

NEWS RELEASE – Jan. 24, 2007

Contact: Cheryl Arvidson

Assistant Director, Strategic Communications

PH: 703-534-3762 cheryl.arvidson@ciab.com

For Immediate Release

MARKET SOFTENING CONTINUES IN ALL BUT CAT-PRONE AREAS

WASHINGTON – Commercial insurance premiums continued their decline in all but catastrophe-exposed areas during the fourth quarter of 2006, with insurers willing to lower prices and place fewer restrictions on coverage to get new business, according to the latest market survey by The Council of Insurance Agents & Brokers.

"There is no underwriting," a broker from the Midwest responded when asked for general market observations.

Although most agents and brokers did not go that far in describing the market, they did report a definite softening, with insurers offering better and broader terms and lower deductibles for almost all classes of commercial p/c coverage.

"Insureds are getting more for their money," said an agent from the Southwest.

As has been the case since the fall of 2005, the exception to the general market trend was coastal property, particularly Florida accounts, where wind coverage capacity remained scarce and costly. Earthquake and other coverages for cat-exposed property also were expensive and hard to find, respondents said.

An analysis of The Council's survey data by Lehman brothers showed an average rate decline of 9.6 percent for commercial p/c accounts of all sizes during fourth quarter 2006. With an average decline of 12.1 percent for large accounts and 6.3 percent for small accounts, both of those categories hit their lowest rate of decline point since The Council surveys began in 1999, Lehman's analysis showed. Midsized accounts reached their low point during the second quarter 2005. The highest premium increases came during the fourth quarter of 2001, right after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Eighty-six percent of brokers responding to the survey said premiums for their small accounts held steady or declined during the fourth quarter 2006 compared with the previous quarter; and the majority – 48 percent – reported a drop of 1 to 10 percent. For medium and large accounts, the brokers said more than 80 percent of their account renewals experienced premiums drops of 1 to 20 percent.

In addition to the general market softening in virtually all classes of commercial property/casualty accounts, it appeared that the standard markets are making room for some accounts that previously were handled as surplus lines.

"Risks are beginning to come out of the surplus lines markets and back into the standard market. We haven't seen this since 9/11," said a broker from the Southwest.

Even medical malpractice premiums were starting to stabilize, according to the survey respondents, and some carriers are not always requesting loss runs in order to quote new business.

"Renewing carriers are still trying to keep premiums level or higher. However, the marketplace is demanding pricing to be lower to avoid losing new business to carriers who come in quite a bit lower – sometimes as much as 40 percent lower depending on the desirability of the account," a broker from the Southeast said.

"Less restrictive 'Tell me what you need' is the story on most p/c clients," said an agent from the Northeast.

The regional carriers are being particularly aggressive, brokers from the Midwest said.

Although wind coverage is still hard to find and expensive for coastal property, be it in Florida or Cape Cod, some of the respondents indicated the worst may be over.

"Coastal wind remains difficult, but there are some rays of light. A few carriers are coming in and under-cutting the market with 'lower' premiums than the rest of the marketplace," reported one broker.

"Flat to small decreases on coastal," agreed another broker. "Increases seem to have peaked."

Founded in 1913, **The Council** is the premier association for commercial insurance and employee benefits intermediaries. The Council represents the leading commercial brokers and agents in the United States and abroad. Council members annually write 80 percent of all commercial property/casualty premiums in the United States and administer billions of dollars in employee benefits accounts. www.ciab.com

Below are the survey results for: ALL REGIONS

NUMBER OF RESPONSES: 113

1. On average, how have premium rates changed over the last three months (October 1 - December 31) for the following accounts? Please check N/A if you don't know or don't handle the type of account.

