

A.P. REID
INSURANCE STORES

Opens 2

Franchisees love A.P. Reid system

By Tom Mason
Special Features Writer

Starting your own business can be a daunting process, even with three decades of experience in the industry. That's what Sue Boutilier thought when she decided to open her own insurance business, Burnside Insurance, an independently owned and operated A.P. Reid Insurance Store.

"I worked for 28 years with the same employer," she says. "My friends were always telling me I should go out on my own, but it was a very big step to actually do it."

The big step was made a lot easier with the help of A.P. Reid. The firm's unique franchise system gave Ms. Boutilier the expertise and confidence she needed to make the transition.

"I have their pull within the industry and their full support. Any questions I have about issues like coverage, I just pick up the phone and call them. They made starting a business a lot less scary."

For Kim Tingley, working for another agency for five years was only partially fulfilling. "When you work for an agent, you're essentially a salesman. You don't do anything about servicing clients after they purchase. That's what I missed."

Mr. Tingley, who now owns and operates Bedford Insurance, also credits A.P. Reid Insurance Stores for giving him the confidence to strike out on his own.

"Aileen Reid has been doing this for 20 years. She's established a formula that works," he said.

A.P. Reid Insurance Stores' franchise system is unique within the business. It provides insurance agents with the support they need to survive in an industry where success requires large volumes of

business, multiple companies providing support and commitments to insurers that are often beyond the reach of small startup agencies.

The A.P. Reid system lets franchisees plug into the custom-designed computer intranet system, allowing access to every application from auto to aviation to oil risks. Like any good franchise system, A.P. Reid covers everything from book keeping to marketing, walking franchisees through the business step by step.

"The computer system is excellent," says Ms. Boutilier. "And I have A.P. Reid's pull within the industry and their support and knowledge."

"We do a lot of the background

work, the running of the business," says Jamie Reid of A.P. Reid Insurance Stores.

"That way the franchisees can concentrate on servicing their customers."

"I get all the benefits of being

self-employed, but with lots of support too," says Ms. Boutillier. "It

really is the best of both worlds."