



Citizens Sinkhole Changes Lauded

NEW PORT RICHEY –Recent changes to Citizens’ sinkhole eligibility requirements will make it easier for policyholders to obtain coverage for their repaired properties and sell their homes while helping ensure that property repairs are made.

Consumer advocates and Tampa Bay Realtors applauded the changes that will allow policyholders with prior sinkhole activity to again be insured by Citizens as long as they have made at least partial repairs. The changes will immediately benefit scores of property owners who had been unable to obtain insurance despite having made necessary repairs.

"This much needed policy change will provide a much needed boost to our real estate market and local economy," said Greg Armstrong, broker/owner of Coldwell Banker F.I. Grey & Son Residential Realtors based in Pasco County.

Citizens’ decision to amend its eligibility requirements came after extensive discussions with state lawmakers, local officials and other stakeholders who said existing requirements were making it difficult for some policyholders to obtain mortgages or sell their homes.

Under the revised rules, policyholders who have made repairs in accordance with the original engineer’s recommendation will be able to again obtain homeowners coverage including additional sinkhole protection. Policyholders who make repairs but do not adhere to the original engineer’s recommendation will be eligible for multi-peril coverage without sinkhole protection, a level of coverage acceptable to mortgage lenders.

Chris Gardner, chairman of Citizens Board of Governors, said the changes strike a balance between Citizens’ roles of protecting policyholders while being a prudent steward of the public trust.

"These changes will encourage homeowners to make proper repairs," Gardner said. "That not only benefits the homeowners, but their neighbors and the community as well."

December 6, 2013

Events

December 10 @ 11 a.m.
[Senate Banking and Insurance Committee Meeting](#)

December 13 @ 9 a.m.
[Citizens Board of Governors Meeting](#)

December 17 @ 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., Office Hours with Rep. Jeanette Nuñez, Professional Trading Center, 13926 SW 47th Street, Miami.

Spotlight



Citizens BOG member:
Freddie Schinz
Okaloosa County

Appointed to board by Senate President Don Gaetz: August 2, 2013
Term Expires: July 31, 2016

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Clearinghouse Ramps Up

TALLAHASSEE – Citizens’ Property Insurance Clearinghouse is poised to open its doors next month and steering many new applicants to qualified private insurers ready to provide comprehensive coverage at competitive rates.

Beginning January 2, new homeowners (HO-3) applicants seeking Citizens coverage will have their policies shopped through the clearinghouse to determine whether comparable coverage is available at premiums no greater than 15 percent above Citizens premium.

By the end of January, the Clearinghouse is scheduled to offer policy options from seven private carriers, with most insurers scheduled to be on board in the first quarter 2014.

To ensure a seamless transition, Citizens initially is focusing on new applicants. Renewal policies, which represent the bulk of Citizens’ business, will begin to be shopped through the clearinghouse during the second quarter of 2014.

Under the program, renewal customers would be ineligible for Citizens coverage if they are offered a comparable private offer at premiums that are less than or equal to their Citizens renewal premium.

Policies in Force

1,223,009

as of October 31, 2013,
including policies taken out
but still serviced

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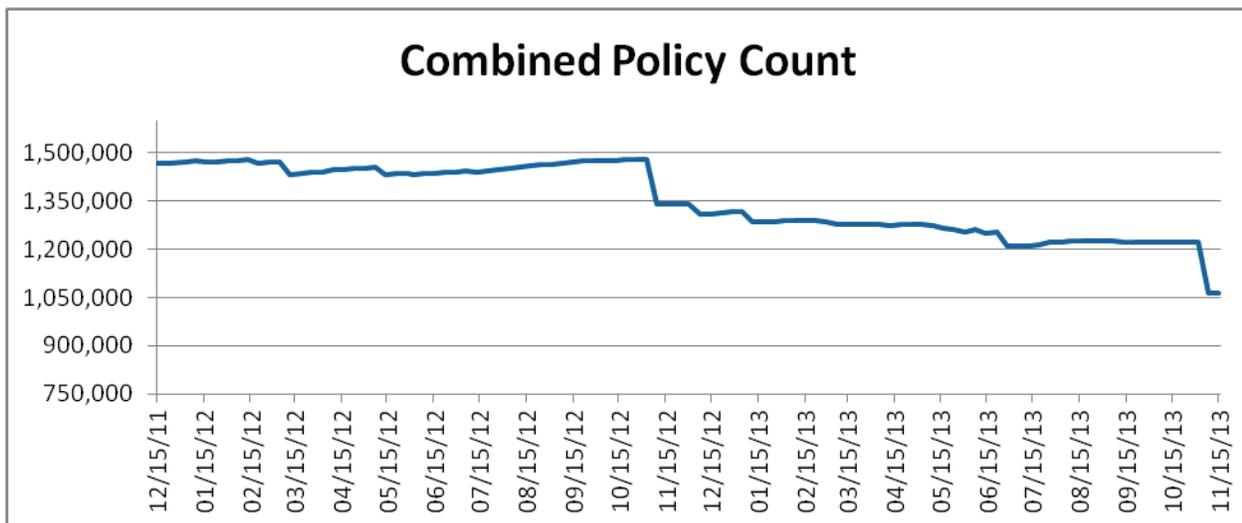
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Did You Know...

Our Policy Count is Dropping



Citizens’ policy count has dropped 28 percent in the past two years, falling from a high of 1,480,191 in October 2012 to 1,062,166 in November 2013. It is estimated that the policy count will fall below 1 million by February 2014.

News Links

[Citizens Ends 2013 Hurricane Season Smaller, Stronger](#) Tampa Times

[Calm Season Over, but Rocky Road Ahead for Florida Insurance Scene](#) The Florida Current

[Citizens Insurance is writing homeowner policies on sinkhole properties](#) WTSP/Channel 10 Tampa

[Barry Gilway Op-Ed: Say Farewell to 2013 Hurricane Season](#)