

# Official Newsletter of ICBND THE COMMUNITY BANKER



## FIRST ICBankPAC SPORTING CLAYS EVENT



MAY/JUNE 2026



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# Chairwoman's Remarks

Last week, I had the pleasure of attending ICBankPAC's first-ever Sporting Clay Shoot in Medora. Despite the hot, windy conditions, the event was a tremendous success—and even more importantly, it left us energized and inspired. A highlight of the day was hearing from Governor Armstrong, who delivered a compelling call to action around voter engagement ahead of the June 9th primary election.

While voter participation can sometimes decline in non-presidential election years, Governor Armstrong reminded us that some of the most important decisions impacting our communities happen at the local level. Here in North Dakota, our greatest opportunity to make a meaningful difference lies in our local elections.

Community banks play a vital role as economic drivers in our small towns, and that success is closely tied to strong, business-minded leadership. From County Commissioners and City Council Members to our state legislators, having leaders who understand and support local businesses is essential to helping our communities grow and thrive.

This June, we have an important opportunity to elect leaders who not only represent our values but also bring real-world business experience to the table. With term limits resulting in the loss of significant institutional knowledge within our state legislature, our participation is more critical than ever.

I encourage each of you to take part in the upcoming election—and just as importantly, to inspire others to do the same. Let's work together to motivate our employees, board members, and customers to get out and vote. By showing up, we can help shape a stronger future for our communities.

Happy voting!

Sarah



**SARAH GETZLAFF**  
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## ICBND UPCOMING EVENTS

### JUNE

- 15-19 ▶ School of Agriculture Lending - Bismarck
- 17 ▶ Essentials of Banking - Session 6, Virtual
- 24 ▶ Universal Banker Certification - Session 4, Virtual
- 24-25 ▶ Leadership Exchange Summer Session - Dickinson & Sentinel Butte

### JULY

- 1 ▶ ICBA ThinkTECH Accelerator, Virtual
- 31 ▶ Community Bankers for Compliance - Regulatory Update, Virtual

### SEPTEMBER

- 21-23 ▶ ICBND 58TH ANNUAL CONVENTION, MEDORA

### OCTOBER

- 8 ▶ Advanced Credit Training - Session 1, Virtual
- 20-21 ▶ Community Bankers for Compliance - Fall Session, Bismarck
- 23 ▶ Community Bankers for Compliance - Regulatory Update, Virtual
- 29 ▶ Advanced Credit Training - Session 2, Virtual

FOR DETAILED EVENT INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER,  
PLEASE VISIT [ICBND.COM](http://ICBND.COM)

For information on how to place an ad in *The Community Banker*, contact Rebecca at ICBND by calling 701-258-7121, or by emailing [rebeccap@icbnd.com](mailto:rebeccap@icbnd.com)

Share your exciting news with us. Submit your news about new hires, promotions, and press releases to Rebecca at [rebeccap@icbnd.com](mailto:rebeccap@icbnd.com)



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*The Independent Community Bank Services, Inc. (ICBS, Inc.) was formed in August 1989 to create an organization that would help any bank provide the best financial services for their community. ICBS, Inc. provides our member banks with a comprehensive menu of cutting-edge products that make running a card program easy and efficient. ICBS, Inc. is a bank service corporation serving the Independent Community Banks of North Dakota (ICBND), and is governed by its own Board of Directors.*

# President's Remarks

I hope this newsletter finds you well and enjoying the recent weeks of warm weather. I also hope that if you have not received a shot of rain in the past week, you get a good one soon. Mother Nature certainly made things interesting at our first ICBank PAC Sporting Clay Shoot in Medora, bringing 95-degree temperatures and stronger than average wind gusts. Despite the wind, bankers, associate members, and Governor Armstrong had a great afternoon of camaraderie, friendly competition, and great conversation. ICBND is grateful to the Governor for joining us and to all the bankers who took part in the day. It was a fun kickstart to a summer full of exciting events.

Next week, we'll be hosting our annual Ag Lending School in Bismarck, June 15-19, at the BSC Energy Center of Excellence. The week has a packed agenda, including sessions on how to speak to customers, title products, livestock and crop commodity outlooks, a hands-on AgBank simulation, appraisals, and so much more. Attendees will also tour the USDA ARS Northern Great Plains Research Lab in Mandan and attend a Bismarck Larks baseball game with ICBND board members. It's not too late to sign up – reach out to Jessie or Rebecca ASAP to register.

Later this month, ICBND Leadership Exchange participants will head to Dickinson and Sentinel Butte (June 24-25). The summer session of this legacy program will feature a tour of Baker Boy in Dickinson and the Home on the Range in Sentinel Butte, plus sessions on navigating conflict and the true marks of leadership. Again, there is still time to sign up, and I would love to see you there!

We have some great virtual sessions scheduled for summer, too: an installment of the Essentials of Banking series (June 17), and session 4 of the Universal Banker Certification (June 24). Finally, on July 1 we are partnering with state associations in South Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Iowa to offer one of ICBA's ThinkTECH Accelerator sessions.

We'll wrap up the summer with everyone's favorite: the ICBND Annual Convention on September 21-23 in Medora, ND. Registration is now open at [www.icbnd.com](http://www.icbnd.com), and we'll release the full agenda soon. Fans of Teddy Roosevelt, presidential libraries, and exclusive experiences will want to take note: the Chairman's Banquet will take place in the just-opened Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library. We'll conclude the evening with a private, after-hours opportunity to explore the library. It's going to be an incredible time!

It's going to be a busy summer at ICBND and across the state. As America celebrates its 250th birthday and you enjoy time with your family and friends, let's pause to appreciate the incredible communities and experiences North Dakota has to offer. So many of these opportunities exist because a community banker cared. Thank you, and I'll see you soon!

Sincerely,

Alexis



**ALEXIS BAXLEY**  
ICBND President

## ICBND HOSTS WOMEN'S SUMMIT FEATURING OLYMPIC MEDALIST CARLY PATTERSON

In April, ICBND hosted its Women's Summit. It was a wonderful two days of networking, informative panel discussions, engaging sessions, and wrapped up with an inspirational keynote from U.S. Olympic medal winner, Carly Patterson.

Attendees also had the opportunity to update their professional portrait courtesy of Layn Mudder of LPT Images. Plus, women could "shop" ICB Marketing Solutions as they had samples for ladies to try on, touch and feel.

Thank you to all our attendees for making these two days fun and memorable. Also, thank you to our panelists, speakers and moderators for sharing your knowledge and wisdom.

Lastly, thank you to our presenting sponsors for helping make this event possible: Brady Martz and ND Banks Benefit Trust.



## ICBND MEMBERS ATTEND ICBA CAPITAL SUMMIT IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

In April, ICBND members attended the ICBA Capital Summit in Washington, D.C. The group heard from top financial regulators and spent time on Capitol Hill meeting with North Dakota’s federal delegation.

Thank you to Senators Hoeven and Cramer and Congresswoman Fedorchak, and their staffs, for taking the time to discuss issues like market structure/the Clarity Act, small business data collection, ACRE and the Farm Bill, tiered regulation, and the Credit Card Competition Act.



## LET’S BUILD YOUR NON-INTEREST INCOME

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## BORAAS NAMED ICBA'S 40 UNDER 40

ICBA recently announced the 2026 Community Bank Leaders 40 Under 40 list. These individuals are making an impact at work and in their communities.

Of the 40 individuals highlighted, ICBND would like to recognize and congratulate Kailey Boraas, VP Trust Officer from First Western Bank.



At First Western Bank & Trust, Kailey Boraas champions women in leadership and continuous learning. In 2024, she cofounded the community bank's annual Western Women in Leadership program and is an active mentor and advocate for education.

## FDIC DIRECTORS' COLLEGE PROVIDES VALUABLE INSIGHTS FOR BANK DIRECTORS



In May, bank directors from across the state gathered for the 2026 FDIC Directors' College at the Radisson Hotel in Bismarck, a one-day educational seminar hosted by the FDIC.

The seminar featured presentations from FDIC subject matter experts who shared timely information on key issues impacting the banking industry. The event provided attendees with a unique opportunity to engage directly with regulators, gain valuable perspectives on emerging risks and trends, and strengthen their understanding of board governance responsibilities.

The Directors' College continues to serve as an important educational resource, equipping bank leaders with the knowledge and tools needed to support their institutions and communities.



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## ICBANKPAC HOSTS INAUGURAL SPORTING CLAYS EVENT IN MEDORA



In May, ICBND members gathered for the first ICBankPAC Sporting Clays event in Medora, ND. Attendees had the opportunity to shoot clay pigeons alongside fellow bankers, associate members, and special guest Governor Kelly Armstrong.

Afterwards, Governor Armstrong spoke at the Regional Meeting on the importance of voting in the upcoming June 9 primary, his recently proposed budget guidelines, and other important current topics.

Thank you to all our participants for making this first event a huge success.

# THE *directors* CLUB

## 2025 DIRECTORS CLUB

First State Bank

Security First Bank of ND

### **ABOUT THE DIRECTORS CLUB**

*Banks whose board of directors achieve 100% participation in ICBankPAC prior to September 1 each year (individual contributions of \$100 or more per director) will receive special recognition as members of the Directors Club.*

*Directors Club members are recognized in listings on the ICBND website, at the ICBND Annual Convention, in the Community Banker e-newsletter, and at various ICBND and ICBankPAC meetings and events.*

# ICBankPAC

## ICBND WELCOMES NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBER

ICBND is pleased to announce our newest associate member, FM Title.

FM Title offers title insurance, cash closings, abstract and title services, and owner encumbrance reports in North Dakota and Minnesota.

Check out their website at [www.fmtitle.com](http://www.fmtitle.com).

Welcome FM Title!



## RENT THE ICB SERVICES' MOBILE ATM THIS SUMMER

The ICBND Mobile ATM trailer was created for the use of promoting local member banks. The mobile ATM lets your bank participate in events such as fairs and school games, and be an important financial resource in situations like disaster relief. Our mobile ATM can meet you whenever and wherever you need to serve your customers.



### HOW IT WORKS

- The trailer is available to all ICBND Member Banks
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- All vault cash will be re-deposited to your bank account on the next business day

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## SERVICE: THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY BANK DIFFERENCE

In the months that have passed since we came together at ICBA LIVE, I've been reflecting on one key sentiment that came across loud and clear: Community banks have a unique and profound impact on the lives of those we serve.

At LIVE, retired U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Travis Mills, a quadruple amputee, shared his story of perseverance and courage, inspiring everyone in the room. But an electric current shot through us all when he indicated that the work he does today to support families of military veterans has been made possible by his local community bank. Everyone sitting in the crowd made a connection in real time that the work they do is vital to helping humanity.

That truth is reflected in the way in which we conduct business. One of my favorite things to do while traveling is to meet with bankers in their community. The story is the same in every market: Community banks go the extra mile to serve.

