State Auto earns top ten national ranking in Deep Customer Connections Inc.'s 2008 Ease of Doing Business Index

ACTON, Mass.—October 13, 2008— More than 7,400 independent agents and brokers assessed the performance of over 250 property and casualty carriers in Deep Customer Connections, Inc.'s (DCC) 6th annual Ease of Doing Business (EDB) survey. State Auto Insurance earned the #8 spot in this year's industry-wide Ease of Doing Business Index® ratings. The EDB Index® gauges a carrier's performance against what independent agents rate as most important when choosing a carrier to write business with.

"State Auto's EDB performance has climbed for the third year in a row," said Nort Salz, President of DCC. "They have been paying attention to ease of doing business as a key part of their strategy and they can be proud that this year they have broken into the top national ranks."

"Our commitment to making State Auto a faster and more focused, flexible and frictionless company is stronger than ever," said State Auto Chairman and CEO Bob Restrepo. "Through investments in technology, elimination of inefficient and ineffective processes and by simply listening to our agents, we've made great progress. Joining the EDB Index Top Ten is an honor, and is certainly encouraging as we continue our efforts to remain a valued business partner to independent agents."

"To State Auto's great credit, they have used EDB metrics to learn how to make it easier for agents to place business with them," noted Salz. "They have shown gains in each of the eleven EDB Factors."

In the annual EDB survey, agents and brokers rate the importance of 11 EDB Factors ranging from underwriting responsiveness and handling claims promptly, to acting with the agency's needs in mind, and then evaluate carriers' performance in those factors.

"Measuring EDB is important for carriers," continued Salz. "Our research clearly shows that EDB is a primary factor in agents' buying decisions. EDB metrics enable carriers to know what they need to do to positively influence whether agents will buy from them because of their EDB performance."

"Acknowledging excellent EDB performance helps improve service and productivity in this critical insurance distribution channel," said Paul Croke, a DCC co-founder. "At DCC, we're proud to recognize State Auto's superior performance and we congratulate them in their efforts."

State Auto offers multi-line property and casualty insurance through independent agents in 33 states.

About Deep Customer Connections, Inc.
Deep Customer Connections, Inc. specializes in helping property and casualty carriers achieve profitable growth by making it easy for their agents to work with them. DCC's EDB Index® is an industry benchmark of carriers' EDB performance. Further details of 2008 survey results will be available in DCC's Annual EDB Benchmark Report, scheduled to be released in December, or by contacting DCC directly.