



**Independent
Insurance
Agents of Texas**

Media contacts:	Matt Smith , IAT Communications Director	msmith@iiat.org	512.493.2427
	Marit Peters , IAT President & Executive Director	mpete@iiat.org	512.476.6281

Tuesday, June 28, 2022

Independent Insurance Agents of Texas Names Jessica Gardner-Elkins of Junction ELITExan Young Agent of the Year

AUSTIN, TX — The Independent Insurance Agents of Texas (IIAT) is proud to announce that Jessica Gardner-Elkins of R.D. Kothmann Insurance Agency, in Junction, was named the André P. Juneau ELITExan of the Year at IIAT's annual awards ceremony and business meeting. The ceremony took place on June 24, during IIAT's INSURCON at the JW Marriott Hill Country San Antonio.

The André P. Juneau ELITExan of the Year award is given annually to a young insurance professional in Texas who has achieved success through hard work, community engagement and industry participation in a manner that is considered exceptional for a person of his or her age.

Jessica started working in her family's agency, R.D. Kothmann Insurance Agency, in Junction, after graduating college in 2009. She was initially unsure if she wanted to pursue a career in insurance, but when there was a transition of leadership at the agency, Jessica had to decide whether she would take over or sell her family's business. "After 75 years in business, I was not about to lose the family agency. I made a commitment to myself and to my family that I would take the reins and bring us out of a slump and 'save the agency,'" she said.

Jessica got licensed as fast as she could and hired the first two girls who walked through the door. "They were younger like me, and although we didn't have the years of 'insurance knowledge' like some of our other competitors, our determination to succeed and our experience with technology and social media was unmatched. Not only did we grow as a team, we excelled and grew enormously within the first two years," said Jessica.

Being a business owner, Jessica understands the importance of giving back to her community. She has served on her local chamber for 10 years and was on Junction's Economic Development Board. She is passionate about finding ways for her small town to grow and be on the map.

"Jessica goes above and beyond for us, for her community and the insurance industry. She strongly believes young agents hold the key to this industry and she's passionate about showing younger people how great the insurance industry can be," said Dalia Stubblefield, an agent at R.D. Kothmann. "Her leadership in the office is unmatched, and her positive influence and ability to manage and supervise employees is the reason for her success. I don't know of anyone more deserving of this award," said Stubblefield.

About IIAT

The Independent Insurance Agents of Texas (IIAT) expands the value and influence of independent insurance agencies via advocacy, training, business solutions, professional networking, and market resources.

As the largest association of independent agencies in the country—representing more than 1,500 agencies that employ approximately 20,000 Texans—IIAT provides a wide range of products and resources to the insurance industry. Each year, IIAT delivers more than 250 days of education, ongoing legislative and regulatory advocacy, access to new insurance markets, customized business solutions, and answers to thousands of specific questions from across the state (and country).

Learn more online at www.iiat.org. IIAT is affiliated with the Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of America (IIABA, the "Big I") and TrustedChoice. There are 14 local, standalone associations in Texas.