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Houghtaling Agency acquired by VTC Insurance Group

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Gathered outside the Lapeer office of Houghtaling Agency Inc. on Saginaw Street are (left to right): Brian Klein, Lisa Mills, Jack Cardinell, Kim McClimans, Gary Houghtaling, Laura Johnson and Craig VanNorman. Photo by Jeff Hogan

LAPEER — Gary Houghtaling has spent his entire career serving his customers in Lapeer and the surrounding communities. The insurance agency that bears his last name was started by his father, Bill, in 1959. When it came time to make a decision as to how his customers would be best served into the future, Houghtaling decided to team with another long-established firm — VTC Insurance Group. As a result, the Houghtaling Agency was recently acquired by VTC.

VTC Insurance group traces its roots back to 1957 when it was founded in

Troy, Mich. Today, VTC has locations in Troy, Oxford, Farmington Hills, Fort Myers, Fla., and now Lapeer.

Brian Klein, senior vice president of group operations for VTC, says the acquisition of the Houghtaling Agency was a natural for VTC in that both companies share the same focus on their customers and commitment to the community. “The people at the Houghtaling Agency know their customers very well. VTC will seek to reward and build on their customers’ loyalty.”

Klein says VTC sees good things ahead for Lapeer. “We think Lapeer represents a great opportunity for us. We believe Lapeer, like the rest of Michigan, is coming back and we want to be a part of that,” he said.

A very important aspect of the transition for both Houghtaling and VTC is one thing what won’t change: the existing Houghtaling Agency staff will stay in place. Customers will find familiar faces at the same location on Saginaw Street in Lapeer and hear the same friendly voices on the phone when they call the agency. That staff includes Laura Johnson, Lisa Mills, Jack Cardinell and Craig VanNorman who collectively have more than 100 years experience in the insurance business. Kim McClimans recently joined the agency adding her considerable knowledge and expertise to the mix.

A sister company of VTC has acquired the building in Lapeer that houses the agency and Klein says plans are already underway to give the offices a bit of a makeover with fresh paint, new furniture and new computer equipment. VTC will continue banking and other professional relationships in the Lapeer community.

“Our goal is to grow here in Lapeer,” said Klein.

VTC Insurance Group also offers complete insurance services to businesses. As one of the largest independent insurance and bonding agencies in Michigan, their business clients include local, regional, national companies.

Gary Houghtaling is pleased that his customers will continue to be well cared for. Addressing his clients, Houghtaling says, “Your satisfaction, your confidence, your success ... is the heart of our collective efforts at VTC Insurance Group.”

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