I recently met with a banker in Colorado who recounted stories of the businesses his bank supported. From the college and hospital to local restaurants and farmers, he knew their histories and current challenges. Community bankers might take this approach for granted, but this is the side of relationship banking that makes the difference. The difference is the relationships, the history and the desire to invest and support the long-term viability of the community, one small business at a time. Lenders of choice

Shortly after this visit in Colorado, I had a meeting with the head of the National Economic Council. We went back to the data: Community banks fund 60% of U.S. small business loans and 80% of the banking industry's agricultural loans. While this aggregate information tells a story, it doesn't explain that we do it because it's what's right for our communities.

That's why leaders need to hear the stories of community bank service. Hearing them reveals, without a doubt, that community banks are the hearts of their communities, and their communities have their hearts. That love for what we do and who we serve transcends day-to-day business to ensure we make a real difference.

At ICBA, this is what we're fighting for and standing up to support through advocacy, education and innovation. We strive to bring you the solutions that help you make a difference every day. Just as LIVE's "Anchored in Purpose" theme said, the work community banks do matters, and we must continue amplifying that message for all who need to hear it.



**REBECA ROMERO RAINEY**  
ICBA President and CEO



Rebeca Romero Rainey is President & CEO of the Independent Community Bankers of America (ICBA), the leading advocacy organization exclusively representing community banks.



**ALICE P. FRAZIER**  
ICBA Chair



Alice P. Frazier is president and CEO of Potomac Bank in Charles Town, West Virginia.

## REDEFINING SUCCESSION AS LEGACY

In my experience, community banks sell for one of the following reasons: Board succession has not been strategically planned, executive staff and leadership succession have not been strategically planned, or the market has taken a turn. Two of the three focus on preparing bank leaders for the future, making succession planning a critical component of a community bank's long-term viability.

But to do it well, succession planning takes work. It requires hard, transparent discussions with the board and executive staff. It relies on open conversations about retirement horizons, and it means the careful cultivation of the next generation of community bankers. A speaker at last year's Independent Community Bankers Association of New Mexico annual meeting summed up this concept with a visual: the quarterback backup chart. It showed Patrick Mahomes, the quarterback for the Kansas City Chiefs, and three different backup quarterbacks, along with what skills were necessary for them to cultivate to replace Mahomes.

### DEVELOPING A LEGACY

It's that level of transparency and thoughtful work that needs to go into succession planning for community banks. We need to equip our teams with the experiences they need to get to the next level. Succession planning is about investing in others, because what we invest in others is the legacy we leave our banks.

When we redefine succession planning as creating a legacy in people, it changes how we view it. Our work in cultivating the next generation means that we are building our bench and preparing our backup quarterbacks to get in the game. It's about being open and strategic in how we ensure the future is secured.

The root word of succession is success, which explicitly tells us that it's our job as leaders to ensure our banks continue to thrive. So, as you read this month's issue and peruse the community bank leaders honored as our 40 Under 40 winners, consider ways you can empower your teams. Get them engaged with ICBA Advocacy activities. Expose them to the sessions offered by ICBA Innovation. Use ICBA Education to support career development planning. Each of these efforts helps to shore up the future of your bank through its people.

At the end of the day, instead of thinking about succession planning as a chore, let's look at it in the context of the legacies we're leaving. Our job is to develop the people who make our banks flourish today and will ensure our legacy into the future.

## FIVE BENEFITS OF DIGITAL WALLET ADOPTION

Digital wallets are now the transactional platform of choice. A Worldpay study projected that by 2030, digital wallets will be used in 44% of all U.S. e-commerce and 26% of in-store transactions. At the same time, value moved via digital wallets continues to climb, amounting to \$10.6 trillion in 2025, a 14% increase over the previous year.

With numbers like these, community banks must chase top-of-wallet status to enjoy these benefits:

**Increased revenue:** Top-of-wallet status leads to higher card spending. A PYMNTS study revealed a consumer’s primary card has a 58% higher monthly spend than a secondary card. And because digital wallet transactions are contactless and tokenized, they lead to an interchange lift.

**Improved security:** According to the Association for Financial Professionals’ (AFP) 2026 Payments Fraud and Control Survey Report, mobile wallets are one of the least-likely payment types to experience fraud (2%), making them “comparatively infrequent targets.” Tokenization also supports reduced fraud and lower dispute costs.

**Faster, more cost-effective activation:** Because cards used in a digital wallet can be provisioned instantly, they have immediate activation, creating a real-time offering that also decreases issuance costs.

**Enhanced customer experience:** Digital wallets reduce friction, creating a more streamlined customer experience. At the same time, they deepen engagement and retention through new daily customer touchpoints.

**Stronger competitive positioning:** Regional banks and fintechs will be vying for top-of-wallet status, and with a digital wallet focus, you demonstrate that you offer both the technology and relationships to drive modern payments.

To reap these benefits, you need only to take small steps to drive adoption. For instance, incorporate “Add to Wallet” as a call to action in your mobile app and post-issuance emails to support your customers in integrating their cards. Or consider launching an in-branch campaign using QR codes to help your customers easily merge your card into their wallet of choice. Or, finally, offer a small (\$5 to \$10) statement credit for the first digital wallet transaction to drive wallet use. These and other small shifts will help empower your customers to use your card in their digital wallets, a game changer in today’s landscape.

As digital wallet use continues to climb, adoption will take your card from a standard-issue piece of plastic to a robust digital payments enabler. For your benefit and your customers’, now’s the time to do everything in your power so your card lands at the top.



**JACOB EISEN**  
CEO of ICBA Payments



Jacob Eisen is CEO of ICBA Payments and its wholly owned subsidiary TCM Bank.



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## LET’S TALK TELLER CASH RECYCLERS



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**DILLON WIEDEMANN**  
Senior Vice President  
The Baker Group



Dillon Wiedemann is a senior vice president of the Financial Strategies Group at The Baker Group, ICBA Securities' endorsed broker-dealer.

## PLAYING UNDER PAR

*With the book price for bond portfolios having dropped for the first time in 17 years, community banks should take a page out of the golfer's playbook.*

One thing that might have gone unnoticed over the past few months is the book price for the average community bank's bond portfolio. It has dipped below par (100 cents on the dollar), according to the more than 700 financial institutions that process bond accounting reports with The Baker Group, though individual bank results may vary. More surprisingly, this hasn't been the case since 2009.

When the Fed began raising rates in 2022, prices on the universe of bonds swung from premiums to discounts. Portfolio managers admirably continued adding bonds to the portfolio in the face of steep unrealized losses. Today, they're being rewarded for that faith as bond portfolio yields sit at 14-year highs and book prices are below par for the first time in roughly 17 years. Given that we find ourselves in not-recently-charted territory, it's a good time to examine what this means for the bond portfolio and some lessons we can learn from the game of golf.

### PROTECTING THE SCORECARD

It's not often I find myself playing under par in golf, but one key to keeping that streak going for as many holes as possible is playing smart and managing risk. Just as taking too much risk in golf can turn a bad shot into a bad hole, buying the wrong bond or reaching for yield at the wrong time can wipe out years of progress.

As fixed-income portfolio managers, we don't have the benefit of uncapped gain potential like stocks do. Our yield can fluctuate based on prepayments, but we have a limit on what our investments can earn. That's why taking too much credit risk is an asymmetrical risk: The maximum upside is capped to the yield we earn, but the maximum downside is total loss of principal.

Our philosophy has always been to take credit risk on the loan side, where you draw from experience in evaluating credit risk, but you're also better compensated for taking that risk.

Reaching for yield in the bond portfolio can often mean taking on unknown risks. In today's world of artificial intelligence, those potential risks are only growing. As a recent example, consider owning a corporate bond in IBM. IBM is a longstanding titan of Fortune 500 companies, but who could've predicted that a new AI coding tool would send the stock tumbling over fears that it could wipe out a strong revenue-generating business line for IBM? I'm certainly not calling for IBM to begin defaulting on its debt, but it's an example of how quickly the picture can change and why adding bonds with agency or government guarantees protect the portfolio against credit risk, even if it means a little less yield.

### CLUB SELECTION MATTERS

A golfer doesn't win with just one club, and neither does a balance sheet manager. As portfolio managers continue to book bonds at discount prices, the following positive things can happen:

1. In falling-rate scenarios, institutions should see the yield on their bond portfolios drift up. This is driven by faster prepayments causing quicker discount accretion to par as cash flow comes back sooner than was anticipated when the bonds were purchased. This is an excellent hedge against the margin erosion that typically happens in falling-rate environments.
2. Total return potential should improve. A discount bond has more positive convexity than the same bond purchased at a premium. Imagine a callable agency purchased at 100 cents on the dollar. That bond's price appreciation potential is limited to basically zero, because anything above par would be considered in-the-money to be called away. Now imagine the same callable agency purchased at 94 cents on the dollar. This bond has six points of price appreciation potential before getting to a price above par where it can be called away.

*Continued from Page 14.*

But club selection matters. An area of weakness for discount bonds is in rising-rate scenarios. As rates go up, we get less cash flow than anticipated, and the discount accretion slows down, causing our yield to drift lower. Few, if any, would have rising rates as their base case scenario, but it's important to acknowledge all scenarios as an effective portfolio manager. Continue to add discounts and focus on structure as you make investment selections, but if you start to notice that your portfolio is full of discounts, don't be afraid to diversify by adding bonds that have premiums. Just as discounts can offer positive yield drift in falling-rate scenarios, premiums can offer positive yield drift in rising-rate scenarios. Adding both premiums and discounts gives the portfolio a natural yin and yang as rates move in either direction. It also protects the portfolio from being overly exposed to one scenario.

As I wrap this column up, it's time to come clean and admit that I stole these points of wisdom from a far better golfer than myself. I would give credit, but the name conveniently escapes me, as the advice was borrowed without asking.

Even so, it's the first time in a long time that bond portfolios have been positioned with these yields and book prices. Now is not the time to start playing like we need to make up strokes. Continue to focus on building a portfolio with a disciplined strategy, and you should continue to reap the rewards.



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**MICKEY MARSHALL**  
Vice President and  
Regulatory Counsel,  
ICBA



Mickey Marshall is vice president  
and regulatory counsel for ICBA.

## REOPENING THE DOOR TO DENOVO BANKS

*A healthy pipeline of new community bank charters keeps the industry competitive and helps support local economies. Learn what ICBA is doing to make sure new bank formation doesn't stall out.*

For years, new banks opened across the country at a steady pace, with between 100 and 200 de novo charters coming online each year. Today, that number has been reduced to 10 or 20, if that. New banks have long kept the community banking industry competitive and given consumers more choice. Absent new bank formation, there is reduced credit availability within a more concentrated banking system.

The sharp decline in de novo bank formation is of particular concern to community banks, because most de novo banks start as community banks. Local organizers build them to serve local customers, and they grow on relationships. When fewer of these banks open, communities lose options and access. The shift traces back to the rules put in place after the 2008 financial crisis, when the Dodd-Frank Act changed the rules for starting and running a bank.

