Independent Banker  
February 2024  
Columns

[tag] Flourish

[hed] The spirit of community

[quote] When we come together at ICBA LIVE, it becomes an uplifting time where we collectively tackle issues and leave excited for new opportunities.

[body]

As it’s often stated, “A rising tide lifts all boats.” When applied to community banking, that sentiment couldn’t be truer. We come together as a community of bankers, having one another’s best interests at heart.

That’s what makes us different from others in the financial services industry. We work hard to build one another up, to differentiate the community banking model and to demonstrate the tangible benefits customers receive from a community bank. So, when we come together at ICBA LIVE, it becomes an uplifting time where we collectively tackle issues and leave excited for new opportunities.

For example, community banks are constantly evaluating new fintech partners. ThinkTECH programs, including the Accelerator and solutions forums, provide not only a path to identifying products but a gateway to connecting with community banks that have already tested the waters of a particular offering. Whether it’s next steps with FedNow, solutions for back-office efficiencies, compliance offerings in support of BSA/AML procedures or something else, we can find recommendations and resources in our colleagues—we just have to ask.

Yet, it’s not about choosing something because it worked for a peer; it’s about diving into the experience, its problems and its positive effects to fuel a more knowledgeable decision-making process. Through shared experiences and examples, community banks personalize and adopt ideas to find the right fit to serve their unique communities.

ICBA LIVE helps simplify that process by providing a one-stop forum for both knowledge and connection. Whether it’s gathering with service providers on the expo floor, coming to education sessions to hear first-hand case studies, attending workshops to generate new ideas or joining ThinkTECH events to get to know and engage with solution providers, LIVE fast-forwards the research phase for any new solution that you may be considering.

In addition, the connections you’ve built follow you from the conference into your bank. Through ICBA Community, our digital member platform, you can communicate with colleagues and ask questions in a secure, virtual environment. Speaking from experience, as you grapple with new technology and big decisions, it will make all the difference to have another community banker who’s walked the path before you share their knowledge.

As we look at the world around us—the pace of change, the evolution of tech competition from all angles, the emergence of new possible partners—we have to support one another so we can continue to flourish. We are stronger together than apart, and I know that this community of community bankers will lift each other up as we navigate the future.

[ends]

[sidebar]

**Where I’ll be this month**

I’ll be attending an American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) event with our chairman, Derek Williams, and incoming chairman, Lucas White. Then, I’ll be hosting current and new officers at our offices in D.C. as we prepare for ICBA LIVE 2024.

[sidebar ends]