



Message from WBA President Scott W. Meier

Happy March! Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow on Groundhog Day, meaning winter is here to stay for a while. What the folks in Pennsylvania probably do not appreciate is that in Wyoming, we have two seasons; winter and road construction.

At the time of this writing, the Wyoming Legislature is halfway done with its Budget Session. So far, things are looking better for Wyoming Bankers. We were able to get introduced our draft of Financial Exploitation of Vulnerable Adults bill. This bill provides more clarity for banks in reporting suspected financial exploitation of vulnerable adults, including notification to third parties, allowing the temporary holds on transaction and provides banks with immunity in making those reports. While unopposed in its introduction and in committee, Senator Nethercott has informed me she intends to offer some amendments to the bill. More to come.

A bill we successfully opposed is the bill, which has become an annual event, allowing credit unions to accept public monies. This was a hard-fought bill that initially was going in favor of the credit unions but, to the thanks of many of you who contacted your local Senators, was killed in third and final reading. I am so thankful for all of your support. The key now, is to find a way, if possible, to end this annual fight with the credit unions. I am not sure what kind of compromise, if any, might look like, but one idea might be for a bank to open a lockbox with a credit union that would allow political subdivisions to deposit their funds at a credit union for the benefit of the bank. More to come, but I welcome any thoughts or ideas you might have.

Finally, we were able to successfully oppose a bill that would prohibit financial institutions from engaging in discrimination based on the use of a social credit score (whatever that means). This was a bill similar to the financial discrimination bill regarding the firearms industry. Our opinion was that the term "social credit score" is too vague and prohibits banks from using their own means to determine risk.

(Continued on next page)

Registration is open.....

2022 WBA Agricultural Bankers Conference

May 11-12 2022 ** Niobrara County Fairgrounds
Lusk WY

Highlighted Speakers and Topics:

- ***American Ag in a Global Market**—Delaney Howell
- ***Management Succession in Agricultural Business**—Dallas Mount
- ***Long Range Outlook Summer 2022 & Beyond**—Don Day
- ***Pricing to Compete**—Marvin Mutchler
- ***Bootheel 7 Ranch LLC**—Andrew Wasserburger & Jake Kugler
- ***Agricultural Prosperity in the New Normal**—Tim Ohlde
- ***Future of Ag**—Jason Fearneyhough
- ***Buckle Up for Agriculture's Wild Ride**—Lynn Paulson
- ***Conservation as a Continuum: Grazing's Role in Supporting Healthy Western Communities**—Kaitlynn Glover
- ***Hedging tools to protect margins in an environment of tremendous volatility and uncertainty**
—Austin Devooght

[Online Registration](#)

[Registration Brochure](#)

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In other news, your association was able to successfully defeat the attempts by the California Bankers Association / Western Bankers Association's trademark of "WBA." This was a hard-fought battle that culminated in the California Bankers Association / Western Bankers Association filing a withdrawal of their trademark registration. While we had great legal representation, the key was the numerous letters the board of the California Bankers Association / Western Bankers Association received from bankers in Wyoming, Wisconsin and Washington. Thank you to all who wrote such letters.

Thank you to all who were able to attend our 2022 Legislative Day luncheon on February 24, 2022. If you were unable to attend, but have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.



Mark your Calendar for 2022 WBA Events—plan to participate!:

[2022 Virtual BSA/AML Fundamentals](#) Bootcamp - March 30-31, 2022 / 8:00 - 3:00 MT

[2022 WBA Agricultural Bankers Conference](#) – May 11-12, 2022 – Niobrara County Fairgrounds, Lusk, WY

[2022 Virtual Credit Analysis Basics Webinar](#) – May 20, 2022

[2022 Opening New Accounts in WY](#) – May 24, 2022 – Hilton Garden Inn – Casper, WY

2022 MT & WY Bankers Convention – June 22-24, 2022 – The Northern – Billings, MT

[2022 Virtual Essentials of Banking Series](#) - July 21, August 11, September 8 & 29, 2022 / 8:00 - 3:00 MT

2022 WBA Lenders Conference – August 25-26, 2022 – Laramie County Community College – Cheyenne, WY

[2022 IRA Basics and Advanced](#) - September 13-14, 2022 – Hilton Garden Inn – Casper, WY

[2022 Key Ratio Analysis Seminar](#) – September 28, 2022 – Hilton Garden Inn – Casper, WY

[2022 Basic Personal & Business Tax Returns Analysis Seminar](#) – September 29, 2022 – Hilton Garden Inn – Casper

2022 *Virtual* Retail Lending: Beyond the Basics – October 3-4, 2022 / 8:00 - 3:00 MT



**2022 Montana &
Wyoming Bankers
Summit**

Navigating the Storm

June 22-24

Northern Hotel - Billings, MT



DBRIEFS

ABA Foundation Encourages Banks to Host 12th Annual Lights, Camera, Save! Teen Video Contest

Popular national competition promotes financial education

WASHINGTON — The American Bankers Association Foundation is urging banks across the country to participate in its upcoming [Lights, Camera, Save!](#) video competition that runs from Feb. 21 to March 31. Lights, Camera, Save! is a national contest that encourages teens to use video to communicate the value of sound money management. The competition is one of ABA Foundation's most popular financial education programs. [Click here](#) to continue reading.

ABA, Banking Trades Call for Durbin Amendment Repeal

A group of financial trade associations, including the American Bankers Association (ABA), sent a letter to the Federal Reserve describing the regulatory burden caused by the Durbin Amendment and calling for its repeal. The letter also highlighted the ongoing harm the regulation has caused consumers and banks. [Read the Letter](#)

CFPB Seeks Information on Financial Product Fees

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) issued a request for information (RFI) seeking comments on fees associated with financial products and services offered by banks and non-bank financial institutions, including overdraft fees, insufficient funds fees, credit card fees, remittance fees, prepaid account fees and mortgage fees, among others. In a joint [statement](#), banking trade groups called the request a “misguided effort that paints a distorted and misleading picture of our country's highly competitive financial services marketplace.” [Read the RFI](#)

CFPB Plans to Scrutinize Credit Card Fees, Practices

In a blog post, the CFPB said it is “looking to use a long-dormant authority” under Dodd-Frank Act Section 1033, which relates to consumer access to financial records, “to help spur better credit card shopping and switching by proposing rules that give consumers more control of their financial data.” [Learn More](#)

ABA Report: Credit Card Market Reflected Economic Recovery in Third Quarter of 2021

WASHINGTON — Credit conditions in last year's third quarter reflected an ongoing economic recovery while credit card debt as a share of disposable income tilted slightly downward, according to the American Bankers Association's latest quarterly Credit Card Market Monitor released today. Monthly purchase volumes grew across risk tiers during the third quarter, while average credit lines for prime and super-prime accounts rose for the first time since the pandemic began. Credit card debt as a share of disposable income fell slightly, nearing all time low, and remained well below pre-pandemic levels. [Click here](#) to continue reading.

