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**2026 NDBA  
Bank Management  
Conference**

**Sunshine, Strategy &  
Strong Connections**



# 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](http://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](mailto:info@bankperformancereport.com).*

## Upcoming NDBA Events

FEBRUARY 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
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MARCH 2026						
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APRIL 2026						
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MAY 2026						
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31						

JUNE 2026						
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JULY 2026						
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AUGUST 2026						
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SEPTEMBER 2025						
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OCTOBER 2026						
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25	26	27	28	29	30	31

### February 2026

25      **BIB 101: Fundamentals of Commercial Lending**  
**March 2026**

3-26     **GSB Digital Banking School**  
9-11     **ABA Washington Summit** - Washington DC  
25      **BIB 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

### May 2026

19      **FDIC Directors College**, Radisson Hotel, Bismarck  
**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**  
26-Aug 6    **Graduate School of Banking** - Madison WI

### August 2026

18-20    **Virtual Fraud Academy**

### September 2026

14-17    **Regional Member Meetings** - 4 Locations!  
21-25    **GSB Financial Managers School**

### October 2026

1-2      **Ag Credit Conference** - Hilton Garden Inn, Fargo  
12-16    **GSB Bank Cybersecurity School**  
14       **Peer Group Consortium** - Bismarck



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## Mission Statement

Extraordinary Leadership for North Dakota Banks



## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



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BankNorth  
Casselton



CHAIR-ELECT  
**Jamie Nelson**  
TruCommunity Bank  
Washburn



TREASURER  
**Duane Bowman**  
Dakota Western Bank  
Bowman

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# BANKING ARTICLES



## Consumer Credit Increased 2.4% In 2025

Consumer credit increased 2.4% in 2025, with revolving and nonrevolving credit increasing 3.4% and 2%, respectively, according to the Federal Reserve. During the fourth quarter, consumer credit increased at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 3%, while in December it increased at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 5.7%.

**Read more:** <https://www.federalreserve.gov/releases/g19/current/default.htm>

## Congress Reauthorizes Private-Public Cybersecurity Framework

Lawmakers have reauthorized a voluntary framework for the private sector and government agencies to share information about cyberthreats as part of a larger budget deal.

The Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act created antitrust and liability protection for companies to share actionable threat indicators with the government. The program expired in September 2025, and the ABA and ICBA, along with other industry groups have urged lawmakers to reauthorize what they view as a vital tool in the defense against increasingly sophisticated cyberthreats.

The recent budget deal passed by Congress included language that reauthorizes CISA through Sept. 30.

## FDIC Extends Comment Period for Genius Act Implementation

The FDIC has announced that it will push back the deadline for comment on its proposal to create a process through which banks can seek agency approval to issue stablecoins through a subsidiary.

The FDIC issued proposed rulemaking in December to begin implementing the Genius Act. The agency originally set a comment deadline of Feb. 17, but in a statement, it pushed that deadline back to May 18.

Last month, the ABA and ICBA joined other industry associations in urging the FDIC to extend the comment period. Among other things, they noted the agency has yet to issue a separate proposal to implement the law's capital, liquidity, risk management and other prudential requirements.

**Read more:** <https://www.fdic.gov/federal-register-notice-extension-comment-period-through-may-18-2026.pdf>

## President Nominates Former Fed Governor Kevin Warsh for Chairmanship

Kevin Warsh has been nominated by President Donald Trump to serve as the next chair of the Federal Reserve Board. In selecting Warsh, the President has chosen an experienced and tested policymaker who previously served at the Fed during one of its most challenging moments. With his deep understanding of monetary policy, markets, and the role banks play in the economy, stakeholders look forward to hearing more about his policy views during the confirmation process and to a smooth transition in Fed leadership.

Warsh worked in the mergers and acquisitions department at Morgan Stanley before joining the administration of President George W. Bush, where he was special assistant to the president for economic policy and executive secretary at the National Economic Council. Bush nominated Warsh to serve on the Fed board in 2006. During his term, he served as the Fed's representative to the G20 and as an emissary to the emerging and advanced economies in Asia. He has a law degree from Harvard Law School.

**Read more:** <https://www.federalreservehistory.org/people/kevin-m-warsh>

## Senators Introduce Bill Requiring Online Platforms to Crack Down on Scam Ads

Two senators have introduced bipartisan legislation directing social media companies and other online media providers to take steps to fight fraudulent advertisements on their platforms.

The Safeguarding Consumers from Advertising Misconduct, or SCAM, Act by Sens. Bernie Moreno (R-Ohio) and Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.) would prohibit online platforms from displaying fraudulent or deceptive commercial advertisements. It would require companies to take additional steps to prevent scam ads from appearing on their platforms, such as by giving users better tools to report fraud.

The bill also would strengthen the Federal Trade Commission's and states' ability to enforce violations of consumer protection laws.

In a statement, ABA President and CEO Rob Nichols called the SCAM Act a critical step forward in the nation's fight against fraud.

"Millions of Americans lose billions of dollars a year to scams that start on social media platforms," Nichols said. "Banks of all sizes invest significant resources to detect and stop fraud, and Americans appreciate those efforts, but we need to prevent scams before they ever reach a bank."

"The SCAM Act simply asks social media companies to put consumers first by taking responsible steps to remove scammers from their platforms," he added. "Protecting Americans from fraud should be a bipartisan, national priority, and ABA encourages all lawmakers to join Sens. Gallego and Moreno in supporting the SCAM Act and sticking it to the scammers."

**Read more:** <https://www.moreno.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/SCAM-Act.pdf>

## Data Breaches Becoming More Focused

Financial services remained the top target for data breaches in 2025, and while the overall number of breaches continues to rise, attackers are more selective in who they set their sights on, according to the annual data breach report by the Identity Theft Resource Center.

The U.S. financial services sector experienced 739 data compromises in 2025, up from 733 the year before, according to the report. Healthcare was the second most targeted sector with 534 data breaches. Professional services – which includes

lawyers, accountants and consultants – experienced 478 compromises last year, up from 344 the year before.

The U.S. saw a record 3,322 data compromises in 2025, representing 79% increase over five years, according to the report. However, the number of total victims dropped sharply from 1.36 billion in 2024 to 278.8 million in 2025, in part because attackers have shifted away from "mega-breaches" to more frequent, targeted attacks on high-value data sources.

The report also found that nearly 40% of small businesses are passing their breach cleanup costs on to consumers through price increases, "turning cyber-risk into a national inflationary issue."

**Read more:** <https://www.idtheftcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/2025-ITRC-Annual-Data-Breach-Report.pdf>

## Banking Trades Participate in White House Meeting on Crypto Regulation

The ABA and ICBA participated in a meeting at the White House with other banking representatives and cryptocurrency leaders to discuss proposed crypto market structure legislation currently pending in Congress.

Congress last year passed the Genius Act, which created a regulatory framework for payment stablecoins. The market structure bill currently before the Senate would do the same for a broad range of digital assets. ABA and others have been urging senators to use the bill to close a loophole that could allow crypto firms to bypass the Genius Act's prohibition on paying interest or yield on payment stablecoins. The White House convened the meeting to open lines of communication to move the market structure bill forward.

The associations in a statement afterward thanked the Trump administration "for hosting today's constructive conversation and for recognizing the importance of the banking industry's perspective on market structure legislation."

"As we shared in the meeting, we must ensure that any legislation supports the local lending to families and small businesses that drives economic growth and protects the safety and soundness of our financial system," they said. "Banks of all sizes will continue to work with lawmakers, the White House and other stakeholders to help develop thoughtful, effective policy around digital assets."

**Read more:** <https://www.aba.com/about-us/press-room/press-releases/Joint-Statement-White-House-Crypto-Meeting>

## FDIC Reinstates Independent Supervisory Appeals Office

The FDIC board has voted to bring back an independent office at the agency to oversee bank appeals of its supervisory decisions. In addition, the OCC plans to explore similar reforms to its supervisory appeals process, according to Comptroller Jonathan Gould.

The FDIC last year proposed to eliminate the Supervision Appeals Review Committee and replace it with the independent Office of Supervisory Appeals. The agency eliminated the OSA in 2022 – not long after the office was formed as a replacement for SARC, which the banking industry said was an ineffective vehicle for banks to challenge supervisory findings.

The finalized guidelines bring back the OSA but include changes from the original proposal. Among the revisions is a requirement that a panel of three officials consider each appeal, with one panelist required to have bank industry experience.

Before the vote, Gould – who serves on the FDIC board – said the OCC will be “following in the footsteps” of the FDIC and will propose its own appeals process reforms in the near future.

**Read more:** <https://bankingjournal.aba.com/2026/01/fdic-reinstates-independent-supervisory-appeals-office/>

## FDIC Adopts Changes to Signage Rules

The FDIC board has finalized several proposed changes to its recently revised signage rules and pushed back the compliance date by a few months.

The FDIC in 2024 adopted new signage requirements that were originally scheduled to take effect in March of this year. Last year, the agency’s new leadership proposed further amendments and pushed back the compliance date to Jan. 1, 2027. The final rule adopts those amendments and again moves back the compliance date, to April 1, 2027.

Among the changes:

- Insured depository institutions have additional flexibility with respect to requirements regarding the color, font and size when displaying the FDIC official digital sign. They can also “wrap” the text of the sign to address space constraints.
- The final rule removes the “landing page” requirement and removes the requirement to display the FDIC official digital sign on pages where the customer may transact with deposits. In a change from the proposal, the final

rule clarifies that signage on the account opening page is only required on the first page of that process.

- Depository institutions would only be required to display the FDIC official digital sign on the initial screen of an ATM or similar device.
- The final rule will provide a non-exhaustive list of examples on various placements of the FDIC official digital sign and non-deposit signage that would meet the “clear, continuous and conspicuous” standard for digital deposit-taking channels.

**Read more:** <https://www.fdic.gov/board/federal-register-notice-part-328-fdic-sign-and-ad.pdf>

## President Directs Agencies to Restrict Housing Ownership by Large Investment Firms

President Trump has signed an executive order directing federal agencies to cease activities that facilitate the sale of single-family homes to large institutional investors and to take possible legal action against those firms.

In the order, Trump alleges that large investment firms buying homes in certain areas of the country have made housing unaffordable for many families. The order directs agencies and government-sponsor enterprises – such as Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac – to stop approving, insuring, guaranteeing, securitizing or facilitating the acquisition of single-family homes by the firms.

The order directs the attorney general and Federal Trade Commission to review “substantial acquisitions” of housing by large institutional investors and to prioritize enforcement of the antitrust laws against coordinated vacancy and pricing strategies. It also requires the Department of Housing and Urban Development to review the role of the firms in single-family home rentals participating in Federal housing assistance programs.

In addition, the order directs White House staff to prepare proposed legislation to prevent the firms from buying single-family housing.

In related news, Trump announced today that he directed Fannie and Freddie to purchase \$200 billion in mortgage bonds. By increasing demand for these bonds, the administration seeks to drive mortgage rates down and lower monthly payments for homebuyers.

**Read more:** <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2026/01/stopping-wall-street-from-competing-with-main-street-homebuyers/>

## AI, Fraud Among Top Cybersecurity Trends For 2026

Artificial intelligence is “supercharging” the cybersecurity arms race, with cyber-enabled fraud affecting people of all stripes, according to a new Global Cybersecurity Outlook report by the World Economic Forum and professional services firm Accenture.

The institutions surveyed organizations and executives about the current cybersecurity environment and identified three key trends for 2026. The first is the role of AI in accelerating both cyber threats and cyber defenses. Among the findings, the number of respondents assessing the security of AI tools rose significantly from the previous survey last year, with 64% now conducting assessments versus 37% in 2025. In addition, 87% of respondents identified AI-related vulnerabilities as the fastest-growing cyber risk.