	1 Down 30-40%	2 Down 20-30%	3 Down 10-20%	4 Down 1-10%	5 No Change	6 Up 1-10%	7 Up 10-20%	8 Up 20-30%	9 Up 30-50%	10 Up 50- 100%	N/A
Small (<\$25K Comm. & Fees)	0%	4%	17%	48%	17%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	12%
Medium (\$25K – \$100K)	0%	5%	40%	40%	7%	3%	2%	0%	0%	0%	4%
Large (>\$100K)	0%	10%	42%	38%	6%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%

	1 Down 30-40%	2 Down 20-30%	3 Down 10-20%	4 Down 1-10%	5 No Change	6 Up 1-10%	7 Up 10- 20%	8 Up 20- 30%	9 Up 30- 50%	10 Up 50- 100%	N/A
Business Interruption	0%	1%	19%	45%	22%	3%	1%	1%	0%	0%	8%
Broker E & O	0%	1%	4%	12%	25%	4%	2%	0%	0%	0%	52%
Commercial Auto	0%	2%	34%	45%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%
Commercial Property	0%	4%	29%	45%	11%	8%	1%	1%	0%	0%	2%
Construction Risks	0%	0%	19%	42%	13%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	19%
D & O	0%	3%	16%	48%	21%	3%	1%	0%	0%	0%	9%
Flood Insurance	0%	0%	1%	8%	45%	11%	4%	0%	1%	0%	30%
Employment Practices	0%	1%	12%	43%	25%	4%	1%	0%	0%	0%	15%
General Liability	0%	4%	33%	50%	9%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Medical Malpractice	0%	0%	5%	25%	12%	5%	2%	0%	0%	1%	50%
Surety Bonds	0%	0%	1%	12%	44%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	41%
Terrorism	0%	1%	5%	15%	55%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	22%
Umbrella	0%	4%	23%	51%	16%	3%	1%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Workers' Compensation	2%	4%	21%	51%	14%	3%	1%	0%	0%	0%	4%

Below are the survey results for: NORTHEAST (CT,DE,DC,MA,ME,MD,NH,NJ,NY,PA,RI)

1. On average, how have premium rates changed over the last 3 months (October 1 - December 31) for the following accounts? Please check N/A if you don't know or don't handle the type of account

	1 Down 30-40%	2 Down 20-30%	3 Down 10-20%	4 Down 1-10%	5 No Change	6 Up 1-10%	7 Up 10-20%	8 Up 20-30%	9 Up 30-50%	10 Up 50- 100%	N/A
Small (<\$25K Comm. & Fees)	0%	3%	16%	48%	19%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	10%
Medium (\$25K – \$100K)	0%	3%	42%	35%	10%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%
Large (>\$100K)	0%	19%	45%	29%	3%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

	1 Down 30-40%	2 Down 20-30%	3 Down 10-20%	4 Down 1-10%	5 No Change	6 Up 1-10%	7 Up 10- 20%	8 Up 20- 30%	9 Up 30- 50%	10 Up 50- 100%	N/A
Business Interruption	0%	0%	32%	35%	19%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	10%
Broker E & O	0%	0%	3%	10%	23%	3%	3%	0%	0%	0%	58%
Commercial Auto	0%	0%	35%	39%	19%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	3%
Commercial Property	0%	3%	39%	39%	13%	0%	3%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Construction Risks	0%	0%	19%	42%	13%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	23%
D & O	0%	6%	19%	42%	23%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%
Flood Insurance	0%	0%	0%	10%	39%	10%	3%	0%	3%	0%	35%
Employment Practices	0%	0%	16%	45%	19%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	16%
General Liability	0%	0%	45%	39%	10%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%
Medical Malpractice	0%	0%	3%	16%	10%	13%	3%	0%	0%	0%	55%
Surety Bonds	0%	0%	0%	6%	45%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	48%
Terrorism	0%	3%	6%	19%	48%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	23%
Umbrella	0%	6%	32%	39%	13%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%
Workers' Compensation	0%	0%	10%	58%	16%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%

Below are the survey results for: SOUTHEAST (AL,FL,GA,KY,LA,MS,NC,SC,TN,VA,WV)

1. On average, how have premium rates changed over the last 3 months (October 1 - December 31) for the following accounts? Please check N/A if you don't know or don't handle the type of account