CFPB Releases 2022 Lists of Rural, Underserved Counties

The CFPB released updated lists of rural counties and rural or underserved counties that entities can use in 2022 to determine whether they are exempt from certain regulatory requirements of the Truth in Lending Act. The CFPB also updated its tool for helping bankers determine whether a property is located in a rural or underserved area. [Access the Lists](#)

Consumer, Banking Groups Comment on FHS Defect Taxonomy Proposal

A group of trade associations submitted comments on proposed changes to the Federal Housing Administration's (FHA) Single-Family Housing Policy Handbook related to the servicing defect taxonomy. The organizations noted that the current proposal fails to provide sufficient detail or clarity regarding defects most likely to occur, severity ties and appropriate remedies. [Read the Letter](#)

ABA Foundation Launches 2022 Financial Education Campaigns, Unveils New Free Resources for Banks

WASHINGTON — The American Bankers Association Foundation today launched its 2022 financial education campaigns, calling on America's banks and their more than two million employees across the nation to participate in these important and effective industry-wide efforts to promote consumer financial readiness. [Click here](#) to continue reading.

USDA Unveils Resource Guide to Help Rural Entrepreneurs Start and Grow Businesses, Create Good-Paying Jobs and Strengthen America's Economy

WASHINGTON, Feb. 14, 2022 – United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Under Secretary for Rural Development Xochitl Torres Small today unveiled a [resource guide](#) to help people in rural America start and grow businesses, create good-paying jobs in their communities and strengthen America's economy. [Click here](#) to continue reading.

FDIC Research on Bank Technology and PPP Loans

According to a new study from FDIC, technology-intensive banks made the highest number of PPP loans. Researchers found investments in technology enhanced banks' reach of borrowers. [Learn More](#)



DBRIEFS

FDIC's Gruenberg Outlines 2022 Priorities

Following the departure of Jelena McWilliams, Acting Chairman Martin Gruenberg provided a roadmap for the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation's (FDIC) 2022 priorities. Gruenberg identified five primary focus areas for the FDIC in 2022: "strengthening and enhancing" the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) through an interagency process "in the near future;" addressing the financial risks posed by climate change; reviewing the bank merger process, which according to Gruenberg hasn't been addressed in 25 years; evaluating crypto-asset risk to determine the extent to which banking organizations can safely engage in crypto-asset-related activities; and implementing the capital framework commonly known as "Basel IV," which was delayed due to the pandemic. Gruenberg noted, "All of these priorities will require close collaboration among the federal banking agencies." [Learn More](#)

OCC Workshops for Community Bank Directors

The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) announced a series of virtual workshops for boards of directors of community national banks and federal savings associations. The examiner-led workshops will cover risk governance, credit risk, operational risk and directorship success. [Learn More](#)

CFPB Allows Consumers to Directly Petition for Rulemakings

The CFPB announced a new process through which consumers may petition the bureau directly for rulemaking actions. All petitions and related materials submitted will become part of public record and will be subject to public disclosure, and the CFPB will respond to petitions for the issuance, amendment or repeal of an existing rule as required by the Administrative Procedures Act.

Consumers may email their petitions to petitions@cfpb.gov or submit them to the Bureau by mail or hand delivery. Petitions should include contact information, the type of action being requested, the factual and legal reasons for the proposed action and the expected effects the proposed action would have on relevant parties. [Learn More](#)

USDA Commits \$215 Million to Enhance the American Food Supply Chain

Department Will Make Available \$215 Million for Projects That Will Promote Competition and Increase Resiliency and Create Economic Opportunity in Rural America

WASHINGTON, Feb. 24, 2022 – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that USDA is making available up to \$215 million in grants and other support to expand meat and poultry processing options, strengthen the food supply chain, and create jobs and economic opportunities in rural areas. Today's funding opportunity, announced on the one-year anniversary of President Biden's [Executive Order 14017 "America's Supply Chains"](#), is [one of many actions that USDA is taking to expand processing capacity](#) and increase competition in meat and poultry processing to make agricultural markets more accessible, fair, competitive, and resilient for American farmers and ranchers. [Click here](#) to continue reading.

Fed's Bowman: CBDC Use Case Not Readily Apparent

At the American Bankers Association (ABA) Conference for Community Bankers, Federal Reserve Governor Michelle Bowman stated that she "struggled to find a business case" for a Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC). "We already have a safe, sound, stable and broadly available financial services industry in the United States," Bowman said, noting that a CBDC could disintermediate the current financial system.

Earlier this year, the Fed released a [report](#) on the risks and benefits of a CBDC and will accept feedback on the topic until May 20. [Watch the Remarks](#)

Coin Task Force Issues Paper on Coin Circulation Slowdown

The U.S. Coin Task Force released a paper on the state of the coin supply chain in the U.S. and the causes and effects of the coin circulation disruption that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. The paper identifies the factors that contributed to the coin circulation disruption, including a significant drop in coin deposits since the outset of the pandemic and a reduction in coin production at the during the early days of the pandemic.

The Federal Reserve and the U.S. Mint will use the paper as they work with a third-party consultant to review the coin supply chain and develop recommendations for improvement. [Read the Paper](#)

ABA Comments on FinCEN Beneficial Ownership Registry

The American Bankers Association (ABA) provided comments on the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) proposed rule for a beneficial ownership registry. The ABA recommended steps to reduce the reporting burden caused by the requirements. The ABA noted that, because the proposed rule is the first of three planned rules, it is difficult to determine how the rule's requirements fit with a bank's responsibilities. [Read the Letter](#)



DBRIEFS

Tenth District Manufacturing Activity Grew at a Strong Pace *Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City Releases February Manufacturing Survey*

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – The Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City released the February Manufacturing Survey today. According to Chad Wilkerson, vice president and economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, the survey revealed that Tenth District manufacturing activity grew at a strong pace, and expectations for future activity increased.

“Regional factory activity continued to increase in February,” said Wilkerson. “Firms noted that supply chain and shipping delays continue to cause issues. Most manufacturers reported higher business costs compared to a year ago and have passed through some of these costs to customers resulting in higher prices.”

A summary of the survey is attached. Historical data, results from past surveys, and release dates for future surveys can be found at <https://kansascityfed.org/surveys/manufacturing-survey/>. [Click here](#) to read full article.

FDIC Publishes 2021 Annual Report

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) released its [2021 Annual Report](#) that highlights the FDIC’s accomplishments last year, including: continued response to economic risks related to COVID-19; efforts to expand access to banking, especially among minority and low- and moderate-income communities; the launch of the Mission-Driven Bank Fund; and efforts to promote the competitiveness of community banks and support the development of new technologies that improve the way banks operate.

The Report also provides details on developments in the FDIC’s primary functional areas: deposit insurance; supervision; research and analysis; depositor and consumer protection; and resolutions and receivership. [Read the Report](#)

News Source: American Bankers Association



Don't Miss Out on GSBC's 71st Annual School Session

GSBC will host its [71st Annual School Session](#) July 17-29, 2022, in Boulder, Colorado!

In the Annual School Session, students take courses that are designed and regularly updated to tackle relevant topics in the community banking industry. Students attend three consecutive

annual two-week sessions at CU Boulder, and have numerous opportunities to network with bankers from their states and across the country.

Curriculum

Budget Considerations &
Application

What to Expect

The GSBC experience will sell out. Enroll ASAP to avoid a waitlist.

