



2026 NDBA Bank Management Conference

February 13-14, 2026

Fairmont Scottsdale Princess
Scottsdale AZ

The Bank Performance Report: Quarter 2 Report Available



The **Bank Performance Report** is a state-specific quarterly reporting service that ranks key indicators of banking performance. Utilizing data from the quarterly FFIEC Call Reports, the BPR ranks overall bank performance across eight different categories – Net Interest, Non-Interest Income, Non-Interest Expense, Efficiency, NPA's/Equity & Reserve, Asset Quality Index, Return on Assets and Return on Equity.

Whether you're on track or looking to refine your strategy, the newly released Q3 2025 Bank Performance Report (BPR) will help you measure progress, uncover opportunities, and position your bank to reach your 2025 benchmarks — setting the stage for an even stronger 2026.

Utilizing data from the quarterly FFIEC Call Reports, the BPR provides comprehensive benchmarking insights for in-depth analysis so you can clearly see where your bank excels — and where untapped potential lies.

For more information about BPR, including how to order, view a sample report (PDF & Excel) and see the BPR Top 10 Banks by state, visit www.BPR.services.

A versatile tool, the BPR can be used for strategic profit planning, setting performance incentives, preparing board reports, analyzing competitors and identifying emerging market trends.

For modification or cancellations, send email to info@bankperformancereport.com.

Upcoming NDBA Events

JANUARY 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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MAY 2026						
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SEPTEMBER 2025						
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February 2026

- 13-14** Bank Management Conference - Scottsdale, AZ
- 25** Breaking into Banking 101: Fundamentals of Commercial Lending

March 2026

- 3-26** GSB Digital Banking School
- 9-11** ABA Washington Summit - Washington DC
- 25** Breaking into Banking 201: Analyzing Repayment Sources

April 2026

- 7-10** Dakota School of Lending Principles - Ramkota Hotel, Pierre SD
- 13-17** GSB Bank Technology Management School
- 20-24** GSB HR Management School
- 27-29** Tri-State Trust Conference - Holiday Inn, Fargo

June 2026

- May 31- Jun 5** Dakota School of Banking - University of Jamestown, Jamestown ND
- 15-17** NDBA/SDBA Annual Convention - Bismarck ND

July 2026

- 19-31** Graduate School of Banking at Colorado
- 27-29** Tri-State Trust Conference - Holiday Inn, Fargo

August 2026

- 18-20** Virtual Fraud Academy

September 2026

- 14-17** Regional Member Meetings - Grand Forks, Fargo, Bismarck and Minot
- 21-25** GSB Financial Managers School

October 2026

- 1-2** Ag Credit Conference - Hilton Garden Inn, Fargo
- 12-16** GSB Bank Cybersecurity School



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Mission Statement

Extraordinary Leadership for North Dakota Banks



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BANKING ARTICLES



CFPB Proposes to Streamline Small-Business Data Collection Rule

The CFPB is proposing revisions to its small-business lending data rule to scale back the scope of data collection, saying that adopting a “longer-term” approach that allows for the future addition of more data points would be the best way to enforce the regulation.

The CFPB released a final rule in 2023 to implement Section 1071 of the Dodd-Frank Act, which requires financial institutions to report data on small-business lending. Several lawsuits followed, including one brought by the Texas Bankers Association and American Bankers Association, which resulted in a stay of the mandatory compliance dates for members of the associations pending the outcome of the case.

In a proposed, the CFPB said it plans to start with “more modest requirements” focused on core lending products, lenders and data. The bureau said it plans to take an “incremental approach” in which the rule could be revisited in the future to add more data points to the collection requirements, if needed.

Among the revisions, the proposed rule would remove the following discretionary data points added by the 2023 final rule: Application recipient and method, denial reasons, pricing information and number of workers.

Other proposed changes include:

- Excluding merchant cash advances, agricultural lending and small-dollar loans from the definition of covered credit transaction.
- Excluding Farm Credit System lenders from coverage, and raising the origination threshold for which institutions are covered from 100 to 1,000 credit transactions for each of two consecutive years.
- Decreasing the gross annual revenue threshold in the rule’s definition of a small business from \$5 million or less to \$1 million or less.

- Extending the rule’s compliance date provisions to Jan. 1, 2028, for all covered financial institutions.

The CFPB will accept public comment on the rule for 30 days following publication in the Federal Register.

Read more: <https://public-inspection.federalregister.gov/2025-19865.pdf>

U.S. Mint Produces Last Penny

The U.S. Mint held a ceremony on November 12, where U.S. Treasurer Brandon Beach struck the final circulating penny, ending 232 years of penny production.

Earlier this year, President Trump directed the Treasury Department to stop producing pennies. The U.S. Mint produces coinage while the Federal Reserve distributes coins to banks and credit unions.

The Mint noted that while it will no longer produce pennies, the currency remains legal tender. “There are an estimated 300 billion pennies in circulation – far exceeding the amount needed for commerce,” the agency said in a statement. “Retailers and other businesses can continue to price goods and services in one-cent increments.

The Mint will continue to produce numismatic versions of the penny in limited quantities for historical and collector purposes.

Ag Lenders Signal Cautious Outlook for Farm Profitability In 2025

Agricultural lenders report signs of tighter conditions in farm profitability and credit quality in 2025, according to a joint survey conducted by the American Bankers Association and the Federal Agricultural Mortgage Corporation, or Farmer Mac.

Most lenders expect producers to remain profitable this year, but fewer than half are projected to stay in the black in 2026 – the lowest share since 2020, according to the survey report, released

at the ABA Agricultural Bankers Conference in St. Louis. Lenders are most concerned about grain and cotton farms, with nearly 70% saying they're very worried about grain profitability – up sharply from just 15% two years ago. By contrast, lenders express much less concern about livestock operations, particularly beef and poultry, which continue to benefit from strong demand and high prices.

Despite tighter credit standards, agricultural lenders continue to meet producers' financing needs – approving roughly 84% of loan applications over the past year and expecting to renew nearly 88% of existing loans in the year ahead, the survey found.

Key findings from the 2025 survey include:

- Only 52% of borrowers are expected to remain profitable in 2025, with that number projected to dip below 50% in 2026 – the lowest level since 2020. In addition, nearly 93% of lenders expect farm debt to increase over the next year, reflecting tighter working capital and increased reliance on credit.
- Farm income and working capital remain the top concerns for lenders, followed closely by inflationary pressures.
- Credit quality and agricultural loan deterioration ranked as the top overall concern for lending institutions in 2025, followed by lender competition and interest rate volatility.
- While delinquency and charge-off rates remained relatively stable, lenders reported signs of deterioration and expect further declines in credit quality over the next 12 months.
- Demand for loans secured by farmland and agricultural production loans increased in 2025, with expectations for further growth in 2026.
- Farmland value growth slowed in 2025, and lenders anticipate a modest decline in national average cropland values over the next year.
- With liquidity and credit risk topping lenders' concerns for 2025, secondary market programs have become even more vital. Facing tighter margins and higher rates, lenders continue to rely on Farmer Mac to manage balance sheet risk and maintain funding capacity. This year, 77% reported using Farmer Mac for agricultural real estate and USDA-guaranteed loans, up from 67% in 2024 – reflecting Farmer Mac's fundamental role in sustaining credit access across the agricultural economy.
- Lenders also reported continued investment in technology to streamline underwriting and loan servicing. More than half of respondents indicated their institutions implemented digitization efforts in 2025, with a focus on improving credit decisions and loan applications.

The survey highlighted demographic shifts in agriculture, with lenders reporting an uptick in farm retirements and rising family living costs. More than 75% of lenders expect retirements to accelerate in the next 12 months.

Read more: <https://www.aba.com/news-research/analysis-guides/agricultural-lender-survey>

FDIC Considering Tokenized Deposit Insurance Guidance, Stablecoin Issuer Rules

The FDIC is considering guidance on tokenized deposit insurance for banks that want to explore the option, and the agency plans to issue a proposal later this year to establish an application process for stablecoin issuers, FDIC Acting Chairman Travis Hill said.

Hill announced the FDIC is exploring guidance on tokenized deposit insurance during a conference held by the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, according to Bloomberg.

“My view for a long time has been that a deposit is a deposit,” Hill said, as reported by Bloomberg. “Moving a deposit from a traditional-finance world to a blockchain or distributed-ledger world shouldn't change the legal nature of it.”

As for stablecoins, the FDIC and other agencies are in the process of implementing the Genius Act, which created a regulatory framework for the digital asset. Hill said the FDIC plans to issue a proposed application process for stablecoin issuers by year's end, but he also said it remains unclear how extensive the agency's role will be given it will only supervise stablecoins issued by FDIC-supervised entities, according to American Banker.

“It's too early to say what that universe is going to be – whether that's going to be a large universe or a small universe – but we are still required under the statute to issue rules for that potential universe,” Hill said., as reported by the publication. “The most immediate-term proposal we're going to issue is one that sets up an application process, which is something that's required under the statute.”

Banking Agencies Release CRA Data on Small-Business, Small-Farm Lending In 2024

The total number and value of small-business and small-farm loans made by financial institutions subject to the Community Reinvestment Act increased in 2024 compared to the previous year, the Federal Reserve, FDIC and Office of the Comptroller of the Currency said in their annual report on CRA lending data.

A total of 731 lenders reported data about originations and purchases of small loans – \$1 million or less – to businesses and farms in 2024, according to the joint agency report. The agencies noted that CRA data provides a useful snapshot of lending to small businesses and small farms, but it is not meant to be comprehensive.

About 9.1 million small-business loans totaling nearly \$276.6 billion were reported in 2024. The total number of loans increased by 8.1% from 2023, while the number of loans originated rose by 8.3%. The dollar amount of small-business loans originated rose by 6.1%.

As for small-farm loans, about 197,000 small-farm loans were reported for 2024, totaling about \$14.5 billion, an increase of about 0.5% in the number of loans and 4% in the dollar amount of loans in 2024 from 2023.

The agencies also examined community development lending among the 731 institutions that reported activity in that area. Lenders with assets that met or exceeded the mandatory reporting threshold – \$1.564 billion in 2024 – extended the vast majority of reported community development loans, reporting a combined total of over \$138 billion, or a 9% increase from 2023, according to the report.

Read more: <https://www.occ.treas.gov/news-issuances/news-releases/2025/nr-ia-2025-107.html>

Most Consumers Would Try Stablecoins If Offered by Banks

Nearly three in four consumers (78.4%) are open to trying stablecoins and other digital currency services if offered by their primary bank, compared to just 3.6% who would feel comfortable using unregulated providers, according to a new survey by FIS.

Slightly more than half (53.9%) of respondents view banks offering stablecoins as a positive development, according to the survey. They also want traditional safeguards applied to digital currency, with 77.4% saying that stablecoins should be regulated like traditional payment methods, and 66.3% saying FDIC-style insurance would increase their likelihood of use.

As for barriers to stablecoin adoption, security and privacy concerns were the top concerns cited by respondents. The survey also found that more than half (52.7%) of respondents want at least half of all merchants to accept digital currency before they consider using it themselves.

Read more: <https://www.fisglobal.com/about-us/media-room/press-release/2025/fis-research-banks-hold-the-key-to-stablecoin-adoption>

Court Temporarily Halts Section 1033 Rule Enforcement

A federal court has issued an order preventing the CFPB from enforcing its rule on financial data sharing while the bureau reassesses the regulation.

The 2024 rule implemented Section 1033 of the Dodd-Frank Act, which requires banks and other financial institutions to make a consumer's financial information available to them or a third party at the consumer's direction. The Kentucky Bankers Association joined the Bank Policy Institute and other plaintiffs in challenging the rule, arguing it jeopardized consumers' privacy and account security.

The rule was implemented under the CFPB's prior leadership. In separate court filings in May, both the plaintiffs and CFPB asked the U.S. District Court for Eastern Kentucky to vacate the rule. The CFPB has since issued an advance notice of proposed rulemaking seeking public input as it drafts a replacement for the rule.