	1 Down 30-40%	2 Down 20-30%	3 Down 10-20%	4 Down 1-10%	5 No Change	6 Up 1-10%	7 Up 10-20%	8 Up 20-30%	9 Up 30-50%	10 Up 50- 100%	N/A
Small (<\$25K Comm. & Fees)	0%	4%	8%	54%	17%	13%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%
Medium (\$25K – \$100K)	0%	4%	50%	21%	8%	8%	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Large (>\$100K)	0%	8%	33%	38%	13%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%

	1 Down 30-40%	2 Down 20-30%	3 Down 10-20%	4 Down 1-10%	5 No Change	6 Up 1-10%	7 Up 10- 20%	8 Up 20- 30%	9 Up 30- 50%	10 Up 50- 100%	N/A
Business Interruption	0%	0%	13%	46%	29%	4%	4%	0%	0%	0%	4%
Broker E & O	0%	0%	0%	8%	29%	8%	4%	0%	0%	0%	50%
Commercial Auto	0%	0%	46%	33%	21%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Commercial Property	0%	0%	21%	42%	13%	21%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Construction Risks	0%	0%	21%	38%	13%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%	13%
D & O	0%	4%	8%	50%	25%	8%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Flood Insurance	0%	0%	0%	4%	54%	25%	4%	0%	0%	0%	13%
Employment Practices	0%	0%	0%	38%	33%	8%	4%	0%	0%	0%	17%
General Liability	0%	4%	33%	42%	13%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%
Medical Malpractice	0%	0%	8%	29%	8%	8%	4%	0%	0%	4%	38%
Surety Bonds	0%	0%	0%	17%	50%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	29%
Terrorism	0%	0%	0%	13%	67%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	17%
Umbrella	0%	0%	21%	46%	17%	8%	4%	0%	0%	0%	4%
Workers' Compensation	0%	17%	58%	21%	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Below are the survey results for: MIDWEST

(AR, IL, IN, IA, KS, MI, MO, MN, NE, ND, SD, OH, WI)

1. On average, how have premium rates changed over the last 3 months (October 1 - December 31) for the following accounts? Please check N/A if you don't know or don't handle the type of account.

	1 Down 30-40%	2 Down 20-30%	3 Down 10-20%	4 Down 1-10%	5 No Change	6 Up 1-10%	7 Up 10-20%	8 Up 20-30%	9 Up 30-50%	10 Up 50- 100%	N/A
Small (<\$25K Comm. & Fees)	0%	8%	25%	46%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	17%
Medium (\$25K – \$100K)	0%	13%	46%	42%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Large (>\$100K)	0%	4%	46%	46%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%

	1 Down 30-40%	2 Down 20-30%	3 Down 10-20%	4 Down 1-10%	5 No Change	6 Up 1-10%	7 Up 10- 20%	8 Up 20- 30%	9 Up 30- 50%	10 Up 50- 100%	N/A
Business Interruption	0%	4%	26%	43%	22%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%
Broker E & O	0%	0%	4%	13%	26%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	57%
Commercial Auto	0%	4%	35%	52%	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Commercial Property	0%	4%	48%	48%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Construction Risks	0%	0%	26%	39%	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	26%
D & O	0%	0%	17%	43%	22%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	17%
Flood Insurance	0%	0%	0%	17%	48%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	35%
Employment Practices	0%	4%	4%	39%	30%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	22%
General Liability	0%	13%	30%	57%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Medical Malpractice	0%	0%	9%	13%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	61%
Surety Bonds	0%	0%	4%	17%	30%	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	39%
Terrorism	0%	0%	13%	13%	48%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	26%
Umbrella	0%	13%	22%	57%	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Workers' Compensation	0%	0%	26%	57%	13%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%

Below are the survey results for: PACIFIC NW (No.CA, AK, CO, HI, ID, MT, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY)

1. On average, how have premium rates changed over the last 3 months (October 1 - December 31) for the following accounts? Please check N/A if you don't know or don't handle the type of account.

