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## Ohio Casualty name changes to Liberty Mutual

By Chelsey Levingston

The Ohio Casualty name will soon cease to exist.

The former Hamilton insurer's parent company is doing a rebranding of all eight of its regional commercial insurance companies, changing the various names to say Liberty Mutual Insurance.

"Our agents feel it's a stronger brand and a more recognized brand to their customers," said Chris Goetcheus, spokesman for Liberty Mutual.

Ohio Casualty sells property casualty products for the small to middle market of businesses with under 1,000 employees, Goetcheus said. The company works with independent agents to sell commercial insurance products.

Ohio Casualty relocated its headquarters from Hamilton to Fairfield in 1999. It was acquired in 2007 by Liberty Mutual Group, and operates as a company of the Boston, Mass.-based insurance business. Until now, the name Ohio Casualty was retained.

Ohio Casualty was a historic Hamilton company founded in 1919. It always claimed to be the first Ohio company to write full coverage for automobile insurance when the number of automobiles sharply increased after World War I, local historian Jim Blount previously told the Journal.

When Liberty Mutual acquired the company, Ohio Casualty went from selling insurance products in more than 40 U.S. states to insuring commercial property casualty products in seven states representing Liberty Mutual's Mid-Atlantic market. The Mid-Atlantic region consists of Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Virginia, as well as Washington, D.C.

After Liberty Mutual bought Safeco, the personal lines business of Liberty Mutual's regional companies moved to Safeco.

The Fairfield office on Seward Road became, and still is a "strategic location" for Liberty Mutual as the main office of the Mid-Atlantic region, Goetcheus said. There are approximately 1,200 Liberty Mutual employees located in Fairfield for Ohio Casualty, a Safeco personal lines claims unit, shared company services and information technology functions.

Estimates are it will take a full year to implement the name change. Insurance agents that work with Ohio Casualty were notified August 2012.

"It's a gradual retirement of the brand, as with the other seven brands. It's more than a question of signage, it's a question of systems," Goetcheus said.

Nothing else in terms of operations changes, he said.

The other retiring brands from across the country are: America First Insurance, Colorado Casualty, Golden Eagle Insurance, Indiana Insurance, Liberty Northwest, Montgomery Insurance and Peerless Insurance.

“Our companies are noted for having local decision making authority and that continues as well,” he said.

Community-based initiatives, including sponsorships and donations, will continue to happen under the local leadership, just under the Liberty Mutual Insurance brand, he added. The local president is Mike Winner.

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### **Ohio Casualty business timeline**

**1919:** Ohio Casualty was founded in Hamilton

**1927:** First two stories of North Third Street, Hamilton, headquarters built

**1979:** Hamilton headquarters expanded to six stories

**1999:** Relocated from Hamilton to Fairfield

**2007:** Business bought by Liberty Mutual Group

**2008:** Started more than \$10 million renovation of Liberty Mutual's Fairfield offices

**2008:** Liberty Mutual sold Hamilton properties at 131 and 136 N. Third St. to IRG Hamilton Office LLC

**2010:** The last Ohio Casualty employees in Hamilton moved to Fairfield

**2012:** Liberty Mutual notifies insurance agents that Ohio Casualty name to change to Liberty Mutual Insurance

**Present:** Former Hamilton headquarters remain vacant

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