In his order, District Judge Danny Reeves enjoined the CFPB from enforcing the 2024 rule until it has completed its reconsideration of the regulation.

"Ultimately, the CFPB is currently engaged in rulemaking to reconsider the rule considering the plaintiffs' concerns about its lawfulness," he wrote. "Nevertheless, the plaintiffs and their members are being compelled to incur expenses that would be unrecoverable and unnecessary if the new rule substantially revises the existing requirements or if the current rule is vacated."

Policy Uncertainty, AI Sentiment Pose Financial Stability Risks

Policy uncertainty remains a top risk to U.S. financial stability, with public sentiment about artificial intelligence emerging as another risk, according to the Federal Reserve's most recent Financial Stability Report.

As part of the report, the Fed surveyed 23 professionals at banks and other financial sector firms about what they viewed as the top risks to financial stability. A majority continued to highlight concerns about policy uncertainty, including trade policy, central bank independence and the availability of economic data. They also cited geopolitical risk, persistent inflation and high long-term rates. A new concern was that prevailing sentiment toward AI, "which has been viewed as a main driver of recent U.S. equity performance, could lead to a correction in risk assets."

"Participants noted that such a turn could lead to large losses in private and public markets and, if the declines were large enough, drive a further slowdown in the labor market and tighten financial conditions," according to the report.

As for the financial sector, the report noted that the banking system remained sound and resilient, with historically high regulatory capital ratios. However, the authors added that banks' fair value losses and exposure to interest rate risk "remained sizable."

Read more: <https://www.federalreserve.gov/publications/files/financial-stability-report-20251107.pdf>

CFPB Rescinds Changes to Adjudication Process

The CFPB has rescinded a series of changes made to its rules that, among other things, gave its director authority to resolve adjudication hearings overseen by the agency.

The CFPB in 2022 and 2023 amended its adjudication procedures to make numerous changes to the process, including transferring authority to decide dispositive motions from the hearing officer presiding over the proceedings to the director. The major concern with the changes is they concentrated adjudicative authority in the director, risked depriving defendants of their due process right to an impartial tribunal, and made it more difficult for regulated entities to access Article III courts.

CFPB said that after considering public comments, it decided to rescind most of the previous amendments, except those related to narrow clarificatory and procedural changes. It specifically cited concerns that the amendments "concentrated greater power in the director, particularly by allowing the director to rule on dispositive motions."

Read more: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/10/29/2025-19687/rules-of-practice-for-adjudication-proceedings>

Legislation Proposed to Address Debanking

Sen. Thom Tillis (R-N.C.) has released a discussion draft of proposed legislation to address alleged debanking by banks and banking regulators by creating a national standard for account access and establishing new watchdog mechanisms for banking agencies.

According to the document, the proposed Ensuring Fair Access to Banking Act would establish a federal fair access standard that would preempt state-level fair access laws and contain "reasonable regulatory-related exceptions" to guard against unsafe or unsound practices or illicit activity.

The proposal also would permanently repeal the use of reputational risk by regulators; create a special inspector general within the Treasury Department to receive, review and report on allegations of financial regulator overreach or abuse; and

adjust the currency transaction report threshold to \$45,000 and the relevant suspicious activity report thresholds to \$4,000 and \$10,000, with annual adjustments for inflation.

Read more: <https://www.tillis.senate.gov/2025/10/tillis-introduces-discussion-draft-on-legislation-to-ban-politically-motivated-debanking>

Congress, Not Fed, Must Fund CFPB

The CFPB will exhaust its currently available funding early next year, and the bureau cannot withdraw funds from the Federal Reserve without a congressional appropriation, according to a recent memo by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel.

The CFPB is unique among federal agencies in that its funding comes directly from the Fed based on a request from the bureau's director. Earlier this year, CFPB acting Director Russell Vought announced plans for a reduction in force affecting a large number of bureau employees and announced he would not ask the Fed for the agency's next appropriation. In response, the union representing CFPB employees filed a lawsuit in federal court alleging the Trump administration is illegally seeking to shut down the bureau.

The Trump administration argues that the CFPB can only withdraw funds from the Fed if the latter makes a profit, although the bureau's defenders counter that the administration is misinterpreting the law. The DOJ upheld the administration's interpretation in the memo filed as part of the lawsuit, saying that because the Fed is not profitable, it cannot transfer money to the CFPB. The bureau's only recourse is Congress, according to the memo.

"Because the only lawful source of funding from the Federal Reserve has dried up, the proper method for obtaining additional funds is to request them from Congress pursuant to the Appropriations Clause, not to draw funds from the Federal Reserve without a congressional appropriation," the DOJ said.

FHFA Nearing Deal to Use New FICO Credit Scoring Model for Mortgages

The Federal Housing Finance Agency is currently reviewing a possible deal with FICO to implement the FICO 10T credit scoring model for mortgages, according to a post on X by FHFA Director Bill Pulte.

FHFA announced in July that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac will allow lenders the option to use VantageScore 4.0 while still allowing use of the classic FICO score to assess the creditworthiness of mortgages. The agency said at the time it was also exploring implementation of the newer FICO 10T, which uses trended data that captures consumer behavior dynamics and

debt history for the previous 24 months. Pulte announced that the agency is nearing a deal with FICO on the use of FICO 10T.

“This would be great for consumers and the safety of the mortgage market, to have both FICO 10T Score and VantageScore 4.0,” he said.

In a July letter, the American Bankers Association and three associations said the use of VantageScore and FICO could help achieve the shared goal “of a more efficient, more transparent and more competitive credit scoring system that serves as many creditworthy Americans as possible.” However, they added that many questions remained to be answered about implementation.

“The transition to a competitive market for credit scores raises a number of implementation questions and concerns that the GSEs will need to address before they can take delivery of loans that rely on new scores – including Vantage Score 4.0 and/or FICO 10T – for pricing or eligibility,” the associations said. “Credit score standards are embedded throughout the mortgage ecosystem and the incorporation of Vantage into that ecosystem will require the GSEs to provide lenders, investors and other market participants critical implementation guidance.”

Appeals Court Upholds Fed Decision to Deny Crypto Firm Master Account

A federal appeals court has ruled that the Federal Reserve is not obligated to grant a master account to a cryptocurrency firm, as the move would “impair the Fed’s ability to safeguard our nation’s financial system.”

In 2020, the Wyoming-based Custodia Bank requested master account access from the Kansas City Bank. It was rejected after officials determined the firm’s crypto-focused business model introduced undue risk into the Fed’s payment systems and services. Custodia sued in the U.S. District Court for Wyoming, which ultimately ruled in favor of the Fed. The firm then appealed the decision to the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals.

In a 2-1 decision, the justices upheld the lower court decision. “The Fed’s historical practices demonstrate that it has always understood that it had the authority to protect its payment systems from risk,” the majority concluded. “The view advanced by Custodia creates a danger of Reserve Banks having no discretion with respect to master account access, thereby impairing the Reserve Bank’s ability to carry out their duty to safeguard our financial system from risky institutions.”

Writing in the minority, Judge Timothy Tymkovich argued that the Fed has managed risky banks with master accounts for years. “Indeed, recent history has amply demonstrated that traditional banks can be no less risky than innovative banks,” he said. “The Fed’s policy concerns can be handled through policy innovation

rather than shutting the door to innovative banks and insulating itself from judicial review.”

The split decision means Custodia could appeal to have the full Tenth Circuit review the case.

FCC Advances Phone Rule Reforms to Enhance Consumer Protections

The Federal Communications Commission has voted to issue a notice of proposed rulemaking that would modernize the FCC’s Telephone Consumer Protection Act rules and combat illegal call spoofing.

The TCPA is a 1991 law that regulates telemarketing and informational calls using an autodialer or artificial or prerecorded voice. Under a draft version of the rulemaking, the FCC’s proposal would make several changes to the FCC’s TCPA rules including rescinding or modifying a 2024 rule that broadly expanded what messages are covered when a customer revokes consent (the “revoke all” rule); eliminating the “provided number” condition that allows banks and other financial institutions to place calls under an existing exemption for fraud alerts only to numbers that were provided by the customer; and deleting the requirement that a caller be placed on an internal “do not call” list when the caller requests not to receive telemarketing calls.

As for combating illegal call spoofing, the FCC is proposing to enhance the effectiveness of the STIR/SHAKEN call authentication framework and to require voice service providers that transmit caller identity information to employ reasonable measures to verify the accuracy of the information transmitted, among other changes.

Senators Propose Raising BSA Reporting Thresholds

A proposed Senate bill would raise the reporting thresholds for currency transaction reports and suspicious activity reports and require the Treasury Department to adjust the amounts for inflation every five years.

The Bank Secrecy Act requires financial institutions to file CTRs and SARs for transactions exceeding certain dollar amounts. The Streamline Act introduced by Senate Banking Committee Chairman Tim Scott (R-S.C.), Sen. John Kennedy (R-La.) and seven senators would raise the CTR reporting threshold from \$10,000 to \$30,000, and raise certain SAR thresholds from \$2,000 to \$3,000 and from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

Read more: <https://www.banking.senate.gov/newsroom/majority/chairman-scott-senator-kennedy-introduce-bill-to-modernize-the-bank-secrecy-act>

NDBA Joins in Urging Treasury to Uphold GENIUS Act's Ban on Stablecoin Interest

In conjunction with the American Bankers Association and 51 State Banking Associations, the NDBA has signed onto a letter to the U.S. Department of the Treasury urging the strong implementation of the GENIUS Act's prohibition on interest for payment stablecoins. The letter warns that without broad implementation of the interest ban, digital asset platforms may exploit loopholes to offer high-yield rewards and other incentives, which would undermine the law's purpose and threaten the traditional banking system. To ensure effective enforcement, the letter calls on the Treasury to:

- Define "interest or yield" broadly, including any economic benefit regardless of its label.
- Prevent evasion through affiliates or partners, treating indirect payments as issuer payments.
- Avoid narrow interpretations of "solely," ensuring that any benefit tied to holding a stablecoin triggers the prohibition.

Read more: <https://www.aba.com/-/media/documents/comment-letter/jointstateltrgenius20251104.pdf>

Most Consumers Uncomfortable Talking About Finances

A new survey found that when talking to friends or family, most people find it easier to discuss politics or their love life than their bank accounts.

The Bankrate survey asked respondents how comfortable they were talking about a range of issues to people they know and trust. Roughly three in five respondents (61%) said they were uncomfortable talking about their bank account balance – the largest percentage of any category. Forty-seven percent said they were uncomfortable talking about their credit card debt and 45% did not want to talk about their salaries. People were only slightly more uncomfortable talking about their love life (51%), although they were more comfortable talking about their weight (31%), politics (24%) and religious views (18%) than anything financial.

Younger adults were more likely than older adults to feel comfortable talking about money, according to the survey. At the same time, men were more likely than women to be willing to discuss financial matters.

Read more: <https://www.bankrate.com/banking/financial-taboos-survey/>

Nacha Adopts New Rules to Enhance International ACH Transactions

The National Automated Clearing House Association (Nacha) voting members have approved new rules aimed at increasing the efficiency of international Automated Clearing House transactions, or IATs, according to the organization.

One new rule requires U.S. financial institutions to register IAT-specific contacts in Nacha's ACH Contact Registry. Other rules add the capability to carry a person's date of birth for sanctions screening; add a new return reason to indicate an issue with sanctions screening as distinct from other return reasons; recognize the possibility that the financial agency outside the U.S. is a non-traditional account-holding institution or organization; and refines the definition of an IAT to make it easier for ACH Originators and Originating Depository Financial Institutions, or ODFIs, to determine whether a payment should be classified as an IAT.

The existing Nacha rules for IATs have been in effect since 2009. Nacha in 2024 adopted rules concerning fraud monitoring that will be phased in starting next year. The new rules will be phased in over the next few years, with Nacha maintaining a timeline on its website.