	1 Down 30-40%	2 Down 20-30%	3 Down 10-20%	4 Down 1-10%	5 No Change	6 Up 1-10%	7 Up 10-20%	8 Up 20-30%	9 Up 30-50%	10 Up 50- 100%	N/A
Small (<\$25K Comm. & Fees)	0%	0%	22%	56%	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	11%
Medium (\$25K – \$100K)	0%	6%	28%	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Large (>\$100K)	0%	6%	44%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

	1 Down 30-40%	2 Down 20-30%	3 Down 10-20%	4 Down 1-10%	5 No Change	6 Up 1-10%	7 Up 10- 20%	8 Up 20- 30%	9 Up 30- 50%	10 Up 50- 100%	N/A
Business Interruption	0%	0%	6%	67%	17%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%
Broker E & O	0%	6%	6%	17%	28%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	39%
Commercial Auto	0%	0%	33%	50%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Commercial Property	0%	0%	22%	56%	11%	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Construction Risks	0%	0%	6%	56%	17%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	17%
D & O	0%	0%	17%	61%	22%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Flood Insurance	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	11%	11%	0%	0%	0%	28%
Employment Practices	0%	0%	17%	56%	22%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%
General Liability	0%	0%	17%	72%	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Medical Malpractice	0%	0%	0%	28%	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	61%
Surety Bonds	0%	0%	0%	6%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	44%
Terrorism	0%	0%	0%	17%	56%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	22%
Umbrella	0%	0%	11%	56%	33%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Workers' Compensation	6%	22%	39%	22%	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Below are the survey results for: SOUTHWEST (So. CA, AZ, NM, OK, TX)

1. On average, how have premium rates changed over the last 3 months (October 1 - December 31) for the following accounts? Please check N/A if you don't know or don't handle the type of account.

	1 Down 30-40%	2 Down 20-30%	3 Down 10-20%	4 Down 1-10%	5 No Change	6 Up 1-10%	7 Up 10-20%	8 Up 20-30%	9 Up 30-50%	10 Up 50- 100%	N/A
Small (<\$25K Comm. & Fees)	0%	0%	13%	31%	38%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	19%
Medium (\$25K – \$100K)	0%	0%	25%	44%	19%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	13%
Large (>\$100K)	0%	6%	38%	31%	19%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%

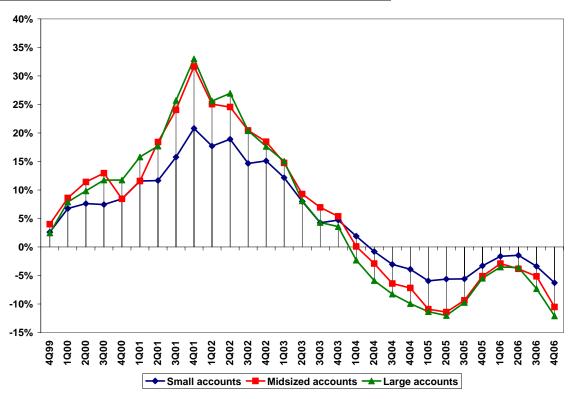
	1 Down 30-40%	2 Down 20-30%	3 Down 10-20%	4 Down 1-10%	5 No Change	6 Up 1-10%	7 Up 10- 20%	8 Up 20- 30%	9 Up 30- 50%	10 Up 50- 100%	N/A
Business Interruption	0%	0%	13%	38%	25%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	19%
Broker E & O	0%	0%	6%	19%	19%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%
Commercial Auto	0%	6%	13%	56%	19%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%
Commercial Property	0%	13%	13%	38%	19%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	13%
Construction Risks	0%	0%	25%	38%	13%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	19%
D & O	0%	0%	19%	44%	19%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	19%
Flood Insurance	0%	0%	6%	6%	38%	0%	6%	0%	0%	0%	44%
Employment Practices	0%	0%	25%	38%	19%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	13%
General Liability	0%	0%	31%	50%	13%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Medical Malpractice	0%	0%	6%	50%	13%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	31%
Surety Bonds	0%	0%	0%	13%	38%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%
Terrorism	0%	0%	6%	13%	56%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	25%
Umbrella	0%	0%	19%	69%	13%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Workers' Compensation	6%	6%	25%	56%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%