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American Bankers Association

**Wyoming Banks Receive \$24,315 in Distributions
from American Bankers Mutual Insurance, Ltd.
*\$94.3 million has been declared in total distributions since 1991.***

Wyoming—American Bankers Mutual Insurance, Ltd., the reinsurer for the directors and officers (D&O), bond and cyber insurance program endorsed by American Bankers Association (ABA) and Wyoming Bankers Association (WBA), declared a \$3 million distribution to be shared by qualified ABA member banks insured through ABA Insurance Services, a member of Great American Insurance Group.

This is the 32nd consecutive year that the industry's leading professional liability and bond insurance provider has declared distributions to eligible ABA member banks, bringing the total to \$94.3 million since the program's inception. Banks that purchase their directors and officers, bond, cyber and related insurance from this program and are current ABA members are eligible to receive a distribution.

"This is a truly unique program, providing a long-term, stable source of insurance and risk services to the banking industry while declaring distributions to eligible ABA member banks for the past 32 years," said Gary Hemmer, chairman of American Bankers Mutual Insurance Ltd. and chairman of the board of First National Bank of Waterloo in Waterloo, Ill."

"For more than three decades, the American Bankers Mutual Insurance program has been one of the many ways ABA provides significant value to its member institutions," said Rob Nichols, ABA president and CEO. "We take great pride in offering participating member banks both high-quality insurance products and meaningful distributions that have been paid year after year."

In order to receive a distribution in 2022, a bank must have been a member of ABA and have D&O, financial institution bond, and/or cyber insurance with ABA Insurance Services as of January 18. Distributions take place in mid-February.

About American Bankers Mutual Insurance, Ltd.

American Bankers Mutual Insurance, Ltd. is a bank-owned, mutual insurance company that reinsures policies written for the ABA-endorsed insurance program.

About ABA Insurance Services

ABA Insurance Services, a Member of Great American Insurance Group, serves the banking industry by offering D&O, bond, cyber, and related insurance to financial institutions across the country. Co-endorsed by American Bankers Association and Wyoming Bankers Association, this unique insurance program has been a market leader since 1987 and is recognized by insurance and banking professionals as a secure, stable, and affordable source of coverage. For more information about ABA Insurance Services, call 800-274-5222 or visit www.abais.com.

About American Bankers Association

The American Bankers Association is the voice of the nation's \$22.8 trillion banking industry, which is composed of small, regional, and large banks that together employ more than 2 million people, safeguard nearly \$19 trillion in deposits and extend \$11 trillion in loans.

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Survey Says: Disconcerting Number of Americans Believe They'll Run Out of Money and/or Time to Retire Comfortably

A recent survey from IAA shows that nearly half of Americans are worried about running out of money in retirement – while the remainder say they are more concerned about running out of the time they deem necessary to do what they would like to do in their golden years.

Released on Oct. 27, [TIAA's 2021 Lifetime Income Survey](#) found 45 percent of the 1,001 working American Millennials, Gen Xers, and Baby Boomers who participated in the study saying that exhausting their financial resources is their chief concern – certainly a very real and understandable worry in today's climate. To help alleviate that concern, 51 percent said that making savings last in retirement is their top priority – commendable, but hardly inspiring confidence.

The survey found that many of the tried-and-true obstacles to saving adequately for retirement remain in play: 44 percent cited debt that needs to be paid off; 42 percent estimated that they cannot afford to put more money away; 22 percent said they want to make sure they can access funds in case of an emergency, while another 22 percent said that they “have other savings priorities.” (Multiple answers were allowed.)

On the time side of the equation, 45 percent said that retiring earlier was their top priority – the survey did not define what “earlier” means in this circumstance. Drilling further down, 42 percent of this group said they were “highly confident” that their savings will last them 20 years in retirement; that figure drops to 32 percent when considering a 30+ year retirement.

The picture is different, however, for those with a lifetime income annuity or pension: 69 percent are highly confident about the 20-year period, and 64 percent are highly confident about 30+ years.

None of these findings are particularly surprising at a glance, though the actual numbers can be troubling. And the lack of detail can be further exasperating: How do the respondents expect to “make their savings last” in retirement? What is their plan when it comes to retiring “earlier” in order to travel or otherwise spend their retirement years?

Fortunately, the survey also found 45 percent of workers saying they believe they can save more if they have help creating and managing a budget, with 66 percent of Millennials thinking that budgeting would allow them to save more.

And that, of course, is almost always the main takeaway from such reports: Seeking professional advice to discuss how to go about creating a reasonably prudent retirement savings strategy – one customized to each person's needs and desires – can be a tremendous aid.

And — as the Millennials would have it – the earlier the better.

With the Covid-19 pandemic hopefully (finally) receding, it is time to reconsider putting away (more) money for retirement. Consulting a trusted industry professional is, as it always has been, a highly effective method of doing so.

About the Author Richard Rausser



Richard W. Rausser has more than 30 years of experience in the retirement benefits industry. He is Senior Vice President of Thought Leadership at Pentegra, a leading provider of retirement plan and fiduciary outsourcing to organizations nationwide. Rich is responsible for helping to shape and define Pentegra's viewpoint on workplace retirement plans, plan design strategy, retirement success and employee savings trends. His work is used by employers, employees, advisors, policymakers and the media to produce successful outcomes for American workers. In addition, Rich is responsible for Pentegra's Defined Benefit line of business, which includes a team of Actuaries and other retirement plan professionals as well as Pentegra's BOLI line of business. He is a frequent speaker on retirement benefit topics; a Certified Pension Consultant (CPC); a Qualified Pension Administrator (QPA); a Qualified 401(k) Administrator (QKA); and a member of the

American Society of Pension Professionals and Actuaries (ASPPA). He holds an M.B.A. in Finance from Fairleigh Dickinson University and a B.A. in Economics and Business Administration from Ursinus College.

Rising tide

Bonds to own for a rate hike environment

By Jim Reber

Community bankers are nothing if not predictable, and I mean that as a compliment. They are bright, enterprising, have a nose for the risk/reward dynamic and a sense of duty and loyalty to their customers and staff. They're also deathly afraid of rising interest rates.

The last is understandable, speaking as one who has A. worked for a bank when overnight rates were double-digit, B. personally borrowed money for a home at 12%, and C. worked in financial services during the near-death of the thrift industry. We know how low rates can go. What we don't know is how high they can go, nor for how long.

But what's a bit curious about this widespread fear is that by a number of measures, community banks in 2022 stand to profit from higher interest rates. This comes from banking regulators, interest rate risk modelers, and even bankers themselves. I suppose the notion of a bond portfolio losing four, five or six percent of its value drives some of this thought process. So, as we haven't had to endure a rate hike scenario since 2018, we'll use the rest of this column to remind ourselves which bonds stand a good chance of performing well if higher rates do indeed prevail in the near future.

Old school

Certainly, the bonds that fit the most traditional definition of a floater are those which have very short reset periods, are indexed to money market equivalents, and have large or no caps, both periodic and lifetime. The model for such a security is a Small Business Administration (SBA) 7(a) pool. These securities float based on the prime rate, which is 100% correlated to fed funds. Most SBAs reset monthly or quarterly and have no caps—so wherever prime goes, so goes your yield.

