



**Inaugural Address by
J. Greg Zimmer – IIAN President 2017-18
Installed October 13, 2017, Embassy Suites, Lincoln, Nebraska**

Thank you and good afternoon. I was looking out over the audience a few minutes ago, and marveling on how things have changed in the last 35 years...

A big change for me is being up here today. I never thought while watching my uncle John or my father Jim being a part of this organization, hey, “I want to do that someday” 😊 and now, thinking back, I wish I’d had. I wish I’d have been more involved and at an earlier age. I’m thinking both would have said something like “better late than never” ... it would be kind of cool if they were here today.

Elliot Bassett with the Young Agents Task Force is here, and I’d like to see that whatever this new board can do to encourage and support his group is done. It would be a shame to lose the input and energy of our young agents. I think we may need them to keep this train moving.

Speaking of young agents, just a little plug for the New Talent Task Force headed by Lori Ruzicka. There has been a consistent cry, and a persistent need for new folks in our industry. As I understand it, many young people shy away from our industry because they fear the number one requirement – going door to door selling stuff.

Creighton’s Ernie Goss has written that the 10.3 billion-dollar impact that our industry has on Nebraska’s economy includes, on average, \$383 more a week earned by employees of the state’s insurance business. Yet our industry is in a daily struggle to find qualified folks – it’s not enough to say “everybody” has this problem. It’s time to do something and we believe the New Talent Task Force is” that thing.

Lori and her group will need our financial help and support. The IIAN Foundation is committed to helping – so, if hanging with Generation Y folks is not your thing, hang with the Baby Boomers of the Foundation. They too will need our help and support.

Zak Morken is another active young agent who I hope will continue with the Membership Engagement Task Force. His goal is to Increase member engagement and participation in association programs and volunteer activities.

Generation X, Y, Z or Baby Boomers – your participation is not an “obligation”. It “is” a great opportunity to give back to your industry, to help it grow and to prosper and Zak sees it. He gets it.

Young people! Let’s see... Tony Purvis, is another “youngster” who I hope continues *his* work with the Trusted Choice Task Force. Yellow page ads were so simple. We thought nothing of plunking down 5, 10, 15,000 dollars a year for a yellow page ad. Now many of our ads are hidden behind million-dollar banners screaming for our attention. I believe we need Trusted Choice®. I believe we need Trusted Choice® to work.

I hope Vince Christensen also continues as our IIAN/InsurPac Chairperson..... another young person giving back...along with Michael Luna who chaired the Annual Convention Committee this year. There are just a lot of young people engaged and participating!

You know, I’m not up here to convince you that this association is the best thing since sliced bread. I’m not up here selling you on the Legislative Advisory Council, or the Crop Insurance Task Force or the Legislative PAC. I’m not selling the Education benefits, Webinars, Virtual University, Innovative Leadership, E & O, or any other of the great programs your association offers –

I’m up here to sell you on the fact that quite a few young men and women **do** see the value of this association and the industry that supports it – and they are voluntarily working hard to provide “you” with benefits and services you can use day to day in your offices, not just in Omaha and Lincoln but in Mitchell, Valentine and McCook.

I’m asking you for your continued support of these folks and all the other young and old, volunteer board members, committee chairs, committee members, the Legislative Advisory Council and its ambassadors, our National committee folks... there are just a ton of people who believe in this industry, this association and in you.

Like I said, I wish I would have become more involved earlier in my career. I wish I were 35 years younger. I’d love to be starting my career over with this group of young professionals!