



News Capsule



Nebraska Autobody Association - Automotive & Business News

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The Omaha police department is asking for your help. If you recently repaired minor damage to the left front corner of a 2005 Nissan Altima with Nebraska license plate 29-Y951 (VIN 1N4AL11D05C373960) please contact Sgt. Klein of the Omaha Police Department at 402-444-7629.

Hartford is one of the latest corporations to be infused with \$3.4 billion in US taxpayer bailout after the company recently suffered huge investment losses. Hartford will give taxpayers stock in exchange for the massive bailout provided under the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP). Elizabeth Zlatkus, Hartford's Chief Financial Officer said that the insurer would retain taxpayer's money till the economy establishes a 'more stable footing'. Hartford reportedly lost \$2.75 billion last year.

Hartford is not the only insurer facing difficulties. US property and casualty insurers suffered record losses during the first quarter of 2009 due to declining investments and claims that exceeded premiums. Overall, the insurance industry reported a \$1.3 billion net loss during the first quarter of this year compared with an \$8.5 billion profit during the same quarter of last year. Despite significant losses insurers are expected to cut premiums, a move designed to preserve market share. Insurers also face over \$16 billion in unrealized investment losses, which are not deducted from earnings. NABA members can request a free email report on the health of the US Property & Casualty Insurance industry by sending an email to nz41254@windstream.net with 'report' in the subject heading.

Travelers insurance company of Massachusetts will open another concierge-type, drive-in claims center in the city of Dedham. That would bring the number of Traveler concierge centers to 59 across the US. Approximately 20 workers will be employed at the new Massachusetts claims facility.

Nebraska Attorney General Jon Bruning is the new president of the National Association of Attorneys General. In a statement Mr. Bruning said, "Attorneys general are uniquely situated to lead the way in building a stronger and safer future for our states and our families. Serving as president of NAAG is an honor, and I look forward to working with my colleagues on issues that affect us on both the state and national level."

The controversial 'Access To Repair Parts Act' was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives last month. The bill would broaden the use of reverse-engineered aftermarket parts used to repair of collision-damaged vehicles. Opponents of H.R. 3059 say that the bill is an attempt to weaken the existing US Patent Code, a move that would allow foreign parts manufacturers to copy and sell additional crash replacement parts as OEM alternatives. But the bill may be a hard sell in today's political climate since an increase in foreign-made aftermarket parts use could further erode US manufacturing jobs and slow the recovery of troubled American carmakers, which rely on patent protection to recover substantial research and development costs.

Policyholders whose legitimate insurance claims were low-balled, delayed or denied by their insurance companies testified before the Washington D.C. Council in June to support legislation that would allow consumers to hold insurer accountable in court. Under current District law, individual consumers cannot take their insurer to court when those insurers fail to pay claims fairly. Consumers advocates say that the lack accountability in court gives insurance companies a financial incentive to make low settlement offers and intentionally delay or deny legitimate claims. "I have to pay my premium on time and in full and my insurer should have the same responsibility", said Carmen Balber, Washington, D.C. director for the nonprofit Consumer Watchdog organization. "Instead, District law lets insurance companies off the hook for unfairly low-balling claims, dragging their feet on payment, or denying a legitimate claim altogether. The law must change to protect consumers from those insurers who otherwise may be more focused on profits than policyholders."

California's insurance commissioner Steve Poizner recently approved regulations that will allow insurers to sell automobile insurance by the mile. Letting consumers pay only for the miles they drive would save money for policyholders who only drive a low number of annual miles. Changes to per-mile premiums is gaining renewed interests and may be among other factors that could lead to a further reduce the average number of annual miles driven by US motorists. An estimated cost saving of 10 cents per mile would encourage use of public transportation and carpooling, changes that could save hundreds of dollars a year on insurance premiums. California Insurance Commissioner, Steve Poizner said that the new regulations would "expand insurance options for consumers, allowing a freer market to create incentives for driving less."

The Nebraska AutoBody Association (NABA) is gearing up for the Collision Industry Days on October 9-10 in Columbus Nebraska. The program will include I-CAR classes and numerous other programs, seminars and entertainment. Details will be available shortly and everyone is encouraged to mark their calendars to participate in this event. Visit the association web site at <http://www.nebraskaautobody.com> for the latest updates.

Fight For What's Right
Join the Nebraska AutoBody Association

Membership application available at

<http://www.nebraskaautobody.com/filedownloads/memberap1&2.pdf>

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