The rub on SBAs, at least from a risk standpoint, is that many of them come with large premium prices of 108, 109 or even higher. This exposes the investor to unwelcome prepayments. Still, the many benefits (have we mentioned 0% risk weighting?) make them attractive to short investors. It's not uncommon for them to yield around prime minus 2.75%, which will beat fed funds by about 25 basis points (0.25%). They are true money market alternatives.

Mortgage floaters

These days there are few true mortgage-backed securities (MBS) floaters. The ones that do exist usually have an extended period of time with a fixed rate, before they convert to adjustable. This "extended period" can be three, five, seven years or more so they're really not floaters, yet. However, the fact that one day they will adjust can help their market value stay relatively stable.

Something new about these is that the Secured Overnight Financing Rate (SOFR) index is becoming more visible. SOFR is the U.S. alternative to London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR), and it has generally tracked fed funds, so far. And, since these will have prices closer to par, the investor doesn't have to take a gigantic bite of prepay risk. Starting yields are wholly dependent on the fixed rate period and other variables, but they deserve a look.

Clip coupons

Even if you don't own a floater, an easy-to-execute trade that will help limit your price volatility is "up-in-coupon" securities. It doesn't matter if they're MBS, agencies, or munis: The bigger the stated interest rate, the greater the cash flow and the lower the duration.

The best example of this strategy is a tax-free municipal bond that has a big stated interest rate, or "coupon." It's common to see a newly hatched security with a 4% rate, that comes to market at an original issue price of 120 or more. This is a quality to be embraced. For one thing, the fact that the yield is tax-

free makes the security less volatile than a taxable bond. If (and when, it appears) interest rates rise, the large interest payments will further help keep the value of the bond from falling off the table.

Do-it-yourself

There's another way to inject floating rate securities into your bond portfolio, and that's to build them yourself. It's a simple task to buy and own a collection of long-durated municipal bonds—that's how they typically come to market. A recent innovation is the ability to execute an interest rate swap to instantly, or at some designated point in the future, turn the munis into floaters.

Interest rate product providers are equipped to price out transactions whereby a community bank can convert a bond, a collection of bonds, or a subsector of your balance sheet into short-duration assets that will see their yields improve every time the Fed has a "policy adjustment." Maybe the best news is that these transactions can now be executed in sizes that fit your community bank's needs.

How many rate hikes might we see this year? That's the subject of myriad conversations around the board room, water cooler, and ALCOs. I'm pleased to report investments that are built for rising rates can take on a variety of appearances, and are fully accessible to your community bank.

* * * * *

***Jim Reber** (jreber@icbasecurities.com) is president and CEO of ICBA Securities, ICBA's institutional, fixed-income broker-dealer for community banks.*

[Sidebar]

March webinar to discuss rising rate strategies

ICBA Securities and its exclusive broker Vining Sparks continues its webinar series, Community Banking Matters on March 8 at 10 a.m. Central. The timely topic is "Balance Sheet Strategies in an Expected Tightening Cycle." CPE credit of one hour is offered for each webinar. For more information visit www.viningsparks.com.



Is it time for your bank to get noticed? Start blogging.

By Neal Reynolds, President, BankMarketingCenter.com



Social media marketing has taken on even greater importance over the last two years and blogging has become an even more important component of social media marketing. The name of the game, the key to growing deposits, customers and revenues is growing relationships. That hasn't changed. What has changed is the way consumers behave, and at the heart of it, a watershed shift from in line to online.

Take customer service, for example. Customer service has always been an important component of a bank's offerings, right? According to tech consulting firm CapTech, in their 2021 Innovations Study, communication with a company using online chat has increased 18%, from 28% in 2020 to 46% in 2021. Another statistic? Fifty-four percent said they would always choose a chatbot over a human customer service rep if it saved them 10 minutes. Goodbye human being, hello chatbot. I've found that online chat customer service has come a long way over the last couple of years and I guess we have advancements in technologies such as AI and Machine Learning to thank for that. This is just one example of how critical your "digital presentation" is.

So, it's no surprise that banks have been working hard over the last two years to execute strategies that make social media marketing an integral part of their overall marketing. And blogging should be a major

focus. Not only can blogging connect with your customers, build relationships, increase brand awareness and generate sales leads, but it's also efficient, effective and measurable. Blogging facilitates interaction, interaction equals engagement, engagement equals relationship and relationship equals loyalty and (ideally) increased revenue.

Blogging helps people find you.

Start by thinking about the size of your website. How many pages are there? Probably not that many. And think about how often you update the content on those pages. Probably not that often. This is where your blog comes in. Every time you create and publish a blog post, search engines consider that yet another indexed page on your website. This means that with each blog, you're creating one more opportunity for your site, through that blog post, to show up on the search engine results page (SERP) and drive traffic to your website in a prospect's organic search.

Blog content can take many forms.

Every time you create and post a blog, you're creating content that 1) you can share across your social platforms and 2) people who see it can share. So, with blogging, you're not only strengthening your social reach with the blog itself. You're also creating a web of engagement points that connect with each other and ultimately lead everyone you've engaged right to your website.

Blogs can drive long-term results.

Hubspot says: "Imagine you sit down for an hour on Sunday to write and publish a blog post. Let's say that blog post gets you 100 views and 10 leads on Monday. You get another 50 views and five leads on Tuesday as a few more people find it through social media. But after a couple of days, most of the fanfare from that post dies down, and you've netted 150 views and 15 leads. It's not over." Since that post is now ranking, it means that for days, weeks, months and years to come, you can continue to get traffic from that blog post. That's because a blog post can bring traffic to your site long after it was first posted. In fact, according to Hubspot, "about 90% of the leads we generate every month come from blog posts published in previous months. Sometimes years ago."

Is this a comprehensive treatise on blog posting? No. There are several additional benefits to blogging that we haven't discussed here. And, there are several companies out there that can advise you on how to get the most of your blogging, from software and templates to guidance on creating a blogging editorial calendar. My hope here is that you've learned just enough about blogging "to be dangerous," as the saying goes. It's a terrific tool for engaging customers and generating leads, so get out there and give it a try! Oh, and by the way. We've been taking our own advice. By blogging and posting regularly, we now find ourselves on the first page in a "bank marketing" organic search. So, yes, it works!

About Bank Marketing Center

BankMarketingCenter.com (BMC) is a web-based marketing portal that empowers banks to produce professionally designed, bank-branded marketing materials in a matter of seconds. As an endorsed partner of the Wyoming Bankers Association, WBA members receive a 20% discount on the already low-cost monthly subscription. For more information or to schedule a no-obligation demo, visit www.bankmarketingcenter.com.

Employment Opportunities

Positions Available

Branch President – FirstTier Bank – Upton, WY

FirstTier Bank, a community-focused bank, is searching for an experienced and ambitious Branch President to provide leadership and oversight of all functions at the Upton branch location.

