

NAII and Alliance close to merger

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The Alliance of American Insurers is gearing up for a new alliance. According to the Alliance Vice President of Public Affairs Roger Morris, the property casualty insurer group is involved in merger discussions with another property casualty trade group, the National Association of Independent Insurers.

The Alliance, which Morris said had "serious talks" about a merger with NAI in 1999, is looking at a Jan. 1, 2004 deadline for any consolidation.

The Alliance has also made staff reductions in preparation for the merger, and in response to market conditions and insolvencies in the industry.

Joseph Annotti, vice president of public affairs for NAI said his organization is not planning any immediate layoffs.

"There are no cuts on the agenda," he said, "but while there haven't been any layoffs per se, we have not filled any of our open positions in preparation that the merger could occur."

Annotti said the talks between the two organizations were "serious and ongoing." □