newly purchased or appraised items.

“We are constantly looking for ways to bring added value to the experience,” says Sheri Ihde, CEM, CSA, who serves as JM's director of industry relations.

Those efforts have earned JM 31 consecutive A+ Superior ratings from A.M. Best Company. When asked what accounts for the company's success, Ihde says, “Our employees, our innovation, and of course, our dedication and commitment to the

industry.”

It all starts with the employees, in whom JM makes a significant investment. The company offers an Education Expense Reimbursement Program that provides financial assistance to employees who take outside courses to further their professional development via certifications, job-related courses, and educational degrees. It also offers monetary Academic Achievement Awards for employees completing select educational courses, such as those leading to the prestigious Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter designation.

Its commitment to the industry can be seen in the many strategic partnerships it has formed with some of the leading membership organizations, all of whom endorse JM. Those partners include MJSA, the American Gem Society, Jewelers of America, Jewelers' Security Alliance, and three Canadian organizations: Canadian Jewellers Association, Canadian Jewellers Group, and Jewelers Vigilance Canada. "Our partners share a mutual passion for supporting the jewelry industry to help it thrive for years to come," says Ihde.

For JM, that support has included substantial financial assistance—in 2017 alone, the company gave more than \$70 million in aid to industry associations, events, and educational programs. But the charity does not stop at the jewelry industry's borders. As Ihde says, "We are a very charitable organization with many different avenues of giving."

One of those avenues is JM's employee-based Charitable Giving Committee, which works with local organizations, including Feeding America and Habitat for Humanity. The company also encourages its employees to volunteer, offering them 12 paid hours per year to do so, and coordinates at least two corporate volunteer events per year. Moreover, the employees are urged to serve as board members for local and national non-profit organizations. "We believe that supporting these organizations makes for a stronger community and a stronger JM," says Ihde.

And a strong company can better serve its customers, which is key. "We know that we would not have reached our 105th year if we had not focused on the custom-



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ers, and this focus remains what drives us as a company," said Jewelers Mutual CEO Scott Murphy in the company's 2017 Annual Report. JM goes to great lengths to reaffirm this dedication and ensure that its customers have peace of mind.

"We include loss prevention benefits to our commercial insureds, such as access to loss prevention consultants and paid memberships to Jewelers' Security Alliance or the Jewelers Vigilance Canada Crime Package," says Ihde. "Plus, we offer complimentary safety materials for their stores." And if, despite such precautions, a robbery or a fire does occur, JM's RELIEVE benefit provides counseling and support.

JM also offers customers education through both its Clarity Blog, where posts offer tips on how to run successful jewelry businesses, and JM University, which has online training resources for improving safety and security.

To strengthen its customer connec-

tions further, JM is making significant investments in technology, especially in web-based programs. "Because technology is often the face of a company, we find it imperative to continue to invest in technological advances that provide our customers with a seamless experience," says Ihde. For instance, JM will soon enable customers to research and apply for its products online, as well as to receive real-time information about their insurance policies.

"The self-service functions provide our internal staff visibility into the entire customer journey and [our customers'] interactions with Jewelers Mutual, so we can more easily personalize their experiences with us," says Ihde.

As it has since 1913, JM has ensured that it all comes back to the customer—a commitment that will no doubt continue through JM's second century of service and beyond. ♦