Responsibilities:

- Responsible for overseeing and coordinating all aspects of the Upton branch location including but not limited to general operations and overall branch profitability.
- Recruitment, management and motivation of branch personnel
- Development of new business opportunities
- Establish and grow customer base and relationships
- Obtain appropriate growth targets for assets and liabilities with emphasis on credit quality
- Ensure compliance with policies and procedures within FirstTier bank as well as the industry
- Marketing the branch within the community to attract business in a professional and honest manner
- Other duties as required or requested that benefit the branch and/or the bank

[Click here](#) to read full opening

Chief Financial Officer – FirstTier Bank – Kimball, NE

FirstTier Bank is a community-focused bank, with a strong presence in the Tri-State area of Nebraska, Colorado and Wyoming. We are searching for a qualified and experienced Chief Financial Officer. As the Bank's lead financial executive, this individual will play a crucial role in the implementation of the Bank's strategic business plan.

Chief Financial Officer Responsibilities:

Strategic Planning:

- Work with executive management team to create annual budgets and strategic business plan
- Management of the Bank's liquidity position
- Capital planning
- Tax strategies and planning
- Manage the Bank's investment portfolio
- Negotiate certain bank contracts

Reporting:

- Quality and accuracy of financial reporting; adherence to generally accepted accounting principles
- Preparation and filing of quarterly call reports
- Various reports and deliverables to the Board of Directors

And more... [Click here](#) to read full opening.

How to Apply / Contact

Send resume to:

Tricia Lukassen tlukassen@firsttierbanks.com

Commercial Lender – Hilltop Bank – Casper, WY

Responsibilities:

- Interviews applicants and request specified information for loan application and requests required data for completion.
- Develops business loan and deposit relationships with existing and prospective customers.

- Analyzes applicant financial status, credit, and property evaluation to determine feasibility of granting loan.
- Compiles loan package and facilitates negotiation of loan structure with applicant, including fees, loan repayment options, and other credit terms. Approves loan within specified limits or prepares loan presentation to loan committee for approval in compliance with the Bank's lending policies and procedures.

Qualifications:

- Knowledge and understanding of commercial lending with the ability to identify primary and secondary sources of repayment.
- Strong communication skills to write reports, business correspondence and effectively present information and responds to questions from groups of managers, clients, or board members.
- Bachelor's degree from four year college or university preferred; minimum of five years of commercial lending experience or three years as commercial lender with two year's or credit analyst or other related lending experience.

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Credit Analyst – Hilltop Bank – Casper, WY

Responsibilities:

- Complete detailed written reports that succinctly summarize financial performance; describe collateral quality and coverage; identify, evaluate and mitigate repayment risks; and provide other relevant information for use in the credit decision process
- Perform research/analysis related to various projects that may arise from time to time such as industry studies and management reports
- Primarily responsible for preparing Credit Approval Presentations (CAP)
- Conduct annual reviews of identified credits and those above established thresholds to ensure ongoing credit quality
- Other duties as assigned

Qualifications:

- Prior credit analysis experience
- Accounting background or education
- Strong Excel proficiency
- Ability to work independently; organization & time management skills for meeting deadlines
- Critical thinking skills to interpret data relevancy
- Strong interpersonal communication skills

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 1, 2022

Contact:
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Marketing Director
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kellien@rnbonline.com

SABRINA HAMBY NAMED RNB STATE BANK PRESIDENT

RAWLINS, Wyoming - RNB State Bank has announced that Sabrina Hamby will step into the position of Rawlins Market President. Bruce Hellbaum, CEO/President of RNB State Bank and Front Range State Bank, has great confidence that Hamby will step into the new role seamlessly.

“I know she will endeavor to provide the best service possible. Sabrina has done a great job at RNB State Bank in Rawlins for the past ten years and she graduated with honors from the Graduate Banking School a few years ago,” Hellbaum said.

Plans have been in the works to make a transition with Hamby taking on the role as Rawlins Market President. Scott Thayer has retired from the position to spend time with family. Hamby’s experience working closely with Thayer throughout the past ten years has demonstrated her ability to lead the team in Rawlins. Having provided excellent service in the loan department, Hamby will continue to serve the customers with the same great care she always has.

“I’m excited for this opportunity and the challenges that will come along as the new Rawlins Market President. I’m also grateful for the support I’ve received from the board of directors, our management team, and my family,” Hamby said.

RNB State Bank will continue to offer the same great service and to remain active in the community. The public is invited to stop by the RNB State Bank main branch at 220 5th Street

on Thursday, March 10 from 2 pm to 5 pm to celebrate Scott Thayer's retirement and to congratulate Sabrina Hamby on her new position.



Sabrina Hamby photo cutline:

Sabrina Hamby says, "There's nothing better than helping someone achieve their dreams! If I haven't met you yet, I look forward to the opportunity. Give me a call or stop by!"

Title: Join

Author:

Size : 10 Inches Sq Green River,WY Circulation: 3300

Keywords: bank ~ community involvement / hiring



Join us in
wishing Angie
Shutran well
as she starts a
new position
with U.S. Bank.

Stop by for an open house in her honor.
Saturday, noon to 4 p.m.
U.S. Bank, 285 Uinta Drive, Green River

Title: Zions hires relationship manager

Author:

Size : 7 Inches Sq Jackson,WY Circulation: 6963

Keywords: bank ~ bank employee obituaries ~ community involvement / hiring



Zions hires relationship manager

Zions Bank has hired Brett Troyan as a Community Banking relationship manager for its Jackson Hole branch. He's responsible for creating and maintaining relationships with business and consumer clients.

Troyan, a graduate of Bowling Green State University, has nearly 10 years of retail banking experience, most recently at Wells Fargo. He also volunteers with his local chapter of Habitat for Humanity, the Center for the Arts and the annual Jackson Hole Easter Egg Hunt.

Zions Bank operates 25 branches in Idaho and 98 branches in Utah and Wyoming.

— *Johanna Love*

Title: Deb Sewell Bank teller a star in the community

Author: KateLynn Slaamot NLJ Reporter

Size : 83 Inches Sq Newcastle,WY Circulation: 2160

Keywords: bank ~ bank employee obituaries ~ community involvement / hiring



POY 2021 NOMINEE:

DEB SEWELL Bank teller a star in the community

KateLynn Slaamot
NLJ Reporter

Debra “Deb” Sewell has lived in Newcastle her whole life — from the time she was born at Weston County Memorial Hospital in 1957 to now, and she’s well known as a long-time First State Bank teller. There’s nothing that instills a community-minded attitude more than spending many years in the same tight-knit community. And Sewell says she can’t help but give back to the community that has helped shape her for all these years.

There are many ways Sewell accomplishes just that, and that is why she was nominated for the *News Letter Journal’s* Person of the Year, by Della Fordyce.

“She’s always there to help. She’s just an all-over good person,” Fordyce said.

Sewell is involved in a number of organizations and undertakes a lot of volunteer work — including volunteering at the Weston County Humane Society, baking

— See **Sewell**, Page 6



Photo by KateLynn Slaamot/NLJ

One of this year’s Person of the Year nominees, Deb Sewell, has been working at First State Bank for over 40 years. Sewell has been a star in the community — helping out at the Weston County Humane Society, attending events in the community, supporting the Weston County Fair and much more.

Title: Deb Sewell Bank teller a star in the community

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Sewell

 from Page 1.....

and helping with the United Fund and United Fund Pie Auction and participating in various ways in Weston County Friends of Fair and the annual county fair.