Read more: <https://www.nacha.org/news/new-nacha-rules-accelerate-funds-availability-and-enhance-iats>

Federal Law Preempts State Law On Credit Reporting

The CFPB has issued an interpretive rule stating that the Fair Credit Reporting Act, or FCRA, preempts state laws on credit reporting, with the move coming after several states enacted laws banning the use of medical debt in credit reports.

The CFPB in 2022 issued a rule interpreting narrowly the FCRA's preemption of state laws "with respect to any subject matter regulated under" certain sections of the FCRA, giving more leeway to state-level regulation of credit reporting. The CFPB rescinded that rule earlier this year and is replacing it with the new interpretive rule. The new rule finds that the FCRA generally preempts state laws "that touch on broad areas of credit reporting, consistent with Congress's intent to create national standards for the credit reporting system."

Among its findings, the new rule states that the older rule was wrong to conclude that states can validly regulate the presence of certain categories of information – such as medical debt or arrest records – on consumer reports. The CFPB under the Biden administration issued a rule banning the use of medical debt on credit reports and encouraged states to do the same. Fifteen

states currently prohibit the use of medical debt on credit reports, according to the Consumer Federation of America.

The CFPB's medical debt rule was challenged in court and struck down earlier this year, resulting in the bureau rescinding the rule.

Read more: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/10/28/2025-19671/fair-credit-reporting-act-preemption-of-state-laws>

Fed To Trim Bank Supervision Staff By 30%

According to the Wall Street Journal, the Federal Reserve will reduce its bank supervision staff by 30% by the end of next year.

The newspaper cited an internal memo outlining the cuts, which are being overseen by Fed Vice Chair for Supervision Michelle Bowman. The reductions will leave the Fed's supervision and regulation division with about 350 staff, down from an authorized 500 staff.

The division will extend to staff a voluntary deferred-resignation offer previously made available to any central bank staff who were approaching retirement, the newspaper reported. The memo stated that the goal was to achieve the cuts as much as possible through natural attrition, retirements and voluntary separation incentives.

Small-Business Owners Generally Happy with Their Banks

Small-business owners are feeling positive about their businesses and the broader economy, and that goodwill is translating into satisfaction with their primary banks, according to a new survey by J.D. Power.

More than half (54%) of small-business owners are financially healthy and increasingly believe their banks are helping them meet their business credit and borrowing needs and savings goals, the survey found. Roughly three in five (61%) of small businesses received financial advice from their banks this year, and 94% of those recipients said the advice or guidance they received positively influenced their financial habits.

At the same time, the proportion of business owners who said they have an excellent credit score declined to 35%, and 57% said they are able to pay all of their bills on time, down two percentage points from a year ago. External factors that business owners fear could have a major or severe influence on their business included inflation (50%); tariffs (37%); interest rates/

cost of borrowing (37%); supply chain (33%); and retaining/hiring employees (27%).

Read more: <https://www.jdpower.com/business/press-releases/2025-us-small-business-banking-satisfaction-study>

Average Bank Merger Approval Window Shrinks to Four Months

The average time for regulators to approve a proposed bank merger fell to four months in 2025, which is the shortest average since 1990, the Financial Times reported.

The U.K. newspaper, citing figures gathered by S&P Global, noted that regulatory approvals have sped up significantly during the opening months of the Trump administration. Nearly 150 bank mergers worth about \$45 billion have closed so far this year.

Under the Biden administration, the average time for approval peaked at almost seven months, according to the report.

Inspector General Report Finds CFPB Cybersecurity Lacking

The CFPB's procedures for securing its information systems have deteriorated in recent months, and the issue has been made worse by the loss of contractor resources and bureau personnel, according to a recent audit by the Federal Reserve Office of Inspector General.

The CFPB's systems house sensitive data about consumers and financial institutions, including Social Security numbers and confidential supervisory information. The OIG found that the CFPB's cybersecurity program declined in fiscal year 2025, with the bureau not maintaining authorizations to operate for many systems and using risk acceptance memorandums without a documented analysis of cybersecurity risks. It has also not maintained contractor resources that support continuous monitoring and testing activity, and has lost agency staff, according to the report.

"As such, the CFPB is unable to maintain an effective level of awareness of security vulnerabilities in its environment," the OIG concluded.

Still, the CFPB was able to take some steps to maintain and strengthen its information security program, according to the report. The bureau updated and formalized processes for responding to potential ransomware incidents and transitioned toward a continuous vetting model for employee background reinvestigations. In addition, the senior agency information

security officer continues to meet with system owners on a weekly basis to manage cybersecurity risks, and the CFPB is in the process of decommissioning and modernizing legacy technology systems.

Regulation Preventing Banks from Engaging in Economic Innovations

The economy has changed significantly since the 2008 financial crisis, but regulation is holding back banks from fully engaging with those changes, Federal Reserve Vice Chair for Supervision Michelle Bowman stated.

During a Q&A at a Santander Bank conference in Madrid, Spain, Bowman spoke about her approach to regulation and supervision. She said that some of the regulatory changes put in place after the financial crisis were important, but the economy has “changed tremendously” since then and regulators have not provided the flexibility banks need to adjust to that change.

“We’ve seen a number of different innovations and different engagements that I think our banks in particular would like to be a part of, but they’re inhibited from doing so because of the regulatory environment, and things that we created or calibrated during the post-financial crisis years may or may not still be fit for purpose,” she said.

Bowman pointed to artificial intelligence as one technology that could transform banking. She also pointed to digital assets, particularly with the recent passage of the Genius Act, which directs the Fed and other agencies to establish a regulatory framework for payment stablecoins.

“In parallel with that, I think it is important that banks are able to engage fully with digital assets if they want to, because we want to make sure that they’re not left behind,” Bowman said. “We also want to make sure they’re engaging in a way that separates those digital assets on their balance sheets from their regular business activity, so we can ensure that safety and soundness remains, but they can also offer the kind of services their customers want.”



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Bernie Sinner | NDBA CHAIR | BankNorth, Casselton



November in North Dakota brings a noticeable shift. The days grow shorter, the pace of harvest settles, and the quiet that follows gives us space to reflect on the year behind us. With fewer hours of daylight pulling us in every direction, we can finally slow down enough to think about what we learned over the past season and how those lessons can help us grow in the year ahead.

This is also a season of gratitude when we can reflect on how fortunate we are to work in an industry rooted in trust, community, and service. Community banking has never been just about transactions. It is about relationships, reliability, and the privilege of walking alongside the people and businesses that shape our towns and rural communities.

This year, we also have reason to be grateful for meaningful progress on the regulatory front. The recent rightsizing of several regulatory requirements represents positive and practical change for community banks. For years, many of us have felt the unintended consequences of over regulation, including well-intended rules that in practice made it harder to meet the needs of our customers. The adjustments we are now seeing help restore balance. They allow community bankers to focus more on serving people and less on navigating unnecessary burden.

“We can reflect on how fortunate we are to work in an industry rooted in trust, community, and service.”

These results did not happen on their own. They are the product of persistent grassroots advocacy from bankers across the state and the tireless efforts of our industry associations. Our NDBA staff have been instrumental in guiding, informing, and amplifying the voice of North Dakota bankers at the state and national level. Their leadership and hard work ensured that policymakers heard the real-world stories behind the regulations, including stories about families trying to buy homes, business owners trying to grow, and communities working to thrive.

To everyone who wrote a letter, made a call, attended a meeting, or shared an example that found its way into the discussions in Bismarck or Washington, thank you. For those of you who support NDBankPAC to help ensure we have representation that understands the importance of the work we do, thank you. You helped move the needle in a meaningful way. This is what grassroots advocacy looks like when it works: steady, united, and focused on doing what is right for the people we serve. This is something to celebrate!

As we head into the holiday season, I hope you find time to enjoy the simple things, the warmth of a full house, the crackle of a wood fire, the laughter around a table, and the peace that comes with a well-earned break. I am thankful for the opportunity to be a community banker alongside all of you, to know our work makes a difference, and for the ways we show up to strengthen our communities and each other day in and day out.

Wishing you and your families a warm and joyful Thanksgiving season.



Bernie Sinner



2026 NDBA

Bank Management Conference



February 13-14, 2026

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Scottsdale AZ

Room Booking Link:

<https://bit.ly/46zbwsc>

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Contact:

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Tara McFadden | 701.370.8901 or tara@ndba.com

Registration available in December.

Thursday, February 12, 2026

NDBA Services Board Meeting
NDBA Board Meeting
Dinner for Board Members
and Past Chairs (by invitation)

Friday, February 13, 2026

Morning General Sessions
Afternoon Golf at TPC Scottsdale
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Gala Reception & Dinner

Saturday, February 14, 2026

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796,568
ND POPULATION
US Census 2024 estimate

44.1
MILLION ACRES
ND LAND AREA

53
ND COUNTIES

24,800
OF ND FARMS
USDA 2024

1,552
AVERAGE ACREAGE
OF ND FARMS
USDA 2024

87.3%
ND'S LAND IN
FARM AND RANCHES

ND PRODUCTION

RANK IN THE U.S.
USDA 2024 ESTIMATES

% of the U.S.	Rank	Product
42%	#2 PRODUCER OF	Beans, Navy
71%		Beans, Small Red
81%		Lentils
86%		Peas, Dry Edible
27%	#3 PRODUCER OF	Barley
20%		Beans, Black
19%		Sugarbeets
45%	#4 PRODUCER OF	Rice
43%		
57%		

2024

- Livestock & Products 18.3%
- Food Grains 19.7%
- Feed Crops 18.5%
- Oil 37%
- Sugarbeets 3.2%

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BANKERS YOU SHOULD KNOW

??????

Do you have a rockstar banker hiding in plain sight at your organization? Someone who crushes their day-to-day, lifts up their team, serves their community, or just always seems to have their superhero cape tucked under their suit jacket? Nominate them for NDBA's monthly Bulletin feature: **Bankers You Should Know!**

From front-line pros to seasoned leaders, North Dakota banks are full of hidden gems – and we want to shine a spotlight on them. **Nominate a standout banker today!**

Fill out the online nomination form [HERE](#) We'll let you know if your nominee is selected and which Bulletin issue they'll be celebrated in.

Let's brag about the amazing people in our banking community!

We need your nominations!

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[More Information](#)



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Education Events

For more information regarding these educational opportunities, visit www.ndba.com or contact Dorothy Lick, SVP of Education, North Dakota Bankers Association, 701.223.5303.

EVENT	DATE	LOCATION	WHO SHOULD ATTEND?
NDBA Bank Management Conference	February 13-14, 2026	Fairmont Scottsdale Princess, Scottsdale AZ	Presidents, CEOs, senior management and directors.
Breaking into Banking 101: Fundamentals of Commercial Banking	February 25, 2026	Virtual Event	New credit analysts, lenders, and underwriters, as well as bankers who don't do credit analysis but need a working knowledge of the process.
Breaking into Banking 201: Analyzing Repayment Sources	March 25, 2026	Virtual Event	Credit analysts, lenders, portfolio managers and others who need skills in financial statement analysis and writing credit documents.
Dakota School of Lending Principles	April 7-10, 2026	Ramkota Hotel, Pierre SD	Loan officer trainees, loan support personnel and personal bankers.
Tri-State Trust Conference	April 27-29, 2026	Courtyard by Marriott, Bismarck	Trust officers, trust attorneys, CTFAs, and CFPS.
Dakota School of Banking	May 31-June 5, 2026	University of Jamestown	Attendees are generally first-or mid-level managers seeking advancement in their banks and careers. However, others who would benefit from exposure to the banking industry and increased familiarity with the individual components that make up a bank are also encouraged to attend.
NDBA/SDBA Annual Convention	June 15-17, 2026	Bismarck	Presidents, CEOs, senior management staff, lenders, marketing team members and sales managers.
Regional Member Meetings	September 14-17, 2026	Grand Forks, Fargo, Bismarck, Minot	All NDBA Members!
Ag Credit Conference	October 1-2, 2026	Hilton Garden Inn, Fargo	Both entry-level and experienced ag lenders will gain valuable information.