That's when the economics of starting a bank changed. It used to take single-digit millions to get a de novo off the ground. Raising \$7 million to \$9 million was enough to get approved and open the doors. Today, that starting point is closer to \$25 million or \$30 million, and regulators often want more. That kind of upfront capital makes the math harder, especially when a new bank isn't expected to turn a profit for three to five years. In addition, regulators have heightened the supervisory expectations for de novo banks in ways that do not correspond to the level of risk and that are not appropriate for institutions just starting out.

That higher barrier has thinned the field. Fewer groups are willing to commit that level of capital and wait that long for a return, which often doesn't come until the bank is sold or goes public. As a result, most new bank activity tends to cluster in larger markets where growth can support those numbers. Smaller communities lose the chance to build new banks that fund local businesses and serve local borrowers.

### FEWER BANKS, FEWER CHOICES

Each year, the number of bank charters declines as banks merge and the industry consolidates. According to law firm Reed Smith, more than 150 bank mergers and acquisitions were announced in 2025 alone. The industry has gone from more than 14,000 banks at its peak to around 4,000 today. That means fewer choices for customers, many of whom suddenly find themselves working with a larger entity after dealing with a community bank for years or even decades.

Many of these deals also lead to branch consolidation or closures as the combined institution looks for scale. These realities affect smaller and rural communities the most. Fewer branches mean less access to services and fewer local relationships. Without new banks to replace those that disappear, the community banking sector keeps shrinking. Over time, that raises a bigger question about what's left if the number of charters keeps falling year after year.

This trend won't magically reverse itself. A healthy pipeline of new charters keeps our industry competitive, supports local lending and ensures communities of all sizes have access to relationship-based banking. Regulators need to recognize the role new community banks play and create a path that makes formation possible again. Put simply, if we want a strong and diverse banking system, we can't allow new bank formation to stall out.

**NEW BANKS IN ACTION**

Even with the regulatory headwinds, there are some bright spots. Locality Bank in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, is one example. Cofounder Keith Costello and his team raised the capital, worked through the approvals and opened a bank focused on local businesses. Locality Bank combines relationship banking with digital tools, but at its core, it does what community banks have always done. It lends to and supports businesses in its market.

Walden Mutual Bank in Concord, New Hampshire, took a different route. It's a mutual bank, owned by its customers instead of shareholders, and the first of its kind to be formed in decades. To get there, organizers created a new capital structure and raised about \$24 million from more than 200 community investors. This community-owned bank lends to local farms and food businesses and keeps that capital close to home.

**TAKING IT RIGHT TO CAPITOL HILL**

Here at ICBA, we're working on this issue on several fronts. We've presented the challenges of de novo bank formation to Capitol Hill, including in a hearing before the House Financial Services Committee, and we're supporting legislation aimed at easing some of the capital requirements tied to new charters. We've also met with FDIC leadership, including chairman Travis Hill, to raise our concerns directly with regulatory agencies. Regulators want to limit failures, and higher capital requirements are one way to do that. The trade-off is that fewer new banks get started.

By their very nature, new entrants are usually small community banks, so the potential losses from a failure are limited. At the same time, de novo banks stoke competition and bring fresh ideas into the market. That benefits customers and communities and drives industry-wide improvements.

ICBA members that want to get involved can support the legislation and stay in touch with their representatives to keep this issue in front of policymakers.

Many new community banks also come from experienced bankers who decide to start something new, often after a merger. That pipeline matters, and we need more of it.

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**SCOTT ANCHIN**  
Senior Vice President,  
Strategic Initiatives & Policy



Scott Anchin is vice president of senior operational risk and payments policy at ICBA.

## WHEN YOUR BANK IS WHERE THE MONEY LANDS

Community banks have built strong fraud-prevention practices around customers who are sending money out. Tellers are trained to spot unusual wires. Verification thresholds catch large transfers. Conversations at the counter give customers groomed by fraudsters the chance to reconsider transactions. This work has long put community banks on the front lines of fraud prevention, but it captures only one side of the problem.

The other side is inbound activity. Investment fraud, romance scams and online extortion schemes all produce money that must land somewhere before it can move on. Sometimes, it lands at community banks.

A fraud network recruits a money mule, someone to move money on their behalf either knowingly or unknowingly, through a job posting, a relationship or coercion. The mule opens an account, presenting documentation that looks routine. The account receives inbound transfers from victims at other institutions, sent at the fraudster's direction. Within days or hours, the funds move, often to cryptocurrency exchanges or other accounts in a layered chain. By the time the originating bank or law enforcement traces the funds back, the money has typically moved on.

Account opening can move faster at smaller banks than at large institutions, and fraud networks have noticed. Inbound activity runs against a smaller volume base at smaller institutions, which cuts both ways for detection. Much fraud detection technology was built around outbound patterns.

Federal authorities have been documenting the pattern. FinCEN issued an advisory in August 2025 describing how recruited money mules open accounts across multiple institutions to receive and move illicit proceeds. The agency issued additional guidance in September 2025 covering similar schemes targeting individual victims, where mules typically take a percentage fee for moving funds. The Department of Justice's annual Money Mule Initiative has acted against thousands of mules in each recent cycle.

A few operational priorities deserve attention. Account opening reviews should weigh the indicators federal authorities have flagged, including inconsistent occupation information, addresses that match other recently opened accounts, and documentation that suggests third-party preparation. Transaction monitoring should give inbound activity the same scrutiny as outbound. Incoming wires that are quickly followed by transfers to cryptocurrency exchanges or money services businesses are the clearest indicator of a mule account in use.

Community banks should consider building or expanding an active 314(b) practice, one of the strongest tools available, as information sharing lets institutions coordinate directly when suspicious patterns appear. Filings should name the suspected mule, describe the inbound and outbound pattern and reference the relevant typology source so law enforcement has what it needs to act.

Community banks that build inbound detection into their fraud posture make these schemes harder to run. The attention to individual accounts that defines community banking is exactly what this work requires.

## GET IN WALLETS: HOW COMMUNITY BANKS CAN DRIVE DIGITAL WALLET ADOPTION AND WHY IT MATTERS

Digital wallets are the transactional platform of choice in today's payments landscape. In fact, a Worldpay study projected that by 2030, digital wallets will be used in nearly half (44%) of all U.S. e-commerce and 26% of in-store transactions. At the same time, value moved via digital wallets continues to climb, amounting to \$10.6 trillion in 2025, a 14% increase over the previous year.

Five ways digital wallet card use benefits community banks

With numbers like these, community banks must continue a push toward top-of-wallet status to benefit your bank in the following ways:

1. **Increased revenue:** Top-of-wallet status leads to higher card spending: A PYMNTS study revealed a consumer's primary card has a 58% higher monthly spend than a secondary card. In addition, because digital wallet transactions are contactless and tokenized, they also lead to an interchange lift.
2. **Improved security:** According to the Association for Financial Professionals' (AFP) 2026 Payments Fraud and Control Survey Report, mobile wallets are one of the least likely payment types to experience fraud (2%), making them "comparatively infrequent targets." Tokenization also supports reduced fraud and lower dispute costs.
3. **Faster, more cost-effective activation:** Because cards used in a digital wallet can be provisioned instantly, they have immediate activation, creating a real-time offering that also decreases issuance costs.
4. **Enhanced customer experience:** Digital wallets reduce friction, creating a more streamlined customer experience. At the same time, they deepen engagement and retention through new daily customer touchpoints.
5. **Stronger competitive positioning:** Regional banks and fintechs will be vying for top-of-wallet status, and with a digital wallet focus, you demonstrate that you offer both the technology and relationships to drive modern payments.

### TIPS FOR DRIVING TOP-OF-WALLET STATUS

To reap these benefits, you need only take small steps to drive adoption. For instance, incorporate "Add to Wallet" as a call to action in your mobile app and post-issuance emails to support your customers in integrating their cards. Or consider launching an in-branch campaign leveraging QR codes to help your customers easily merge your card into their wallet of choice. Or finally, offer a small (\$5-\$10) statement credit for the first digital wallet transaction to drive wallet use. These and other small shifts will help empower your customers to leverage your card in their digital wallets, a game changer in today's landscape.

As digital wallet use continues to climb, adoption will take your card from a standard-issue piece of plastic to a robust digital payments enabler. For your benefit and your customers, now's the time to do everything in your power, so your card lands at the top.



**JACOB EISEN**  
CEO of ICBA Payments



Jacob Eisen is CEO of ICBA Payments and its wholly owned subsidiary TCM Bank.



INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY BANKS  
of NORTH DAKOTA

# SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURAL LENDING

**June 15-19, 2026**

**National Energy Center of Excellence, at BSC  
Bismarck, North Dakota**

# SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURAL LENDING

## 2026 Course Schedule

### MONDAY, JUNE 15

12:30pm - 1:00pm	Registration
1:00pm - 1:45pm	Welcome & Class Introductions..... Jessie Pfaff - ICBND
1:45pm - 3:15pm	How to Speak to Your Customers: Addressing Stress Levels, Attitude & Reaction..... Mark Holkup - Former Farm Mgmt Education Instructor
3:15pm - 3:30pm	Break
3:30pm - 4:45pm	Which Title Product is Right for my Transaction..... Nick Hacker - The Title Team

### TUESDAY, JUNE 16

8:30am - 9:30am	State Banking Update - State Exams..... Corey Krebs - ND DFI & Ryan Spah - ND DFI
9:30am - 9:45am	Break
9:45am - 12:00pm	FSA Farm Loan Programs - Direct & Guaranteed Loans..... Ryan Lindbom - FSA; Holly Heimark - FSA; Lisa Menne - FSA
12:00pm - 1:00pm	Lunch at BSC
1:00pm - 2:00pm	Farm Bill Update - Projected ARC/PLC Payments..... Bryon Parman - NDSU
2:00pm - 2:15pm	Break
2:15pm - 3:30pm	Livestock Market Outlook..... Tim Petry - NDSU
3:45pm - 4:45pm	Crop Commodity Outlook..... Randy Martinson - Martinson Ag Risk Management
5:35pm - 10:00pm	Bismarck Larks vs. Minot Hot Tots Baseball Game

### WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17

8:00am - 12:15pm	AgBank Sim with Breaks..... Ryan Larsen - Utah State University
12:15pm - 1:00pm	Lunch at BSC
1:00pm - 1:45pm	AgBank Sim Recap and C's of Credit..... Ryan Larsen - Utah State University
1:45pm - 2:00pm	Break
2:00pm - 3:30pm	Agricultural Loans..... John Schroeder - Dakota Law Group
3:30pm - 3:45pm	Break
3:45pm - 5:00pm	Bankruptcy Preparedness - What You Need to Know..... John Schroeder - Dakota Law Group

### THURSDAY, JUNE 18

8:30am - 9:30am	Crop Insurance Importance..... Curt Christofferson - NAU Country Insurance
9:30am - 10:00am	Lenders Perspective on Loan Guarantees..... Todd Neurohr - Security First Bank of North Dakota
10:00am - 10:15am	Break
10:15am - 11:15am	Livestock Risk Protection..... Tyler Schau - AgMarket.net
11:15am - 12:00pm	Environmental Services Program..... Scott Ressler - ND Stockmen's Association
12:00pm - 1:00pm	Lunch at BSC
1:00pm - 1:15pm	Depart for Tour
1:15pm - 3:30pm	Tour of USDA ARS Northern Great Plains Research Lab 1701 10th Ave SW, Mandan..... John Hendrickson - Northern Great Plains Research Lab
6:00pm	Dinner at Stonehome Brewing Company

### FRIDAY, JUNE 19

8:30am - 9:30am	Appraisals, Valuations & Trends..... Scott Steffes - Steffes Group
9:30am - 10:30am	The AI Culture: Are We Ready..... Doug Johnson - Johnson Ag Outlook, LLC
10:30am - 10:45am	Break
10:45am - 11:45am	Closing Keynote..... Doug Goehring - ND Agriculture Commissioner
12:00pm	Dismissal - Lunch not provided



**REGISTER TODAY!**  
Scan the QR Code or  
register online at [www.icbnd.com](http://www.icbnd.com)

# LEADERSHIP EXCHANGE

## SUMMER SESSION

### JUNE 24-25, 2026

Join us for the Summer Session of the Leadership Exchange. Both Lead Forward and Emerging Leader groups will convene for two days of learning, networking and growth.