"I'm a hometown girl. Don't know any place else I'd rather live," Sewell said.

The humane society is one of Sewell's longest involvements, and she just loves animals, she said. Sewell is also quite sociable and loves visiting and spending time with people. Even if it's just shooting the breeze with someone at the grocery store, one can often find Sewell chatting with others.

"I love the senior citizen dances on Fridays," Sewell said. "I love those people. They're my people." Sewell often goes to the Friday night dances and makes her rounds to mingle with those present.

Sewell often takes pictures at the dances and purchases them off of Snapfish to give to the subjects. She will even find pictures of people she knows off of Facebook and order them for them because she knows they would appreciate having a print of the image.

"It's super fun, and they're always surprised," Sewell said.

The all-school reunion has also been a passion for Sewell, and she has been involved in it

for over 30 years. She always makes sure to get her class of 1975 together for its class reunion too.

Sewell has made lots of friends over the years — whether that's coworkers at the bank, customers she enjoys getting to know or people she comes into contact with through her volunteering. And a number of people have good things to say about Sewell and how she interacts with others.

"She'd give you her shirt off her back. She does anything and everything to help the customer out ... she's a great person," said Dana Bangma, assistant head teller at the bank. Bangma has worked with Sewell for 13 years.

Louise Stith, vice president at the bank, has worked with Sewell for the entire four decades that both have been there. Stith also attended school with Sewell,

both graduating in 1975.

Sewell is always kind, caring and generous, Stith said, and is constantly involved and doing a lot in the community. Sewell also has considerable knowledge when it comes to her job at the bank, which is very helpful and makes her a valuable member of the team, Stith said.

For Sewell, while she's honored to be nominated for

Person of the Year, she said she doesn't feel like she's done anything special — she just does what comes naturally and gives back to the community that has given so much to her.

"She truly cares about people and tries to go the extra mile as much as she can," Bangma said. "She does go the extra mile ..."

And beyond her volunteer work, Sewell enjoys supporting the community by attending different events, fund-raisers, the fair and visiting at the Weston County Manor when she can.

"If nobody did anything for their community, their community wouldn't be what it is. ... I just love the community and being around people. It's just a phenomenal place to be," Sewell said.

Taking part in community is what makes community thrive, Sewell said, and she loves being even just a small part of making that happen.

“

She truly cares about people and tries to go the extra mile as much as she can ... She does go the extra mile.”

— Dana Bangma

Title: Laramie-based Western States Bank sold to First National Bank

Author:

Size : 53 Inches Sq Cheyenne,WY Circulation: 13800

Keywords: bank ~ community involvement / hiring



Laramie-based Western States Bank sold to First National Bank

By Jonathan Make
Wyoming Tribune Eagle

CHEYENNE—Laramie-based Western States Bank is now owned by an out-of-state company. On Monday, the new owner announced that the takeover—news of which was first disclosed in November—has now been completed.

Not much will change anytime soon for customers or employees of the approximately 10-branch Western States. This is according to interviews Monday with representatives of both the new owner, First National Bank of Omaha, and Western States.

Until sometime in the third quarter, Western States will keep operating under its current name, the officials said. After the integration of Western States into FNBO is completed, the just-acquired company will also go by the First National Bank of Omaha name.

Western States has two branches in Cheyenne, located at 1525 E. Pershing Blvd. and 5538 Yellowstone Road. The banking company's approximately \$542 million in total assets and nearly 100 employees compare with FNBO's roughly 4,500 workers and \$26 bil-

lion in assets.

FNBO is among the top 100 U.S. commercial banks in terms of assets, said spokesperson Kevin Langin. Financial terms of the deal were not disclosed.

Unlike with some corporate takeovers, in this transaction, no layoffs are anticipated. "Nothing is really changing for the customer or for the employees as we transition to FNBO," said Langin.

In Fort Collins, Colorado, both FNBO and Western States have branches close to each other, so a closure of one or other is a possibility, Langin said. "We have to evaluate" how to proceed, the spokesperson said.

Possible expansion

Gary Crum, who until the takeover's completion was president and CEO of Western States, signaled that the bank now under FNBO could expand in Wyoming.

"Our mission is to grow the Wyoming franchise in Wyoming," Crum, who now is regional director at FNBO, told the Wyoming Tribune Eagle. "There's nothing off the table," he said of the possibility of adding branches or other types of expansion in the state.

Crum said this business combination was desirable for Western States because it involves no layoffs. "That was one of the real selling points for us" of FNBO's offer, he said, "that they wanted all of our employees."

It makes business sense for an out-of-state acquirer to keep the branches and personnel in Wyoming, said Ali Nejadmalayeri, the Guthrie endowed chair in banking and financial services at the University of Wyoming's College of Business. For a buyer like FNBO, "you really have limited ability to make cuts like that, because you want to access the market, you need access to the customer."

It is also a good time for a smaller banking company to sell to a bigger operator because of the economic challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and because many customers now are more comfortable doing their banking virtually instead of going into a branch, said Nejad-



Crum



Nejadmalayeri

malayeri, who is also a UW professor of finance.

"This is a great opportunity for bigger banks ... to expand, to get access to the Wyoming economy," he said in a telephone interview on Tuesday. A bigger bank can better "weather the shocks," he added.

Wyoming Division of Banking Interim Commissioner Joe Mulberry said by email that his agency OK'd the deal.

The regulator deemed the merger to have "satisfied all of the division's notice and filing requirements," Mulberry said.

In an online message to customers of Western States, FNBO Chairman and President Clark Lauritzen said that fnbo.com/wsb will have details on what he called "your transition to FNBO."

Jonathan Make is the Wyoming Tribune Eagle's assistant managing editor and editor of the Wyoming Business Report. He can be reached at jmake@wyomingnews.com. Follow him on Twitter @makejdm.

Title: Bank deposits surging in wake of pandemic

Author: By Thomas Dewell

Size : 153 Inches Sq Jackson,WY Circulation: 6963

Keywords: bank



Bank deposits surging in wake of pandemic

Marketplace shifts,
grows as wealth flocks
to Teton County.

By Thomas Dewell

Driven by an influx of wealth, federal stimulus in the wake of the pandemic and a buoyant tourist economy, county bank deposits surged from \$2 billion in 2017 to \$3.8 billion in 2021, according to reports from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.

The growth amounts to an increase of more than 88% in just five years. When considering just the COVID-19 pandemic time frame, deposits grew 40% from 2020 to 2021, or \$1.09 billion.

Broadly, the increased liquidity has been driven by three factors, Bank of Jackson Hole CEO Pete Lawton said.

Wealthy people have been able to move to — and work remotely from — the northwest corner of Wyoming, a state that does not charge income tax. Deposit growth also stemmed from valley companies taking advantage of the Small Business Administration Paycheck Protection Program. Steady



Lawton

tourist traffic in summer and winter helped the Jackson Hole hospitality sector, which in turn swelled accounts.

“Resort communities are doing really well through COVID,” said Lawton, who has worked in the valley banking industry for 32 years.

He was careful to note that flush bank deposits driven by a pandemic have not, in fact, bought happiness.

“The results have been pretty strong economically — emotionally, I’m not so sure.”