The second trend was geopolitics remaining the top factor influencing overall cyber risk mitigation strategies. Nearly two in three organizations surveyed said they are accounting for geopolitically motivated attacks in their cyber planning.

The final trend was the broad nature of who is targeted, with 73% of respondents reporting that they or someone in their networks had been personally affected by cyber-enabled fraud last year. Among top executives, CEOs listed cyber-enabled fraud as their top concern, while chief information security officers remain concerned about ransomware and supply chain resilience.

**Read more:** [https://reports.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_Global\\_Cybersecurity\\_Outlook\\_2026.pdf](https://reports.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Global_Cybersecurity_Outlook_2026.pdf)

## 159 Million Americans Could Lose Access to Credit Under 10% Credit Card Rate Cap

A proposed 10% federal credit card interest rate cap would significantly reduce access to credit for millions of consumers nationwide, and even those with good credit scores who pay their bills on time will be affected by the rate cap, according to a new analysis of credit card data by the ABA.

The 10% Credit Card Interest Rate Cap by Sens. Josh Hawley (R-Mo.) and Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) has made little progress in Congress, but the idea recently received a boost when President Trump proposed a one-year, 10% cap on credit card interest rates. To understand the effects of a cap, ABA analyzed data from credit card issuers accounting for about 75% of the market. Among the findings:

- 74%–85% of open credit card accounts nationwide would be closed or have their credit lines drastically reduced.

- At least 137 million cardholders – and up to 159 million – would no longer be able to use their cards.
- State-by-state analyses are consistent with the national data, indicating the pain from price caps would be felt in every corner of the country.
- While the proposed rate cap aims to lower consumer costs, the new data demonstrates that it would instead undermine affordability by effectively eliminating the credit card as a spending tool and vital source of liquidity for tens of millions of Americans, according to ABA

“This new data is clear: interest rate caps lead to fewer options, higher costs and reduced access – especially for those who can least afford to lose their credit card.” ABA President and CEO Rob Nichols said. “We urge the administration and Congress to carefully consider the significant harm a rate cap would have on U.S. households and the broader economy. This is not the solution to the affordability challenge.”

**Read more:** <https://www.aba.com/about-us/press-room/press-releases/rate-cap-research>

## FDIC Approves Deposit Insurance Applications for Ford, GM Industrial Banks

The FDIC has approved two deposit insurance applications submitted by automobile manufacturers Ford and GM to establish industrial banks, according to an agency statement.

Ford will establish Ford Credit Bank and GM will launch GM Financial Bank. Both institutions will be based in Salt Lake City and focus on providing automotive financing products nationwide, primarily through the purchase of retail installment sales contracts from independent dealers, the FDIC said.

Both banks will be required to maintain a minimum 15% tier 1 leverage ratio, and the parent companies will be required to support each bank's capital and liquidity positions, the agency said.

Both companies previously sought deposit insurance applications. Biden administration officials were reluctant to grant them and instead proposed a rule to tighten industrial bank applications, which was not finalized.

**Read more:** <https://www.fdic.gov/news/press-releases/2026/fdic-approves-deposit-insurance-applications-ford-credit-bank-salt-lake>



## Most Americans Would Struggle to Cover an Emergency Expense

Fewer than half of Americans have sufficient liquidity or access to funds to cover a \$1,000 emergency expense, according to a new survey by Bankrate.

Thirty percent of respondents said they would pay an emergency expense of \$1,000 from savings, while 17% said they would rely on their regular income or cash flow, Bankrate reported. A third of respondents said they would go into debt to cover the expense.

The survey also found that inflation poses a challenge for savings. Fifty-four percent of respondents said inflation is causing them to save less for emergencies. Income/unemployment (26%) and recent interest rate cuts (17%) were also cited as barriers.

**Read more:** <https://www.bankrate.com/banking/savings/emergency-savings-report/>

## Merchants Expand Payment Options, Express Interest in Crypto

Rising consumer interest in digital wallets, debit and credit cards, buy now pay later, and cryptocurrency has small-business owners accepting a wider range of payments, JD Power reported in its most recent Merchant Services Satisfaction Survey.

More than 92% of U.S. merchants now accept payments through digital wallets, representing a 4% increase since 2024, according to the survey. BNPL is now accepted by 58% of U.S. small businesses, up from 54% in 2024. BNPL is now the fourth most accepted form of payment behind debit or credit cards (96%), digital wallets (92%) and cash (78%). Personal checks are now accepted by just 57% of U.S. small businesses, down from 63% in 2024.

Crypto adoption among U.S. small businesses is 19%, up four percentage points from 2025. JD Power reported that more businesses are warming to crypto, with 37% of merchants saying they have a favorable view of digital currency. Thirty-three percent of non-accepting merchants said they would likely accept crypto payments if their merchant services provider enabled the option.

**Read more:** <https://www.jdpower.com/business/press-releases/2026-us-merchant-services-satisfaction-study>

## FHLBank Advances Boost Community Lending

Federal Home Loan Bank advances are “strongly associated” with higher lending across banks and credit unions, particularly following the 2008 financial crisis, according to new research by the Urban Institute.

Using data from 2000 to 2024, the Washington, D.C.-based think tank examined how FHLBank membership affected total lending as well as lending for housing, small businesses, agriculture and community development. The study’s authors said there has been relatively little research on member lending activity.

“As policymakers and regulators reassess the system’s mission and structure, understanding how advances – the collateralized loans FHLBanks provide to members – affect real-world lending is essential,” they said.

The study found that increases in advances corresponded to higher levels of lending, with larger effects following the financial crisis. A \$100 increase in advances relative to assets was associated with \$38 more in bank loans, rising to \$48 after 2008.

“These results, together with observed quarterly changes in advances, suggest that bank advance use expands total lending by between \$75.6 billion and \$97.3 billion per year,” the authors said.

Housing-related lending showed “the clearest response.” A \$100 increase in advances relative to assets was associated with an \$18 increase in residential real estate loans over assets, and \$22 after 2008. This resulted a \$35.2 billion and a \$45.6 billion annual overall residential real estate lending increase.

The study also found that advances were consistently linked to higher levels of small-business, small-farm and community development lending, although at lower levels than housing-related lending. For every \$100 in additional advances over assets, banks increased small-business lending over assets by \$2.40 and small-farm lending over assets by \$1.20, with the latter showing stronger effects after 2008.

**Read more:** <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/value-fhlbank-system-promote-housing-and-community-development-lending>

## AI Romance, 'Machine-To-Machine' Scams Among Top 2026 Fraud Trends

Romance scams carried out by artificial intelligence and computers scamming other computers are among the top five fraud trends to watch out for in 2026, according to a new report by credit reporting agency Experian.

Experian said its data found nearly 60% of companies reported an increase in fraud losses from 2024 to 2025. "This year's forecast shows fraudsters are rapidly weaponizing technologies to launch attacks that are more autonomous and harder to detect," it said.

Among the top five fraud trends for 2026 were romance and relative-in-need scams, which were traditionally carried out by people using false identities. Now AI can carry out these complex scams, according to Experian.

"These bots will respond convincingly, build trust over time, and manipulate victims with precision and emotion," the company said. "As they become harder to distinguish from real people and good bots, Experian predicts fraud will scale faster and become more financially and psychologically damaging."

Another risk comes as more companies incorporate AI to conduct routine transactions while fraudsters increasingly turn to AI to commit fraud. "With machine-to-machine interactions initiating transactions without clear ownership of liability, businesses will face growing uncertainty around agent ownership, intent and risk," Experian said.

The other top fraud trends include the use of deepfake technologies to create fake resumes and backgrounds for job candidates, unsecured smart home systems, and the use of website cloning to replicate legitimate websites for phishing schemes.

**Read more:** <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20260113509639/en/Experians-New-Fraud-Forecast-Warns-Agentic-AI-Deepfake-Job-Candidates-and-Cyber-Break-Ins-Are-Top-Threats-for-2026>

## HUD Proposes to Remove Disparate Impact from Fair Housing Act Rule

The Department of Housing and Urban Development is proposing to rescind three rules allowing the use of disparate impact in determining Fair Housing Act violations.

HUD in 2013 published a disparate impact rule under the Fair Housing Act, formalizing a burden-shifting test for determining whether a given practice has an unjustified discriminatory effect. Two years later, the U.S. Supreme Court, relying on its own interpretation of the Fair Housing Act, ruled that the act authorizes disparate impact liability, and announced important procedural safeguards for disparate impact litigation to ensure that the law is not used to bring frivolous cases. In 2019, HUD revised its 2013 rule to align with the court's 2015 ruling. The 2019 rule was challenged, and in 2021, the Biden administration withdrew it and reinstated the 2013 rule.

In rescinding the 2013 rule, "these rules formalized legal tests that were not explicit in statute and imposed a presumption of unlawful discrimination when any variance in outcomes exists among protected classes, even without a showing of a facially discriminatory policy or discriminatory intent," HUD said.

President Trump last year issued an executive order directing federal agencies to "deprioritize enforcement" of statutes and regulations that include disparate-impact liability. Since then, the FDIC, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency and the CFPB have removed disparate impact from their documents and examinations.

**Read more:** <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/01/14/2026-00590/huds-implementation-of-the-fair-housing-acts-disparate-impact-standard>



# From the CORNER CHAIR

Bernie Sinner | NDBA CHAIR | BankNorth, Casselton



February in North Dakota can test our patience, but it also brings subtle signs of progress. By the end of the month, towns like Bottineau and Langdon gain an hour and half of daylight compared to the first day of the month. Combined with a relatively mild winter, it is a reminder that spring is getting closer and that momentum is building.

That momentum has been reflected in a busy and productive month for the Association:

- **Bank Management Conference – Scottsdale**

We recently wrapped up our biennial conference, which delivered timely and practical content for today's banking environment. Sessions explored the economic outlook and Federal Reserve policy, compensation trends, the future of banking, and how community banks can compete in the age of artificial intelligence. We also heard a Washington update from ABA on regulatory and legislative issues, along with a powerful session on cybersecurity that reinforced the importance of vigilance at every level of our organizations.

- **Looking Ahead to the ABA Washington Summit**

Advocacy efforts continue this spring at the annual Washington Summit, where thousands of bankers from across the country, including several from North Dakota, will meet with our congressional delegations. These conversations matter. When bankers share real-world experiences, they help shape legislation that supports the long-term success of our industry and the communities we serve.

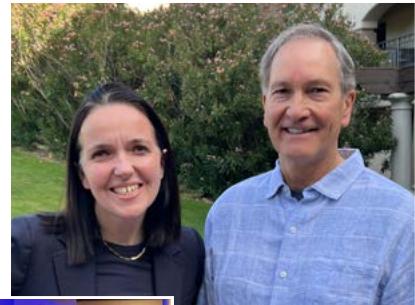
- **ABA Conference for Community Bankers**

February also gave us the opportunity to engage in another great event – ABA's annual Conference for Community Bankers... an event full of connecting with hundreds of community bankers from across the country and more than 100 vendors dedicated to serving community banks. Attendees heard from subject matter experts on payment stablecoins, tokenized deposits, data analytics, artificial intelligence, talent development, and forward-looking strategies designed to position community banks for the next decade.

With all of the amazing content shared at these events, I'm excited to see how we can build on this momentum right here at home. In this issue of the Bulletin, be sure to check out all the educational opportunities designed to support bankers at every level of their organizations. I encourage you to stay engaged through the Association and take advantage of these offerings as we continue building momentum toward spring.

