

BUSINESS & FINANCE

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A disability insurance plan valuable

Editor's note: This is the fourth article in a nine-part series on risk management. Next week's column will discuss survivorship life insurance.

The importance of disability insurance as an integral part of a financial plan can be judged against the backdrop of the following three real-life situations:

Dr. T. is a psychiatrist and owns her own practice. She does not have a disability insurance, but is not concerned because she makes good money.

Mr. X. works for Ford Motor Co. and believes that he has excellent disability coverage.

Mr. M., divorced, believes she would rather have a new car than buy disability insurance. She is in good health and doesn't believe she would ever become disabled.

All of these persons have one thing in common: They did not understand the true meaning of adequate coverage through disability insurance.

Disability insurance can be explained in simple terms. You are not indestructible.

It is dangerous to assume that you would never become disabled because you are in good health or because you are a safe driver.

Disability can strike anyone and you cannot be sheltered from that risk.

You can overcome even severe financial troubles if you can work. But if you can't work because of sickness or injury, then you must have income from somewhere - preferably enough to replace most of your normal earnings as long as the need exists, which could be for a long time or even for life.

Unless you have large financial resources, this "somewhere" might have to be disability insurance. Upon disability your income can come from a combination of three sources discussed below.

Social Security

To receive benefits, you must have worked five of the past 10 years or, if young, at least 1-1/2 of the past three years. Your disability must have lasted or be expected to last a year.

You must wait several months for payments, and they cease when you can do any kind of work. Also, it is widely believed that Social Security usually rejects one's first claim. Average monthly payments for a family are around \$1,000.

Group Coverage

Medical examinations are not required. Not only employers but also professionals working as a

group can buy such insurance, most easily in groups of 10 or more, but possibly as few as 3 or 4.

Group coverage is usually "coordinated" with Social Security, so if you receive benefits from it, your group payments may be less. An insurer can raise premiums or cancel a policy if many employees do not resume work when able - it's termed "excessive malingering."

It is important to know what your monthly income would be if you were totally or partially disabled. Frequently the income expected from Social Security and group insurance falls far short of the disability income needs. If that is the case, consider buying your own supplementary policy.

Individual Insurance

Shop for the best coverage available. There is no

See MITTRA, D3

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Plante & Moran named family-friendly



Southfield-based Plante & Moran, Michigan's largest public accounting firm, has been recognized as one of the country's most family-friendly companies by Working Mother magazine.

BY KLENA FULKA
SPECIAL WRITER

One of this year's "Working Mother 100 Awards" stands on a wooden easel in the third floor reception area of Plante & Moran, LLP's Southfield headquarters.

Sponsored by Working Mother magazine, the award recognizes

Michigan's largest public accounting and management consulting firm as one of the 100 best companies for working mothers because of its family-friendly benefits, flexible schedules and career advancement opportunities for women.

"We're exceptionally proud of the recognition it provides for the firm on a national basis," said William

Bufe, CPA and human resource director for Plante & Moran. "We're very complimented by this."

The nation's 13th largest certified public accounting firm was one of two Oakland County companies to win the award. The firm was honored along with this year's other 99 winners at a ceremony in New York City hosted by Katie Couric of NBC's Today show in September.

Vice president Al Giro was the keynote speaker. There were 400 serious contenders nationwide.

Plante & Moran created its Parenting Tightrope Action Committee in 1986 to help employees fulfill

their parental and professional roles and to prepare for the influx of women in the workplace. The acronym, PTA, was chosen because it's kid-friendly. The reference to a tightrope is a reminder of the delicate balance of life.

"If you lean too far one way, you fall off the tightrope," explained Bufo, who has co-chaired the PTA Committee since its inception. "We have to give appropriate amounts of effort and attention to our professional and personal lives."

Partners, staff and administrators

See FAMILY, D3

Bartering Rochester man pushing for more fair trading

BY ROBERT SNELL
SPECIAL WRITER

Chances are Michael Mercier would have spiced up the colossal uneven deal of 1626 that landed the Indians \$24 in beads and trinkets and brought Dutch colonist Peter Minuit Manhattan Island.

But Mercier, 51, preaches equitable bartering as president of Troy-based Metro Trading Association, a 2,000-member, non-profit clearinghouse for trading among area businesses.

The converted stockbroker and investment banker forged his business sense during summers at his family's Montana cattle ranch.

"No single ranch had enough cowboys to round up all the cattle and brand them so four cowboys from one ranch would share labor with the other ranches to get the branding done," the Rochester resident said. "Those summers taught me that while good things come from competition, great things come from cooperation."

See BARTER, D2



Barter advocate: Michael Mercier of Rochester is the new head of the Troy-based Metro Trading Association. He said he plans to use his tenure to increase the use of electronic currency exchange for services among members.

ELECTRONIC CURRENCY

Electric vehicles now used in local plants

There's a new mode of transportation zipping around the TAN Industrial Park, located at M-59 and Crooks Road in Rochester Hills.

