

WISCONSIN INSURANCE ALLIANCE
44 East Mifflin Street, Suite 201
Madison, Wisconsin 53703
(608) 255-1749
FAX (608) 255-2178

Contact: Andrew Franken (WIA)
(608) 255-1749

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**PERCENTAGE OF UNINSURED DRIVERS IN WISCONSIN IS EXPECTED TO RISE
AS UNEMPLOYMENT INCREASES, SAYS NEW STUDY**

MADISON, WI, February 5, 2009 – Approximately 15 percent of Wisconsin motorists may be driving uninsured, but that number may rise as unemployment increases, according to the Wisconsin Insurance Alliance (WIA).

WIA cited a study from the Insurance Research Council which reported that 15 percent of Wisconsin drivers were uninsured in 2007 (latest data available), compared with 13.8 percent countrywide. Looking at neighboring states, 17 percent of Michigan drivers, 15 percent of Illinois drivers and 12 percent of Iowa and Minnesota drivers are uninsured.

“Most drivers in Wisconsin are responsible and able to purchase at least the minimum levels of auto liability insurance required by state law,” said Andrew Franken, president of WIA. “Unfortunately, they are the ones who end up paying for the injuries caused by uninsured drivers who flaunt the law and drive up insurance costs.”

In addition to the economic pressure facing Wisconsin drivers, the State Legislature is considering a number of proposals that will hike automobile insurance rates. “This is not the time for increasing the automobile insurance cost burden on Wisconsin families which will ultimately increase the number of uninsured drivers on Wisconsin roads,” said Franken.

(more)

The IRC study estimates the uninsured driver population using a ratio of insurance claims made by individuals who were injured by uninsured drivers to claims made by individuals who were injured by insured drivers.

The study found a strong correlation between the percent of uninsured motorists and the unemployment rate. It observed that an increase in the unemployment rate of one percentage point is associated with an increase in the uninsured motorist rate of more than three-quarters of a percentage point.

Based on current national unemployment rate projections, the IRC forecast the percentage of uninsured motorists in the country is expected to rise from 13.8 percent in 2007 to 16.1 percent in 2010.

Despite these trends there is good news for Wisconsin families. Wisconsin remains one of the lowest cost states for automobile insurance. Recently, the National Association of Insurance Commissioner's updated its Auto Insurance Database Report to reflect the most recent data.

The NAIC data shows that Wisconsin's combined average premium remains among the lowest in the nation at \$657.55 per year. Only Iowa had a lower combined average premium (\$644.49) and Wisconsinite's premiums are 30% lower than the national average of \$936.60.