Average 4Q06 Commercial Rates Decreased 9.6%

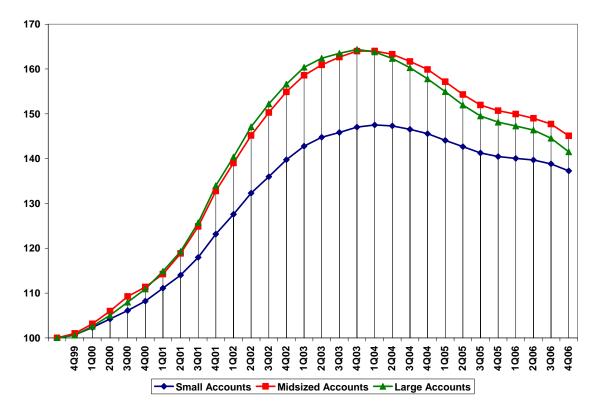
Average Rate Declined 9.6% in 4Q06										
	Small	Mid	Large	Avg						
4Q06	-6.3%	-10.5%	-12.1%	-9.6%						
3Q06	-3.4%	-5.1%	-7.3%	-5.3%						
2Q06	-1.4%	-3.8%	-3.6%	-3.0%						
1Q06	-1.6%	-2.9%	-3.5%	-2.7%						
4Q05	-3.3%	-5.1%	-5.5%	-4.6%						
High (4Q01)	20.8%	31.7%	33.0%	28.5%						
Low	-6.3% (4Q06)	-11.4% (2Q05)	-12.1% (4Q06)	-9.9%						

Source: The Council of Insurance Agents & Brokers. Chart prepared by Lehman Brothers Equity Research.

Average Commercial Premium Rate Changes by Account Size



Cumulative Quarterly Rate Increases by Account Size



By-Line 4Q06 Rate Changes Ranged From -7.7% to -9.6%

By-Line 4Q06 Rate Changes Ranged From -7.7% to -9.6%								
	Comm'l	Workers'	Comm'l	Gen'l	Umbrella	Average		
	Auto	Comp	Property	Liability				
4Q06	-9.3%	-8.1%	-8.1%	-9.6%	-7.7%	-8.6%		
3Q06	-6.5%	-6.8%	-1.4%	-6.9%	-5.5%	-5.4%		
2Q06	-4.5%	-6.9%	9.3%	-5.6%	-3.6%	-2.3%		
1Q06	-4.0%	-7.9%	2.3%	-5.3%	-4.1%	-3.8%		
4Q05	-4.2%	-4.6%	-1.0%	-4.7%	-2.0%	-3.3%		
High	28.6%	24.9%	45.4%	26.0%	51.9%	35.3%		
Low	-9.3%	-8.1%	-13.3%	-9.6%	-7.7%	-9.6%		

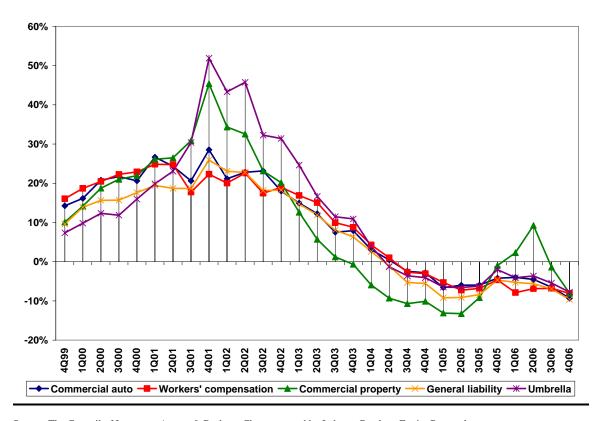
Source: The Council of Insurance Agents & Brokers. Chart prepared by Lehman Brothers Equity Research.