Through the pandemic, Jackson Hole has remained a dynamic banking marketplace.

Chase Bank now has an office in the Jackson Shopping Village (former Kmart/future Target plaza), bringing with it the full financial weight of J.P. Morgan Chase and its \$3.2 trillion in national deposits.

Chase is following clients.

“For us it’s about meeting our

Title: Bank deposits surging in wake of pandemic

Author: By Thomas Dewell

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Keywords: bank

customers where they are,” Chase spokesperson Darcy Donahoe-Wilmot said. “We have a number of customers in the market — many who live here in the community, many who visit for long periods of time.

“We continue to deepen our relationships and give this market convenient access to our banking services. We’re a large national branch, but also a very small, local one when our customers need us.”

At the close of 2021, First Western Trust and Rocky Mountain Bank announced a merger.

Zions Bank, which operates in the valley out of a branch just east of Town Square, confirmed through the local branch manager that it has purchased a lot in west Jackson, namely the former Rendezvous Bistro (nee Denny’s).

Zions Bank has not finalized a plan for the property.

“We are continually evaluating our branch network and locations,” said Logan Rich, vice president and manager of Zions Bank’s Jackson Hole branch. “We can confirm that we have purchased the property, but plans for its use have not yet been determined.”

FDIC reports show Zions deposits in the county market have fluctuated between a high of \$37 million and a low of \$19 million between 2017 and 2021. Current county deposits are \$43 million, Rich said Friday.

Although tens of millions of dollars sound like a lot of cash to most people, in the Jackson marketplace such deposits have equated to Zions holding 2% or less of county deposits in the last five years.

Deposit growth has pushed other valley banks to records. FDIC figures show Bank of Jackson Hole eclipsing the \$1 billion deposit mark

in 2021. That left the bank with nearly 27% of market share. As of February the bank holds \$1.6 billion in deposits, Lawton said.

The market leader remains Wells

Fargo, with roughly 30% of the market share and more than \$1.1 billion in deposits as of June 30, 2021. In 2017 Wells Fargo held 47% of deposit market share, according to FDIC reports.

First Republic has moved

rapidly in the market, with market share growing from 2.6% in 2019 to 17.7%, according to the 2021 FDIC report. The growth has corresponded in the same time frame to First Republic deposits in the valley growing from \$57.6 million to \$673 million, a more than tenfold increase.

This all can make for interesting relative outcomes. U.S. Bank, for instance, has seen deposits more than double from \$81.7 million in 2017 to almost \$204 million as of the 2021 FDIC report. In the same time the bank’s deposit market share rose from just over 4% to 5.35%, the FDIC reported.

Another relative perspective can be derived from looking at the growth in deposits held by the nine banks within the Teton County market versus the total out-of-market deposits of those same banks.

From 2019 to 2021, deposits at FDIC banks operating in the valley increased from \$2.21 billion to \$3.81 billion, an increase of roughly 72%.

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During the same time, the deposits held by the same nine institutions outside the Teton County market increased from \$1.85 trillion to \$2.2 trillion, growth of 18%.

Lawton suspects the general trend of increased deposits will begin to level off. Money held in banking accounts doesn't perform well in an inflationary environment. Plus companies may want to start reinvesting capital in their businesses.

"My gut [says] we've probably capped in the liquidity and that will start to recede a little bit," Lawton said. "They will invest in assets and they'll spend it."

Contact Johanna Love at 732-7071 or jlove@jhnewsandguide.com.

*"Resort communities
are doing really well
through COVID."*

— Pete Lawton
BANK OF JACKSON HOLE

Title: Bank deposits surging in wake of pandemic

Author: By Thomas Dewell

Size : 153 Inches Sq Jackson,WY Circulation: 6963

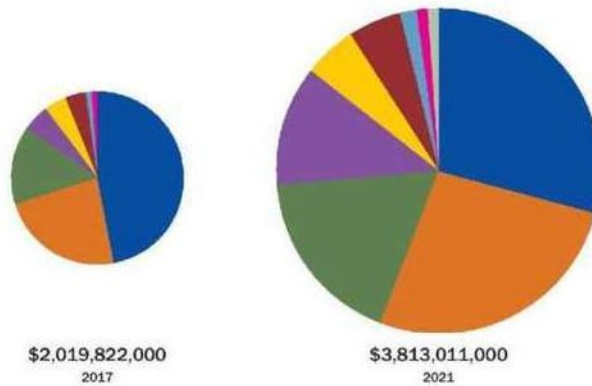
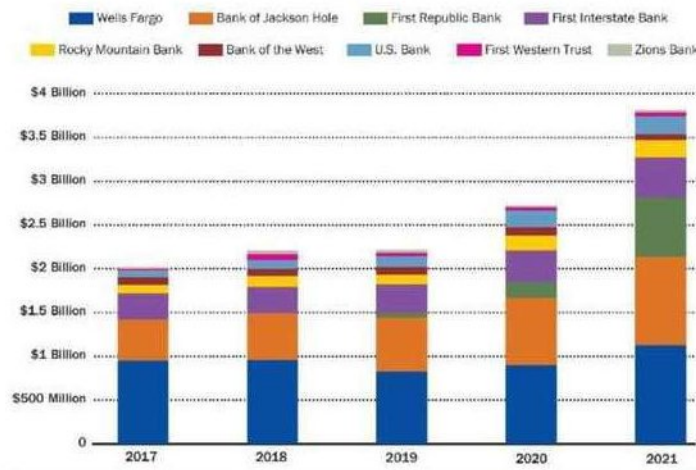
Keywords: bank

TETON COUNTY BANK DEPOSIT MARKET SHARE

| BANK | 2017 | 2021 |
|----------------------|-------|-------|
| WELLS FARGO | 47.07 | 29.93 |
| BANK OF JACKSON HOLE | 23.06 | 26.67 |
| FIRST REPUBLIC* | 0 | 17.66 |
| FIRST INTERSTATE | 14.6 | 12.02 |
| ROCKY MOUNTAIN BANK | 5.03 | 5.13 |
| BANK OF THE WEST | 4.23 | 1.78 |
| U.S. BANK | 4.03 | 5.35 |
| FIRST WESTERN TRUST | 1.04 | 1.13 |
| ZIONS BANK | .94 | .86 |

*First Republic deposit county reports started in 2019.

■ Wells Fargo
 ■ Bank of Jackson Hole
 ■ First Republic Bank
 ■ First Interstate Bank
■ Rocky Mountain Bank
 ■ Bank of the West
 ■ U.S. Bank
 ■ First Western Trust
 ■ Zions Bank

**FIVE YEAR CHANGE IN FDIC DEPOSITS**

Title: Local schools intend to participate in Random Acts of Kindness Week

Author:

Size : 24 Inches Sq Greybull,WY Circulation: 1280

Keywords: bank ~ community involvement / hiring



Local schools intend to participate in Random Acts of Kindness Week

If you want to hear a bit of good news for a change, look no further than 22,000 Wyoming students, 2,000 Wyoming employees, and 100 Wyoming families who all signed up to embrace Random Acts of Kindness Week from February 13-19, 2022.

