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**SIX CAA MEMBERS RETAIN STATUS AS IIABA'S BEST PRACTICES AGENCIES FOR 2009**

*Bigham-Kliwer-Chapman-Watts Insurance, Bryan Insurance, Pierson & Fendley Insurance, Weatherby-Eisenrich Insurance, The Bridges Group and Ed Berrong Insurance Part of Elite Study Group*

**Austin, TX, January 21, 2010** – Today Combined Agents of America, LLC (CAA) announced six of its member agencies, Bigham-Kliwer-Chapman-Watts Insurance Agency, The Bridges Group, Inc., Bryan Insurance Agency, Ed Berrong Insurance Agency, Pierson & Fendley Insurance Agency, and Weatherby-Eisenrich Insurance Agency, have retained their status for 2009 as part of an elite group of independent insurance agencies around the United States participating in the Independent Insurance Agents and Brokers of America (IIABA) “Best Practices” Study Group. Additionally Bigham-Kliwer-Chapman-Watts (Killeen, Texas) was awarded as the Best Practices Top Performer for the revenue category of between \$2.5 and \$5 million. Ed Berrong Insurance (Weatherford, Oklahoma) was ranked as number one in its revenue category of between \$1.25 million to \$2.5 million. With recent expansion into Oklahoma and Kansas, Texas-based CAA is a managing general agency (MGA) committed to further expansion across the country to strengthen the independent insurance agency system through profitable growth and exceptional service for its member agencies.

“We are excited that a third of the Texas agencies chosen by IIABA as 2009 Best Practice agencies are also members of Combined Agents of America. And with our rapid expansion outside of Texas last year, we gained another two agencies also chosen to be apart of this prestigious study,” said Don Jones, CIC, CAA president and president of Crockett Insurance Services, Crockett, TX. “As we at CAA move forward in 2010 to broaden our membership across the southwest and south-central regions of the United States, we will continue to work to join ourselves with agencies that demonstrate the same kind of top performance as these six.”

These agencies originally qualified in 2007 for this status by ranking among the 25-35 top-performing agencies in one of six revenue categories in the annual Best Practices Study conducted by IIABA and Reagan Consulting of Atlanta, Ga. More than 800 independent agencies throughout the U.S. were nominated in 2007 to take part in a new three-year study cycle, but less than the top fourth qualified for the honor. Each agency must qualify based on outstanding customer services, growth, stability and financial management. To retain the Best Practices Agency status for 2009, these CAA member agencies had to submit year-end results for review to re-qualify as one of the top performers in their revenue category.

The Best Practices Study was initiated by IIABA in 1993 as the foundation for efforts to improve agency performance. This annual study of leading independent insurance agencies documents the business practices of these “best” agencies and urges others to adopt similar practices.

"Congratulations to the six CAA agencies that were selected as Best Practices agencies-- these agencies represent the best of the best," said David VanDelinder, CPCU, AAI, Executive Director of Independent Insurance Agents of Texas (IIAT). "We are certainly proud of Texas for having more Best Practices agencies than any other state."

Based in Killeen, Texas, Bigham-Kliwer-Chapman-Watts Insurance Agency offers a full line of personal and business insurance products, alongside other financial services since 1952. URL: <http://bkcw.com/>

Since 1894, The Bridges Group, Inc. has served the region surrounding Norton, Kansas for over a century as an insurance specialist with a full range of insurance products, including crop, farm and ranch, alongside other financial services. URL: <http://www.bridgesinsurance.com/>

Based in Graham, Texas, Bryan Insurance Agency is a full service agency that writes all lines of business, including oil and gas. The family-owned agency has served North Texas since 1921. URL: <http://www.bryanins.com/>

Based in Weatherford, Oklahoma, Ed Berrong Insurance Agency serves Oklahoma and surrounding states since 1948 with a full line of insurance products, while specializing in oil and gas. URL: <http://www.berrongins.com/>

Pierson & Fendley Insurance Agency has been providing residents of Paris, Texas and its surrounding areas with both personal and business insurance since 1935. URL: <http://www.pierson-fendley.com/>

The Weatherby-Eisenrich Insurance Agency is a full service agency headquartered in Andrews, Texas with two other locations in Odessa, Texas as Edgmon-Eisenrich Insurance and in Granbury, Texas as InSCO Insurance. URL: <https://www.weinsure4you.com/>

### **About Combined Agents of America, LLC**

Founded in 1997 Combined Agents of America, LLC (CAA) is based in Austin, Texas, and is comprised of 44 independent insurance agencies located throughout Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas. By funneling the agencies' combined premiums, CAA brings larger volume commitments to insurance companies, while empowering its members to realize greater benefits from insurance companies, vendor discounts and other incentives.

CAA works with 18 of the largest insurance companies in the nation. CAA placed 18<sup>th</sup> nationally in the *Insurance Journal's* Top 100 Property and Casualty Agencies in 2009. All CAA member agencies remain independent and are recognized by insurance companies as a key component to their future growth and goal commitments. Additional information is available at [www.combinedagents.com](http://www.combinedagents.com).

CAA member agencies include: Aars & Nelson Insurance Agency, Barnard Insurance Agency, Bartlett, Baggett & Shands, Benchmark Insurance Group, Benton-Luttrell-Brown Company, Bigham-Kliwer-Chapman-Watts Insurance Agency, BRIA Insurance & Risk Consultants, Bridges Group Inc., Bosworth & Associates, Bryan Insurance Agency Ltd., Brownrigg Insurance Agency Inc., Cravens-Warren & Co., Crockett Insurance Service, Duncan-Fraser & Bridges Insurance Agency Inc., Ed Berrong Insurance Agency, Ed Weeren Insurance Agency Inc., EFGI Insurance & Bonds LCC, Evans-Ewan & Brady Insurance

Agency Inc., First Insurance Services, First Texas Insurance Services LC, Henry Norris Insurance Agency, Inc., Garrett Insurance Agency, Inc., GBS Insurance Agency Inc., Grona Boles Martin & Bloxson Insurance, Hill County Insurance Agency, Insurance Associates of Texas, Insurance Net Inc., JHC Insurance Agency Inc., J. S. Edwards & Sherlock Insurance Agency, Lake Insurance Agency, Inc., McCorkle Commercial Insurance Agency, Mims & Smith, Mr. Insurance Agency, Inc., Pierson-Fendley Insurance, Pinnacle Insurance Group Inc., Porter Insurance Agency Inc., Purifoy & Company, The Shropshire Agency Inc., Siegeler Insurance Agency, Inc., Walthall-Sachse & Pipes, Inc., The Weatherby-Eisenrich Inc., Wellmann Insurance Agency, Inc., Western Insurance Agency, and Whorton Insurance Services.

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