Rate Changes in Other Lines

4Q06 Rate Changes in Other Lines			
	4Q06	High	Low
Business interruption	-5.8%	28.8%	-8.1%
Construction	-5.8%	38.7%	-5.8%
D&O liability	-5.8%	32.4%	-5.8%
Employment practices	-4.3%	21.9%	-4.4%
Medical malpractice	-1.0%	32.5%	-1.6%
Surety bonds	-0.6%	11.2%	-0.8%

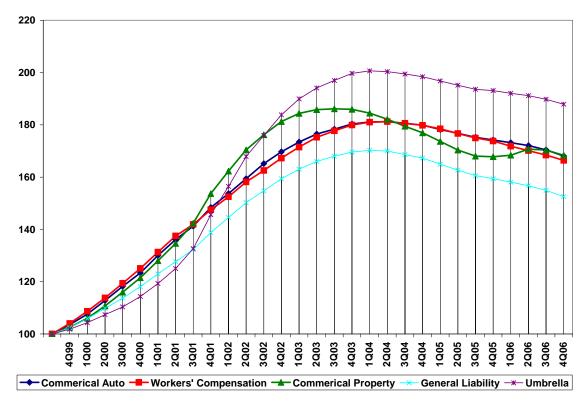
 $Source: The \ Council \ of \ Insurance \ Agents \ \& \ Brokers. \ Chart \ prepared \ by \ Lehman \ Brothers \ Equity \ Research.$

Average Commercial Rate Increases by Line

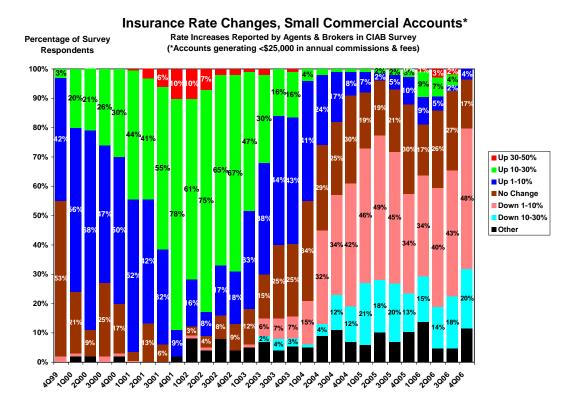


 $Source: The \ Council \ of \ Insurance \ Agents \ \& \ Brokers. \ Chart \ prepared \ by \ Lehman \ Brothers \ Equity \ Research.$

Cumulative Quarterly Rate Increases by Line

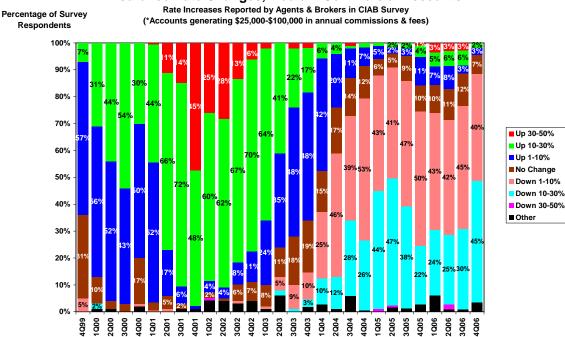


Source: The Council of Insurance Agents & Brokers. Chart prepared by Lehman Brothers Equity Research.

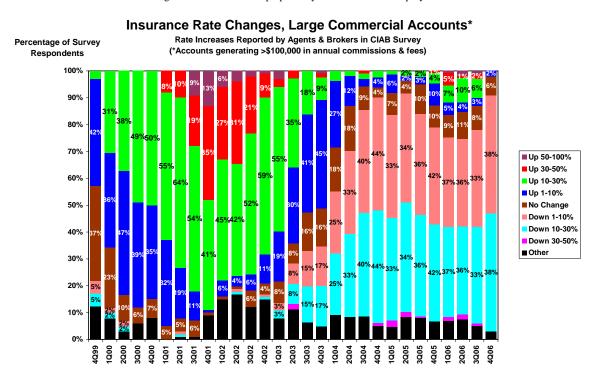


 $Source: The \ Council \ of \ Insurance \ Agents \ \& \ Brokers. \ Chart \ prepared \ by \ Lehman \ Brothers \ Equity \ Research.$