Warm regards,

Bernie Sinner



(above)  
Megan  
Roudebush  
and Bernie  
Sinner  
at  
NDBA Bank  
Management  
Conference



(above)  
ND Group at ABA Conference for  
Community Bankers



**Rob Nichols**  
President and CEO  
American Bankers Association  
[nichols@aba.com](mailto:nichols@aba.com)



## WASHINGTON UPDATE



# Fighting on in 2026

In just the first few weeks of 2026, the banking industry faced two separate and significant policy challenges.

The first was a fight over the future of stablecoins and digital asset regulation, which heated up as 2025 drew to a close and lawmakers were considering new market structure legislation. For bankers, this legislation represented an opportunity to close a critical loophole in the Genius Act that allowed stablecoin partners and affiliates to offer yield-like rewards, clearly undermining the intention of the Genius Act's ban on issuers paying interest.

The threat to the banking sector was clear: failure to address the loophole could lead to billions of dollars in deposits exiting banks, which would have severe downstream effects on local lending and economic growth.

The second major challenge we faced came when the president in early January expressed support for a 10% credit card interest rate cap in a social media post. As bankers know all too well, price caps always have unforeseen and costly consequences for consumers, and if this kind of cap was imposed, as many as 159 million Americans could lose access to credit.

In the face of these dual threats, America's banks sprang into action.

Thanks to ABA members and our partners in the State Association Alliance, we were able to send over 10,000 letters to senators and 3,200 signatures on a petition reminding them about the Genius Act loophole and its potential impact on families and small businesses across the country. Our Community Bankers Council – which includes community bankers from every state – penned its own letter, and ABA rallied the other community financial institutions trades together helping the industry demonstrate a united front on Capitol Hill.

ABA and our members were also out in front on card issues, issuing a grassroots call to action and quickly publishing new data (available at [RateCapReality.com](http://RateCapReality.com)) that showed that the proposed 10% rate cap would have a drastic impact on the card industry, threatening between up to 85% of open credit card accounts.

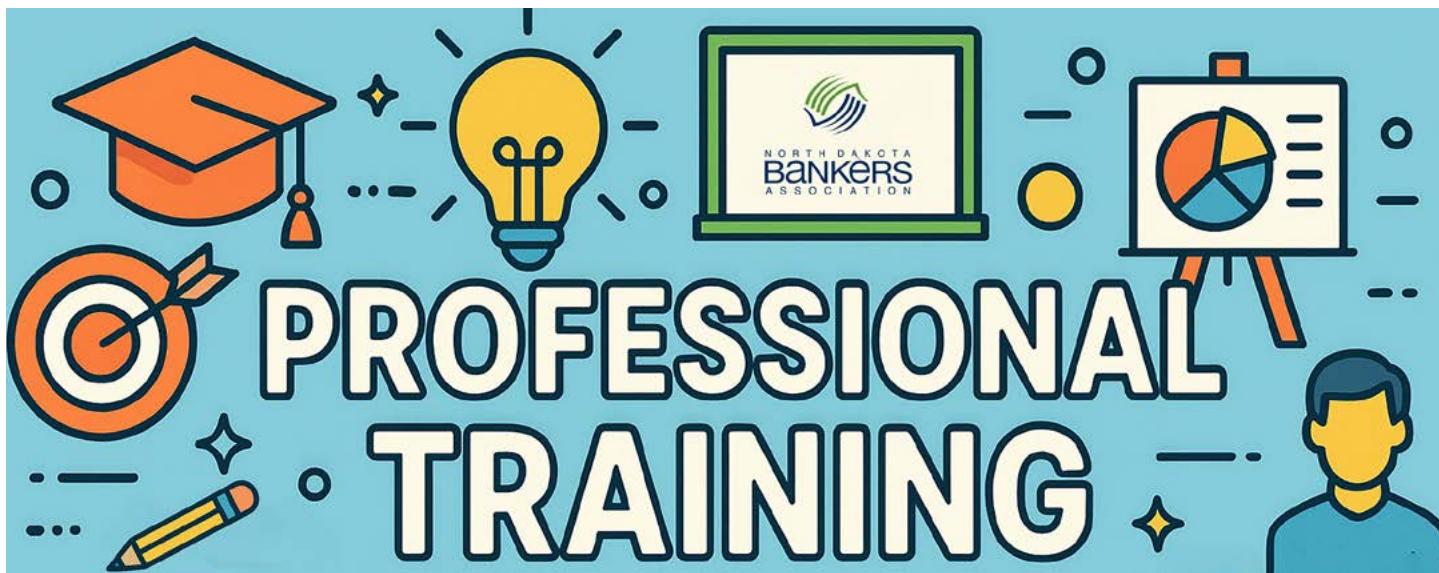
These policy threats remain very real, and at the time this column was written, ABA was still engaged in an all-out push to ensure that our perspective is being heard by the entire policy community. We're using every tool in our toolbox, from grassroots calls to action to targeted advertising to in-person lobbying efforts. Even more messaging efforts are planned.

The speed and velocity with which these issues emerged was a reminder that even as we face a more supportive regulatory environment, major policy challenges remain and we must be ready to respond.

At the same time, it also underscored the strength of our collective advocacy. When bankers come together to elevate the issues that matter, our voices carry significant weight. In these two policy debates, the response from our industry has changed the momentum even if the final outcomes remain uncertain.

Rest assured, ABA and the state associations are working tirelessly on behalf of the industry, and with your support, I'm confident in our ability to move the needle on major policy challenges, wherever and whenever they arise. But we need your voice.

Please consider joining us at the 2026 ABA Washington Summit, March 9-11 in the nation's capital. This free event is our best opportunity to show up in person in Washington and show the administration and Congress that the banking industry is strong, united, and ready to advocate on behalf of the customers, clients and communities we serve.



## Education Events

For more information regarding these educational opportunities, visit [www.ndba.com](http://www.ndba.com) or contact Dorothy Lick, SVP of Education, North Dakota Bankers Association, 701.223.5303.

EVENT	DATE	LOCATION	WHO SHOULD ATTEND?
<b>Breaking into Banking 101: Fundamentals of Commercial Banking</b>	February 25	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.
<b>Breaking into Banking 201: Analyzing Repayment Sources</b>	March 25	Virtual Event	Credit analysts, lenders, portfolio managers and others who need skills in financial statement analysis and writing credit documents.
<b>Dakota School of Lending Principles</b>	April 7-10	Ramkota Hotel, Pierre SD	Loan officer trainees, loan support personnel and personal bankers.
<b>Tri-State Trust Conference</b>	April 27-29	Courtyard by Marriott, Bismarck	Trust officers, trust attorneys, CTFAs, and CFPS.
<b>FDIC Directors College</b>	May 19	Radisson Hotel, Bismarck	Presidents, CEOs, senior management staff, lenders, marketing team members and sales managers.
<b>Dakota School of Banking</b>	May 31-June 5	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.
<b>NDBA/SDBA Annual Convention</b>	June 15-17	Bismarck	Presidents, CEOs, senior management staff, lenders, marketing team members and sales managers.
<b>Regional Member Meetings</b>	September 14-17	Grand Forks, Fargo, Bismarck, Minot	All NDBA Members!
<b>Ag Credit Conference</b>	October 1-2	Hilton Garden Inn, Fargo	Both entry-level and experienced ag lenders will gain valuable information.
<b>NDBA Peer Group Consortium</b>	October 12 October 13	Welcome Party - TBD Consortium - Bismarck	Those involved in individual peer groups are encouraged to attend.



## OnCourse Learning Webinars

EVENT	DATE	EVENT	DATE
Treasury Management A Powerful Tool to Increase Deposits and Fee Income	2/23/2026	7 Habits of High Performing Bankers	3/2/2026
Call Center Contact Staff Training Compliance Security and Cyber Issues All Day Streaming	2/24/2026	RTP Essentials Real Time Understanding of the Network How it Works Use Cases and Whats Next	3/3/2026
Bank Accounting Operational Perspective Part 3	2/24/2026	Business Writing for Financial Professionals	3/3/2026
Dealing with Appraisals and Valuations 2 Part Series	2/24/2026	ACH Returns Mastering ACH Exception Management	3/4/2026
Dealing with Appraisals and Valuations Part 1	2/24/2026	Onboarding your New Hire Experience or Afterthought	3/4/2026
2026 BSA Officer and Staff All Day Streaming	2/25/2026	Bank Accounting Beyond the Basics 5 Part Series	3/4/2026
Bi Monthly Compliance Briefing 6 Part Series 2026	2/25/2026	Bank Accounting Beyond the Basics Part 1	3/4/2026
Bi Monthly Compliance Briefing February 2026	2/25/2026	Marketing and Advertising Compliance What Do We Have to Do All Day Streaming	3/5/2026
Writing Effective Email	2/25/2026	The GENIUS Act Stablecoins A New Era for Electronic Banking	3/5/2026
Health Savings Accounts Financial Institutions vs Customer Responsibility	2/26/2026	Community Banker Workshop Intro to Model Risk Management	3/5/2026
Unforgettable Training Practical Techniques to Elevate Your Learners Experience Workshop	2/26/2026		
Dealing with Appraisals and Valuations Part 2	2/27/2026		

NDBA offers convenient bank training and access to timely topics through a variety of webinars.

For more information, [click here](#).

SPONSORED BY:



Registration Materials  
will be available April 1

A composite image featuring a fighter pilot in a cockpit, an American flag, and other aircraft in the background. Overlaid on the left is the text 'STRONGER Together' in a stylized font with stars, and on the right is a portrait of Lt. Col. Dan Rooney in a flight suit.

## Featured Speaker

Fighter Pilot  
Folds of Honor Founder

# LT COL DAN ROONEY

"True greatness lies not in our achievements alone but in the lives we touch and the impact we make on others." - Lt. Col. Dan Rooney

**2026 NDBA/SDBA Annual Convention**  
**June 15-17, 2026 ★ Radisson Hotel, Bismarck ND**



# SDBA/NDBA — 2026 DAKOTA SCHOOL OF LENDING PRINCIPLES

**APRIL 7-10, 2026**

RAMKOTA HOTEL, PIERRE, SD

The SDBA/NDBA Dakota School of Lending Principles is a learning event with one foot grounded in the classroom and one foot in the bank. This school allows students to learn the theory and process of basic lending and then put this knowledge to work in actual nuts and bolts sessions.



2026 NDBA

## Bank Management Conference

# Sunshine, Strategy & Strong Connections

Bankers were welcomed by beautiful Arizona sunshine during the 2026 NDBA Bank Management Conference, held February 13-14 at the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess in Scottsdale, AZ.

Over two days, North Dakota bank leaders gathered to explore timely topics impacting today's banking environment, including the economic outlook, balance sheet strategy, compensation trends, emerging technology and AI, cybersecurity, and the evolving regulatory landscape.

Attendees also enjoyed valuable networking opportunities, time on the golf course, an artistic spouse/guest program (pictured below), and an evening gala reception, making the conference both productive and memorable.

The 2026 Bank Management Conference once again provided meaningful education, strategic insight, and the opportunity for bankers and business partners to connect under the warmth of the Arizona sun.



Special thanks to the sponsors whose support and partnerships made this event possible:

### Platinum Sponsors:

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Bank Management Conference Platinum Sponsors

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# Associate Members



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**Contact: Glen Herrick**

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**Mickelson & Company**, based in Sioux Falls, SD, has been a leading tax credit advisory firm since 2005, specializing in federal and state tax credits for railroad and renewable energy sectors. With a strong focus on monetizing tax credits, MickCo has helped over 100 railroad companies and renewable energy businesses convert tax credits into cash, solidifying its reputation as a trusted advisor in the industry. Through their extensive network of tax credit counterparties, MickCo continues to provide valuable financial solutions to companies unable to utilize their tax credits internally. To learn more, visit [mickco.com](http://mickco.com).