OnCourse Learning Webinars

EVENT	DATE
Call Report: Secrets to Loan Coding and Risk Weighting	11/21/2025
CRE Lending: Cash Flow Analysis and Cap Rates	11/24/2025
Mortgage Lending Compliance Training Program	11/25/2025
Mortgage Lending Compliance Training Program - Part 1	11/25/2025
Most Common TRID Issues	11/26/2025
Conducting an RTPÂ® Self-Audit: A Guide for Financial Institutions	11/26/2025
Understanding the Role of the Notary Public	11/26/2025
New 1071 Small Business Data Collection and Submission Proposed Rule: What Does It Mean and What Has Changed?	12/1/2025
CRE Lending: Property Types, Lease Structures and Other Non-Financial Risks	12/1/2025
BSA Reporting and Training for the Board	12/2/2025
Beneficial Ownership Certification: Line-by-Line	12/2/2025
Most Common TRID Issues	12/3/2025
Conducting an RTPÂ® Self-Audit: A Guide for Financial Institutions	12/3/2025

EVENT	DATE
Understanding the Role of the Notary Public	12/3/2025
Mobile Banking Compliance Considerations	12/4/2025
Cybersecurity: C-Suite and Board Oversight	12/4/2025
Stablecoins CONTINUED: What the GENIUS Act Means for Your Financial Institution	12/5/2025
Bank Accounting Basics: Preparing a Statement of Cash Flows - 2 Part Series	12/8/2025
Bank Accounting Basics: Preparing a Statement of Cash Flows - Part 1	12/8/2025
Understanding Dormant Accounts and the Escheatment Process	12/9/2025
Section 1071 (Small Business Data Reporting): Where Are We Now?	12/9/2025
Tick Tock! One Big Beautiful Bill Act Kicks in January 1st	12/9/2025
Bi-Monthly Compliance Briefing - 6 Part Series (2025)	12/10/2025

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Probate and Non-Probate Assets

Your estate assets are divided into two categories: those that are subject to probate and those that are not. Understanding the difference between probate and non-probate assets can help you make decisions about assets that could be transferred either way.

Probate Assets

Probate assets include any property you own individually — which means in your name alone — from bank accounts and investments to real estate and automobiles. It also includes all your personal property including furniture and jewelry, whether or not you specify in your will to whom you want to give those items.

Non-Probate Assets

Non-probate assets are typically transferred directly to the beneficiary and are not subject to probate court proceedings because they are not included in your will. In practically all cases, non-probate assets are passed to beneficiaries more quickly than those that are probated. That may explain why some people choose to take assets out of the probate estate if that is possible.

Types of Non-Probate Assets

1. **Assets with named beneficiaries.** These assets include insurance policies, annuities, employer sponsored retirement accounts, such as 401(k)s, individual retirement accounts (IRAs), education savings accounts, 529 plans and health savings accounts (HSA) for which you have named a beneficiary. They are always part of the non-probate estate and are never transferred by your will.
2. **Assets with joint owners.** These are assets that you may have purchased with a joint owner, each of you with right of survivorship, or that have been retitled from individual to joint ownership. The surviving owner becomes the sole owner at your death.
3. **Assets you title as payable or transferable on death.** With these assets, you retitle accounts that were yours to be payable on death (POD) in the case of bank accounts or transferrable on death (TOD) in the case of investment accounts. The person you name becomes the sole owner at your death.

All you do is contact the bank or brokerage firm where you have the account and make that arrangement. That takes these assets out of the probate estate.

4. **Living trust.** If you wish, you may move some or nearly all of your assets in a living trust. A living trust is one that you set up during your lifetime as a way to reduce the size of your probate estate and speed up the transfer of assets to your beneficiaries. For example, you might choose to leave only the money in your checking account and your personal property in the probate estate.

You can find a list of state probate courts at
<https://estate.findlaw.com/probate/state-probate-courts.html>



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John Zetocho

Starion Bank
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NOVEMBER 2025

BANKER YOU SHOULD KNOW



November's Banker You Should Know spotlight features **John Zetocho**, Market President with Starion Bank in Oakes. This month's profile is a bit unique in that John wasn't nominated by a colleague inside the bank, but by one of Starion's own customers, Audrey O'Brien, who also works alongside John through Oakes Enhancement, Inc.

Her nomination set the tone for a conversation that revealed not only John's deep commitment to his customers and community, but also the values, experiences, and passion that have shaped more than three decades in banking. Audrey shared: "John is a natural leader with visionary ideas, a willing worker, dependable, knowledgeable, and approachable in business and the community."

How long have you worked in the banking industry and what inspired you to pursue a career in banking?

John: I was tapped on the shoulder over 32 years ago to work in the banking field and realized with my ag background I had developed a passion to help others, especially young farmers trying to get started in farming.

John shared that what began as an unexpected opportunity quickly turned into a lifelong calling. With deep agricultural roots, he discovered how

naturally his background aligned with helping young producers and small businesses thrive. Over the years, he has found great purpose in building strong, long-term relationships with farm families and local enterprises – relationships that continue to ground and motivate his work today.

How have you seen the banking industry change during your career?

John: Technology is always changing... always trying to make online platforms more user friendly while still keeping everything secure and safe

Throughout his career, John has witnessed banking evolve from paper-heavy processes to a digital-first world. He emphasized how constant software upgrades and new online tools have improved the customer experience while also requiring the industry to stay vigilant in maintaining security. For him, adapting to these shifts has been essential to serving customers well – and helping them feel confident in a rapidly changing environment.

What's the most fulfilling part of your job?

John: Taking care of the customer; helping provide the funding and resources to help a small business or a farm family be successful.

John said he feels extremely fortunate to work with a talented team and a strong support system, both at work and at home. What truly motivates him, though, is seeing customers succeed – whether it's a young farmer purchasing land or a local entrepreneur growing their business. Knowing he plays even a small role in helping others achieve their goals is what he finds most meaningful.

As she nominated John, Audrey said, "He cares about and appreciates all the people he encounters and works with."

What's one accomplishment in your career you're especially proud of?

John: In a small rural community, to see many young people come back to be part of our community and to continue their family business or farming legacy.

Rather than pointing to a single moment, John took pride in the broader impact he's witnessed over time – watching new generations return home to build lives and carry forward their family operations. Seeing rural communities stay vibrant and resilient is, to John, one of the greatest rewards of his work.

What's something people would be surprised to learn about you?

John: I graduated with a degree in Agricultural Education, minor in agronomy and coaching. I'm the youngest of eight... and all eight of us graduated with a degree from NDSU. Go Bison!

Beyond banking, John has a diverse educational background rooted in agriculture and teaching. He also comes from a remarkably accomplished family. Growing up with seven older siblings on a North Dakota farm shaped his work ethic – and earning eight NDSU degrees across one household is a point of pride.

If you weren't a banker, what career could you see yourself in?

John: I would farm full-time. It's truly a passion and something that runs deep... But I've also loved to coach.



John and Ann with their grandchildren



John with a local Oakes farmer, Vic Thompson, as a part of Starion's harvest season lunch delivery program.



John and his wife, Ann with their family

Farming has always been central to John's identity, and he still farms actively today. He said if circumstances had been different, he could have easily pursued full-time agriculture or even a career in coaching. Teaching young people – whether his own children or their peers – has always brought him joy, and he can imagine himself mentoring at any level. No matter the path, he knows agriculture would always be at the heart of his work.

If you could go back and give your younger self one piece of advice, what would it be?

John: Recognize a better work/life balance. Learn to breathe and have more patience.

Looking back, John acknowledges how easy it can be to pour everything into work – especially in a career focused on helping others.

What do you enjoy doing outside of work?

John: I have a passion for farming, and still actively farm today. We currently have 8 grandkids with two more to arrive. Anything outdoors and traveling with my wife.

When he's not at the bank, John is happiest outdoors. Farming remains a major part of his life, but so do family activities, hunting, hiking, and watching sports. With a growing number of grandchildren, family time has become one of his greatest joys. He and his wife also enjoy traveling and exploring the outdoors together.

What impact do you hope to make in your organization or community?

John: Steward leadership. A passion to give back to the community.

John takes seriously the responsibility of leading with intention and service. He hopes to continue contributing to the health and vitality of the Oakes community, and he strives to set an example of giving back – both personally and professionally.

“You are never too important to be nice to people. Always be humble and kind.”

Audrey added, "John is actively involved with his church, Knights of Columbus, Oakes Lions, Oakes Area Community Foundation, and Oakes Enhancement, Incorporated. In each organization he takes on the challenges of keeping these entities viable, bringing them into the future."



"Grandpa" John with grandson Sutton

What's one piece of advice you'll never forget?

John: You are never too important to be nice to people! Always be humble and kind!

This simple but meaningful advice guides the way John interacts with customers, colleagues, and community members. For him, success means treating people with respect and leading with humility.



John with Craig and Shelley Larson and Dave Rogstad during the summer customer appreciation picnic in August.

How do you define success?

John: Success is not achieved alone... Professionally, knowing that I've helped others to be the best they can be. Personally, watching my children grow into the adults they have become.

John believes success is measured in the growth of others – customers, colleagues, and especially his family. Watching his children pursue their goals and become strong, capable adults is one of his greatest sources of pride. In his career, he finds fulfillment in lifting others up and helping them reach their potential.

John Zetocha... Now that's a banker you should know!



Oakes Starion team working girl's basketball concessions



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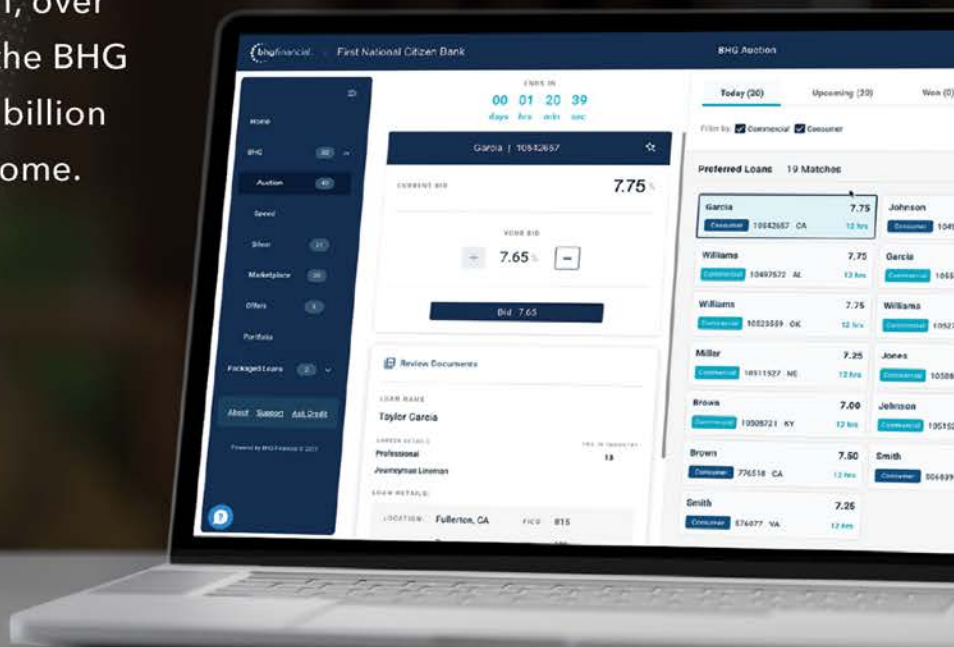


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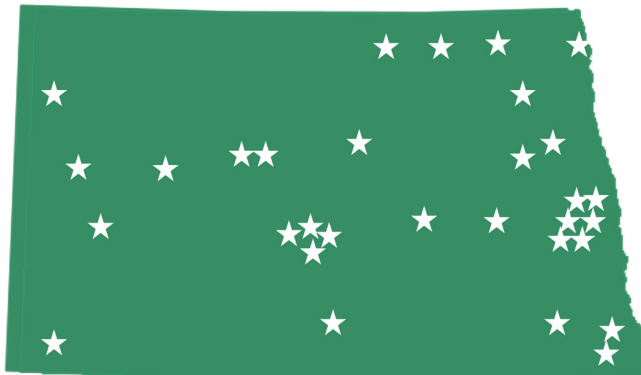
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NOVEMBER 2025 EDITION

The Power of Gratitude and Positive Thinking

It can be easy to get caught up in everyday stress and negativity. However, practicing gratitude can be a powerful tool to improve mental health. Gratitude involves recognizing and appreciating life's positive aspects. By focusing on what one has rather than what one lacks, gratitude helps shift the mindset to a more positive and resilient state.

