



Stefan Hurd/Times Argus

Jon Jamieson, left, and his father, Dick, stand outside their Waitsfield office of Jamieson Insurance Agency. The senior Jamieson is passing the baton of ownership of the agency to his son.

## From father to son

### Jamieson agency will retain the same attributes, says new owner

By Peter Hirschfeld

TIMES ARGUS STAFF

WAITSFIELD -

Members of the insurance industry have in recent years won water-cooler acclaim for their cleverly executed advertising blitzes.

There's Geico's diminutive reptilian pitch master, an exceptionally well spoken lizard who helped brand the company name in the minds of potential consumers.

Aflac, too, has looked to the animal kingdom. It found a decidedly less articulate goose, whose inability to clearly announce "AF-lac," ironically, made the word difficult to forget.

Long before those characters made their small-screen debuts, however, Little Dicky Jamieson was waxing philosophical about the virtues of quality insurance service on local radio stations.

Dick Jamieson's ads, which first appeared on

WDEV nearly 10 years ago, helped make the Jamieson Insurance Agency's owner a minor central Vermont celebrity. The company, which Jamieson incorporated in 1977, changed hands in January, prompting some concern over the fate of Little Dicky. But the new owner, who happens to be Dick's son, Jon Jamieson, said Little Dicky's legacy will remain intact.

The ads were noted for their depiction of a young Dick Jamieson and his unconventional aspirations to join the insurance industry while still in elementary school.

"I couldn't improve upon it," Jon Jamieson said. "It just works too well. We may add some new episodes in the life of Little Dicky Jamieson, but nothing big. It's our brand, frankly."

It's a brand Dick Jamieson spent 27 years building. The senior

Jamieson started out in Waitsfield as a one-man shop. The company now employs 12 staff members in two offices and serves 5,700 clients in Washington, Chittenden, Lamoille, and Addison counties.

Dick Jamieson said advertising, acquisitions and customer service have helped fuel the company's consistent double-digit growth rates.

"We did some acquisitions, bought some other agencies. That's not a major part of our business success, but it has been an important part," Dick Jamieson said. "Annual growth rates of 10 to 12 percent are normal for us."

Jon Jamieson said he will carry on in his father's tradition, but said he will not rely on name recognition alone to woo current and potential customers.

"I try not to play that card too much," Jon Jamieson said. "Just because

we've been around for 30 years as Jamieson doesn't mean we deserve people's business. We want to earn it because we deliver good service and a good product. It's great to have a good reputation but you have to earn it every day."

Dick Jamieson will remain at the company as vice president for business development for at least two years. Jon, meanwhile, said he is enjoying his entrance into the world of corporate ownership.

Jamiesons have been selling insurance to Vermonters since 1865, according to Dick. Though he and his son obviously inherited the gene, the newest generation of Jamiesons has yet to reveal the inclination.

"At 4 year old and 2 years old, they haven't shown much of a draw to the insurance world," Jon said. "But there's always hope."