

Flood policies 'shock' owners

With the flood in the rear-view mirror, insurance brokers in Manitoba are starting to look ahead.

Many affected by the high waters this spring are once again surprised to find out their home insurance policies do not cover such disaster. Dave Schioler, chief executive officer of the Insurance Brokers Association of Manitoba, says the basic language in their policies comes as more of a shock to homeowners than the scar left by the ice and water.

"Not enough people are really aware that this kind of flooding is not covered in their insurance policies," Schioler said. "That's why you have disaster relief coming in from the government.

"People should be very clear what their insurance policy covers with respect of flooding or any other kind of

water damage."

Schioler said most policies have provisions for basic water damage due to sewer back-up and similar inconveniences, but not for the large-scale, week-to-week flooding southern Manitoba sees in spring.

'Crazy weather'

"Water damage of different kinds is gradually taking over as a No. 1 threat, compared with fire damage, in terms of insurance," he said. "With all the crazy weather that we're experiencing worldwide, water damage is a growing phenomenon.

"Insurance companies are looking more and more at this."

Schioler points to a system in some American flood-threatened jurisdictions where homeowners pay a slightly higher premium, so there is a combination of cov-

erage from insurance companies and different levels of government. Choose not to shell out for the higher premium, and you won't see any disaster relief dollars.

Coming up with new flood insurance measures is what some of the discussion will centre around when IBAM's conference and trade show convenes in Winnipeg today.

Highlights include tomorrow's President's Dinner at the Fairmont Hotel that will see the IBAM welcome a new president — Scott Andrew, of Andrew Agencies in Virden — as well as a speaking engagement with Olympic champion Catriona Le May Doan, and an insurer's panel, welcoming six of Canada's top insurance executives.

More than 1,500 people are expected at the three-day event.

— Sun Media