Gratitude encourages individuals to savor the present moment and acknowledge the good in their lives, no matter how small. This positive focus can lead to a more optimistic outlook and stronger relationships. It also encourages resilience, the ability to bounce back from setbacks more quickly. Similarly, gratitude instills a sense of control over emotions, enabling calmer and more effective responses to stressors. A positive outlook doesn't mean ignoring life's challenges; rather, it means approaching them with a constructive and hopeful attitude.

Ways to Practice Gratitude

Regularly acknowledging what you're grateful for can cultivate a sense of contentment. Starting small and being consistent can make a significant difference. Consider these tips to get started:

- Get vaccinated. The CDC recommends that nearly everyone aged 6 months and older get a flu shot every year.
- Keep a gratitude journal, writing down things you're grateful for and reflecting on why they're meaningful to you.
- Try gratitude affirmations to reinforce positive thinking. Instead of writing down what you're grateful for, repeat it to yourself daily.
- Express thanks to others, sharing why you're grateful for them or how they're positively impacting your life.
- Embrace mindful moments by pausing to appreciate the beauty or the good around you, such as a sunny day or a kind gesture.
- Take a walk and consciously notice things you're grateful for in your surroundings. Then, reflect on how they enhance your life.

Remember, gratitude is a journey; every small step can lead to a more positive and fulfilling life



Gratitude is similar yet different from appreciation. The American Psychological Association defines gratitude as "a sense of happiness and thankfulness in response to a fortunate happenstance or tangible gift."

Combatting Tech Neck

While not an official medical diagnosis, "tech neck" has become a familiar phrase. As smartphones, laptops and tablets have become everyday tools, people spend more time hunched over screens. The result is a growing number of individuals reporting stiffness, discomfort and pain in their neck and shoulders. Tech neck refers to the strain placed on the cervical spine (the part of the spine in the neck) when a person consistently looks down at a device or sits in poor posture while using technology.

The good news is that tech neck is preventable and manageable. A few small changes in daily habits can make a big difference, so consider these tips:

- **Improve ergonomics.** Set up your workstation to reduce unnecessary strain. Position your computer monitor so the top of the screen is at or just below eye level. Sit in a chair that supports your back, with feet flat on the floor and shoulders relaxed.

- **Follow the 20-20-20 rule.** Every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds. This not only eases eye strain but also encourages you to reset your posture.
- **Strengthen and stretch.** Encouraging short stretch breaks (e.g., chin tucks, neck stretches and shoulder blade squeezes) during the workday can be particularly effective in preventing long-term strain.
- **Mind your phone habits.** When checking your phone, bring the device up to your eyes rather than bending your head down.

Contact a doctor if tech neck symptoms persist or worsen. Physical therapy, massage or exercise programs can help address severe discomfort.



Zywave, 2025.

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NOVEMBER 2025 EDITION

Adjusting to Daylight Saving Time

Most of the United States shifts between standard and daylight saving time (DST) each year in an effort to “save” natural light. Clocks will get set one hour back on Sunday, Nov. 2, when the DST period ends. Although you may be excited about gaining another hour in your day, the disruption of DST can wreak havoc on your physical and cognitive health for several days, weeks or even months.

Your internal clock regulates critical processes, including the immune system. Interruptions to the circadian rhythm, your body’s 24-hour cycle that regulates wake and sleep, can also impair your focus and judgment.



If your area follows DST, consider these tips to help adjust to the time change:

- Exercise in the morning to increase your wakefulness and reset your internal clock.
- Prioritize daylight exposure to help preserve your circadian rhythm.
- Keep a regular sleep routine and aim for seven to nine hours of sleep each night.
- Remove sleep disturbances (e.g., excess amounts of alcohol, caffeine and blue light exposure) a couple of hours before bedtime.

While you may be tempted to use the bonus hour to indulge in various activities, health experts recommend using that time for sleep. To help make the DST transition easier, consider going to bed 15 to 20 minutes early in the days beforehand to help your body get used to the difference. If you have specific concerns, talk to your health care provider.

Zywave, 2025.

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MONTHLY RECIPE

SLOW COOKER PORK STEW OVER BROWN RICE

Makes: 8 servings



INGREDIENTS

- 2 lbs. lean pork stew meat
- 3 cups baby carrots
- 1 large onion (sliced)
- 1 ½ tsp. dried thyme leaves
- ½ tsp. coarse ground black pepper
- ¼ tsp. salt
- 1 clove garlic (minced)
- 1 ½ cups complete bran and wheat flakes ready-to-eat cereal (crushed to ¾ cup)
- 1 cup dried tart cherries
- ¾ cup 100% apple juice or apple cider
- 4 cups hot cooked brown rice

PREPARATIONS

1. Trim fat from the pork.
2. Spray a large pan with nonstick cooking spray. Cook half of the pork at a time until browned.
3. In a 4- to 6-quart slow cooker, layer the carrots, onion, thyme, pepper, salt and garlic. Sprinkle with cereal and cherries.
4. Top with the pork and pour apple juice or cider over the contents in the cooker.
5. Cover and cook on low for 7 to 8 hours or on high for 3 ½ to 4 hours.
6. Prepare the brown rice according to package directions toward the end of the stew cooking time. (Brown rice typically takes about 40 to 45 minutes to cook.)
7. Stir the pork mixture and serve over a ½ cup of brown rice.

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

(per serving)

Total calories	412
Total fat	7 g
Protein	30 g
Sodium	280 mg
Carbohydrate	57 g
Dietary fiber	6 g
Saturated fat	2 g
Total sugars	20 g

Source: MyPlate



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December 2025 Webinars

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

Raising Future Ready Kids 4: Parenting Young Adults: Do you often feel uncertain as you try to adjust to the unwritten rules of relationship with your now-adult child? Family dynamics change as our children get older, creating new challenges and opportunities for growth. Whether your children are struggling or thriving, their current life stage may mean a new role for you. Join us as the Learn to Live clinical team discusses proven tools to help you through this next phase in parenting.

[Friday, December 5th: 11-11:30am CST/12-12:30pm EST](#)

Grief: Coping with Loss: We all encounter loss in life. We lose friends, jobs, opportunities, and yes, loved ones. Grief is the process of working through our loss, which may look different for each person. The Learn to Live clinical team will explore the four tasks of the grief process that we all experience and how we can grieve well.

[Tuesday, December 9th: 3-3:30pm CST/4-4:30pm EST](#)

Retrain Your Brain: The Case for Gratitude: Research shows that strengthening the gratitude muscle can lower stress and improve mood. Building this muscle actually feels good! The L2L Clinical Team will explore ways to strengthen your gratitude muscle and retrain your brain with practical ideas.

[Wednesday, December 10th: 12-12:30pm CST/1-1:30pm EST](#)

The Most Wonderful Time of the Year: Managing Stress and Worry: While this time of year may truly be the most wonderful for a lot of people, there's many that find the holidays to be one of the most stressful times. If you're feeling overwhelmed this season, Learn to Live can help. Join us as our clinical team explains holiday stressors, how to alleviate them and allow ourselves to experience more joy!

[Friday, December 12th: 11-11:30am CST/12-12:30pm EST](#)

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.

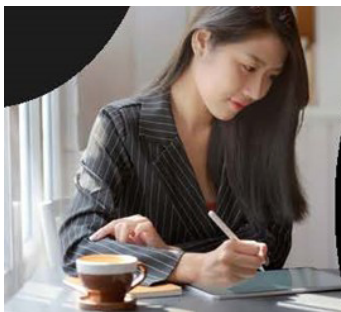


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Analyzing Financial Statements | [click here](#)

December 1, 2025 – March 27, 2026

Member Price: \$770 (with text)

A practical introduction to financial statement analysis from the perspective of the commercial loan officer. Gain the skills needed to effectively assess the risks related to a customer – current and prospective – and evaluate possible sources of repayment for the loan.

AI in Banking Workshop | [click here](#)

January 12, 2026 – February 6, 2026

Member Price: \$595

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Analyzing Bank Performance | [click here](#)

February 1, 2025 – March 20, 2025

Member Price: \$775

An overview of tools and techniques to analyze and improve a bank's financial performance. Participants observe the effects of certain kinds of risk on a bank's financial track record, and the correlation between risk optimization and superior financial performance.

The required textbook for this course is Bank Management, 8th Edition.

Marketing in Banking | [click here](#)

February 2, 2026 – March 27, 2026

Member Price: \$375 (with text)

Marketing in Banking presents the foundations of marketing in the banking industry. The course reviews the core responsibilities of bank marketing, how marketing is structured in an organization chart, and how to assess the financial performance of a financial institution.

Learning Outcomes and Objectives:

- Clarify the role of marketing in bank performance management
- Identify the core responsibilities typically assigned to marketing
- Understand how to review a bank's balance sheet and income statement
- Provide background information for the regulations impacting bank marketing activities

GSBC to Award Scholarship to NDBA Member Banks

As a co-sponsor of the [Graduate School of Banking at Colorado \(GSBC\)](#), the North Dakota Bankers Association has partnered with GSBC to recognize community banks across North Dakota for their innovative approaches to serving their customers and communities with a new, nomination-based scholarship.

The scholarship is called the [Bolder Banking Scholarship](#) and is an extension of GSBC's Bolder Banking campaign, which aims to highlight bold leaders in the community banking industry by sharing innovative information and ideas with fellow bankers.

The Bolder Banking Scholarship will afford NDBA the opportunity to recognize and reward member banks displaying innovative approaches to banking. GSBC will fund the scholarship for a rising star within the recipient bank to use toward tuition at GSBC's [Annual School Session](#).

NDBA member banks may nominate themselves or another bank to be a Bolder Banking Scholarship recipient. There is **one** of these bank-wide scholarships given annually.

To submit a Bolder Banking Scholarship nomination for your or another bank displaying innovative, out-of-the-box initiatives, complete the nomination form by **February 15**. The recipient bank will be decided on by **March 1**.

How to apply:

GSBC Boulder Banking NDBA scholarship nomination form | [Click here](#)

Email completed pdf to dorothy@ndba.com.



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BANKING**
Scholarship





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For more information, visit www.GSBColorado.org.

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GSBC's Flagship Program Since 1950

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- **Core banking principles** complemented by **peer-driven curriculum innovations** accelerate personal and professional growth.
- Practical takeaways to **apply immediately** at your institution.
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Next Session: July 19-31, 2026



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Next Session: October 18-21, 2026



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Community Bank Performance Institute

ALM strategies, liquidity management, investments, scenario planning and regulatory readiness.

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Next Session: May 4-7, 2026



Managing Interest Rate Risk: Strategy Over Speculation



Luke Mikles
Senior Vice President
Financial Strategies Group
The Baker Group

Betting is all the rage these days. Whether it's on sports, election outcomes, or even the weather, the prevalence of gambling feels like it's at an all-time high. Over the past year, betting on the federal funds target rate has also surged in popularity. Many believe it's a foregone conclusion that the Fed will continue cutting rates. The unknown exists in the timing and pace of falling rates. There are three polarizing topics I try to avoid talking about at dinner; religion, politics, and where interest rates are headed because everyone has a different opinion. When we talk about interest rate risk, we must remember that it's about managing that risk—not making wholesale bets on rate predictions.