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**Contact: Mekael Teshome**

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[PNC.COM](http://PNC.COM)

**PNC Capital Markets** provides strategic solutions for banks and their clients, including capital and liquidity management, balance sheet optimization, risk management, and white-label products for community and regional banks.

Through our partnership with NDBA, we aim to be a trusted resource—sharing insights, listening to member priorities, and helping banks navigate changing economic and regulatory environments to better serve their communities.

NDBA encourages member banks to utilize the products and services provided by NDBA Associate Members. Each Associate Member is approved by the NDBA Board of Directors.

If you should have any questions or would like more information on the North Dakota Bankers Association's Associate Members, please contact Tara McFadden at 701.370.8901 or [tara@ndba.com](mailto:tara@ndba.com).

NBID

## NBID, LLC

**Contact: Tony Karalekas**

27 W 24th St, Ste 701 | New York, NY 10010  
[NBID.COM](http://NBID.COM)

**NBID (National Bank InterDeposit Company)** is the first bank-owned, bank-driven reciprocal deposit network, giving community and regional banks greater oversight, transparency, and long-term control of their deposit infrastructure. NBID enables banks to offer expanded FDIC insurance, retain large depositors, and reduce uninsured balances through reciprocal deposits, sweeps, and funding access – all at lower costs than legacy networks. With modern API-driven technology, streamlined operations, dedicated support, and a profit-share model, NBID returns value directly to participating banks, which receive membership interest in the company.



## UNITED ACCOUNTS, INC.

**Contact: Darren Klabo**

PO Box 9239 | Fargo, ND 58106  
[UNITEDACCOUNTS.COM](http://UNITEDACCOUNTS.COM)

**United Accounts, Inc.** provides collection services primarily in North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota and has the ability to collect nationally if your business reaches across the country.

We are recognized as the oldest and largest collection agency in the Upper Midwest and for that reason you can trust that you are doing business with a financially secure and reputable company.



## BREAKING INTO BANKING

2026 SEMINARS



**Instructor:**  
Andy Keusal



### Breaking into Banking 101

Fundamentals of Commercial Lending  
**February 25 | Virtual via Zoom**



### Breaking into Banking 201

Analyzing Repayment Sources  
**March 25 | Virtual via Zoom**

# Women Lead Symposium

July 30, 2026 | Virtual Event

[aba.com/WomenLead](http://aba.com/WomenLead)

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CO-SPONSORED BY:  
NORTH DAKOTA  
BANKERS  
ASSOCIATION

Empower your leadership journey and elevate your career at the **Women Lead Symposium**, a virtual half-day event hosted by the American Bankers Association (ABA) designed for women in banking at every stage of their career.

Whether you're an emerging leader or a seasoned professional, this event gives you the tools, perspectives, and connections to drive meaningful growth — for yourself and your bank.



# 2026 NDBA Peer Group Meeting Schedule

All Virtual via TEAMS (unless otherwise noted)

## Audit

**Facilitator:** Jason Goyne – Bravera Bank  
• April 13 | 10:00 am

## Chief Credit Officer (CCO)

**Facilitator:** Steve Larson – Gate City Bank  
• March 3 | 2:00 pm  
• May 12 | 2:00 pm  
• August 11 | 2:00 pm  
• November 18 | 2:00 pm

## Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

**Facilitators:** Shane Husar – BankNorth  
• April 21 | 10:00 am

## Collateral Valuation

**Facilitator:** TBD  
• March 18 | 10:00 am

## Communications & Marketing

**Facilitators:** Janel Schmitz – Bank of North Dakota  
Karly Scheftner – First Western Bank & Trust  
Kristin Jaeger – Cornerstone Bank  
• April 16 | 10:00 am

## Community Reinvestment Act (CRA)

**Facilitator:** Kristin Kupfer – Starion Bank  
• March 25 | 9:00 am

## Compliance

**Facilitators:** Jenni Lang – Bank of North Dakota  
Lynne Michels – Stock Growers Bank  
• March 24 | 10:00 am

## Credit Analyst

**Facilitators:** Victoria Ripplinger – Bank of North Dakota  
Tara Copp – United Valley Bank  
• March 3 | 10:00 am

## Enterprise Risk Management (ERM)

**Facilitator:** Jeremy Skoglund – Western State Bank  
• April 16 | 2:00 pm

## Fraud

**Facilitators:** Kim Lazur – Alerus  
Jacob Rued – First Western Bank & Trust  
Heidi Schumacher – Border Bank  
• May 21 | 9:30 am  
• August 18 | 9:30 am

## Front Line Operations

**Facilitators:** Olivia Wheeler – Bank Forward  
Jenni Rime – TruCommunity Bank  
Melissa Liebenow – BankNorth  
• April 8 | 10:00 am

## Human Resources (HR)

**Facilitators:** Natalie Murch – BankNorth  
Amy Otterson – Bank Forward  
• April 8 | 2:00 pm

## Information Technology (IT)

**Facilitators:** Allen Huber – BankNorth  
Jona Ziemann – Western State Bank  
• April 2 | 10:00 am

## NDBA Fraud Forum (Tentative)

October 13 | 8:30 am - 4:00 pm  
National Energy Center of Excellence – Bismarck

## 2026 NDBA Peer Group Consortium

- **Welcome Reception:** October 13 | 5:30-7:30 pm  
Location TBD
- **Consortium:** October 14 | 8:30 am - 4:00 pm  
National Energy Center of Excellence – Bismarck



[More Information](#)

# NDBA Member Benefit Highlight

## Peer Groups



### Gather | Share | Grow

One of the most valuable benefits of your NDBA membership is access to our **Peer Groups**—dedicated communities where members come together to share insights, tackle challenges, and support one another. Whether you're looking for new ideas, professional guidance, or a network that truly understands your work, NDBA Peer Groups offer meaningful engagement throughout the year.



### Why Participate in a Peer Group?

- Build trusted relationships with peers
- Exchange practical strategies and realworld experience
- Stay informed on emerging trends
- Gain support in navigating common challenges
- Enjoy this benefit at no additional cost—included with your membership

### Current Peer Groups

- Audit
- Chief Credit Officer (CCO)
- Chief Financial Officer (CFO)
- Collateral Valuation
- Communication and Marketing
- Community Reinvestment Act (CRA)
- Compliance
- Credit Analyst - **NEW in 2026**
- Enterprise Risk Management (ERM)
- Fraud
- Front Line Operations
- Human Resources (HR)
- Information Technology (IT)



### Ready to Get Involved?

More information, and the [\*\*NDBA Peer Group Meeting Schedule\*\*](#) can be found on the NDBA website. Joining a Peer Group is simple – reach out to Tara McFadden at [tara@ndba.com](mailto:tara@ndba.com).

Members are welcome to join multiple groups based on their needs and interests. Take advantage of the opportunity to connect with peers, gain new perspectives, and enrich your professional journey.



# Lindsay Hoff

TruCommunity Bank  
Washburn



NDBA's first *Banker You Should Know* spotlight of 2026 shines on Lindsay Hoff, Operations Officer with TruCommunity Bank in Washburn.

Lindsay was nominated by her colleague, Emily Sondrol. On her nomination form, Emily wrote, "Lindsay just gets it! She can explain and help our staff with the best care, and employees walk away from their experience feeling better. She wants people to succeed and helps set them up for that!"

Jamie Nelson, TruCommunity President and CEO agrees. "Lindsay doesn't just complete tasks, she takes ownership! She has an extremely strong work ethic and a genuine kindness that makes her one of the best team members."

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

**Lindsay:** I was inspired to pursue a career in banking because of my mom, who worked in the industry.

Lindsay shared that growing up, she admired her mom's work ethic and professionalism and wanted to follow in her footsteps. That early influence sparked her interest in banking and shaped the career path she chose 20 years ago.

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

**Lindsay:** Over the course of my career, I've seen the banking industry change quite a bit, especially with technology.

Lindsay explained that many processes that were once manual are now automated, improving both efficiency and accuracy. Online and mobile banking, electronic documentation, and real-time processing have transformed how customers are served and accounts are managed. These advancements have made the work faster and more secure, while allowing more time to focus on customers and problem-solving rather than paperwork.

**What's the most fulfilling part of your job?**

**Lindsay:** Helping others achieve the right outcomes. I find it rewarding to support employees and departments by resolving issues, navigating and improving processes, and ensuring things are done correctly the first time.

Lindsay went on to say, "Working in bank operations, a lot of what we do happens behind the scenes, but it plays a critical role in accuracy, compliance, and customer trust. Knowing

that our work and guidance helps teams succeed – and ultimately supports our customer and the organization – is what makes the role meaningful to me.”

Jamie Nelson added, “Lindsay is one of those team members that quietly keeps everything moving. She brings a level of care to everything she does and makes our bank so much better because of it.”

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

**Lindsay:** One accomplishment I'm especially proud of is working my way up throughout my career to my current role. I started by learning the fundamentals and consistently took on additional responsibilities, sought out growth opportunities, and built relationships along the way.

Lindsay shared that each step allowed her to develop her skills, broaden understanding of banking operations, and contribute at a higher level. That progression reflects her commitment to continuous improvement, accountability, and long-term growth within the organization.

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

**Lindsay:** I'm very home-oriented and enjoy quiet time to recharge. I love unwinding with a good TV show after a busy day, and that downtime helps me stay balanced, focused, and energized in my professional life.

Born and raised in Mandan, Lindsay later relocated to Washburn after meeting her husband, Dan. The two stay busy with their hobby farm raising cattle and are proud parents to daughters Karlie (5) and Olivia (3). Their family is rounded out by their dog, Trapper. She mentioned that it's important to her to stay connected with the people she cares about and she loves to spend time outdoors with her children.

Lindsay with husband Dan and daughters Olivia and Karlie.



Lindsay and "Pink Pony Bank" group at Dakota School of Banking in 2025



Lindsay's daughters, Karlie and Olivia.

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

**Lindsay:** That's a tough question since I've been in banking since high school, but if I weren't a banker, I could see myself being an accountant.

Lindsay has always had a knack for numbers and a love for analyzing information. An accounting role would allow her to channel those strengths in a new way, while continuing to lean into the detail-oriented and analytical mindset that comes naturally to her.

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

**Lindsay:** I'd tell her to keep her head up, even when things get challenging, and to always stand up for what she believes is right.

She added, "I'd also remind her to embrace every opportunity to learn and grow, because those experiences will shape not only your career but who you become as a person."

**Who has been a role model or mentor in your life or career?**

**Lindsay:** My mom has always been my biggest role model. While balancing her career and raising three children, she showed incredible strength, resilience and dedication. Watching her balance responsibility, hard work, and integrity taught me the value of perseverance and prioritizing what truly matters.

Lindsay also shared how fortunate she feels to work alongside colleagues she can rely on and collaborate with each day. Watching their expertise and problem-solving in action continues to inspire her and fuels her own professional growth.

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

**Lindsay:** I hope the impact I leave is that I'm someone people can rely on and feel comfortable turning to.

With kindness and positivity at the forefront, Lindsay aims to create a workplace – and a community – that feels welcoming and supportive. She carries that same spirit into her volunteer work with the Washburn Riverboat Days Committee, where she helps coordinate the annual celebration.

Staci Berube, Community President with TruCommunity added, "Beyond her extensive banking knowledge, she elevates everyone around her through encouragement and positivity. She gives 100% to each day and we are truly fortunate to work alongside her."



