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OLDWICK, N.J., JUNE 04, 2009

A.M. Best Co. has upgraded the financial strength rating to A- (Excellent) from B++ (Good) and issuer credit rating to "A-" from "bbb+" of **Continental American Insurance Company** (Continental American) (Columbia, SC). The outlook for both ratings has been revised to stable from positive.

The rating upgrades reflect Continental American's continued favorable operating earnings and consistent growth of surplus and sales in recent years. Continental American has demonstrated increased direct sales and premiums while moderating the amount of business written through joint ventures. Additionally, the company has made good progress in diversifying its product mix, expanding geographically into additional states and writing business over a number of different industries by utilizing an increased number of marketing organizations.

While Continental American has generated consistent premium growth and favorable profitability in the worksite market for a number of years, A.M. Best believes an extended recession could somewhat inhibit operating results in the near term.

For Best's Credit Ratings, an overview of the rating process and rating methodologies, please visit Best's Ratings & Analysis.

The principal methodologies used in determining these ratings, including any additional methodologies and factors that may have been considered, can be found at Best's Credit Rating Methodology.