Interest rate risk (IRR) is the potential impact on an institution's earnings or capital caused by changes in market interest rates. This risk is inherent in financial operations and must be actively managed. Regulators require institutions to establish policy limits that define acceptable levels of exposure to interest rate movements for both earnings and capital at risk. While the goal is to operate within these limits, institutions must also navigate the trade-off between risk and return. Increasing earnings often involves raising the balance sheet's risk profile, which then must be controlled within the institution's policy framework. This dynamic creates

ongoing tension between management, ownership, and regulators – hence the importance of effective interest rate risk management.

Following the rapid rising rate cycle coming out of the pandemic, community financial institutions also had to rapidly adjust their balance sheets to manage interest rate risk. The higher federal funds target rate led to a higher cost of funds and a diminishing net interest margin (NIM). By the end of the cycle, the FOMC had raised its target federal funds rate by 525 basis points in 15 months.

The FOMC had finished their tightening cycle. To combat further risks to earnings if rates reversed course and started to fall, the community banking industry in turn extended overall asset duration and decreased liability duration. These balance sheet changes helped protect against further deterioration of NIM in a falling rate environment. However, as discussed earlier, there is a tradeoff between risk and return. In this scenario, the risk to capital in a rising rate environment grew substantially.

To be clear, this is not a bad thing. To effectively manage a balance sheet, there must be some sort of interest rate bias. In this case, that bias was the expectation that rates would come down. The tradeoff between increasing earnings in a falling rate

environment at the cost of increased capital as risk in a rising rate environment makes sense at the peak in rates. However, this will not always be the case. The rate cycle will progress, the peak will become the trough, and a new strategy must be put into place. This is why acting on short term directional views on interest rates can lead to too much long-term risk. Interest rate risk and the strategy to effectively manage it is an ever-evolving process. What made sense in 2015 or 2020 might not make sense in 2025. So, what does effective interest rate risk management look like going forward? It starts with discipline and knowing when to adapt to the current market. Rather than putting all the eggs in one interest rate basket, institutions should build balance sheets that can adapt to the changing interest rate environment. This means regularly stress-testing assumptions, monitoring key risk metrics, and being willing to adjust strategies as conditions change.

Finally, remember that interest rate risk management is not about being right; it's about being prepared. The institutions that thrive through rate cycles are those that maintain discipline, aim to stay within policy limits, and resist the temptation to let short term predictions impact the long-term

health of the institution. In an era where betting has become entertainment, successful balance sheet management requires staying grounded in strategy over speculation.

Interest rates will go wherever they go, and no one knows with 100% certainty what will happen over the next 12 months. The goal is to ensure your institution can weather the journey, regardless of the destination. Homeruns are flashy and exciting, but singles and doubles win games all day long.

Luke Mikles is a senior vice president in the Financial Strategies Group at The Baker Group. He joined the firm in 2019, serving in the Interest Rate Risk Department. In 2023, Luke moved to the Financial Strategies Group, where he assists institutions with the risk management process and speaks at Baker's educational seminars across the country. Luke holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in energy economics from the University of Central Oklahoma.



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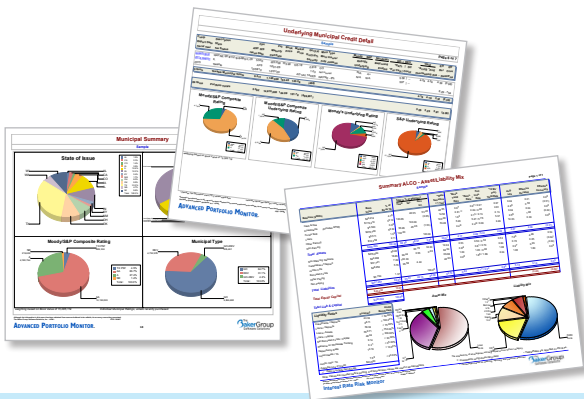


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Addressing HR's direct impact on the bottom line, this program focuses on key bank performance topics, including talent management, legal compliance, and profitability.

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BUSINESS PARTNER FEATURE

ACT[®] Deposit Program: A Simple Solution for Improving Your Bank's CRA Rating



Diane Ellis
Senior Managing Director
IntraFi

For many bank executives, meeting the Community Reinvestment Act requirements can feel like solving an intricate puzzle.

But a new initiative offers a safe, straightforward solution to one key aspect of CRA compliance.

Launched last year by the Community Development Bankers Association (CDBA) and the National Bankers Association (NBA), the Advancing Communities Together[®] Deposit Program provides banks with a secure and efficient way to fulfill their CRA obligations. By placing deposits into Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) or Minority Depository Institutions (MDIs), your bank can earn credit toward the CRA's community development and investment tests.

"The ACT Deposit Program is a promising new tool for community and regional banks to earn CRA credit," says Brian Blake, CDBA's Chief Public Policy Officer and a former bank CRA officer, "ACT excels at meeting both the spirit and the letter of the CRA, and I believe it is very competitive compared with more complex, costly, or time-consuming alternatives."

How Does the ACT Deposit Program Work?

The ACT Deposit Program uses IntraFi's ICS[®], or IntraFi Cash Service[®], so your bank's deposit is eligible for millions of dollars in aggregate FDIC insurance at network banks. The minimum deposit under the program is \$1 million for banks with \$10 billion or less in assets and \$5 million for larger banks. And the deposits earn interest.

Note: IntraFi is not an FDIC-insured bank, and deposit insurance covers the failure of an insured bank. A list identifying IntraFi network banks can be found at [IntraFi.com/network-banks](https://intrafi.com/network-banks). Certain conditions must be satisfied for "pass-through" FDIC deposit insurance coverage to apply.

Regulators define CRA "qualified investments" to include bank deposits with a primary purpose of community development. Under this definition, and subject to considerations such as the asset size and assessment area of the bank seeking CRA credit, deposits placed at CDFI and MDI banks qualify for CRA consideration.

While CRA guidelines require CDFIs to be located within a bank's assessment area to qualify for

the credit, deposits into any MDI bank qualify regardless of geographic location. Currently there are 35 MDIs and 64 CDFIs¹ operating in 32 states participating in the ACT Deposit Program. You can see a full list of participating CDFIs and MDIs [here](#).

Blake notes that these deposits will help CDFIs and MDIs do even more to help local communities.

“ACT program deposits put capital to work in communities that need it most,” he says. “Because CDFI and MDI banks operate in low-income or low-wealth communities, their funding options are limited – but they excel at financing affordable housing and small businesses, creating jobs, and expanding neighborhood facilities in low-income communities.”

Blake adds that ACT deposits offer banks qualitative benefits when it comes to CRA ratings, since the deposits meet standards of being responsive, flexible, and innovative. He concludes that “when leveraged by CDFI and MDI banks, ACT deposits go to very good use.”

Learn More about ACT

If your bank is looking for a secure, effective way to meet CRA’s community development or investment tests, learn more by visiting the ACT Deposit Program website at <https://www.intrafi.com/act-deposit-program> or email Diane Ellis at delis@IntraFi.com.

You’ll be doing something smart for your bank while also supplying a CDFI or MDI with much-needed deposits to lend in their markets.

¹ Seventeen ACT Deposit Program banks are both CDFIs and MDIs.

Deposit placement in the ACT Deposit Program within ICS (“Program”) is subject to the terms, conditions, and disclosures in applicable agreements, including the ACT Addendum to the ICS Deposit Placement Agreement. A portion of a deposit placed in the Program may be allocated to IntraFi network banks that are not CDFIs or MDIs. The interest rate earned on Program deposits will likely be lower than the interest rate available on deposits outside of the Program. IntraFi and ICS are registered service marks, and ACT is a service mark, of IntraFi LLC.

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END CYBER RISK

BUSINESS PARTNER FEATURE

Building a Strong Cybersecurity Culture Within Your Organization

Jon Waldman
President
SBS CyberSecurity



Fostering a cybersecurity-savvy culture isn't just a best practice – it's essential for protecting sensitive data and maintaining business continuity. Wait, did I just say that culture plays a role in business continuity? Yes, I did!

Technical defenses alone aren't enough to counter constantly evolving cyber threats. A well-established cybersecurity culture ensures that employees at all levels understand their role in protecting the organization and actively work to prevent security incidents. In this article, we'll explore how to build and sustain that culture so that security becomes second nature rather than an afterthought.

Understanding Cyber Threats

A reactive approach to cybersecurity isn't enough — organizations must take proactive steps to identify and mitigate risks before they become full-blown incidents. Regular security assessments help identify vulnerabilities, while timely software updates protect systems from known exploits. Ongoing employee training ensures staff can recognize and respond to threats, strengthening overall cybersecurity and reducing the likelihood of costly breaches.

Creating a Culture of Cybersecurity at Work

Building a cybersecurity-focused culture means integrating security into everyday workplace behavior. This involves setting strong and clear expectations through policies, providing ongoing (not just once-a-year) and role-appropriate training, and ensuring employees understand and apply their responsibilities through regular testing. When employees know what's expected, receive training to meet those expectations, and have opportunities to

practice and be evaluated, security becomes part of how they work — not just a checkbox. Testing results can also be tracked to measure improvement over time. Doing these things consistently helps create an environment where employees feel personally responsible for safeguarding customer information and the business.

Leadership plays a crucial role — when executives prioritize cybersecurity and lead by example, it reinforces its importance across the organization. When security is ingrained in the culture, best practices become instinctive, and employees act with awareness.

Evidence and transparency are vital in establishing this culture. Organizations must back up their commitment to cybersecurity with clear actions and policies. Regular reporting and open communication build trust and accountability. For example, sharing security audit results or lessons from incident response exercises demonstrates a proactive stance. Transparency also means acknowledging vulnerabilities and collaborating to address them.

Strategies to Build a Cybersecurity Culture

Top-Down Approach

Executives and managers can embed cybersecurity into the culture by modeling strong security behaviors, supporting awareness initiatives, and allocating resources for training and tools. Enforcing policies and reinforcing cybersecurity priorities through companywide communication set the foundation for a security-conscious workplace. When leadership is visibly committed to security, it fosters accountability across all levels of the organization.

Continuous Training and Awareness Programs

Cybersecurity training shouldn't be a one-time event — it must be an ongoing effort tailored to different roles. IT teams may need advanced threat detection training, while customer service staff must recognize phishing attempts. Interactive formats like workshops, webinars, and gamified learning enhance engagement and retention of security principles. Simulated phishing exercises provide real-world testing opportunities, sharpening response skills. Periodic refresher courses keep staff informed on emerging threats and risk mitigation techniques.

Recognizing and Rewarding Positive Security Behaviors

Training and testing are essential, but it's just as important to recognize employees who take initiative when it comes to cybersecurity. For example, when someone reports a real phishing attempt that helps stop a threat in its tracks, that action should be acknowledged and praised as the heroic move it is. When you ask employees to follow specific security protocols that may fall outside their usual responsibilities, reinforcing positive outcomes with recognition is key. Acknowledging these efforts builds confidence and motivates employees to stay alert and engaged.

Creating a Collaborative Environment

A strong cybersecurity culture thrives when security is seen as a shared responsibility beyond formal training. Encouraging employees to report suspicious activity

and share security tips increases collective awareness. Regular team discussions about cybersecurity issues and solutions can foster accountability, while cross-functional cybersecurity teams can further integrate security measures across departments. By embedding security considerations into daily operations, organizations create an environment where safe practices become the norm.

Nailing Down Your Organization's Cybersecurity Culture

Building and maintaining a strong cybersecurity culture is vital for protecting your organization from cyber threats. By implementing the strategies outlined in this article, you can cultivate a proactive security culture that strengthens your defenses and resilience.

This blog was originally published on sbscyber.com.