A fleet of 12 battery-powered trans2 multi-purpose electric vehicles from the trans2 Corporation of Live-

nia are now in operation at the park, providing convenient and emissions-free shuttle service for design and engineering staff along with customers of one of the area's fastest growing advanced manufacturing and service business groups.



The "trans2" electric vehicle.

The business enterprises, owned by Douglas Peterson, consist of five separate firms housed in four facilities.

See ELECTRIC, D3

Metro area gets national directory help

Beginning Monday, Ameritech's Detroit area customers will be able to obtain telephone numbers nationwide without having to know the area code when Ameritech begins offering National Directory Assistance, according to Ameritech Michigan Presi-

dent Bob Cooper. "Simply by dialing the regular directory assistance number - 555-1212 - customers can have access to national directory assistance," Cooper explained. "They don't need to know the area code, just give our operators the city and state

and they'll be able to search for the phone number and address."

The service began earlier this month in Chicago and has met with tremendous response.

"We're thrilled that we could offer our customers an

See DIRECTORY, D3

Corridor study gets top honor, recognition

The three year Woodward Corridor Study has been selected as the recipient of the 1996 Outstanding Planning Project Award by the Michigan Society of Planning Officials (MSPO) and the Michigan Chapter of the American Planning Association (MAPA).

The award was presented to Oakland County and the Woodward Avenue Steering Committee during the joint MSPO/MAPA Conference which is being held at the Radisson Hotel in Lansing, Michigan through Sept. 28.

"The Woodward Study represents a great deal of hard work by many people,

WOODWARD

all of whom should be commended for participating in a project that will ultimately transform Woodward Avenue into a revitalized corridor of commerce for the 21st century," Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson said. "I would like to especially congratulate Deborah Schutt and her fine staff in the Oakland County Development and Planning Division for doing such an outstanding job on this project."

Patterson also praised

See WOODWARD, D5

This column highlights promotions, transfers, hirings and other key personnel moves within the Oakland County business community. Send a brief biographical summary including the towns of residency and employment and a photo, if desired, to: Business Milestones, c/o Business, Editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009. Our fax number is (810) 644-1314.



Dummond

Timothy D. Dummond of West Bloomfield was named vice president at May & Seefeldt, a Howell manufacturer and assembler to the automotive industry. He's responsible for all manufacturing, quality, purchasing, engineering, sales and tooling

functions for May & Seefeldt's U.S. plants. He's a registered professional engineer and licensed building contractor. Formerly Hills-based Follmer, Rudzewicz & Co., P.C. promoted



DiTomasso

Mary DiTomasso of Bloomfield was named manager of business development at Southfield-based Netrex, Inc. Her responsibilities include managing the sales staff, maintaining client contact and determining prospective clients.

Dawn Krentz-Trotto of Warren from senior staff accountant to senior accountant at the firm's Sterling Heights office.

Michael Lipp of Westland was

BUSINESS MILESTONES

promoted from senior staff accountant to senior accountant at Follmer, Rudzewicz & Co., P.C. in Southfield.



Clout

Rebecca Clout of Bloomfield Hills joined DMB&B Public Relations in Bloomfield Hills as an assistant account executive. She will service the GM Corp. and non-automotive business accounts and the DMB&B agency account.

The Detroit Chapter of the American Marketing Association named the following officers for the 1996-97 term:

Kyle Percina of Commerce

Township was promoted from senior staff accountant to senior accountant at Follmer, Rudzewicz & Co., P.C. in Southfield.

Attorney Albert Holtz was re-appointed by the Michigan Supreme Court as a member of the Attorney Discipline Board for a three-year term, and as vice chair for a one-year term. He was also accepted as a general member of the Academy of Family Mediators.

Michael Stuart of Troy was named inside sales representative for Southfield-based Ultracore. He will be responsible for bringing new clients.

W. Bryan Hira of West Bloomfield was appointed area pres-



Coury

Michael Coury, Ph.D., Kantor Research Group, Detroit, president; Mitchell Phillips, Urban Science, Detroit, president-elect; Gerald Breuer, Expense Reduction Consultants, Southfield, treasurer; Carol Dunitz, Ph.D., The Last Word, Ann Arbor, newsletter; Ron Peterson, Adrian & Peterson, Inc., Westland, public relations; and Tony Faria, Ph.D., University of Windsor, Windsor, colleague. Also: Terry Nuckels, Maritz Marketing Research, Southfield, programming; Frank Forkin,

Research Data Analysis, Bloomfield Hills, workshops; William Royce, Fanouli Research, Birmingham, database director; Carrie Spurner, Nicholas Marketing Group, Canton, communications; Jeffrey Dworkin, Online Marketing Co., Southfield, Internet; and Jeffrey Stoltman, Ph.D., Wayne State University, Detroit, membership. State Sen. Mike Bouchard (R-Birmingham) was honored with the "Guardian of Small Business" award by the National Federation of Independent Business for working "effectively to protect and preserve the future of free enterprise and small business." The distinction is given on behalf of 23,000 small business members of the NFIB in Michigan. According to NFIB standards, Bouchard voted in favor of small business 92 percent of the time.