Family pup, Trapper

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

**Lindsay:** Always stay true to your values and do what's right, even when it's not the easiest choice.

This simple yet powerful advice has shaped Lindsay's approach to both her career and personal life, grounding her decisions in integrity and reinforcing her belief that honesty and consistency ultimately lead to lasting success.

**How do you define success?**

**Lindsay:** Professionally, I define success as simple as making a positive impact on my team and organization.

Personally, Lindsay says success is having a work-life balance and being present for the most important people in her life... family.

**Grounded in integrity and driven by growth, Lindsay represents the very definition of a *banker you should know!***



TruCommunity Halloween costume contest

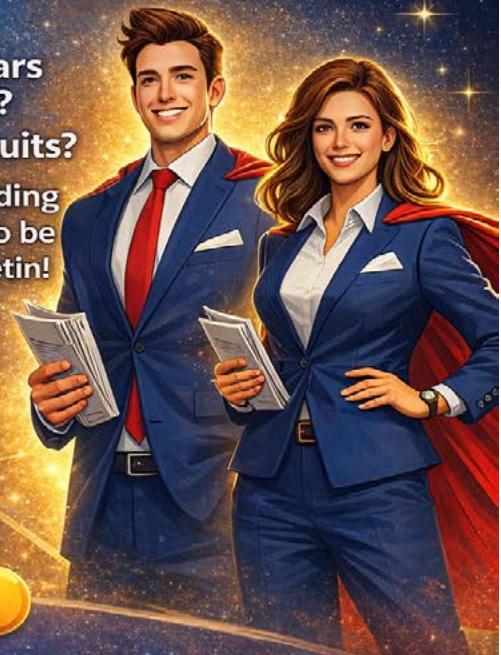
# NOMINATE A BANKER TODAY!

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- ★ Front-line stars to seasoned leaders
- ★ Pillars in your community
- ★ Hidden gems who go the extra mile

**NOMINATE A BANKER TODAY!**

Hidden rockstars  
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Nominate an outstanding  
banker for a chance to be  
featured in NDBA Bulletin!



Help us celebrate the best in our banking community! Fill out the online nomination form. Selected honorees will be showcased in an upcoming NDBA Bulletin feature.

**Let's recognize and celebrate the stars of our industry!**

# 2026 NDBA SERVICE AWARDS



## CELEBRATING DECADES OF DEDICATION

Help us honor the professionals who have dedicated decades to North Dakota banking at these two events:

- ◆ 2026 NDBA/SDBA Annual Convention June 17 | Bismarck
- ◆ 2026 Regional Member Meetings September 14-17 | Four Locations

### WHO IS ELIGIBLE

Bank employees with 20, 30, 40, or 50  
total years of service  
(can be with multiple banks)

### HOW TO NOMINATE

Complete the application form at  
[www.ndba.com](http://www.ndba.com)

### **QUESTIONS?**

Contact Jolene  
[jolene@ndba.com](mailto:jolene@ndba.com)  
701.223.5303 Ext. 58



# ABA WASHINGTON SUMMIT

**March 9–11, 2026**

**Marriott Marquis Washington, DC**

## **Advocate for America's Banks.**

2026 promises to be a pivotal year for banks. From regulatory changes to new stablecoin rules and a host of other major issues, make your voice heard in Washington on policies that affect your bank, your customers and your communities. And hear directly from the key players in Congress, the regulatory agencies and the Trump administration on what's ahead for banks of all sizes.

**Registration is free for all bankers –**  
**Don't miss your chance to connect!**

[aba.com/SummitSBA](http://aba.com/SummitSBA)



American  
Bankers  
Association.<sup>®</sup>

# \* North Dakota Fraud Forum \*

May 19, 2026 | 9:00 am - 3:00 pm CT

Fraud is constantly changing—and staying ahead takes connection and collaboration. Join industry peers, law enforcement, and experts for an in-person forum focused on fraud awareness, prevention, and response, presented by **UMACHA**.

## You'll Learn How To:

- Spot current fraud trends impacting financial institutions
- Strengthen prevention & response strategies
- Work effectively with law enforcement
- Use tools and resources from UMACHA, FRPA and Nacha



**FRAUD FORUM**

## Register for this Event:



<https://tinyurl.com/NDFraudForum>



Bell Tower, Fargo ND

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## Live Well, Work Well

February 2026

### Eating Real Food

Nutrition is the foundation of health, influencing disease prevention and overall well-being. Dietary habits can shape long-term health outcomes. The [Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025-2030](#), reflects the latest in nutrition science and public health needs, marking what public health officials describe as the most "significant reset" of federal nutrition policy in decades.

**At its core, the new dietary guidance emphasizes a simple directive: "Eat real food."**

The 2025-2030 guidelines define real food as whole, nutrient-dense and naturally occurring, placing it back at the center of Americans' diets. Here are some major changes to the guidelines from the previous recommendations:

- **The New Pyramid**—The latest update features an inverted pyramid that places meats, cheese and vegetables in the widest part at the top, reversing a long-standing visual representation of the American diet and shifting away from the circular MyPlate image. This flexible framework is designed to guide better choices, rather than dictating specific meals.
- **Ultra-processed foods (UPFs)**—For the first time, the guidelines specifically call out UPFs. Americans are advised to avoid packaged and

ready-to-eat foods that are salty or sweet (e.g., chips, cookies and candy) and limit foods and beverages with artificial flavors, dyes, preservatives and sweeteners.

- **Protein**—The new guidelines prioritize protein at every meal, with a goal to get 1.2 to 1.6 grams per kilogram of a person's body weight daily, nearly double the previous advice. Americans are encouraged to obtain their protein from both animal sources (e.g., eggs, poultry, seafood and red meat) and plant-based sources (e.g., beans, peas, lentils, legumes, nuts, seeds and soy).
- **Dairy**—The updated version prioritizes full-fat dairy with no added sugars, marking a major shift from the long-standing recommendation for fat-free or low-fat milk and yogurt.
- **Added sugars**—The guidelines note that no amount of added sugar is healthy. As such, adults should limit their intake to no more than 10 grams per meal, and no amount of added sugar is suitable for children aged 5 to 10.
- **Alcohol**—The general recommendation now is to simply limit alcohol consumption without providing exact figures.

To learn more about the new dietary guidelines, visit [RealFood.gov](#). Individuals should consult with their health care provider for personalized guidance.

This article is intended for informational purposes only and is not intended to be exhaustive, nor should any discussion or opinions be construed as professional advice. Readers should contact a health professional for appropriate advice. © 2026 Zynwave, Inc. All rights reserved.

# Understanding Vitamin D Supplements

Vitamin D is especially important during the winter because reduced sunlight exposure limits the body's ability to produce it naturally, increasing the risk of deficiency. This nutrient plays a critical role in maintaining strong bones and teeth by aiding calcium absorption, supports immune function to help fight seasonal illnesses and regulates mood.

**Since shorter days and colder weather make sun exposure difficult, incorporating vitamin D-rich foods or supplements becomes essential for overall health during the winter months.**

Doctors and pharmacists often recommend D<sub>3</sub> to individuals who need vitamin D supplements. Forms of these supplements include capsules, gummies,

liquid products, powders, and dissolving tablets. It's important to purchase high-quality supplements that have been independently tested.

While dietary supplements, including vitamin D<sub>3</sub>, can be beneficial, they can cause harm when used unnecessarily. It's possible to get too much vitamin D. When you overdose, calcium builds up in your blood. This condition, known as hypercalcemia, can cause nausea, vomiting, weakness, decreased appetite, constipation and frequent urination. Vitamin D toxicity also has the potential to progress to irregular heart rhythms, kidney stones and even kidney failure. The Food and Drug Administration recommends that all consumers consult their doctor or pharmacist before taking supplements.

## Winter Self-care Tips

Amid the chill of winter and shorter days during the colder months, it's crucial to prioritize self-care. Winter brings unique challenges, but you can thrive during this season with the right self-care practices. Such rejuvenating winter habits can leave you feeling cozy, refreshed and ready to conquer the cooler days ahead. Try these self-care tips:

- **Prioritize hydration.** The dry air can take a toll on your skin and overall well-being, so be sure to stay hydrated.
- **Nourish your body with seasonal foods.** Opt for nourishing, seasonal foods (e.g., sweet potatoes and Brussels sprouts) that support your immune system and provide comfort.
- **Move your body.** Maintaining an active lifestyle is vital to well-being, even during winter. Indoor exercises, winter sports or even a brisk walk in the cold air can invigorate your body and mind.
- **Ensure sufficient rest.** The longer nights of winter provide an excellent opportunity to

prioritize sleep. Create a relaxing bedtime routine and strive for at least seven hours of sleep each night.

- **Create a cozy sanctuary.** Enhance your living space with elements that promote warmth and relaxation, such as soft blankets, scented candles or diffusers.
- **Embrace outdoor activities.** Even in small doses, fresh air and sunlight can do wonders for your mental health.
- **Establish a relaxing evening routine.** A consistent evening routine can help signal to your body that it's time to wind down, promoting restful sleep.

Keep in mind that self-care is an ongoing process, and finding what works best for your mind and body is key to a fulfilling and balanced winter season. These tips are simply a starting point.

# Recipe of the Month

## Honey Baked Lentils

Makes: 6 servings

### Ingredients

- 2 cups lentils (uncooked)
- 1 small bay leaf (optional)
- 5 cups water
- 1 cup carrots (chopped)
- 1/2 cup onions (chopped)
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 lb. 90% lean ground beef
- 1/3 cup honey
- 1 tsp. herbs (fresh or dried)

### Nutritional Information

(per serving)

Total calories	287
Total fat	3 g
Protein	20 g
Sodium	41 mg
Carbohydrate	47 g
Dietary fiber	13 g
Saturated fat	1 g
Total sugars	17 g

Source: MyPlate

### Preparations

1. Combine rinsed lentils, bay leaf and 5 cups of water in a large saucepan. Bring to a boil. Cover tightly and reduce the heat. Simmer 30 minutes. Do not drain. After cooking, discard the bay leaf.
2. Chop the onion. Combine onions and carrots with 1 cup of water. Add to lentils and stir into a 9x13-inch baking dish.
3. Brown the ground beef. Drain and discard the fat. Add the meat to the lentil mixture.
4. Pour honey over the entire casserole.
5. Add herbs if desired.
6. Cover tightly with foil and bake it for one hour at 350 F.



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## March 2026 Webinars

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

**Unmasking the Secrets to a Better Night's Sleep:** How does the amount or quality of sleep that you get affect you? You may be surprised by the far-reaching impact that the lack of sleep can have on our lives. But rest assured, Learn to Live has gathered some very practical ways you can improve your sleep, starting tonight. Join us to learn more!

[\*\*Tuesday, March 10th: 3-3:30pm CST/4-4:30pm EST\*\*](#)

[\*\*Friday, March 20th: 11-11:30am CST/12-12:30pm EST\*\*](#)

**Following each "Unmasking the Secrets to a Better Night's Sleep" session in March, 20 attendees will be chosen at random to receive Learn to Live swag as a reminder to use the helpful sleep tips shared by the Clinical Team!**

**Reset and Refresh: Personalizing Your Sleep Schedule:** Are you frustrated with nights spent tossing and turning, then dragging yourself around in the morning? Join the Learn to Live clinical team in this 15-minute webinar where you'll learn how sleep scheduling can help you reset your sleep patterns and improve your rest. Discover the principles behind designing a sleep schedule that works for you, promoting better sleep quality and consistency.