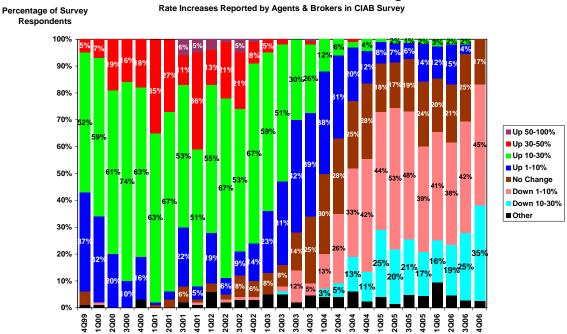
Insurance Rate Changes, Medium Commercial Accounts*



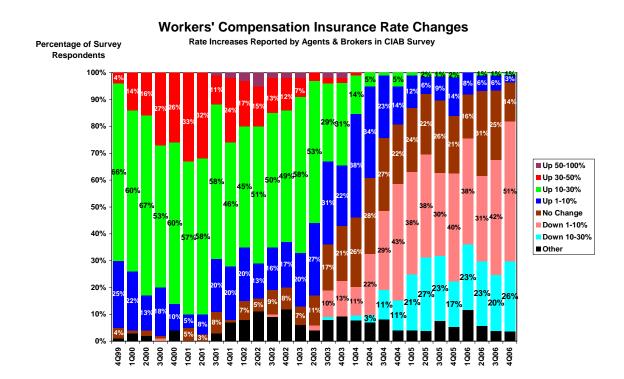
Source: The Council of Insurance Agents & Brokers. Chart prepared by Lehman Brothers Equity Research.



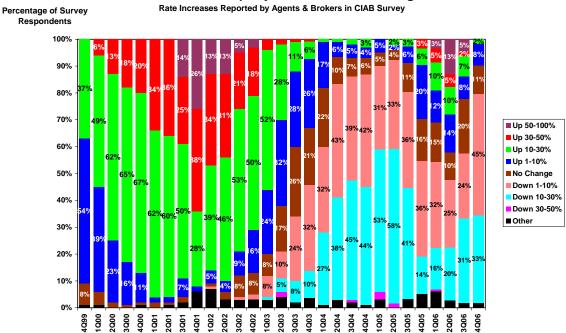
Commercial Auto Insurance Rate Changes



Source: The Council of Insurance Agents & Brokers. Chart prepared by Lehman Brothers Equity Research.



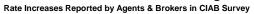
Commerical Property Insurance Rate Changes



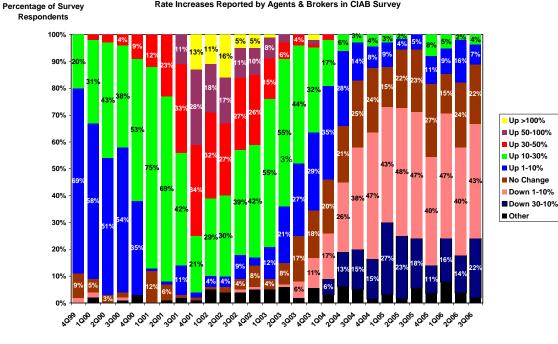
Source: The Council of Insurance Agents & Brokers. Chart prepared by Lehman Brothers Equity Research.

Commercial General Liability Insurance Rate Changes Rate Increases Reported by Agents & Brokers in CIAB Survey Percentage of Survey Respondents 90% 80% 70% ■Up 50-100% ■Up 30-50% 60% ■Up 10-30% ■Up 1-10% 50% ■ No Change Down 1-10% 40% Down 10-30% Other 30% 20% 10%

Umbrella Insurance Rate Changes



Up >100%



Source: The Council of Insurance Agents & Brokers. Chart prepared by Lehman Brothers Equity Research.

Business Interruption Insurance Rate Changes

