Heidi Bazata knew she wanted to be an insurance agent before she was even in high school.

When she was 14 years old, Bazata's father—a longtime State Farm Insurance agent in Auburn—took her to work with him and from that day on her mind was made up.

After graduating from high school in Auburn, Bazata earned her accounting degree from the University of Nebraska at Kearney in December 1995 and began working in the State Farm regional office in Lincoln in May 1996.

Because State Farm has a company policy which doesn't allow anyone to take over a family member's agency, Bazata knew going back to Auburn wasn't an option.

So she started looking for a place to land, moving to Cozad in March 1999.

Whether it's helping a client file paperwork after a routine auto accident or handling a death claim, Bazata said what she enjoys most about being an insurance agent is knowing she's helped someone through a tough time.

In 2010, State Farm officials approached Bazata about expanding her Cozad business.

She opened her office in the Gateway Building at 828 Lake Ave. in February.

"With the way the Cozad economy is now, I was looking for a way to expand anyway," she said.

“This was a good opportunity.”

Because State Farm agents own only their business and not their client list, Bazata said she provides service to several Gothenburg residents who are or have been State Farm customers for years.

She’s also constantly marketing to gain new customers.

Between the Cozad and Gothenburg offices, Bazata has six employees, all licensed.

“I figure it’s worth it to spend the money to help get them licensed,” she said. “I’d hate to lose a customer because no one was here who could help them when they came in.”

The Gothenburg office is open 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Bazata splits time between the two offices, working in Gothenburg on Tuesdays and Fridays.

In her spare time, Bazata’s life is centered around family activities with husband Brian and four children.

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