



**BEELS INSURANCE**  
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**Since the Spotlight H.B. Beels & Son, Inc was sold and now is Beels Insurance.**

This month I would like to put the spotlight on another one of the great legacy businesses here in Knox called "H.B. Beels & Son, Inc." This insurance agency has a long robust history (over 114 years) of filling a broad array of insurance needs, while delivering superior customer service not only to the Knox area residents & businesses, they are a well known insurance provider to many all over N/W Pennsylvania.

The agency was founded by Harry B. Beels (better known as H.B.) who had been in the oil business, but H.B. was looking for a more stable income away from the BOOM & BUST of the local oil industry excitement going on at the turn on the century. In 1910 H.B. Beels purchased the insurance agency from J.L. McElhaney in Blairs Corners for \$350.00, and the first office for the new agency was then relocated to H.B.'s farm out in Monroe. H.B. continued a working relationship started by Mr McElhaney with the Farmers Mutual Fire Insurance Company of Marble Pa, and after 114 years that working relationship continues today.

In 1920 the Beels agency became associated with a new insurance company called "Pennsylvania Threshermen & Farmers Mutual Casualty Company (PTF) of Harrisburg. "PTF" provided farm-related workers compensation insurance and FOUR of the first TEN policies sold for this new "PTF" company were written by H.B. Beels. In 1933 H.B. Beels became one of the directors for the "PTF" company and went on to serve on it's executive board for 35 years. In the 1930's "PTF" began writing personal

automobile coverage, trucking coverage & workers compensation on coal miners. In the 1960's this "PTF" company became "Pennsylvania National Mutual Casualty Insurance Company" and H.B. Beels & Son was the first agency to write over two million dollars of annual sales for them. H.B. Beels and Son, Inc. continues writing insurance for "Pennsylvania National Mutual Casualty" to this day.

History of the business during these times shows HB moving the office into the "ALT" building in Knox around 1924. This ALT building was in the Kooman Block on main street, and as the business expanded H.B. moved again down the street to the second floor of the "King" Rexall Drug Building (512 main street) in 1935. I can personally remember my dad having me run over insurance payment checks to the Beels upstairs office from our family's Knox Fruit Company business (across the street) when I was a kid. In 1973 H.B. Beels & Son built a new building and moved to their present day location @ 433 Main Street here in Knox.

In 1936 H.B.'s son Kenneth (Ken) W. Beels joined the agency after graduating from Penn State. In 1946 (after serving in the US ARMY) H.B.'s stepson William (Bill) Mason joined the agency and H.B. / Ken & Bill were the sales force for the agency through the 40's , 50's & 60's....The agency grew and expanded into writing more commercial business insurance, writing for some 20 coal operations during those days. H.B. died on Christmas Day in 1972 at the age of 88. He had kept active in the business up to two months before he passed away. He was a remarkable "self made" man with a dry wit and warm personality that endeared him to many.

After H.B.'s death, his son Ken Beels and stepson William (Bill) Mason continued running the business. They were joined by Bill (and Betty) Mason's sons John (in 1970) and W. Michael (in 1975) who became the third generation of the family to be in the business. Bill Mason died from a heart attack in 1981 at the age of 59. Ken Beels, like his father, continued working at the business up until a few months before his death at the age of 87. Both Bill Mason & Ken Beels were very active in the Knox community throughout their lives.

Present day staff at H.B. Beels & Son Insurance:

John Mason / President..... Graduate of University of Pittsburgh in December 1969, began at the agency January 1970

W. Michael Mason / Sec-Treasurer ..... Graduate from Robert Morris College in 1975, employed at the agency from April 15th, 1975 to May 31st, 1994. Michael then owned & operated "Cutting Edge Graphics" June 1994 to March 2001. Employed again by the agency April 1st, 2001 to present....

Robert Best / Agent....Graduate of Clarion University, began at the agency in August 1985

Deborah Keister / Agent....began with the agency August 13, 1984

Karl Heineman / Agent.....Graduate of West Virginia University 1981, began with the agency in November 1st, 2003

Mallory M. Mason Griebel / Agent.....Graduate of Penn State in 2007, began with the agency on July 1st, 2007

Rhonda Troup / Commercial Customer Service Representative.....began with the agency on January 1st 1980

Karen Dittman / Personal Lines Customer Service Representative .....began with the agency on September 18th, 1984

Matt Steinman / Employed as a part timer since 2011.

Notable Mention: Beulah (Bood) Baltzer retired some 15 years ago from H.B. Beels & Son. Many Knox area residents still know and love Beulah (Bood) Baltzer who also ran a high end clothing store in Knox for many years. She gave some almost 50 years of dedicated service to the Beels agency.

Lots of great H.B. stories at hand. John Mason will tell the story how he remembers H.B. talking about taking the train from Knox (in 1919) riding down to Foxburg, where he would cross the Allegheny River on a flat bottom raft, then walk to Parker where he would rent a horse and ride to Bruin. Policies were 3 dollars back then and H.B. would take live chickens in exchange for the premium. Policies are not \$3 anymore and they don't take live poultry barbers today, but they can still trace 4 generations of customers along that trip Harry took in 1919.

This mayor says THANKS to "H.B.Beels & Son Inc." for being the great outstanding Knox business it is. H.B. Beels & Son Inc. has provided the area residents (and businesses) with fine insurance services for 114 years now and we say THANKS to everyone at "H.B. Beels & Son, Inc. "