SBS helps business leaders identify and understand cybersecurity risks to make more informed and proactive business decisions. For more information, contact Cole Kratovil at 605-270-7925 or cole.kratovil@sbscyber.com. Learn more at sbscyber.com.



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BUSINESS PARTNER FEATURE

Have You Covered Fair Lending Considerations in the Debt Collection Process?

Tara Booth
Virtual Compliance Officer
Compliance Alliance



Financial institutions like to keep their losses to a minimum when it comes to delinquent loans, but has your institution considered its Fair Lending risks associated with the process of collecting debt? As we delve into this question, let's consider how a compliance officer or collections officer would know what examiners expect to see in place for the debt collection process.

Do you start by reading the Fair Lending regulations? How boring! Let's cut to the chase and go straight to the source. I always look to the Fair Lending Exam Manual or the Interagency Fair Lending Examination Procedures to gain insight.

As we walk through the debt collection process, let's keep in mind the prohibited basis groups found in the Equal Credit Opportunity Act (ECOA): race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, or receipt of public assistance. Similarly, under the Fair Housing Act, the prohibited bases include race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, and sexual harassment), familial status, and disability. These prohibited bases also apply to debt collections.

A potential Fair Lending issue could arise if, during the debt collection process, the collections department fails to provide a borrower with information or services regarding any aspect of the lending process, including debt collection.

Examples:

- The bank tends to work more with married couples, assuming they have two incomes and are more likely to repay the debt if the bank refinances the loan. Single borrowers are not offered a refinance as quickly, based on the assumption their repayment ability may not be as strong.
- A loan officer who performs their own collections tends to work more closely with male borrowers, giving them multiple workout options to avoid foreclosure, while similar options are not offered to female borrowers.

To help avoid these situations, the institution can conduct its own analysis of collection procedures with Fair Lending in mind, using available collection data. This process can highlight potential concerns or disparities.

Mitigating Fair Lending Risk in Collections

What can financial institutions do to avoid any perception of Fair Lending issues in the debt collection process?

A good starting point is to centralize the collection process and prohibit lenders from collecting their own debts. Ensure the bank has written collection procedures that include the loss mitigation options offered by the institution. Promote consistency in

procedures so that the same options are offered to all borrowers.

Procedures should instruct collection staff on how to use the various means of communication—including text messages, email, social media, and phone calls—to effectively and fairly reach borrowers. Consider how the institution is represented in these communications.

Avoid using third-party debt collectors unless you are very familiar with their practices and compliance with the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (FDCPA). Address any incentives paid by the bank to ensure compensation structures do not promote unfair treatment or result in discriminatory outcomes.

Fair Lending and OREO (Other Real Estate Owned)

If the worst-case scenario occurs and the institution must manage Other Real Estate Owned (OREO), are Fair Lending concerns over? Wrong!

Examination manuals clearly instruct examiners to look for potential Fair Lending concerns within OREO practices by reviewing statistics on foreclosures and deeds in lieu of foreclosure. They also direct examiners to assess any disparities between groups of individuals in the maintenance, marketing, and disposition of OREO properties.

For example, do disparities appear in property maintenance tied to the race or ethnicity of the neighborhood? If so, this could constitute a Fair Housing violation.

Collection procedures should also describe how OREO properties will be maintained and marketed. Be specific about the type of maintenance, repairs,

or renovations to be performed, and identify who is responsible for making those decisions.

To avoid Fair Lending issues, ensure all OREO properties are maintained equally, regardless of the demographic characteristics of the neighborhood.

Examples of potential disparities:

- OREO lawns in non-Hispanic neighborhoods are mowed regularly, while those in Hispanic neighborhoods are neglected.
- Debris removal or utility maintenance is performed consistently in some areas but not others.

Such inconsistencies may suggest discriminatory practices.

Integrating Fair Lending into the Collection Framework

If the institution hasn't already documented its collection and OREO processes within its Fair Lending Risk Assessment or collection procedures, now is the time to enhance those documents and provide greater clarity.

In the end, ensure your financial institution can demonstrate that its procedures support Fair Lending compliance throughout the entire lending process – including debt collection and the management and disposition of property taken in collection of debt.



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HAPPENINGS



Aberdeen

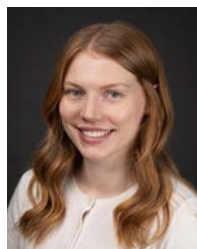
Dacotah Bank is excited to continue supporting students with its annual scholarship program. This year, Dacotah Bank will award one outstanding high school graduate a top scholarship of \$10,000. In addition, twenty-nine individual scholarships of \$2,000 each will be distributed across Dacotah Bank's market areas, which span three states: South Dakota, North Dakota, and Minnesota. Detailed criteria for scholarship selection can be found in the application.

Dacotah Bank is committed to helping young people in its communities pursue higher education. To be eligible, high school seniors must be planning to attend a post-secondary institution in South Dakota, North Dakota, or Minnesota, and the applicant or the applicant's parent/guardian must hold an account with Dacotah Bank.

For more information or to apply, visit dacotahbank.com/scholarships.

Bismarck

Bank of North Dakota recognizes **MaKayla Ellingson** who joined Bank of North Dakota as a loan servicing associate III. She has a bachelor's in business administration with a specialization in accounting and administration from Dickinson State University.



MaKayla Ellingson



Devon Smith

Devon Smith and **Michael Lehn** have accepted relationship manager positions. Devon has worked as a treasury associate III since he began his career at BND in 2022. Michael has worked as an agri-business banker since he began his career at BND in 2022.

Smith and Lehn are both graduates of the Dakota School of Banking.



Michael Lehn

Bismarck

In response to Governor Kelly Armstrong's recent directive allocating emergency state funds to support food programs during the federal government shutdown, **Bravera** is proud to announce a \$25,000 donation to the Great Plains Food Bank. This contribution will help bolster the organization's emergency efforts to source and distribute additional food across North Dakota.

Bravera has long supported Great Plains Food Bank's Regional Distribution Center in Bismarck through both financial contributions and volunteerism. Each quarter, Bravera employees roll up their sleeves at the local distribution center to pack and prepare food. This hands-on involvement reflects Bravera's commitment to building stronger communities through action and advocacy.

Bravera encourages others to join in supporting local food pantries and nonprofits during this critical time. Together, we can help ensure that no North Dakotan faces hunger alone.

Bismarck

Rebecca Ternes has joined **Cornerstone Bank** as market president with over 20 years of experience. Ternes brings a wealth of knowledge from her time as vice president of business banking where she worked with large corporations and family-run companies as well as non-profits and trusts. Previously, she worked for the North Dakota Department of Insurance as Deputy Commissioner, and Acting Commissioner. She also spent time with the North Dakota Bankers Association and the Governor's office. Ternes holds a Bachelor of Science from Moorhead State University and an MBA from the University of North Dakota.

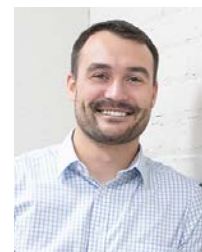


Rebecca Ternes

Mandan

Jared Schumacher recently joined **Bravera Bank** in Mandan in the role of agricultural banking officer. He has worked in the industry since 2020. Prior to joining Bravera, he worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency in Pierre, SD, and a bank in Herreid, SD.

Jared grew up working on his family's feedlot, ranch and farm operation near Zeeland and earned a bachelor's degree in animal science and agricultural economics from North Dakota State University.



Jared Schumacher

associate HAPPENINGS

Bismarck

Dakota Carrier Network (DCN) has been recognized as the Connectbase Most Valuable Provider (Regional), for its leadership and innovation in using the platform to enhance network operations, collaboration, and service delivery. Cora Schlenger, DCN network design specialist whose work laid a solid foundation for implementation of the system, accepted the award at the Connectbase Customer Summit in Chicago.

DCN utilizes Connectbase's Connected Infrastructure Management (CIM) system to document network assets that power its carrier Ethernet, cloud, data center, dedicated internet, private line, and wavelength solutions. The detailed circuit records generated within CIM are shared with DCN's customers and Owner companies and serve as essential resources for the Network Operations Center during service activations and troubleshooting. In addition, DCN leverages CIM for trouble ticketing, outage management, and maintenance notifications.

The Connectbase Most Valuable Provider (Regional) is given to a leader in their region, interconnecting providers and partners and providing best-in-class network inventory management using the CIM system.

Dakota Carrier Network (DCN) Systems Administrator **Cole Hardy** recently earned CompTIA Server+ certification. This technical certification validates skills in the areas of server hardware installation and management; server administration; security and disaster recovery; and troubleshooting hardware, software, networks, and disaster recovery. CompTIA is the largest vendor-neutral credentialing program for technology professionals, and this certification is the industry standard for professionals working in data centers, on-premises, and hybrid environments. Hardy joined the company in August 2025. He earned an Associate of Science in computer science and cybersecurity from Bismarck State College and a Bachelor of Science in computer science from the University of North Dakota.

Fargo

Dakota Business Lending (DBL) is excited to announce that applications for the fourth cohort of the Entrepreneur District are now open. This year, the program is expanding to welcome product-based entrepreneurs.

Created to support small businesses across various industries, the Entrepreneur District offers access to both the office space they need and the collaboration they crave to create, work, and grow... all at no cost. The program now features two distinct tracks, each designed to serve a wider range of small businesses.

Service or client-based businesses will continue to have access to personal office space at Dakota Business Lending's Fargo location.

Product development or prototyping businesses will receive a complimentary one-year membership to the NDeavor Innovation Studio at the Barry D. Batcheller Tech Park, complete with workshop spaces and specialized equipment to help bring ideas to life.

Both tracks of the Entrepreneur District will have access to shared conference rooms located on the second floor of Dakota Business Lending's headquarters, along with business development support and opportunities to collaborate with other local District Residents.

Those who wish to hold their office at the Entrepreneur District must have one of two goals: the desire and potential to grow and scale their business OR the desire to sustain their business at its current level by creating a more robust, well-rounded business.

Resident applications are due December 19, 2025. To apply or find more information about the Entrepreneur District, please visit our website at www.dakotabusinesslending.com/entrepreneur-district. Any questions and completed applications can be sent to Michaela Schell, Business Development & Outreach Officer and Head of District, at mschell@dakotabusinesslending.com.

CLASSIFIEDS

To place an ad, email information to ndba@ndba.com.

The cost is \$25 to run in two consecutive issues of the Bulletin and be posted on NDBA's website for 6 weeks.



Business Banking Representative Mandan ND



Full job description and to apply: [click here](#).

Are you a customer-focused, disciplined, and ethical individual with a passion for inspiring others? If so, we want you on our team at Starion Bank!

Why Starion Bank? As a growing community bank, we pride ourselves on local leadership, personalized service, and deep community loyalty. We're not just a bank; we're a place where you can thrive both professionally and personally.

Locations: Mandan North Dakota

Key Responsibilities:

- Initiate and process commercial loan applications, ensuring compliance with regulatory and internal policies
- Assist in portfolio management – process loan advances, paydowns, payment issues, wires and other servicing needs
- Act as a point of contact for business clients, ensuring timely resolution of account related needs and delivering exceptional customer service.
- Meet with business customers to open accounts, close loans, complete profiling information, clear documentation exceptions, and obtain additional information
- Support your assigned business bankers to meet required deadlines for service expectations and Starion standards

Qualifications:

- Three to five years of similar or related experience.

What We Offer:

- **Competitive Salary:** Your hard work deserves great pay!
- **Comprehensive Benefits:** Including health, life, dental, vision, and a health savings account.
- **Retirement Planning:** 401K and profit-sharing options.
- **Incentives:** Annual Incentive Compensation Program available for all benefit eligible employees
- **Work-Life Balance:** Paid vacation and holidays.

Recognized Excellence:

Join a team recognized as the "Best of the Best" by Independent Bankers magazine!

