Rebeca Romero Rainey Column—May

As I pen my first column for the newly revamped *Independent Banker* as ICBA’s president and CEO, I’m filled with a tremendous amount of pride and optimism. I am proud of what ICBA has accomplished over its 88-year history and optimistic about what the future holds for community banks.

ICBA’s incredible members, staff, state and regional partners, leadership bankers and, of course, the inimitable Cam Fine have given strength and momentum to our association and to the community banking industry more broadly. Now, the future is ours for the taking. We own what will happen next.

I’m honored to be part of that future and look forward to leading ICBA as we write the next chapter of the community bank story. Together, we will build on our tradition of service and differentiation as we continue to make even more positive change happen for our industry, our customers and the communities we serve.

Mission: Flourish

As ICBA’s leader, I will always look to our mission for inspiration and as a barometer of our success. That’s why you’ll see that my column here in *Independent Banker* is titled “Flourish.” Every month, I want you to see what the ICBA team is doing to create and promote an environment where community banks flourish.

This mission is why ICBA has been, and always will be, there for you—fighting against threats like the disproportionate regulatory burden, unfair competition from tax-advantaged credit unions and, more recently, the specter of technology companies like Amazon that want to operate like banks but not be regulated like them.

It’s also why ICBA will help you navigate and harness changes in the industry by bringing you best-in-class education and innovative business solutions.

Through advocacy, education and innovation, we will fulfill our mission by helping you fulfill your mission.

Opportunity is knocking

The future holds so much promise. There’s no telling what community banks can accomplish, especially when we face challenges head on and turn them into opportunities to flourish.

Thank you for your continued support of ICBA. I look forward to getting out and meeting with so many of you in the months ahead, so we can discuss more ways to help your community bank thrive.