Thanks to support from The Caring Foundation of Blue Cross Blue Shield and Jonah Bank, the nonprofit Kindness Wyoming was able to send out nearly 500 kits to be utilized by over 25,000 residents of Wyoming. These kits were requested by students, teachers, parents, kids, and employees all across the state. Each kit includes a variety of activities

and challenges to complete acts of kindness during Random Acts of Kindness Week. Families and students can also complete their challenge to be entered into a drawing for a gift card to be used for yet another act of kindness.

Random Acts of Kindness Week is recognized around the world, and is intended to celebrate kindness. Governor Mark Gordon will sign a proclamation for "Wyoming Random Acts of Kindness Week," as well as dozens of local proclamations from cities in Wyoming. In addition, local school superintendents have encouraged schools to find a way to integrate kindness curriculum

and efforts into schools across the state.

Kindness Wyoming also partnered with Braver Angels to provide Kindness Kits to the Wyoming Legislature that included letters encouraging civility from former legislators, drawings from elementary school kids in the state, and custom kindness coins made by students at Pathways Innovation Center in Casper.

Go to www.kindnesswyoming.org or on Facebook and post your favorite acts of kindness with hashtag #kindnesswyoming all one word.

All three schools in Big Horn County School District No. 3 are listed as participants.

*Together, let's
make it happen.*

*Craig
McCandless*

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Title: Federal funding flowing to SD#3

Author: By Nathan Oster

Size : 73 Inches Sq Greybull,WY Circulation: 1280

Keywords: bank ~ community involvement / hiring



Federal funding flowing to SD#3

Latest round adds up to \$2.63 million

By Nathan Oster

Big Horn County School District No. 3 has approved and forwarded to the state an initial plan that outlines how it intends to spend the \$2.63 million in ESSER III funding that it will be receiving from the federal government as part of its American Rescue Plan.

Before approving it, the board held a public hearing during its Jan. 11 meeting to gather input, but no one attended or offered comments on the plan. That being the case, the school district was able to meet the Jan. 18, 2022 deadline for submitting the plan to the state.

This is the third round of federal ESSER funding that the district receives. The first round was included in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020, the second in the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act of 2021.

Each of them have deadlines for when the funding must be spent — for the first round it's Sept. 30,

2022, for the second it's Sept. 30, 2023 and for the third, it's Sept. 30, 2024.

Twenty-percent of the \$2.63 million that Big Horn County School District No. 3 is in line to receive must address the academic impact of learning loss brought on by the pandemic. In real dollars, 20% of the total is \$526,024.

The district's initial plan for that 20% projects \$270,000 for the hiring of a new MTSS teacher and MTSS paraprofessional positions, \$69,500 for after-school programming and \$43,000 in tutoring (GHS/GMS) — in both cases, for use between spring 2022 and spring 2024 — to go along with another \$32,000 in specialized training for staff, \$102,000 for summer programs and \$10,000 for parent resources/training.

As for the remainder of the money, Schlattmann said, "Our plan has a wide variety of other components that we are looking into, including some additional

SCHOOL see Page 6

Title: Federal funding flowing to SD#3

Author: By Nathan Oster

Size : 73 Inches Sq Greybull,WY Circulation: 1280

Keywords: bank ~ community involvement / hiring

SCHOOL: ESSER III funding must be spent by September of 2024

Continued from Page 1

HVAC upgrade projects, heating projects, outdoor seating options, playground and PE upgrades, upgrades to our student computers, and the potential for retention incentives. This is all subject to approval from the state of course and they are looking very closely at how we intend to spend the funds."

All the ESSER III money will need to be spent by Sept. 30, 2024.

Schlattmann emphasized that the district's plan can and likely will change in the months to come.

"We want to be sure we use the funds in the most effective way that will benefit our students and staff," she wrote in an email this week. "We also recognize that our needs could change over the course of the next few years, and we have the ability to adjust our application if that occurs.

"Over the course of the next few years, different projects will come before the board that will be funded via ESSER III, so this just creates the template."

In other Jan. 11 business:

- In personnel matters, the board approved the hiring of Ken Nelson as a

route bus driver and Bobbi Link as a paraprofessional as well as the resignation of elementary teacher Sarah

Bowe. Because she resigned before the end of her contract, the board voted to impose a penalty. Bowe moved back to Wisconsin, where she rejoined her husband Casey, who left the Greybull school district last summer.

- With substitute teachers in great demand, the board approved a plan to reward those who stepped up to help the district between October and December and perhaps provide some incentive for them to do so again in the future.

Board members didn't accept the plan proposed by Business Manager Sara Schlattmann, but rather a modified version that provides a \$1,000 payment to subs who put in more than 10 days during those three months, a \$500 kick-back for those with six to 10 days of service, and a \$100 bonus for those with two to five days of service.

The tiered plan that was initially presented to the board would have been more generous at the bottom tier of the scale. A sub who worked a single day would have been included in the bottom tier and, thus, in line

for a \$300 bonus. Trustee Lynette Murray was the most vocal critic of that aspect of the plan.

Board members deadlocked when asked to consider the amendments, proposed by Murray

and Trustee Pam Flitner. Chairman Ted Menke's vote was needed to break the tie and send it to a final vote on the entire plan. It also passed, with Trustee Todd Dalin casting a dissenting vote. Dalin's preference was for the plan that was originally presented.

- The board accepted the following donations:

- Greybull Elks Lodge

donated \$3,500 for middle school activities;

- Big Horn Federal donated \$300 to the GHS Spanish Club, which provided service for the bank's holiday dinner in December. More than 150 guests attended, the best turnout ever for the bank.

- Doubletree of New Orleans donated \$2,000 to the district as a good-faith gesture stemming from a mixup that left school district employees attending a conference without the four rooms they'd been promised. The school was also refunded the cost of the rooms.



Title: Wyo. firms getting federal funds worth \$23.2 million

Author:

Size : 18 Inches Sq Cheyenne,WY Circulation: 13800

Keywords: bank ~ community involvement / hiring

Wyo. firms getting federal funds worth \$23.2 million

Wyoming firms will get financial assists from the federal government worth about \$23.2 million, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced Wednesday. The money is part of the Biden administration's so-called Build Back Better program.

A small chunk of the money, \$75,000, is going to a business in Laramie County, according to a USDA spokesperson and the agency's online materials. The website of Rabou Farms, the recipient, says it is "a 5th generation family farm located in southeastern Wyoming."

In the biggest portion of the funding actions, USDA said it "recently invested \$20.83 million in five Business & Industry loan guarantees." This went to five banks.

"The recent funds awarded in Wyoming will allow for job creation or retention, while ensuring revenue streams continue," said Janice Blare, Wyoming acting state director, in a statement from USDA.

For instance, the agency said that First Interstate Bank made a loan for the purchase of an industrial machining and welding business, saving 35 jobs and creating 10 new positions.

Banks involved in other projects included First National Bank of Gillette, which lent to a telecommunications company that is deploying broadband services. USDA also supported loans from First Northern Bank of Wyoming, First State Bank of Newcastle and Pinnacle Bank of Wyoming.

The banks did not immediately provide details of their loans. In addition, USDA is making almost \$3 million in grants, which the agency spokesperson said recipients do not need to pay back.