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Tech-Versed, New NJM CEO Calls Advancements a Balancing Act

By Renee Kiriluk-Hill

WEST TRENTON, N.J. //BestWire// - Technological advancements are a balancing act, according to new NJM President and Chief Executive Officer Carol Voorhees.



Carol Voorhees

The pace of change is forcing the industry to plan for the future at a much quicker pace, she said. Companies are benefiting from operational efficiencies but need to pay strict attention to complex fraud and cybersecurity risks, she said.

“There’s reason to be cautious,” said a leader who started her career at NJM in 1996 as a systems analyst. She understands risks and also thinks it’s “fun to watch technology advance.”

NJM views AI as an “enabler for our staff,” said Voorhees. “We’re not replacing our employees with robots. Insurance requires an empathetic staff.”

Digital services help in particular with initial contacts, but “even young people want to talk to somebody” about coverage and claims, she said. “We try to smooth things out for our customers.

Our value proposition comes back to our staff.”

The regional insurer created an innovation committee to advance technology and monitor perils, she added. “We need to change and grow and adapt, we need to make sure we stay ahead of the curve.”

Voorhees became the first woman and 10th chief executive in NJM’s 112-years at the end of July ([BestWire, March 12, 2025](#)).

NJM expanded its regional footprint the past seven years under her predecessor, Mitch Livingston, although 91% of its book is currently written in New Jersey.

It has offered an expanding lineup of commercial lines products since 2018 in Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New York and Connecticut. It added personal lines in Pennsylvania that year and personal lines in Maryland, Ohio and Connecticut since then.

Voorhees said the regional carrier competes against “everyone, including the big guys” that have deeper ad spend pockets.

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Since 2021, NJM has worked to build brand awareness across this wider market with a “no mascots, no jingles, just great insurance” marketing campaign.

Insurance shoppers typically seek three quotes, Voorhees noted. “There’s Geico, Progressive, and we need to be No. 3.”

Voorhees didn’t have a college degree when she joined the company looking for a job that became a career. Mentors took her under their wing, encouraging her to keep learning. She earned a CPCU designation and bachelor and master’s degrees as she moved into positions with increasing responsibility, including chief information officer and, prior to become CEO, chief operating officer.

“That’s something I’m proud of, and it’s not that unique to our culture,” said Voorhees. The company has 2,500 employees, 394 of them members of its “25-year club.”

Include former employees and the 25-year membership jumps to nearly 1,400.

Longevity has its benefits, said Voorhees. For instance, employees remember the challenges New Jersey auto insurers faced in the 1990s and legislative reforms that improved the environment.

By 1998, New Jersey drivers paid more than \$1,100 for coverage that would have cost \$460 in Iowa, or 62% more than motorists elsewhere in the country, a Rutgers University professor of economics said earlier.

The difference was caused by factors such as populations density, said John Worrall, but was further attributable to “the story of its regulatory history.”

“We knew we had challenges” at the time, Voorhees said. More recently it watched carriers grapple with “demons” in states like Florida and Georgia.

This year NJM is writing a half-million policies in the state, and Voorhees said the carrier has a dual role — serving as an advocate at the state level for policyholders and a healthy insurance market.

She said NJM’s next decade will be one of transformational growth as a regional insurer, saying, “We know New Jersey like the back our hand.”

It is the largest homeowners multiperil writer, with a 12.73% market share; No. 3 all-private passenger auto writer, with a 13.14% share; and No. 4 commercial auto liability writer, on a 4.33% share in New Jersey, according to BestLink.

We’re getting better and better” at learning the finer points of risks in newer states of operation, the CEO said.

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Climate and weather pattern changes are a prime focus. “There are risks and challenges regardless of the part of the country you’re looking to grow in,” she said. The hail risk is greater in Ohio than New Jersey. But flood risks are up in areas previously immune to them, including in the carrier’s home state.

By writing in a broader area, she added, events are less likely to be felt throughout a book.

Operating entities of NJM Insurance Group currently have a Best’s Financial Strength Rating of A+ (Superior).

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