[\*\*Thursday, March 12<sup>th</sup>: 12-12:15pm CST/1-1:15pm EST\*\*](#)

[\*\*Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup>: 12-12:15pm CST/1-1:15pm EST\*\*](#)

**Resilience: The Role of Optimism in Overcoming Life's Challenges:** Will we succeed or fail? Will tomorrow be bright or gloomy? Many of us don't realize that how we view our past can have a huge impact on our future. In this webinar, we'll share a new lens for viewing setbacks in order to build resilience & create optimism for the future.

[\*\*Friday, March 13<sup>th</sup>: 11-11:30am/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.





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April 3, 2026**

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The Dakota School of Banking provides a focused education of the banking industry. Students enroll for two years, attending one week each summer. The first-year session provides students with a general overview of the banking industry and banking departments. The second-year session builds on this general banking knowledge and adds a computerized bank management simulation. Bankers at all levels benefit from the well-rounded curriculum that builds on fundamental skills and focuses on emerging trends.

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The Dakota School of Banking offers one \$450 scholarship, which is awarded to a DSB student who:

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- is entering the first year at DSB and agrees to complete the two-year program

**Find the Scholarship Form at [ndba.com](http://ndba.com).**

## BUSINESS PARTNER FEATURE

# SBA Lending in a Changing Risk Environment: What Compliance Officers Should Be Watching Now

**Alison Stokes, CRCM**  
Virtual Compliance Officer  
Compliance Alliance



Small Business Administration (SBA) lending remains one of the most meaningful ways banks can support local communities while building a strong portfolio. At the same time, the risk environment surrounding SBA lending has evolved. Banks are navigating faster origination expectations, more sophisticated fraud schemes, complex third-party relationships, and heightened documentation and governance standards.

### Fraud controls should be part of daily operations

Fraud attempts tied to small business lending have become more persistent and harder to detect. While some of the most visible cases surfaced during emergency-era lending programs, many of the same patterns continue today. Common indicators include inconsistent borrower information, questionable or altered supporting documentation, and business activity that does not align with the stated purpose or operational profile.

Compliance can support SBA lending teams by reinforcing clearly defined fraud-validation steps and escalation protocols. Strong intake controls and consistent handling of red flags reduce reliance on individual judgment and promote timely, well-supported decision-making when activity does not align or raises concern.

### Documentation should support the decision

SBA lending has always required strong documentation, but expectations have shifted toward ensuring the loan file clearly supports each decision made. Many banks can explain underwriting decisions in conversation, but the loan file itself may not always reflect the same rationale in a way that a second-line reviewer, auditor, or examiner can easily validate.

A practical approach is defining what “complete documentation” means and reinforcing those expectations through checklists and procedure standards. At a minimum, the file should support borrower eligibility, the credit decision, and required approvals. Strong file quality is more than a best practice; it also reduces servicing challenges and helps protect the SBA guaranty.

### Third-party oversight matters more than ever

Banks increasingly rely on third parties such as referral sources, loan agents, technology platforms, and document support services. These relationships can improve speed and capacity, but they also introduce risk when responsibilities are unclear or oversight is informal.

Compliance should help ensure the bank has clarity around who performs which activities across the SBA lifecycle, from borrower intake through closing and servicing. Monitoring should confirm that third parties operate within the bank's expectations, issues are escalated in a timely manner, and the bank retains access to critical records. If a loan file cannot be retrieved quickly without third-party involvement, the relationship may be creating more risk than the business realizes.

### Change management must be consistent

SBA programs are governed by procedural guidance, operational rules, and internal bank requirements. When updates occur, many institutions implement changes operationally but do not consistently document how the change was assessed, approved, communicated, and validated.

Compliance can strengthen SBA programs by introducing lightweight change-management practices that are consistent and repeatable. A sound approach includes defining the change and its impact, identifying affected procedures and training, confirming approvals, documenting implementation timing, and validating execution. Banks may reference SBA procedural guidance, such as SBA SOP 50 10 <https://www.sba.gov/document/sop-50-10-lender-development-company-loan-programs>.

### Exception tracking helps control risk

Although SBA lending differs from consumer lending, regulators still expect disciplined and consistent processes. Risk increases when credit decisions rely heavily on discretion without clear documentation standards and structured controls around exceptions.

Compliance officers should pay close attention to how exceptions are defined, approved, and tracked. A high volume of exceptions, unclear rationale, or inconsistent approvals can create both compliance exposure and operational instability. Strong exception governance is one of the most effective ways to reduce avoidable risk while supporting responsible growth.

### Servicing cannot be an afterthought

Many institutions place their strongest controls in origination, but issues often surface during post-close servicing. Missing documentation, incomplete follow-up, or weak monitoring can turn a well-underwritten SBA loan into a higher-risk asset over time.

Compliance can support servicing teams by confirming they have the procedures and tools needed to maintain file integrity, track key borrower requirements, and escalate issues that could affect performance or documentation quality. Strong servicing controls reinforce the bank's ability to support its decisions long after closing.

### Build exam readiness into the process

A strong SBA program should not require a scramble when an examination begins. Exam readiness is built through repeatable file standards, clear governance, and routine self-review.

Compliance can support this effort by implementing a risk-based review cadence that includes periodic file sampling or targeted quality-control testing. The objective is to identify and correct issues early, before they become systemic. This approach also helps the business view compliance as a partner in long-term success rather than a final checkpoint.

### Final thoughts

SBA lending remains a key growth strategy for many banks. The strongest SBA programs are not the most complex. They are built on clear expectations, strong file integrity, disciplined execution, and proactive readiness.

For compliance officers, focusing on fraud resilience, documentation quality, third-party oversight, structured change management, exception discipline, and servicing consistency protects the institution while enabling SBA lending to scale responsibly.

Alison Stokes is a Virtual Compliance Officer with Virtual Partners, bringing more than 20 years of experience in banking and regulatory compliance. She began her career in retail branch banking management, mortgage operations, and credit administration before advancing into senior compliance officer and executive leadership roles overseeing consumer and commercial lending compliance operations and regulatory examinations. Her background spans compliance testing, risk assessments, policy governance, and regulatory change management for institutions of varying size and complexity. Alison is recognized for developing technology-enabled compliance frameworks that enhance oversight, transparency, and regulatory readiness. She is a Certified AI Consultant, holds dual Bachelor's degrees in Business Administration and Marketing from Colorado Technical University, and is a Juris Doctor candidate at Northwestern California University School of Law.





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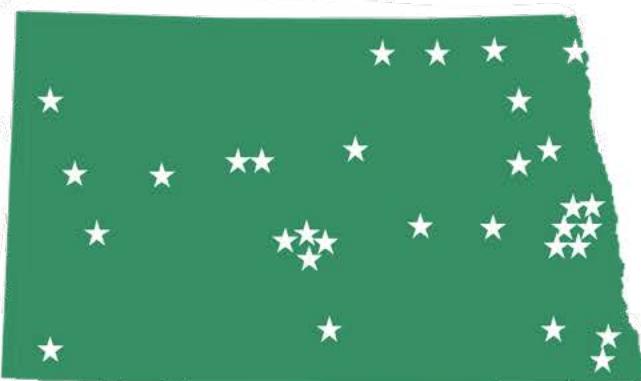
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Featured Speaker:  
**Matthew Dickinson**



[More Information](#)

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## 2026 FDIC DIRECTORS' COLLEGE

**MAY 19, 2026**

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The FDIC Directors' College is designed for both inside outside bank directors. The presentations will be delivered by a group of experienced FDIC speakers and subject matter experts, and will include up-to-date information on various issues relevant to all bank directors with an overall theme of corporate governance. Please consider this opportunity to interact with your bank's regulators and enhance your board's experience and knowledge.

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Member Price: \$590 (with text)

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## BUSINESS PARTNER FEATURE

# Caught Between Mandates: The Fed's 2026 Balancing Act

**Carson Francis**  
Financial Strategies  
The Baker Group

From middle to late 2024, the direction of future monetary policy has been fairly known, in the sense that the direction was towards lower, short-term policy rates. To kick off 2026, the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) decided to hold rates steady following three rate cuts in the latter half of 2025 at the September, October, and December meetings. For financial institutions, particularly those whose bottom-line performance is dictated by interest income and interest expense, the Federal Reserve's next move carries significant implications on the balance sheet, which will inevitably feed into earnings.

The Federal Reserve has an explicitly stated dual mandate: maximize employment and maintain steady price levels. Fulfilling this mandate is a lot easier said than done, as the two components of it are contradictory. Achieving strong employment typically requires economic growth, while keeping prices stable calls for restraint. Adding to the complexity, Jerome Powell's term as Fed Chair expires this year, as Kevin Warsh, the Trump Administration's nominee, is set to take his place.

Outside of competing objectives and new leadership, the central bank faces a variety of challenges in 2026. Labor market health sits at the top of the Fed's agenda but getting a clear read has become increasingly difficult. Technological shifts, particularly in artificial

intelligence, along with tariff effects have muddied the picture in what's already a stagnant environment often described as "low hiring, low firing." Look only at hiring and you might conclude that a recession is inevitable or that one has already arrived. The economy added just 584,000 jobs last year, as well as a slight uptick in the unemployment rate, marking the weakest year for job creation outside the COVID-19 pandemic era since 2009. Still, the broader economy proved resilient. According to the December 2025 Summary of Economic Projections (SEP), real GDP growth for 2025 was expected to be 1.7% for the year, barely missing the 1.8% long-run trend by a single tenth of a percent.

Business uncertainty was a key driver of the "low-hire, low-fire" economy in 2025 and is expected to continue into 2026. The primary source of this uncertainty is shifting trade policy, particularly the Trump Administration's reciprocal tariffs designed to level the playing field in international markets. The tariffs have not gone unchallenged. In a 7-4 decision, the Federal Circuit ruled that the president exceeded his authority under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act of 1977. The administration appealed to the Supreme Court, which agreed to take up the case. A ruling on the constitutionality of current trade policy is pending, and the outcome, whatever it may be, will carry significant implications for the labor market.

Just as GDP showed resilience, inflation proved stubborn. Price pressures remained sticky throughout 2025, and while estimates for 2026 suggest some easing, inflation is expected to stay elevated. As of the December 2025 Summary of Economic Projections, PCE inflation was projected at 2.4% for 2026, suggesting that further progress toward the 2.0% long-run target is still needed should those projections hold. Much of the path forward depends on shelter costs, which comprise roughly one-third of CPI and have yet to fully reflect softening rental markets.

Since 2020, the Case-Shiller U.S. National Home Price Index has climbed more than 50%, driven by a structural housing supply shortage and a surge in credit availability that magnified demand for existing units. This appreciation has exerted considerable upward pressure on both the Consumer Price Index and the Federal Reserve's preferred inflation gauge, Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE). Looking ahead into 2026 and beyond, forecasters anticipate some equanimity in housing cost growth, offering potential relief to inflation readings. Should employment uncertainty and decelerating wage growth translate into reduced consumer spending, the resulting pullback in housing demand could offer further relief on the inflation front, though at the cost of weaker economic output.

The Federal Reserve faces a familiar tension. On one side, PCE inflation is projected to remain above the 2.0% long-run target. On the other, the labor market is showing signs of strain, as business uncertainty and rapid technological change continue to complicate the path forward for employment. With Powell's term expiring, a new Fed Chair incoming, and a trade decision looming, the central bank faces not only economic uncertainty but institutional transition as well. Caught between mandates, the Fed's balancing act is far from over.