#### AGENDA

**JUNE 24, 2026 – DICKINSON, ND**

**6:30 pm (MT) – Welcome Dinner, Axe Throwing & Golf Simulator at Phat Fish Brewing**  
(1031 Villard St W, Dickinson, ND 58601)

*Phat Fish Brewing is Dickinson's hometown brewery and pizzeria, where every pint is brewed and every pizza is baked in-house. Attendees will also be able to try their hand at axe throwing and the golf simulator.*

**JUNE 25, 2026 – DICKINSON, ND & SENTINEL BUTTE, ND**

**8:30am – 11am (MT) – Tour of Baker Boy in Dickinson**  
(170 Gta Drive, Dickinson, ND 58601)

*As a manufacturer of premium bakery products for foodservice, bakery, C-store, Supermarket, and private label customers, Baker Boy makes their word their pledge and their handshake their commitment. On this tour you will hear from Baker Boy President, Guy Moos, and learn about the company's history, culture and what it's like to work with the Baker Boy team of customer-first experts dedicated to customer success.*

**11:00am – 12pm (MT) – Drive to Home On The Range in Sentinel Butte, ND**  
(16351 I-94, Sentinel Butte, ND 58564)

*Directions: Take I94 Exit 7 for Home on the Range and head north. Meet at the Alwin C. Carus Building.*

**12:00pm – 1:00pm (MT) – Lunch**

**1:00pm – 2:00pm (MT) – Kelly Hoeven, BradyMartz**  
"How to Navigate Conflict & Communicating with Impact"

*Conflict is inevitable—miscommunication isn't. How to Navigate Conflict and Communicating with Impact equips professionals with the tools to turn tense moments into productive conversations. This session goes beyond theory, offering real-world strategies to manage difficult interactions, de-escalate conflict, and communicate with clarity and confidence.*

**2:00pm – 3:00pm (MT) – Larry Williams,**  
"Don't Act Like a Leader, Be a Leader"

*Don't Act Like a Leader. Be a Leader isn't your typical leadership seminar. Led by Larry Williams, a 21-year banking veteran, CEO, and Executive Consultant, this transformative experience challenges the outdated notion that leadership is about performance and posturing. Instead, it invites professionals to embrace authenticity, vulnerability, and service as the true marks of leadership. Through candid insights, compelling storytelling, and practical frameworks, Larry helps participants confront the insecurities, isolation, and expectations that often drive us to "act" like leaders—while offering a clear path to becoming one. Whether you're a seasoned executive or an emerging leader, this course will shift your mindset, deepen your impact, and help you lead with purpose.*

**3:00pm – 5:00pm (MT) – Tour of Home On The Range**

*Home On The Range is a therapeutic and working ranch located in rural western North Dakota. The wholesome and safe environment is the perfect place to offer hope and a second chance to children who have experienced trauma in their lives. The facility provides education, therapy, spiritual guidance and recreational and work activities. Home On The Range is licensed by the State of North Dakota as a Qualified Residential Treatment Program and nationally accredited by the Council of Accreditation to help boys and girls, ages 12-17, and has helped children and their families since 1950.*



#### HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS

Hampton Inn & Suites  
110 14th Street W, Dickinson  
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ThinkTECH Accelerator

# SHAPING THE FUTURE OF COMMUNITY BANK INNOVATION



Be a part of shaping the future of community bank innovation. Join us for a 3.5-hour session via Zoom to hear from emerging bank technology solutions poised to change the way your bank and its customers do business. Become more efficient, competitive, and profitable by attending these sessions designed to make your bank more strategic and shape the solutions of the future.

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 1, 2026 - 9:00AM**  
VIRTUAL | FREE TO ATTEND  
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## 2026 ACCELERATOR PROGRAM 11 COHORT



### CLOX AI

Praveen Mamidi,  
Founder & CEO  
praveen@clox.ai  
www.clox.ai

*Clox AI detects AI-generated and manipulated documents while automating workflows to identify tampering, forgery, and deepfakes.*



### FINGOAL

David Nohe,  
Founder & CEO  
david@fingoyal.com  
www.fingoyal.com

*FinGoal offers an insights platform that enriches transaction data to build user profiles and deliver personalized, transaction-based calls to action.*



### PAYMAN AI

Tylen Biakcic,  
Founder & CEO  
tyllen@paymanai.com  
www.paymanai.com

*Payman AI embeds consumer, small business, and commercial AI agents directly into digital banking to safely initiate payments and execute workflows with policy controls, approvals, and audit trails.*



### SWAYSTACK

Har Rai Khalsa,  
Founder & CEO  
harrai@swaystack.com  
www.swaystack.com

*Swaystack offers a gamified onboarding platform that helps activate new accounts by driving funding, direct deposit, bill pay adoption, and more to win primary relationship status.*



### VAULTRIGHT

Eric Hilaire,  
Founder & CEO  
ehilaire@vaultright.com  
www.vaultright.com

*VaultRight modernizes branch operations with a secure, mobile and web-based platform that replaces paper processes and strengthens audit readiness.*



### WARRANT

Austin Carroll,  
Founder & CEO  
austin@hellowarrant.com  
www.hellowarrant.com

*Warrant offers an AI-powered marketing compliance and digital asset management system that automates regulatory checks, approval flows, and provides full audit trails.*

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**COMMUNITY BANKS: IN THE ARENA TOGETHER**



**ICBND 58TH  
ANNUAL CONVENTION**



**Medora • Sept. 21-23**



**SCAN TO REGISTER TODAY!**

# 2026 ANNUAL CONVENTION AGENDA

## MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2026

8:00am - 7:00pm	Registration Desk Open	Townsquare Showhall
8:00am - 3:00pm	Exhibitor Setup	Townsquare Showhall
10:00am - 3:00pm	ICBND Annual Golf Scramble	Bully Pulpit Golf Course
5:00pm - 9:00pm	Theme Party & Exhibition Tradeshow	Townsquare Showhall
9:00pm - 10:00pm	Exhibitor Teardown	Townsquare Showhall

## TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2026

8:00am - 3:30pm	Registration Desk Open	Townsquare Showhall
8:00am - 8:45am	Breakfast	Badlands Pizzeria Parlor
8:45am - 9:30am	Opening General Session Doug Parrott, ICBA Secretary	Townsquare Showhall
9:30am - 10:30am	ICBA Securities	Townsquare Showhall
10:45am - 11:45am	Bank Regulatory Panel	Townsquare Showhall
12:00pm - 1:00pm	Lunch	Badlands Pizzeria Parlor
1:00pm - 2:00pm	A.I. – Is Your Bank Ready?	Townsquare Showhall
2:00pm - 3:15pm	North Dakota Legislative Panel	Townsquare Showhall
6:00pm - 7:00pm	Annual Social	T. R. Presidential Library
	Photo Sessions	
7:00pm	58th Annual ICBND Banquet	T. R. Presidential Library

## WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2026

8:00am - 11:00am	Registration Desk Open	Townsquare Showhall
8:30am - 9:30am	Blue Ribbon Committee Breakfast	N.D. Cowboy Hall of Fame
8:30am - 9:30am	Breakfast	Townsquare Showhall
9:30am - 10:30am	Annual Prayer Breakfast - Matt Anderson	Townsquare Showhall
10:30am - 11:30am	Ag Outlook	Townsquare Showhall
11:30pm - 1:00pm	ICBND Annual Business Meeting Luncheon	Townsquare Showhall
	State of the Association - Alexis Baxley, ICBND President	
	Speaker: Sarah Getzlaff, ICBND Chairwoman	
	Speaker: Josh Elder, ICBND Leadership Exchange Board Liaison	



**SCAN TO BOOK YOUR HOTEL!**

*\*Schedule subject to change.*

## June 2026 Webinars

Embrace your emotional health with a live webinar led by Learn to Live's clinical team.

**When Squirrels and Shiny Objects: Addressing Problems with Focus and ADHD:** Do you find it hard to pay attention, stay organized, or avoid distractions? Whether or not you have ADHD, these problems can make daily life tough. But there is good news. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) can help. Join this conversation with the Learn to Live clinical team as we explore how CBT can help those living with lack of focus and productivity challenges.

[Friday, June 12th: 11-11:30am CT/12-12:30pm ET](#)

**Everyone is Having Fun in the Sun, Why Don't I?:** Do you experience a pattern of low mood setting in when summertime comes rather than the fun in the sun that others seem to be enjoying? Although Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) occurs mostly in the winter, a few, instead, experience those feelings during the summer months. This is sometimes referred to as "Reverse SAD". Time spent indoors avoiding heat and humidity, disrupted sleep schedules, and late nights could lead to the struggles that those with Reverse SAD often experience. Join us for this 15-minute webinar and we'll share research-supported strategies to boost your mood.

[Tuesday, June 16th: 12-12:15pm CT/1-1:15pm ET](#)

**\*NEW\* When We Say We're Fine, But We're Not: Tools for Mental Exhaustion:** How often do you find yourself reflexively saying, "I'm fine" while moving through your days on autopilot? Maybe you don't want to admit, or even realize, how exhausted you actually are. What if you can find a way to really mean it the next time you tell someone you're fine? In this webinar, the Clinical Team will offer practical tools to recognize mental exhaustion before you hit empty, reintroduce meaningful activities into your routine, and help you ask for support when you need it. With a few small changes, you might be able to turn off autopilot and prevent mental exhaustion to live with more intention.

[Tuesday, June 23rd: 12-12:30pm CT/1-1:30pm ET](#)

**Thriving Through Transition: Simple Menopause Strategies:** For many women, menopause is considered a loss... a time of uncertainty and change. Bodily sensations such as hot flashes and mood swings can be overwhelming and embarrassing. And for some women, there is a sense of sadness as their reproductive capacities come to an end. In this 15-minute webinar, we will share research-supported steps to thrive through this transition in life.

[Friday, June 26th: 10-10:15am CT/11-11:15am ET](#)

### To Register:

Click the link for the webinar of your choice and use the access code **BLUEND**. Upon registering, you will receive a confirmation email from Zoom.

