Independent Banker

Columns

December 2022

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“People want to be a part of something bigger than themselves, and community banks provide that opportunity.”

[tag] From the Top

[byline]

Brad M. Bolton

Chairman, ICBA

Brad M. Bolton is president and CEO of Community Spirit Bank in Red Bay, Ala.

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Community banking is about serving the greater good. As community continuators, we are part of something bigger than ourselves. We support civic clubs, Lions Clubs, the Relay for Life, our local schools and so much more, because these issues matter to the communities we serve.

Month after month, we’re called to support any number of great causes, and we step up to the plate, because community bankers embody what it means to operate in a culture of service.

Thankfully, this give-back philosophy helps drive employee engagement and loyalty. People want to be a part of something bigger than themselves, and community banks provide that opportunity. We not only encourage but expect our team members to be out in the community, serving on boards, civic clubs and even in city government. There is no one better to help lead a community than those who know it best—its local community bankers.

So, as we read this month’s issue featuring the best community banks to work for, keep in mind that the common thread among each of these unique stories is that they are community banks that lead with a spirit of service. Their approaches look different because their communities are different, but at their core, each one has a servant’s heart, one that extends to their employees. Their culture of service is what attracts employees to them, and in turn, ensures that they have engaged, enthusiastic teams.

As we close out the year, I hope we’ll all take the time to be thankful that we work in the best industry on earth. Community bankers from every level of the organization carry the title of a protector of Main Street, serving small business owners, farmers, community leaders and consumers to the best of our ability every day. Any time you come across a local event in your community, I guarantee you will see a local community bank behind it all, and that is what makes me so proud to be a community banker.

We community bankers are one huge family serving millions of customers across this country. What we collectively achieve together we could never do alone, and I am so thankful for that. It is an honor to serve alongside all of you and tell our stories together.

I wish everyone a merry Christmas and a prosperous 2023. This year has brought us much success; let us never forget where our blessings originate.

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Connect with Brad **@BradMBolton**

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*My top 3*

**Year-end tips**

1. Use social media to tell your community bank’s story of service.
2. Send a handwritten thank you note to every member of your team.
3. Be thankful for your success and our ability to serve our fellow humans.

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