This uncertainty puts a lot of pressure on financial institutions, particularly community financial institutions, where the bulk of the bottom line consists of money earned via net interest income. When the Federal Reserve's path is unclear, the range of possible outcomes widens, and that range of uncertainty is the definition of interest rate risk. Consider the scenarios: If inflation remains sticky and rates stay elevated longer than expected, funding costs could continue to compress margins. If labor market deterioration accelerates and the Fed responds with cuts, institutions need to understand how quickly their balance sheet is repriced, particularly on the asset side. A Supreme Court ruling on tariffs or a change in direction from the Federal Reserve under new leadership could reshape interest rate expectations overnight. In an environment with many potential catalysts, having clear visibility into your balance sheet's rate sensitivity isn't just a defensive measure, it's a competitive advantage. In an environment where multiple rate scenarios remain in play, proactive interest rate risk management will allow institutions to act decisively when the path forward becomes clearer.

Carson Francis serves as a financial strategist at The Baker Group, providing expertise in financial modeling, investment strategies, and interest rate risk management. He joined the firm in 2023 as a member of the Interest Rate Risk Department before transitioning to the Financial Strategies Group in early 2025. Carson holds a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Oklahoma.



The **Baker**Group

# Baker Asset/Liability Management School

The Baker Group pioneered Asset/Liability Management (ALM) more than forty years ago when we developed the first computer based ALM program designed specifically for community banks. Since then, we have spent four decades educating financial institutions how to effectively use ALM strategies to manage risk and maximize performance. The Baker Group has presented hundreds of seminars and conferences across the country and now we have brought that history of educational experience to an Asset/Liability Management School designed specifically for members of the ALCO and those needing to learn the fundamentals of ALM. The Baker ALM School will give attendees the knowledge to better understand the "who, what, why, and how" of ALM and the ALCO process.

## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- Fundamentals of asset/liability management including what it is and why we do it
- Understanding the impact of the economy, monetary policy, and interest rates on the earnings and capital of the institution
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- Best practices for developing an effective ALCO process including appropriate policies, procedures, and risk limits
- Practical methodologies and recommendations for how to develop assumptions that are institution specific and regularly reviewed, stress-tested, and back-tested
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  - Prepayment rates
  - Rate scenarios including instantaneous vs. ramped and parallel vs. non-parallel
- Risk mitigation strategies for managing interest rate risk
- Incorporating investment portfolio management into asset/liability management
- How to develop an effective liquidity risk management process including forward looking dynamic cash flow modeling, stress testing, and contingency funding plans

**April 23–24, 2026**

### SCHOOL LOCATION

**Lively Hotel on Oak  
Oklahoma City, OK**

**Cost: \$625**



### ALM SCHOOL SCHEDULE

**Thursday, April 23, 2026**

Breakfast, Program, Lunch, Program, Adjourn, Dinner

**Friday, April 24, 2026**

Breakfast, Program, Concludes at Noon

### ACCOMMODATIONS

A block of rooms is available at the Lively Hotel on Oak. Identify yourself as a Baker ALM School attendee when calling 405.849.4777 to make online hotel reservations. The special room rate will be available until **March 19, 2026** or until the room block is sold out. Hotel price: \$179 + tax.

### WHO SHOULD ATTEND

This school is designed for Presidents, CEOs, CFOs, and members of the ALCO committee. Directors and anyone else involved in the asset/liability management process will also benefit from the Baker ALM School.

For your convenience, register for the school online at [GoBaker.com/alm-school/](http://GoBaker.com/alm-school/). Call Skoshi Heron at 405.415.7200 or scan QR code for more information.



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# IntraFi Bank Executive Business Outlook Survey



## Bankers Concerned About Credit Union Acquisitions

More than 170 bank M&A deals were announced in 2025, with credit unions accounting for roughly 10% of that total. Among bankers surveyed, the overwhelming majority (86%) cited uneven competition as their top concern related to these acquisitions. Eighty-two percent anticipate 11 or more credit union acquisitions in 2026. Download the latest [Bank Executive Business Outlook Survey](#) from IntraFi.

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# Stable, Cost-Effective Balance Sheet Essentials **RECIPROCAL DEPOSITS**

## GROW CORE DEPOSITS & FRANCHISE VALUE

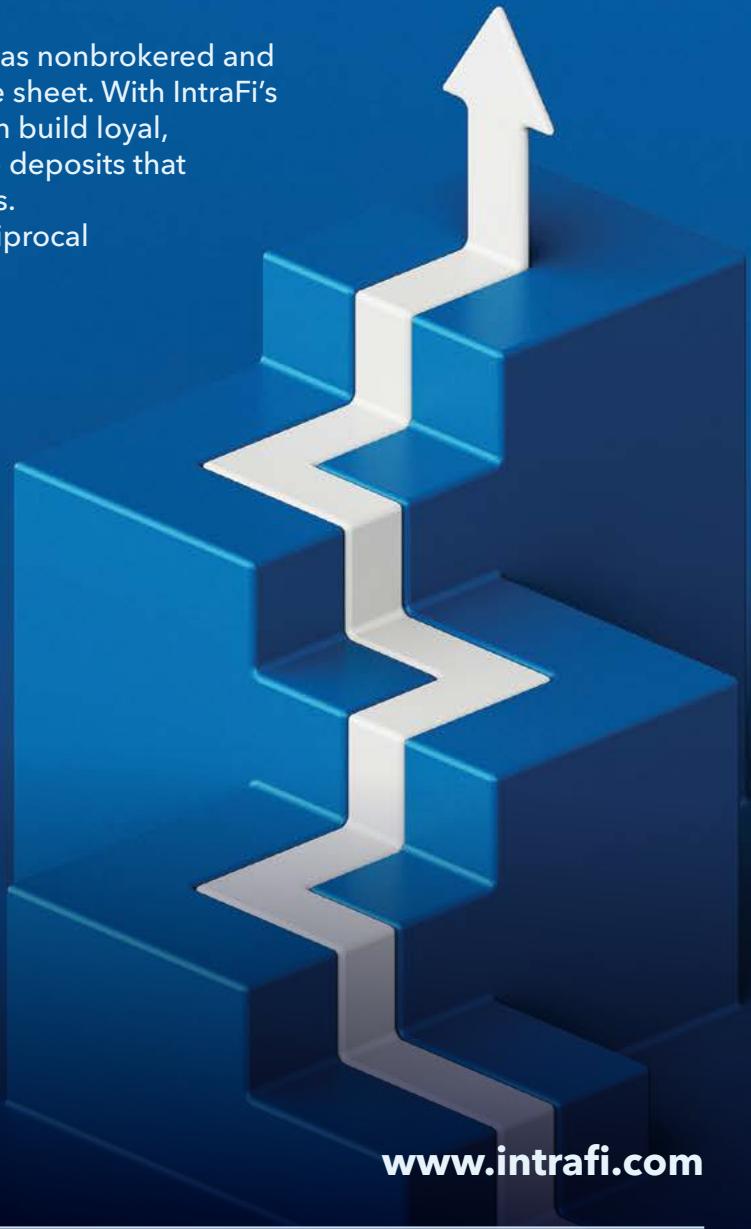


Most reciprocal deposits are reportable as nonbrokered and can help strengthen your bank's balance sheet. With IntraFi's ICS® and CDARS® services, your bank can build loyal, local customer relationships and receive deposits that typically come in large-dollar increments.

The inventor and largest provider of reciprocal deposit services, IntraFi provides high per-depositor and per-bank capacity, thanks to The Power of Many®—its unparalleled network of thousands of financial institutions. **Discover how your bank, no matter its size, can benefit from reciprocal deposits in today's competitive marketplace.**

---

Contact your Managing Director, **Brad Cole** at (866) 776-6426, x3392, or [bcole@intrafi.com](mailto:bcole@intrafi.com)



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IntraFi is not an FDIC-insured bank, and deposit insurance covers the failure of an insured bank. A list identifying IntraFi network banks appears at <https://www.intrafi.com/network-banks>. Certain conditions must be satisfied for "pass-through" FDIC deposit insurance coverage to apply. Deposit placement through an IntraFi service is subject to the terms, conditions, and disclosures in applicable agreements. Deposits that are placed through an IntraFi service at FDIC-insured banks in IntraFi's network are eligible for FDIC deposit insurance coverage at the network banks. The depositor may exclude banks from eligibility to receive its funds. Although deposits are placed in increments that do not exceed the FDIC standard maximum deposit insurance amount ("SMDA") at any one bank, a depositor's balances at the institution that places deposits may exceed the SMDA before settlement for deposits or after settlement for withdrawals or be uninsured (if the placing institution is not an insured bank). The depositor must make any necessary arrangements to protect such balances consistent with applicable law and must determine whether placement through an IntraFi service satisfies any restrictions on its deposits. To meet the conditions for pass-through FDIC deposit insurance, deposit accounts at FDIC-insured banks in IntraFi's network that hold deposits placed using an IntraFi service are titled, and deposit account records are maintained, in accordance with FDIC regulations for pass-through coverage.



# Flooding **Outside** Special Flood Hazard Areas



*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.*

## ❶ 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.



## ❷ 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.



HIGHLY ACCURATE  
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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\*<https://www.floodsmart.gov/flood-insurance/why>





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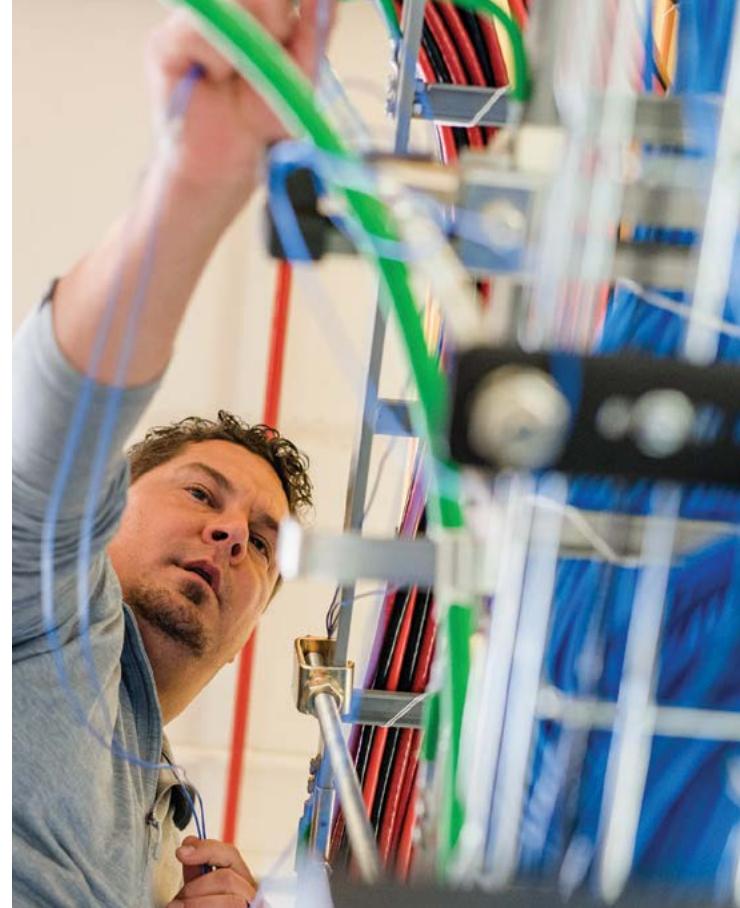


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## BUSINESS PARTNER FEATURE

# AI Security and Governance Services for Regulated Organizations

**Lindsey Hull**  
Content Strategist  
SBS CyberSecurity



AI is already present in most regulated organizations, whether formally approved or not. Employees experiment with [generative tools](#), [vendors](#) embed AI into products, and leadership teams explore use cases under pressure to move quickly. Without structure, this activity introduces [AI security and compliance risk](#) that is difficult to see, explain, or defend.