If you cannot attend a live session, you can still register to receive a link to the recording.



Monthly wellness materials are part of a comprehensive health and wellness platform, BlueElements.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association.

Learn to Live, Inc. is an independent company offering online tools and programs for behavioral health support on behalf of BCBSND.





## Upcoming Webinar Schedule

June 2026	DATE	TIME
New Security Officer Fundamentals, Including Minimum Security Guidelines	Mon 06/08	10:00 AM CDT
Safe Deposit Box Compliance: Disclosures, Due Diligence & Drilling	Tue 06/09	10:00 AM CDT
AI in Banking Today: What You Need to Know	Thu 06/11	10:00 AM CDT
Breaking the Communication Code: Understanding the Four Communication Styles	Mon 06/15	2:00 PM CDT
BSA Officer Part 2: BSA Reporting to the Board	Tue 06/16	10:00 AM CDT
Handling Legal Documents: POAs, Trusts, Estates & Guardianships	Wed 06/17	10:00 AM CDT
Top 20 TRID Issues & Risks	Thu 06/18	10:00 AM CDT
Writing Effective Credit Memos & Loan Narratives	Mon 06/22	10:00 AM CDT
Liability with ACH Death Notification Entries (DNEs) & Reclamations	Tue 06/23	10:00 AM CDT
Effective Audit Committees: Oversight Without Overreach	Wed 06/24	10:00 AM CDT
Decoding ATR/QM Requirements: Ensuring Your Documentation Is Squared Away	Thu 06/25	10:00 AM CDT
Who Is Liable? Forgeries, Remotely Deposited Items, Fraudulent ACH, Unauthorized Electronic Withdrawals & More	Mon 06/29	10:00 AM CDT
BSA Officer Part 3: BSA/AML Deep Dive for the New BSA Officer	Tue 06/30	10:00 AM CDT
July 2026	DATE	TIME
CRA Exam Preparation: Documenting Compliance	Mon 07/06	10:00 AM CDT
IRA Transfers, Rollovers & Conversions	Tue 07/07	10:00 AM CDT
ChatGPT Risks & Rules for HR Professionals: Using AI Without Violating Laws, Regulations, Ethics, or Privacy	Wed 07/08	10:00 AM CDT
Maximizing Today's Collections Technology	Thu 07/09	10:00 AM CDT
Avoiding the Most-Cited Lending & Deposit Compliance Violations	Mon 07/13	10:00 AM CDT
Security, Fraud & BSA Red Flags	Tue 07/14	10:00 AM CDT
BSA & OFAC Summer Update	Wed 07/15	10:00 AM CDT
Complex Call Report Lending Schedules	Thu 07/16	10:00 AM CDT
Third-Party Risk in the Fintech Age: Oversight, Contracts & Contingency Planning	Mon 07/20	10:00 AM CDT
Top 10 IT Frauds: Risks & Protection Strategies	Tue 07/21	10:00 AM CDT



### SCAN TO REGISTER TODAY

Community Bankers Webinar Network (Powered by FinEd) partners with community bankers associations throughout the country to deliver quality webinar training for bankers in all 50 states. The synergy of these relationships allows us to successfully deliver more than 200 live and on-demand webinars, with more being added throughout the year.

## AMERICAN STATE BANK & TRUST COMPANY ANNOUNCES 2026 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

American State Bank & Trust Company of Williston recently announced the awarding of several scholarships for the 2026-2027 school year that are administered annually through the bank's Trust Department.

ASB Vice President & Trust Department Manager Jeremy Hansen stated, "It is a privilege and an honor for us to be involved in the process and administration as trustees of scholarship programs for students primarily from Western North Dakota and Eastern Montana. Students in the area have such a great opportunity to receive scholarship funds through these programs. ASB has made it both easy and accessible to apply online through [www.asbt.bank](http://www.asbt.bank)."

The Frank A. Wenstrom & M. Esther Wenstrom Foundation awarded a total of \$20,000.00 to 20 students. The Advisory Committee is comprised of John MacMaster, Marilyn McGinley, and Nancy Hoffelt. The Frank A. Wenstrom & M. Esther Wenstrom Foundation scholarship criteria include graduates of a Williams County High School or Carrington High School who plan to attend either Williston State College or The University of North Dakota.

Frank A. Wenstrom was a former North Dakota Lieutenant Governor, State Senator, and long-time Williston businessman. Frank passed in 1997, and Esther passed in 2002.

The John Eberle Scholarship awarded a total of \$60,000.00 to 39 students. The Advisory Committee is comprised of Carlyle Norby, Michael Eberle, and Jeremy Hansen. The John Eberle Scholarship criteria include graduates of Williams, Burke, and Divide counties. This scholarship was established by the Eberle family to promote higher education in memory of John Eberle.

The Maude M. Schuetze Foundation awarded a total of \$38,800.00 to 31 students. The Advisory Committee is comprised of Paula Dehner, Judy Romo, Julie Johnston, and Jennifer Nasner. The Maude M. Schuetze Foundation scholarship criteria include graduates from the following six eastern Montana high schools, Culbertson, Westby, Plentywood, Medicine Lake, Froid, and Bainville. This foundation honors the memory of Maude M. Schuetze, a lifelong resident of Montana, who was a charter member of the Culbertson Saddle Club, and a member of various community organizations.

The Kingsley T. Davidson Memorial Scholarship awarded a total of \$1,000.00 to two students. The Kingsley T. Davidson Memorial Scholarship criteria include graduates of Williams, Divide, and McKenzie counties. This scholarship was established to honor the late Kingsley Davidson, grandson of W.S. Davidson, founder of ASB.

Detailed information and specific criteria can be found on the ASB website. All scholarship applications have a deadline of April 1 each year.

### 2026-2027 Recipients:

Frank A. Wenstrom & M. Esther Wenstrom Foundation: Scholarships in the amount of \$1,000.00 were awarded to: Braelynn Rose Marie Tofte, Elisteph Ngwa Mankaa Muyanwi, Presley Larsen, Micah Fleck, Nicole Enno, Kory Benjamin Chapman, Emalie Sorensen, Jayden Larsen, Kaelyn Sime, Abigail TeSoro, MaKenna Vigness, Marlee Baisch, Jayla Arcand, Sheldon Thome, Nana Toure, Williston, ND; Olivia Threadgold, Jack Paulson, Carrington, ND; Maddix Falk, Shelby Knox, Ray, ND; Owen Cowan, Epping, ND.

John Eberle Scholarship: Scholarships in the amount of \$2,000.00 were awarded to: Garrett Bloms, Fargo, ND; Megan Wolter, Fortuna, ND; Cassidy Skor, Katelynn Skor, Grand Forks, ND; Taylor Brown, Tioga, ND; Bridger Cvangara, Wildrose, ND; Alexis Christensen, Alice Hill, Angela Kaye Wold, Emmalynn Richardson, Jayla Arcand, Jordan Stauffer, Kaydence Lynn Gibbens, Keegan Ruth, Keira Borreson, Lacey Sime, Myah Tofte, Nana Toure, Nate Norby, Nicole Enno, Rylee Rude, Shaun Branham, Williston, ND.

Scholarships in the amounts of \$1,000.00 were awarded to: Shelby Knox, Ray, ND; Sydney Rudningen, Grenora, ND; Kysten Keever, Tioga, ND; Aubrianna Nunez, Audrey Jafolla, Dominic Thompson, Garrett Gathman, Hailee Chanthavongsack, Jaxon Meyer, Jayden Larsen, Kaelyn Sime, MaKenna Vigness, McKenna Rehak, Nate Norby, Nikki Bristow, Presley Larsen, Rita Johnson, Sheldon Thome, Williston, ND.

Maude M. Schuetze Foundation: Scholarships in the amount of \$1,500.00 were awarded to: Elsie Wilson, Bainville, MT; Samantha Lee Fell, Bismarck, ND; Reese Harmon, Bozeman, MT; Trevor Green, Culbertson, MT; Addison Elvsaa, Froid, MT; Meg Ator, Great Falls, MT; Kenadi Kayann Rippley, Outlook, MT; Brea Kleppen, Kylee Kleppen, Plentywood, MT.

Scholarships in the amount of \$1,150.00 were awarded to: Addison Hansen, Lila Butikofer, Kaiden Holmes, Rowan Wilson, Kaden Featherston, Isabella Anderson, Bainville, MT; Ian Snyder, Leandra Perkins, Gavyn Harrison, Isabella Apple, Josie Simonsen, Ivy Colvin, Culbertson, MT; Lily Johnson, Samantha Austin, Froid, MT; Ayden Ator, Avery Johnson, Medicine Lake, MT; Henry J Kukowski, Jacob Manley, Christopher Andersen, Plentywood, MT; Hannah Tholborn, Sierra Skor, CoraMay Theige, Williston, ND.

Kingsley T. Davidson Memorial Scholarship: Scholarships in the amount of \$500.00 were awarded to: Jensen Falcon, Genesis Custodio, Williston, ND.

## AGENCY HONORS OUTSTANDING PARTNERS WITH CHAMPION AWARDS

North Dakota Housing Finance Agency (NDHFA) recently awarded Champion of Affordable Housing awards to fifteen outstanding loan officers, real estate agents, and lending institutions that consistently promote NDHFA's homeownership programs. The state agency provides individuals and families, primarily first-time buyers, with low-cost financing, down payment and closing cost assistance.

"NDHFA's Champion Awards recognize and celebrate the work of the individuals and businesses who go above and beyond to provide North Dakotans with an affordable home," said Brandon Dettlaff, the agency's executive director.

The Excellence in Homeownership Partner Award and Outstanding Homeownership Partner Recognition honor lending institutions for their strong performance in production volume, loan performance, and program delivery. This year's recognized partners include Fairway Independent Mortgage Corporation, Gate City Bank, First International Bank and Trust, Town & Country Credit Union, and First Community Credit Union.

The Keys to Homeownership Impact Award and Recognition for loan officers highlight individuals who demonstrate excellence in production volume, loan quality, and best practices. Honorees include Aaron Stoneberg of Fairway Independent Mortgage Corporation, Lisa Thuner of Town & Country Credit Union, Greg Dean of First Class Mortgage, Brianna Tabor of First Community Credit Union, and Katie Stockert of Guild Mortgage.

The Keys to Homeownership Impact Award and Recognition for real estate agents recognizes top performers based on loan production. This year's honorees include Olivia Wellenstein of Continental Real Estate in Dickinson; Samantha Vigness of The Bakken Home Team — Realty One Group Caliber in Williston; Tammy Glasser of RE/MAX Integrity Realty in Dickinson; Amy Rogers of Brokers 12 in Minot; and Heather Stromme of Century 21 Morrison Realty in Bismarck.

"In 2025, NDHFA helped 1,898 households purchase a home — first-time buyers, as well as families who previously owned a home and needed assistance to buy again," said Dettlaff. "All of these North Dakotans learned about our programs from the individuals and businesses employed in the private sector who collaborate with NDHFA to promote and originate our affordable home loans."

