

# TONEE WEST

## A SHINING STAR, LOVES TO HELP OTHERS SHINE

As Claims Training & Development Leader for Montana State Fund, Tonee finds her current position the one that gives her the greatest opportunity to do what she loves best, to help others improve. “As a rule, I love all people. I really enjoy working with others. It is such a gift to watch the light bulb turn on when someone learns something new. Then it becomes an even greater gift when the light bulb continues to burn bright as that person begins to use the information, grows and becomes a shining star.”

Tonee began her impressive insurance industry career in 1975. She was working at a grocery store when a coworker got injured lifting a case of dog food. No one knew how to fill out the form, so they gave it to Tonee to figure it out. That exposed her to the claims world, where she has stayed ever since, holding numerous positions such as Claims Examiner, Branch Manager and Customer Service Manager.

Tonee has been with Montana State Fund since 2009, and has loved every minute. Her coworker, who she refers to as her “Rock of Gibraltar,” Chance Eaton, Organizational Development Specialist, commented, “Tonee not only has a wealth of knowledge and experience in Claims Management, she brings commitment, accountability, and integrity to her role as an educator. She models customer service every day, and her enthusiasm inspires me to bring my ‘A’ game.”

Anyone who knows Tonee would state emphatically that her dedication to customer service is her greatest strength. By smiling, Tonee agrees. She attributes her success to her pas-

sion to provide not only exceptional customer service, but to provide others with the same kindness and respect she hopes others will provide to her.

Tonee’s leader, Sam Heigh, Vice President of Operations Support, commented, “Tonee is a real go-getter when it comes to our training program at Montana State Fund. We have had several changes over the last year which requires many more employees to have continuing education credits. Tonee has



# FREE TRAINING AND SUBROGATION ASSISTANCE

chased down many programs to help people get their credits internally rather than having to find classes externally ... which also improves overall costs.”

Tonee believes there is good in everyone, and if they have an opportunity to be taught, they have the opportunity to succeed. She insists there is a silver lining to every cloud. That philosophy may have come from her mother, Marta Plant, who Tonee says had the most influence in her life.

That is a good outlook for someone who is tasked daily to honor the mission, vision and guiding principles of Montana State Fund, to provide a performance-driven culture that is conducive to the growth and development of its employees. She is most proud of being part of the customer-focused, team-oriented, high-performance environment that empowers, challenges and rewards its employees.

Tonee’s desire is to simply remain humble and serve others to the best of her ability. “I will manage what I can manage ... and find solutions for the challenges that may arise in the path,” she says. Her advice to those just starting out is, “Believe in others, pay it forward and never expect re-payment for yourself. The payment will shine in the results.”

Even Lawrence Hubbard, President of Montana State Fund, had time to weigh in by commenting, “accomplished claim professionals are, rightfully, confident in how they manage their work. It takes a unique set of skills and personality to teach others that there may be more effective ways of doing things.”

Her favorite quote is a twist on the golden rule from Confucius, “What you do not wish for yourself, do not do to others.”

When not focused on others, Tonee likes to spend time cooking.

Asked for any final thoughts about this article, Tonee commented, “I am so fortunate that I have the opportunity to create solutions to the training needs of others and to contribute to their successes whether it is in the professional world or just life in general.”

What a star! ■



One of the great programs we offer to our member companies is where we, along with our partners at Latitude Subrogation Services, perform a Closed File Review to help identify any potential subrogation. These are on files already closed, therefore it will not interfere with any files currently being handled by your subrogation department.

We will then provide a report to you showing all of the subrogation opportunities that might exist on those closed files. This service is completely free to member companies, and all we ask is that you assign us to go and get your money for you.

In exchange for allowing us to provide you with this service, we will facilitate any full-day workshop from our catalog to you free of charge!

It is an extraordinary service that, at the very minimum, can give you a huge head start in increasing subrogation results. What have you got to lose? ■

*Please contact Carl Van, President & CEO at 504-393-4570 or [CarlVan@InsuranceInstitute.com](mailto:CarlVan@InsuranceInstitute.com) with any questions.*