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Executive Assistant Bismarck ND



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Why Starion Bank? As a growing community bank, we pride ourselves on local leadership, personalized service, and deep community loyalty. We're not just a bank; we're a place where you can thrive both professionally and personally.

Locations: Bismarck, North Dakota

Key Responsibilities:

- Provide administrative support to the President
- Schedule appointments, meetings and other events, make travel arrangements, prepare and maintain documents and reports.
- Prepare, process and track expense reports, invoices, and reimbursements
- Draft correspondence and ensure timely and accurate communication on behalf of the President
- Serve as liaison between President and internal/external stakeholders, always maintaining confidentiality.

Qualifications:

- Demonstrated experience in administrative assistant tasks and confidentiality, typically acquired through three to five years of similar or related experience.
- Excellent organizational, multitasking skills and time management skills
- A team player with strong written and oral communication skills
- Demonstrates adaptability and self-direction

What We Offer:

- Competitive Salary: Your hard work deserves great pay!
- Comprehensive Benefits: Including health, life, dental, vision, and a health savings account.
- Retirement Planning: 401K and profit-sharing options.
- Incentives: Annual Incentive Compensation Program available for all benefit eligible employees
- Work-Life Balance: Paid vacation and holidays.

Recognized Excellence:

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Credit Officer Fargo ND



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Work Hours: Full-time, Monday through Friday, 8-5pm.

Skills / Requirements / Qualifications:

- Act as a resource for bank officers in the credit administration process by analyzing and spreading financial statements for potential new clients and providing preliminary recommendations as to the feasibility of the credit request.
- Assist lenders with the preparation of loan committee presentations, credit reviews and problem loan summaries.
- Prepare independent, written credit evaluation of new, renewal or modification loan proposals as well as annual credit reviews.
- Identify trends and analyze performance in order to develop an assessment of credit risks.
- As required, monitor credit quality through the review of financial information such as interim financial statements, to provide early warning of possible deterioration.
- Provide input to lending officers on terms under which a credit request could be structured including costs, repayment methods and collateral requirements.
- Develop and maintain a thorough understanding of the Bank's credit policies, procedures, processes and manage to best practices.
- Knowledge, skill, and mental development equivalent to the completion of a four-year college degree in Accounting, Finance, or a related field and five years of credit, lending, or banking experience.

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Resumes can be sent to: humanresources@bankforward.com.



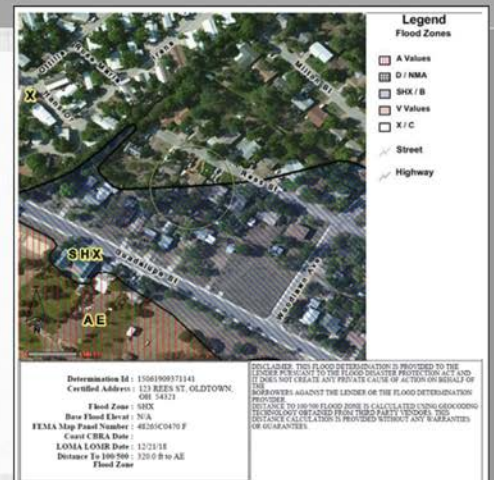
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*Seeing is believing. A visual representation of a building location in relation to the **Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA)** can be a valuable aid in conveying the need for flood insurance, when structure(s) are within the **SFHA**, or to help borrowers make an informed decision when the structure(s) are outside the **SFHA**.*

Risk Factor

It's estimated that approximately **40%*** of all properties not located within a **SFHA** will flood at some point. So with this in mind, one can see why it would be important to understand how close all structures on a property lie in relation to the *nearest SFHA*. In many of these instances a standard Flood Hazard Determination Form for a property does not give enough detail to the borrower or lender, and may leave them unaware of the potential risk of flooding the property faces.



Quick & Accurate

By utilizing an **aerial Map Copy**, the lender can see the distance to the next hazardous zone from any structure on the property. Due to the nature of the risk, it's important that lenders review accurate and easy-to-read maps. A **clear Map Copy** provides beneficial information regarding *nearby SFHAs* that may not directly affect the primary structure or structures.



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FLOOD ZONE
DETERMINATIONS**

*The benefits to ordering an easy-to-read **aerial Map Copy** along with your flood zone determination extend beyond just being able to see the multiple structures on a property and can significantly reduce the risk for the borrower and lender. If you are not using a vendor who can provide you with an **aerial Map Copy** along with your flood zone determination, reach out to **DataVerify Flood Services**. We can provide the digital lift that lenders and borrowers need to work through all the uncertainties surrounding **SFHAs**.*



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What You'll Do: This position is responsible for assisting the Chief Credit Officer in overseeing the bank's loan portfolio. They will work to resolve loans that are either in default or at risk of going into default. They aim to minimize losses for the bank while helping the borrower find solutions to regain financial stability. This can involve restructuring the loan, negotiating new repayment terms, and exploring options to prevent foreclosure. In the event it goes to foreclosure they will work with bank legal counsel through foreclosure, ownership, and eventual sale.

What We're Looking For:

- Extensive experience in commercial lending, credit analysis, and risk management
- Deep understanding of financial statements, credit scoring models, and industry trends
- Strong analytical and problem-solving skills to evaluate complex credit risks

Background & Experience:

Bachelor's degree in Business, Finance, Accounting or a related field and 5 years of loan management or financial rehabilitation experience, or an equivalent combination of education and experience sufficient to successfully perform the essential duties of the job.

- People-first culture with real responsibility
- An innovative approach to banking
- Development opportunities for continual growth
- Competitive Pay and a Comprehensive Benefits Program
- Incentive Compensation Plan

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Commercial Banker Bismarck, ND



FIRST WESTERN BANK & TRUST

POSITION OVERVIEW:

Develop new commercial loan business for First Western Bank & Trust through securing, structuring, and closing loans; maintain and service existing commercial lending portfolio.

ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS, DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Build and maintain customer relationships through sales calls, interviews, and ongoing communication to identify lending needs and generate new loan business.
- Manage a full loan portfolio, including commercial and assigned loans, ensuring accurate files, annual reviews, and compliance with bank policies and regulations.
- Analyze financial information, evaluate collateral, and make credit decisions within lending authority, preparing larger requests for committee or Board approval.
- Coordinate with agencies such as the SBA and Bank of North Dakota to qualify customers for participation programs and negotiate loan terms, collateral, and payment structures.
- Represent the bank in the community at meetings and events to promote products and services and support customer engagement.
- Review loan reports, monitor repayment activity, work with customers on outstanding balances, and maintain ongoing education in lending and compliance standards.

OTHER DUTIES:

- Conduct site visits and collateral inspections, as necessary
- Other duties, responsibilities, and activities may be assigned with or without notice

EDUCATION AND/OR EXPERIENCE - SKILLS/ABILITIES

- Bachelor's degree in business or finance related field
- Experience in bank lending, loan review, compliance, or finance is preferred
- Strong understanding of financial statements and credit standards
- Knowledge of business management principles preferred
- Excellent oral and written communications skills
- Demonstrate professionalism in working with the public and all levels of management
- Ability to define problems, facts and draw valid conclusions
- Strong analytical, problem solving, and decision-making skills
- Computer proficiency, especially in Microsoft Excel

First Western Bank & Trust is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, marital status, or veteran status. <http://www.firstwestern.bank/careers/>

AG Banker

Bismarck, ND - hybrid capacity in Southwestern ND



Location: This position is on site in Bismarck or may be filled in a hybrid capacity in Southwestern ND.

Bank of North Dakota is seeking an Ag Banker to join our team! The Bank was established to promote agriculture, commerce, and industry in the State. Its loan programs work in conjunction with private financial institutions to finance economic development throughout the State. It is the legal depository for all state funds unless provided otherwise by law. The Bank also serves as a central clearing agency and provides many other services to North Dakota banks and other financial institutions.

At Bank of North Dakota, we offer rewarding work opportunities with a competitive employee benefits package including a fully paid family health insurance plan, paid leave, retirement plan options, work-life balance/flexibility, an infant-at-work program, tuition reimbursement, and more!

If unable to find qualified candidates, the hiring authority will consider an underfill as an Ag Banker II. The hiring range for level two is \$93,494 - \$140,240 annually.

As the Ag Banker, you will serve as the primary contact for financial institutions and farmers and ranchers within the southwest and western regions of North Dakota. In this position, you will be responsible for building and maintaining strong relationships with lending staff at financial institutions, working with them on new loan opportunities, servicing an existing portfolio, and collecting necessary financial information. The Ag Banker position also represents the Bank of North Dakota (BND) through community involvement, agricultural events, and industry meetings.

In this role, you will develop a deep understanding of your assigned market and serve as a trusted resource to both lenders and agricultural producers. You will identify customer needs, educate financial institutions on BND products and services, and demonstrate how those solutions can support growth and stability in their operations. You will handle inquiries from financial institutions, collect annual borrower information, and help increase BND's visibility in both the banking and agricultural communities. The Ag Banker will also attend meetings and events to promote BND's role in supporting statewide economic development and ensure that loan requests align with program guidelines and the Bank's overall mission.

The Ag Banker position will manage a diverse loan portfolio, working with originating lenders to modify existing loans, review files for documentation completeness, and maintain delinquency and problem loan records. In this position, you will assist lenders in resolving delinquent or workout credits, develop strategies for managing risk, and ensure loan data is accurate and up to date.

You will also be responsible for analyzing financial data to assess creditworthiness, including reviewing financial statements, calculating ratios and cash flows, and discussing findings with originating lenders. The Ag Banker will prepare and present loan requests to appropriate committees, recommend approval or denial of loans beyond individual lending authority, and ensure loans are structured to minimize risk while maintaining profitability. Additional responsibilities include conducting site inspections, negotiating rates and fees, coordinating loan closings, and following up on outstanding items in collaboration with Loan Administration and Credit Administration.

This position carries lending authority up to established thresholds and requires a strong understanding of agricultural lending, sound judgment, and a relationship-driven approach. At times, additional hours may be required to complete special projects or meet critical deadlines.

Minimum Qualifications:

The Ag Banker III position requires a bachelor's degree in accounting, banking and finance, business administration, or economics, along with at least seven years of agriculture banking/lending experience. Additional years of relevant lending experience may substitute for the degree requirement on a year-for-year basis.

Candidates should demonstrate strong competencies in presentation skills, drive for results, self-development, customer focus, ethics and values, negotiating, decision quality, and functional or technical expertise.

This position may be filled as an Ag Banker II, which requires a bachelor's degree in accounting, banking and finance, business administration, or economics, and a minimum of five years of agriculture banking/lending experience. Additional years of lending experience may substitute for the degree requirement on a year-for-year basis.

Apply here.



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NDBA is pleased to partner with companies involved in the banking industry. Endorsed business partners are approved by the NDBA Services Board based on the caliber of a company and its products and services.

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- Build long-lasting relationships with companies that have a record of success
- Learn from industry experts that support, speak, and exhibit at NDBA events

Allied Solutions

www.alliedsolutions.net

Fargo ND

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Phone: 612-845-4282

stephen.owens@alliedsolutions.net



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IntraFi

www.IntraFi.com

Arlington VA

Contact: Bradley Cole, Managing Director, Northern Plains

Phone: 703-292-3392

bcole@intrafi.com



IntraFi

Arctic Wolf

www.arcticwolf.com

Eden Prairie MI

Contact: Logan McAlpin, Sr. Account Representative

Phone: 612-304-0875

logan.mcalpin@arcticwolf.com



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Eden Prairie MN

Contact: Adam Dawson, Regional Sales Manager

Phone: 952-261-8978

adamd@mbisllc.com



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Oklahoma City OK

Contact: Jantz Kinzer, Managing Director

Phone: 405-415-7255

jantz@gobaker.com



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Contact: Kimberly Gilbert, Senior Inside Sales Representative

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BHG Financial Institutional Network

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SBS Cybersecurity

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Compliance Alliance

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Superior IRA & HSA

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DataVerify Flood Services

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