## VANTAGE POINT ACQUIRES MCCORMACK AND ASSOCIATES, INC. (MAI), STRENGTHENING BANKING CONSULTING SERVICES

Vantage Point, a national consulting firm serving financial institutions, today announced the acquisition of McCormack and Associates, Inc. (MAi), an Oklahoma-based banking consulting firm. The acquisition expands Vantage Point's Banking Division and enhances service capabilities for clients in Oklahoma, Texas, and beyond.

The transaction brings together two firms with shared cultures, values, and a strong commitment to the banking industry. MAi's experienced audit and compliance professionals join Vantage Point's growing team, increasing depth of expertise while maintaining the trusted relationships MAi clients rely on. "This acquisition reflects our continued investment in the banking industry and our focus on long-term, sustainable growth," said Natalie Reed, Director of Banking Division, Vantage Point. "We are proud to welcome the MAi team and build upon their strong reputation for exceptional client service."

Vantage Point is also expanding its industry engagement through membership in the Oklahoma Bankers Association and the Community Bankers Association of Oklahoma, reinforcing its commitment to regional industry partnerships.

Vantage Point serves financial institutions nationwide with audit, compliance, and credit consulting, as well as critical business services including IT, cybersecurity, and marketing. The firm also provides specialized services such as environmental reviews, offering clients stability, breadth of service, and long-term partnership.



LINDSAY COX

**BANK OF NORTH DAKOTA WELCOMES NEW CREDIT UNDERWRITER**

Lindsay Cox joined BND on March 24 as the new Credit Underwriter III. She comes to BND from Choice Bank where she was a Credit Officer III. Lindsay has a bachelor's degree in management and marketing from University of North Dakota.



RYAN MCKAY

**MCKAY JOINS BANK OF NORTH DAKOTA**

Ryan McKay joined BND on April 21 as the new Chief Risk Officer (CRO). Ryan previously worked as the Chief Risk Officer at Starion Bank and as a former compliance manager at Eide Bailly. Ryan brings experience in enterprise risk management, compliance, internal audit, information security, and business continuity functions as well as experience directly related to fintech and AI utilization. He is certified as both a regulatory compliance manager and a BSA/AML professional



AMMON HORNER

**HORNER NAMED NEW STUDENT LOANS QUALITY & SUPPORT SPECIALIST**

Ammon Horner joined BND on May 1 as the new Student Loans Quality & Support Specialist. He comes to BND from the North Dakota Senate where he was a technical clerk. Ammon has a Bachelor's degree in finance from Western Governors University.



CADEN SCHATZ

**BND WELCOMES SCHATZ**

Caden Schatz joined BND on May 4 as the new Student Loans Quality & Support Specialist. He comes to BND from Western Cooperative Credit Union in Dickinson where he was a member service representative. Caden has a Bachelor's degree in composite social science from Dickinson State University.





**KERN JOIN BND TEAM**

Shanna Kern joined BND on May 11 as the new Student Loan Representative I in Origination. She comes to BND from BNC National Bank where she was a personal banker. She has an associates degree in liberal arts from Bismarck State College.



**SHANNA KERN**



**DCN NAMES SUBRAMANIAN NETWORK ARCHITECT**

Aparna Subramanian has accepted the position of DCN Network Architect, leading the newly formed engineering department based in Bismarck.

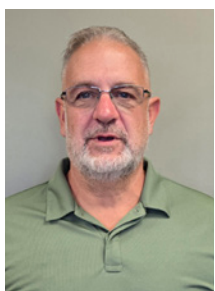


The network architect directs the planning, design, and lifecycle of the DCN's network infrastructures, helping ensure high performance, reliability, and scalability. She provides leadership to the engineering teams, guiding the design and deployment of customer solutions that align with company standards and capabilities. In addition, she leads cross functional initiatives to develop and introduce new technologies and services, supporting consistent, high quality service delivery. She will also continue in her role as information security officer, supporting strong security practices across the organization.

**APARNA SUBRAMANIAN**

In her 12 years at DCN, this is the second time Subramanian will lead a new department; in March 2021 she took the lead role for the new information systems team. Prior to that, she served as sales engineer, systems engineer, and Ethernet/IP technician II.

After earning a bachelor's degree in computer science and mathematics with a minor in leadership studies from Dickinson State University, Subramanian joined Consolidated Telcom in Dickinson for six years. During her career, she has earned multiple professional certifications including MEF Carrier Ethernet Certified Professional, Cisco Certified Network Professional, and Nokia Network Routing Specialist II. Most recently, she added a Certified Information Systems Security Professional certification, which focuses on defining the design, architecture, controls, and management of highly secure business environments. Subramanian is currently pursuing graduate studies in cyber defense through Dakota State University.



**QUAIFE JOINS DCN**

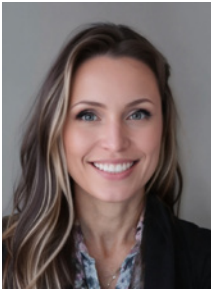
Dakota Carrier Network (DCN) has hired Jason Quaife as an Ethernet/IP technician I.



In this role, Quaife is part of the Network Operations Center team, supporting DCN's state-of-the-art carrier Ethernet and IP networks. His responsibilities include network monitoring and provisioning, trouble analysis, receiving and resolving trouble reports, and administration of equipment. He is based out of DCN's Fargo office and serves customers throughout the state.

**JASON QUAIFE**

Quaife began his career in the U.S. Air Force. Following 22 years of service, he joined the telecommunications industry and has 25 years of experience in network monitoring, service provisioning, and troubleshooting. He completed numerous training and certifications with both the USAF and civilian companies. Quaife earned a Bachelor of Arts from Minnesota State University Moorhead.



**ELLIE OEHRLEIN**

**KAREN VON GUTEN RETIRES FROM UNITED BANKERS' BANK (UBB) USOURCE, ELLIE OEHRLEIN HIRED TO LEAD HR CONSULTING TEAM**

Karen Von Guten, Vice President, USource Manager, announced her retirement from United Bankers' Bank effective March 19, 2026. "We have been fortunate to have Karen leading our incredible HR Consulting Team," commented John Peterson, Executive Vice President, Chief Marketing Officer.



"Her dedication to UBB's mission, vision, and values was evident in each interaction with both customers and fellow employees. We express our gratitude for her service and wish her the best in her future endeavors."

Ellie Oehrlein started in March as the new USource Manager. Ellie has over 10 years of experience in Human Resources. She graduated from Crown College with a BBA in Business Administration and is a certified SHRMSCP and PHR.

"It is difficult to say 'goodbye' to Karen, but I am eager to see how USource Human Resources Consulting will progress under Ellie's leadership," explains John Peterson. "Ellie's vast knowledge and experience, combined with the expertise of the current USource team of Kerry Gleason and Katharine Sanchez, will only further the expertise UBB provides to its Human Resources Consulting customers."



**JASON STEIN**

**STEIN JOINS STARION BANK BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Starion Bank is pleased to announce that Jason Stein has joined its Board of Directors, bringing three decades of leadership experience in sales, operations, and enterprise technology to the family owned, super-community bank.



Stein currently serves as Chief Information Officer (CIO) at Border States, an employee owned electrical distribution company headquartered in Fargo, N.D. He joined Border States in 1995 and advanced through a wide range of leadership roles, including product management, regional sales leadership, vice president positions, and executive vice president of sales and marketing. He was appointed CIO in 2024.

In his current role, Stein oversees technology strategy and digital transformation initiatives that support customer experience, operational efficiency, and long-term organizational growth.

Stein also serves on the board of directors for Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota, providing governance experience within a regulated industry environment. He is a graduate of Minnesota State University Moorhead with a degree in Industrial Distribution.



**KASSY LANDIS**

**KASSY LANDIS RECOGNIZED NATIONALLY WITH THREE TOP MORTGAGE INDUSTRY AWARDS**

Kassy Landis, Mortgage Banking Supervisor at Starion Bank, has been recognized with three national honors in 2025, earning top rankings from Mortgage Executive Magazine and Scotsman Guide. The awards place Landis among the leading mortgage originators in the country and mark another year of national recognition for consistently high performance and trusted customer service.



Landis was named:

- Top 1% of Originators in 2025 by Mortgage Executive Magazine
- Top Mortgage Originators in 2025 by Scotsman Guide
- Top Woman Mortgage Originators in 2025 by Scotsman Guide

Each honor is based on production and highlights professionals who demonstrate sustained excellence in a competitive mortgage landscape.

## HIRING - INTERNAL AUDITOR III

Bank of North Dakota (BND) is seeking an Internal Auditor III to support the Bank’s mission of promoting agriculture, commerce, and industry across the state. Working alongside North Dakota’s financial institutions, BND helps fuel economic development and serves as the central depository for state funds—making a meaningful impact in communities statewide.

### Summary of Work

As the Internal Auditor III, you will play a key role in protecting and enhancing organizational value by independently leading and executing audits ranging from routine to highly complex. You will support the continued advancement of Internal Audit function and its use of data analytics, automation, and AI-enabled tools, helping strengthen risk detection, continuous auditing, and strategic insight. In this senior-level role, you will conduct risk assessments, develop audit scopes and work programs, perform detailed testing and data analysis, and prepare clear, well-supported audit reports that offer practical, value-added recommendations. Your work will include evaluating internal controls through interviews, walkthroughs, sampling, automated testing routines, and analysis of financial, operational, regulatory, and technology-related risks. You will also monitor corrective actions efforts through follow-up procedures and ongoing monitoring.

This position also provides advisory support that helps management strengthen governance, enhance operational efficiency, and proactively manage emerging risks. This includes identifying process improvement opportunities, evaluating new or evolving initiatives, and offering risk-aware perspectives on organizational changes, systems, and strategic projects. Additionally, you will identify opportunities to embed data analytics, automation, and AI-enabled monitoring into business processes.



As a senior member of the Internal Audit team, you will help develop the annual audit plan and support the enterprise-wide risk assessment process. You will help lead and coordinate external and outsourced audits and collaborate with other internal assurance providers to strengthen alignment and reduce duplication of efforts. You will also contribute to Internal Audit’s methodology, reporting process, and quarterly and annual communication & reporting to the Executive Committee and Advisory Board. This role also serves as a mentor and resource to junior auditors by providing guidance, feedback, and knowledge sharing that elevates the effectiveness of the team.

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## SBA ANNOUNCES NEW “MADE IN AMERICA LOAN GUARANTEE” TO RESTORE MANUFACTURING DOMINANCE

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) announced that small manufacturers across the country will soon be eligible for enhanced support through the SBA’s International Trade Loan (ITL) Program. The loans, which come with a 90% federal guarantee, will help manufacturers expand facilities, hire workers, and increase production – as part of the Trump Administration’s broader effort to rebuild America’s industrial dominance and strength. In addition, the SBA recently expanded ITL eligibility to include small businesses across the food supply chain, including those in the agriculture, production, and logistics industries.

“Industrial dominance is essential to our national security and strength, and the Trump Administration has taken historic action to incentivize “Made in America” through tax cuts, deregulation, fair trade and energy dominance – all of which are restoring American industries and jobs,” said SBA Administrator Loeffler. “Today, the SBA is taking another step to support reindustrialization with our new Made in America loan guarantee, which will give U.S. manufacturers additional financing to expand operations, modernize equipment, and supercharge domestic production. Small businesses make up 98% of all manufacturers in America, and as I’ve traveled across the country meeting with industry leaders, the demand for additional capital to expand and hire is evident. This Administration is transforming America into a nation of builders once again, as part of an industrial comeback that is being led by small businesses.”

The ITL program unlocks long-term, affordable financing to support American producers – offering borrowers additional flexibility through an increased SBA guarantee of 90% compared to the standard 75% guarantee for the agency’s flagship 7(a) Loan Program. This expanded support will give lenders greater confidence to deploy capital into domestic manufacturing, driving investments in machinery, facilities, and production capacity.

Starting May 1st, manufacturers across NAICS Sectors 31–33 will become eligible for the expanded ITL Program. Eligible businesses may use the funds to:

- Upgrade or replace equipment to improve productivity and reduce unit costs.
- Modernize facilities and production lines to meet customer and national security requirements.
- Diversify supply chains away from foreign adversaries and bring critical production back to the United States.
- Build more resilient inventory positions.
- Expand operations and capacity through strategic acquisitions.

The enhanced SBA funding builds on the Trump Administration’s broader commitment to reshoring American industry and domestic supply chains. President Trump’s Working Family Tax Cuts include major incentives for small manufacturers – including 100% expensing on factory equipment, no tax on overtime, and a permanent 20% small business deduction. The tax cut and fair trade agenda is already driving new demand and growth for small businesses, as weekly wages in the manufacturing sector surged by 5.1% in February.

In support of this agenda, the SBA launched its Made in America Manufacturing Initiative last year. The agency waived loan fees for small manufacturers in Fiscal Year 2026 and established the first-ever loan program dedicated to American manufacturers. The SBA also launched its Make Onshoring Great Again Portal, a free tool designed to connect small businesses with a database of more than one million domestic suppliers and producers – and cut over \$100 billion in red tape crushing small businesses, including manufacturers.

Lenders and small businesses interested in the updated International Trade Loan program can contact SBA’s national team of Finance Managers for more information. SBA’s Finance Manager team not only supports the ITL program but also serves as the agency’s working capital specialists and can help lenders and borrowers understand how ITL can be paired with SBA’s expanding suite of working capital solutions - including the MARC and Working Capital Pilot.

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- Ag Disaster Relief Program
- Grain Storage and Facility Rebuilder Program



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# HSAs: THE RETIREMENT SAVINGS OPPORTUNITY MANY CLIENTS ARE OVERLOOKING

By: Jodie Norquist, CIP, CHSP | Ascensus | [www.ascensus.com](http://www.ascensus.com)

For many consumers, a health savings account (HSA) is simply a convenient way to pay for prescriptions, office visits, or the occasional unexpected medical expense.

But increasingly, financial organizations are seeing a different picture emerge: clients using HSAs not just as spending accounts, but as long-term wealth-building tools. Some of them have built sizable accounts rivaling IRAs or 401(k) plans.

And with healthcare costs continuing to rise in retirement, the opportunity is significant.

Clients who understand how to strategically use an HSA can create a powerful source of tax-advantaged savings for future healthcare expenses, while potentially improving their overall retirement readiness at the same time.

According to Devenir's 2025 Year-End Research Report, the HSA market ended 2025 with nearly \$174 billion in HSA assets across 41.7 million accounts. That marks a 19 percent increase in assets year-over-year, while account growth remained strong at 6 percent.

In addition to having an HSA checking or savings account, many HSA owners are starting to look for other types of investments, such as mutual funds, stocks, bonds, or exchange traded funds. Devenir found that HSA investment assets climbed to nearly \$85 billion by the end of 2025, up 33 percent from the previous year. About 4.2 million accounts, or roughly 10 percent of HSAs, held invested dollars, up 22 percent year-over-year.

Devenir projects the HSA market will surpass 49 million accounts and \$234 billion in total assets by the end of 2028.

This creates an important educational opportunity for financial organizations.

## THE TRIPLE TAX ADVANTAGE OF HSAs

HSAs remain one of the few accounts offering a true triple tax advantage.

- Contributions may be tax-deductible
- Earnings grow tax-deferred
- Qualified distributions are tax-free

Many clients understand the contribution piece, but fewer fully appreciate the long-term planning potential.

That gap matters because many account owners continue to treat HSAs like checking accounts, spending contributions as quickly as they are deposited, rather than allowing balances to accumulate and potentially grow. For organizations working with account owners, that creates an opening for meaningful education and deeper client engagement.

## RETIREMENT HEALTHCARE COSTS ARE BECOMING HARDER TO IGNORE

One reason HSAs are attracting more attention as retirement tools is simple: healthcare is expensive.

Many consumers underestimate how much they may spend on healthcare in retirement. Clients often focus heavily on income replacement during retirement planning while underestimating healthcare as a separate financial strategy.

HSAs can help address that concern because qualified medical distributions remain tax-free at any age.

For clients who can leave funds untouched and invested for years, the account can evolve from a short-term spending tool into a dedicated healthcare reserve.

## THE "PAY OUT OF POCKET NOW" STRATEGY

One strategy receiving growing attention involves clients paying current medical expenses out of pocket while allowing HSA assets to remain invested.

Because there is no deadline requiring reimbursement for qualified expenses incurred after the HSA was established, some account owners save receipts for years or even decades.

Later, they may reimburse themselves tax-free.

For financially stable clients who can afford current healthcare costs without tapping into their HSA balances, this approach can provide several potential advantages.

- More time for tax-deferred growth
- Additional retirement healthcare reserves
- Greater flexibility later in retirement
- Another source of tax-advantaged distributions

Of course, this strategy also depends heavily on documentation discipline.

Clients must maintain records showing that the expense

- was qualified,
- occurred after the HSA was established,
- was not previously reimbursed, and
- was not deducted elsewhere on a tax return.

*Continued from Page 36.*

While HSA owners are responsible for tracking their expenses, financial organizations have an opportunity to educate clients about the importance of record retention.

### **MANY CLIENTS STILL MISUNDERSTAND DISTRIBUTION RULES**

One of the most common areas of confusion involves HSA distributions themselves.

Because many HSAs include debit cards and online payment tools, clients sometimes assume that all healthcare-related purchases automatically qualify. Or they may use their debit cards to make other purchases, intentionally or not.

But the IRS rules remain specific.

Nonqualified distributions before age 65 are generally subject to ordinary income tax plus a 20 percent penalty tax.

That penalty tax often surprises HSA owners who mistakenly view their accounts as flexible spending vehicles, rather than tax-advantaged accounts governed by strict distribution requirements.

### **HSAS BECOME MORE FLEXIBLE AFTER AGE 65**

The rules shift somewhat once an HSA owner reaches age 65.

At that point

- qualified medical distributions remain tax-free,
- nonqualified distributions avoid the 20 percent penalty tax, and
- nonqualified distributions are still taxable as ordinary income.

In practice, this means an HSA can begin functioning somewhat similarly to a Traditional IRA for nonmedical expenses while still preserving unique tax-free treatment for healthcare costs.

That flexibility can be especially valuable during retirement income planning.

### **HSAS AND RETIREMENT PLANNING CONVERSATIONS NATURALLY FIT TOGETHER**

For financial organizations, HSAs can create a natural bridge between healthcare spending discussions and broader retirement planning conversations.

Clients may initially open HSAs for immediate tax savings or employer contributions. But many are unaware of the long-term planning opportunities attached to the account.

That creates opportunities for organizations to educate clients on the following.

- Long-term contribution strategies
- Investment options within HSAs
- Retirement healthcare projections
- Tax diversification
- Distribution planning
- Recordkeeping best practices

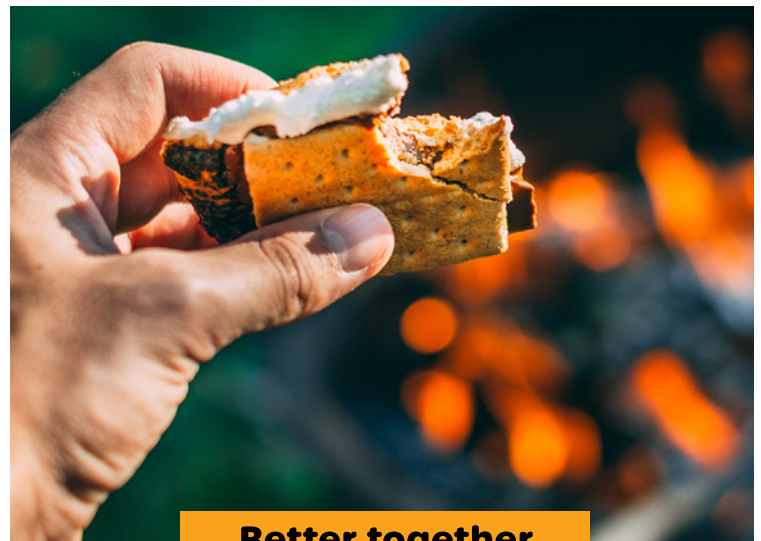
### **EDUCATION MAY BE THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY**

The challenge is not necessarily convincing clients that HSAs are valuable.

It is helping them understand how valuable they can be.

As healthcare expenses continue climbing and retirement planning grows more complex, HSAs may increasingly become one of the most underappreciated financial tools.

For financial organizations, helping clients understand that opportunity could be one of the most meaningful conversations they have.



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# SPENDING OUTLOOK: BANKERS' TOP 5 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR 2026

By: Tara Schultz | CSI | [www.csiweb.com](http://www.csiweb.com)

As banking leaders navigate through 2026, they are focused on five key strategic priorities, including customer support, market expansion, operational efficiency and more. These efforts are all aimed at staying competitive and meeting rising customer expectations.

CSI's 2026 Banking Priorities survey highlights how institutions are putting these priorities into action, by investing in modern platforms, stronger security and automation that enables them to do more with less.

Below, we count down the five most-cited strategic priorities from the survey, and why they're receiving the most focus.

## #5: Customer Support Improvements

Customer support improvements landed in the top five because "pretty good" service isn't enough anymore to differentiate — competition is steep.

Consumers don't separate "digital" from "human." They expect both to work seamlessly. They're also quicker than ever to compare experiences across banks, fintechs and even general lifestyle apps. As expectations shift toward more personalized, real-time support, financial institutions are increasingly turning to AI to deliver faster, more intuitive experiences. In fact, 48% of banking leaders say AI will enhance customer service, while 46% believe it will improve engagement through tools like chatbots and virtual assistants.

These rising expectations are directly impacting where customers choose to bank and where they choose to keep their money. With consumers increasingly holding accounts across multiple institutions, loyalty isn't what it used to be. A 2025 JD Power Financial Services Churn Data and Analytics report found that among consumers who already had a checking account, 72% were opening new checking accounts at a different bank. Delivering experiences that align with account holders' specific needs is essential to maintaining primary relationships, driving consistent card usage, and unlocking cross-sell opportunities.

When support is generic, slow, or disconnected from customer needs, account holders have little reason to stay. Institutions that deliver faster, more personalized experiences are better positioned to strengthen relationships and improve retention.

## #4: Market Expansion

Market expansion remains a priority, but the focus is shifting from quantity to quality. Rather than simply adding accounts, financial institutions are working to deepen primary relationships, so customers deposit more funds, use debit cards and adopt additional services.

The 2026 Banking Priorities survey highlights this shift:

- 92% of bankers surveyed agree their institution is growing its existing customer base
- 82% are focused on increasing retail deposits
- 86% are focused on increasing commercial relationships

High acquisition costs are also influencing strategy. BAI research shows the average cash incentive offered to attract new checking accounts is \$277, and promotion-driven churn can drive costs higher. Instead, many institutions are exploring referral programs, which can attract higher-value account holders at a lower cost.

## #3: Operational Efficiency

Tight margins and rising expectations are pushing financial institutions to streamline operations. In the study, 74% of leaders said their processes could be more efficient, and the same percentage said they would prefer to consolidate technology with fewer providers.

In response, institutions are prioritizing investments that drive efficiency at scale. Automation and AI are the top tech investment priorities this year, followed by data analytics and digital account opening. Together, these investments help reduce manual work, streamline operations and generate faster insights.

As a result, institutions are rethinking how work gets done, shifting toward more integrated systems and data-driven decision-making.

## #2: Cybersecurity and Fraud Defense

Cybersecurity and fraud prevention remain top priorities in 2026, as the cost of being unprepared continues to rise. More than 50% of fraud executives expect losses in U.S. banking payments to increase by over 10% in the next three years.

Artificial intelligence is both part of the problem and part of the solution. Attackers are increasingly using AI to scale scams that look and sound more convincing than ever. Banking leaders rated AI-enhanced social engineering (such as voice cloning and QR-code phishing) 16 percentage points higher this year than last, making it the top cybersecurity concern. At the same time, 57% of respondents said cybersecurity is AI's most valuable application.

Continued from Page 38.

Fraud and financial crimes are just as concerning. In the study, card and check fraud remain the most common types of fraud, but close behind are phishing, wire transfer fraud, P2P fraud and fraudulent account opening. Phishing is particularly painful because it often happens outside the financial institution's ecosystem. Microsoft research shows that AI-generated phishing emails can drive a 54% click-through rate vs. 12% for traditional phishing, which could make phishing up to 50x more profitable for criminals.

### #1: Technology Modernization

Technology modernization ranks #1 among strategic priorities because it's what unlocks everything else on this list (and more).

In the survey, prioritization increases with institution size, from 31% at smaller institutions (\$100M–\$250M) to 59% at larger ones (\$5B–\$10B). Modernization typically includes initiatives that improve system integration, data flow and the ability to launch new capabilities more quickly.

As a result, institutions are prioritizing integration and simplification. In the survey, 93% of banking leaders said they are interested in customizing product offerings through technology integrations, while 74% prefer consolidating technology providers.

These challenges are particularly evident in commercial banking, where technology limitations and integration gaps were cited as the top barrier to expanding commercial portfolios. The strongest modernization strategies will create technology environments that are easier to integrate, easier to manage and flexible enough to support future innovation.

### Moving Forward in 2026

In 2026, the most effective institutions will align their spending with a broader strategy to protect the institution, improve the consumer experience and remove operational friction.

Read more about how financial institutions' strategic priorities for the year in the 2026 CSI Banking Priorities Report.



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# IRS PROPOSES RULES GOVERNING TRUMP ACCOUNTS, INCLUDING \$1,000 FEDERAL PILOT CONTRIBUTIONS

By: Ascensus | [www.ascensus.com](http://www.ascensus.com)

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has issued two coordinated proposed regulations that begin to define how Trump accounts will operate. One proposal addresses how Trump accounts are established for children under Internal Revenue Code Section (IRC Sec.) 530A, while a companion proposal explains how a limited group of accounts may receive a one-time \$1,000 federal pilot contribution authorized under IRC Sec. 6434. Together, the proposals outline the basic framework for creating Trump accounts and seeding certain accounts with an initial federal contribution, while reserving many substantive operational rules for future guidance.

## BACKGROUND

Trump accounts were created under newly enacted IRC Sec. 530A as part of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. They are a new type of traditional IRA designed specifically for minors, with special rules that apply while the beneficiary is a child.

From the time a Trump account is opened through the end of the year the beneficiary turns 17—referred to as the growth period—those special rules apply. During this period, a child may have only one funded Trump account at a time, though the account can be moved to a new trustee through a trustee-to-trustee transfer (a qualified rollover contribution). Once the growth period ends, most of the special rules fall away, and the account is generally governed by the traditional IRA rules under IRC Sec. 408.

The legislation also created two related but separate programs that include

- IRC Sec. 6434, which authorizes a one-time \$1,000 federal pilot contribution for children born between 2025 and 2028, and
- IRC Sec. 128, which allows employer contributions of up to \$2,500 per year to a Trump account for an employee or dependent.



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The companion proposals focus on how Trump accounts are opened, how they are administered while the beneficiary is a minor, and how the one time \$1,000 pilot contribution is delivered. Rules governing ongoing contributions (including employer contributions under IRC Sec. 128), investments, distributions, and reporting are largely reserved for future guidance.

It is also important to note that the rules for making Trump account elections under IRC Sec. 530A are separate from those that govern the \$1,000 pilot contribution under IRC Sec. 6434. While the two programs are related, setting up a Trump account doesn't automatically qualify a child for the pilot contribution. Each has its own eligibility criteria and its own election process.

### ESTABLISHING AND ADMINISTERING TRUMP ACCOUNTS

Unlike most IRAs, an initial Trump account is not opened directly by a parent or financial institution. Instead, the federal government creates the initial account after a valid election is made on behalf of an eligible child. Because only one initial Trump account may ever be opened for an individual, the proposed regulations establish clear rules regarding who may act on a child's behalf.

### HOW AND WHEN TO MAKE AN ELECTION

To establish a Trump account, an authorized individual must make an election on behalf of an eligible child. Key requirements include the following.

- An election must be made no later than December 31 of the year in which the child turns age 17.
- Elections may be submitted using IRS Form 4547 or an electronic portal (i.e., trumpaccounts.gov).
- Only the first processed election results in account creation; later filings are disregarded.
- Missing this deadline permanently closes the window to establish a Trump account for that child.

### FUNDING TRUMP ACCOUNTS THROUGH THE \$1,000 PILOT PROGRAM

The proposed regulations also outline a temporary \$1,000 pilot program designed to provide an early federal seed contribution for certain Trump accounts. Eligibility to establish a Trump account, however, does not automatically mean a child will qualify for the \$1,000 pilot contribution, as the pilot program has its own, separate requirements. The proposed regulations focus on defining the time and manner for making an election for an eligible child's account to receive the pilot contribution.



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# Live Well, Work Well

June 2026

## Explore the Great Outdoors

Spending even a few moments outside daily can significantly improve your physical health by reducing muscle tension, regulating sleep and improving your work performance. Experiencing the outdoors—specifically, green spaces—can also provide some mental health benefits, including reduced anxiety and depression symptoms, decreased stress levels and improved overall mood.

The Environmental Protection Agency reports that the average American spends only 7% of their life outdoors, leaving 93% spent indoors.

It may seem difficult to incorporate fresh air into your daily routine, so here are a few tips to spend more time in the great outdoors this summer:

- **Find time throughout the day to be outside.** Try walking or doing a similar activity before or after your workday. Alternatively, enjoy lunch outside instead of eating at your desk during the workweek. If working remotely, you could join virtual meetings outside in a quiet place with little background noise or try “walking meetings” with teammates. Focus on finding small ways to incorporate fresh air each day.
- **Move your workout outside.** If you usually run on the treadmill, consider jogging around your

neighborhood instead. Additionally, doing bodyweight or free-weight exercises in your backyard or at a park can give you the same workout you get in the gym while letting you spend more time outside.

- **Focus on the quality—not quantity—of your time outdoors.** While outside, try to really listen to and look at what’s around you. Are there birds chirping? What color are the flowers? An intentional presence outdoors can help you feel more connected to nature and increase the benefits you receive from the fresh air.
- **Find someone to explore with.** It can be much easier to start a new habit when you have someone to do it with. As such, consider getting together with a partner or a group of friends to participate in outdoor activities.
- **Bring nature indoors.** Even when you can’t get outside for very long, you can still bring in little pieces of the outdoors. Consider purchasing a few houseplants to place around your home or starting an indoor herb garden.

Spending time outdoors can improve your physical and mental health, so take advantage of the longer summer days and get outside.

# When's the Best Time to Eat Protein?

Protein is important for overall health. Health experts note that there isn't one perfect time of day to eat protein. What matters most is how evenly you include it throughout the day. Instead of saving most of your protein for dinner, spreading it across meals and snacks allows your body to use it more efficiently for energy, fullness and muscle repair.

The 2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans prioritize protein at every meal, aiming for 1.2 to 1.6 grams per kilogram of body weight daily.

Eating protein at different times of the day has certain advantages. For example, protein in the morning after an overnight fast supports steady energy, sharper focus and improved appetite

## Summer Medicine Cabinet Checklist

Summer brings more time outdoors, and with it, a higher chance of sunburns, bug bites, minor injuries, allergies and heat-related issues. Medications can also lose effectiveness or even become unsafe after expiration, and heat and humidity can further degrade products that are already past their prime. When summer ailments or accidents strike, you want relief that works quickly and safely.

The average American opens their medicine cabinet 468 times each year. However, nearly 3 in 4 people admit they often forget to replace their expired products.

A cabinet check today ensures you're prepared for common summer needs without last-minute store runs. Consider these 10 summer essentials:

control, which may reduce overeating later in the day. Adding protein to snacks also plays a key role, helping stabilize blood sugar and prevent afternoon energy crashes. Similarly, protein is useful after workouts, as it helps muscles recover and grow stronger. Dinner protein remains important, but loading most of the day's intake into a single meal isn't ideal, since the body can only use so much at once. Most people don't need excessive protein supplements, as regular meals often provide enough.

In the end, a practical approach is to include protein at every meal, aim for moderate portions, and balance it with carbohydrates and healthy fats. Consistency delivers the biggest benefits.

1. Pain reliever and fever reducer
2. Antihistamines, nasal sprays and eye drops
3. Hydrocortisone cream for rashes and bug bites
4. Broad-spectrum sunscreen
5. Aloe vera or after-sun gel
6. Insect repellent
7. Oral rehydration packets or electrolyte drinks
8. Bandages and basic first-aid supplies
9. Antibiotic ointment for minor cuts
10. Instant cold packs

Refreshing your medicine cabinet is a small task that can make a big difference, allowing more time for fun in the sun. Make it a habit to check expiration dates every six months so you're always prepared.

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