For financial institutions and other regulated organizations, AI raises familiar questions in new ways: How is data being used? Who owns the risk? How are AI-driven decisions governed? And how will regulators evaluate oversight? AI security and governance services help organizations address these questions before they surface as audit findings or control gaps.

SBS offers AI services designed to support regulated organizations at different stages of AI maturity, from early exploration to enterprise-level oversight. Combined, these governance services help move AI use from informal experimentation to a structured, defensible program, providing a foundation for secure, compliant, effective, and [ethical AI adoption](#).

## Why AI Security and Governance Matter

Effective AI governance is not about slowing innovation. It is about ensuring AI use is intentional, documented, and aligned with existing risk management practices. The right AI services help organizations:

- Identify and manage AI security risks tied to data, models, and decision-making.
- Establish clear ownership and accountability for AI initiatives.
- Reduce exposure from informal or "shadow" AI use.
- Support regulatory readiness as examiner expectations for AI governance evolve.

- Build confidence with executives, boards, and regulators.

Organizations that invest early in AI security and governance are better positioned to expand AI use responsibly without relying on [reactive controls](#) or assumptions.

## AI Risk Assessment

An AI risk assessment evaluates the use of artificial intelligence across the organization. This includes reviewing data inputs, access controls, use cases, documentation practices, and alignment with existing risk and compliance frameworks.

The assessment highlights areas where AI introduces new or unmanaged risk, such as insufficient oversight, unclear accountability, or gaps in policy coverage. Findings are prioritized to support practical remediation planning and stronger AI risk management.

**Why it matters:** Many organizations discover AI security gaps only after an examiner or auditor asks the right question. An AI risk assessment provides clarity and context before that happens.

**When it's needed:** An AI risk assessment is beneficial early in AI adoption, when new AI tools or use cases are introduced, or ahead of regulatory exams, audits, or board discussions that require clear visibility into AI-related risk.

## Virtual Chief AI Officer

The virtual chief AI officer (vCAIO) provides executive-level leadership and oversight for AI initiatives without the need for a full-time role. This service helps organizations move from isolated experimentation to a structured AI governance and risk management program.

Guided by the NIST AI Risk Management Framework and the NIST Cybersecurity Framework, the vCAIO works with

leadership to define AI strategy, establish governance structures, assess AI security risk, validate vendors, deploy pilot projects, and document outcomes.

**Why it matters:** AI is not just a technology decision — it is a business, compliance, and risk decision. The vCAIO ensures AI efforts remain intentional, coordinated, and defensible as they scale.

**When it's needed:** Organizations should engage a vCAIO when AI use spans multiple departments, when leadership needs formal governance and accountability, or when boards and regulators expect structured oversight of AI strategy and risk.

## AI Copilot Training

AI Copilot training guides the secure and compliant use of Microsoft Copilot and similar approved AI tools within regulated environments. Training is tailored to business, IT, risk, and compliance teams and reinforces governance expectations, data boundaries, and appropriate use.

Sessions combine practical examples with clear guidance on how AI tools should be used within established policies and risk tolerances.

**Why it matters:** Without training, employees may unintentionally expose sensitive data or bypass existing controls. Training supports consistent AI security practices and reduces operational risk.

**When it's needed:** AI Copilot training is most effective when Copilot or similar tools are first deployed and should be revisited as functionality expands, policies are updated, or regulatory expectations become clearer.

## Certified Banking AI Strategist

The [Certified Banking AI Strategist](#) (CBAIS) course, offered through the [SBS Institute](#), builds internal expertise in AI security, governance, and risk management for financial institutions. The program blends strategic frameworks with hands-on assignments and real-world scenarios tailored to regulated environments.

Across seven modules, participants learn how to evaluate AI platforms, identify high-value use cases, manage AI vendor risk, establish governance practices, and apply tools such as Microsoft Copilot responsibly.

**Why it matters:** Strong AI governance depends on informed leaders who understand both opportunity and risk. CBAIS helps institutions develop internal capability to guide AI use with confidence and consistency.

**When it's needed:** Institutions should consider CBAIS certification to develop internal AI leaders, clarify ownership of AI initiatives, and align cross-functional teams.

## Building a Repeatable, Defensible AI Program

AI security and governance are ongoing disciplines, not one-time initiatives. Successful organizations treat AI like any other material risk area: They assess it, assign ownership, document decisions, and review it regularly.

By combining AI security services, executive oversight, and internal education, regulated organizations can move from informal experimentation to a structured AI program that supports innovation without sacrificing control.

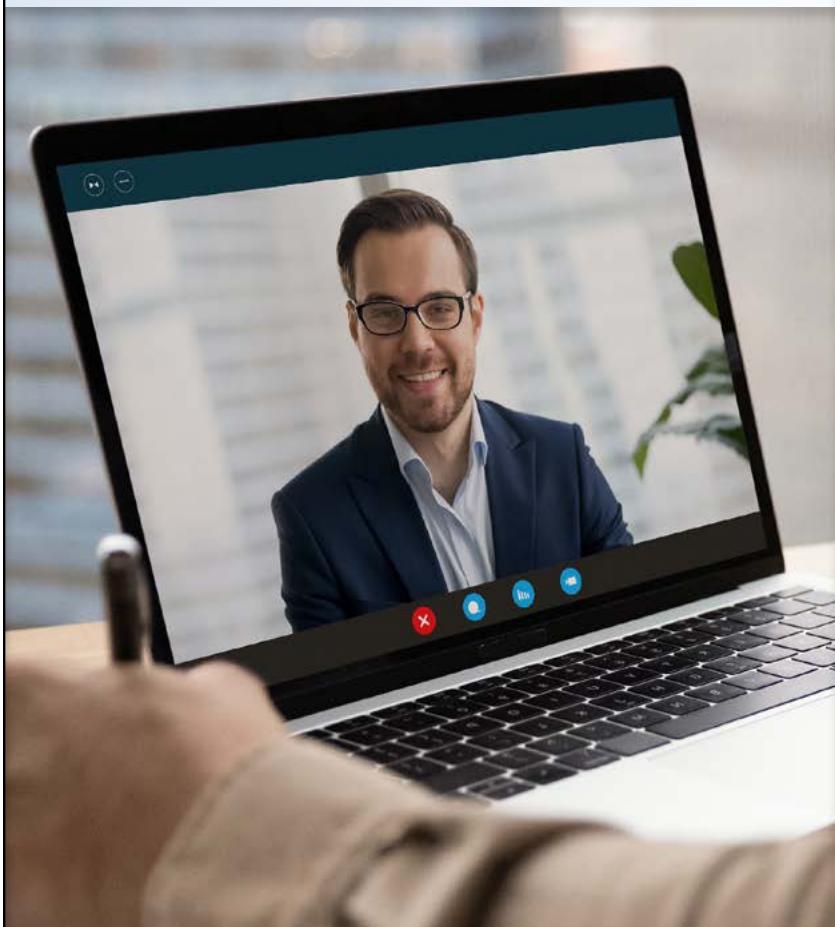
This blog was originally published on [sbscyber.com](#).

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](mailto:cole.kratovil@sbscyber.com).

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# BANK



## HAPPENINGS

### Bismarck

The Industrial Commission reports that Standard & Poor's (S&P) affirmed **Bank of North Dakota's (BND)** credit rating as A+/Stable in its annual review released Jan. 14.

The ratings are consistent with those given by S&P in November 2023. S&P is a U.S.-based financial services company that publishes financial research. Financial institutions are typically reviewed annually, but S&P will review more frequently if a modification of the rating is needed.

In addition to the risk-adjusted capital and credit quality mentioned as strengths, S&P highlighted the decrease in nonperforming assets (NPAs) ratio stating, "Over the past 10 years, the net charge-off rate has been under 15 basis points annually despite significant energy and agriculture commodity price volatility which we think reflects BND's strong credit selection and underwriting." The full S&P report may be viewed at [bnd.nd.gov](http://bnd.nd.gov).

### Bismarck

#### Bank of North Dakota

recently hired three new employees. **Brenna Grossbauer** joined BND as the chief talent officer. Brenna comes to BND from Starion where she was the chief human resources officer.

She has a bachelor's degree in human resource management from Park University and a master's in human resource administration from Central Michigan University.

**Danielle Scherr** joined BND as a loan servicing associate III. She comes to BND from Western State Bank in Fargo where she was a business banking associate II.

**Taylor Kitzan** joined BND as a loan operations specialist III. Taylor comes to BND from Bis-Man Transit where she was an accountant and has 7 years of previous banking experience. She has a bachelor's degree in business administration from Dickinson State University.

**Cody Gangl** joined BND as an ag banker. Cody comes to BND from Department of Financial



Brenna Grossbauer



Danielle Scherr



Taylor Kitzan



Cody Gangl

Institutions where he was a bank examiner. He has previous experience as a consumer loan processor, credit review officer, and ag banking officer at Bravera Bank. Cody has a bachelor's degree in business administration from Mayville State University.



Pam Lewis



Shar Martin

Bank of North Dakota announces the retirement of three employees. **Pam Lewis** retired in January after 11 years of years of service to BND and 41 total years in the banking industry.

**Shar Martin** retired in January after 38 years of service to BND. **Charlie Tweet** retired from BND January 15 and had worked in various IT roles at BND since January 2014.



Charlie Tweet

### Devils Lake

**Devyn Hill** recently joined **Western State Bank** as a business/ag banking officer. Hill brings over five years of experience in the banking industry. He is a graduate of Minnesota State University Moorhead and earned his bachelor's degree in information technology.



Devyn Hill

### Williston

**American State Bank & Trust Company (ASB)** is pleased to announce a major contribution of \$500,000 toward the construction of Bethel Lutheran Nursing and Rehabilitation Center's (Bethel) new senior care facility set to open in 2028. The new facility will be located in Williston Square with a groundbreaking ceremony expected to be held in the spring of 2026. ASB recognized the opportunity to support a longstanding institution delivering essential care for Williston's senior community.

The \$500,000 pledge will contribute to the construction of a state-of-the-art senior care and rehabilitation facility. This generous contribution will pave the way for a comprehensive center that prioritizes the health, well-being, and dignity of our senior community members.

To learn more about the project, visit [www.blfnd.org](http://www.blfnd.org).



# associate HAPPENINGS

## Bismarck

**Sam Aannerud** and **Jon Herreid**, members of the **Dakota Carrier Network (DCN)** network operations center team, recently earned industry certifications. Both are based in Bismarck and serve customers throughout the state.

Aannerud earned MEF Carrier Ethernet Certified Professional (CECP) certification following a week of intensive training and a successful exam. CECP is a vendor neutral certification recognizing carrier Ethernet expertise in professional roles.

Aannerud joined DCN in July 2024 as an Ethernet/IP technician I following an internship with the company. He is a graduate of Minot State University with a bachelor's degree in management information systems and a certificate in cyber defense. While at Minot State, he also earned PC Pro and Network Pro certifications from TestOut Corporation.

Herreid completed Optical Communications Associate (OC-A) certification through Ciena. This credential equips professionals with essential skills in optical network design and optimization, with a focus on increasing network capacity and efficiency. The 15-module program is technology-focused rather than equipment focused, and certification is valid for three years.

Herreid joined DCN in February 2025 as transport technician. He earned an associate of Applied Science degree in cybersecurity and computer networks from Bismarck State College following a career in welding.

## Bismarck

**Branden Rasmussen** and **Cole Hardy** (no photo available), members of the Dakota Carrier Network information systems team, recently trained in the Proxmox Server Solutions virtual environment (VE).

Both completed coursework in VE Deployment and Management and VE Clustering and Shared Storage, strengthening DCN's ability to increase productivity and reduce operating costs.



Sam Aannerud



Jon Herreid

In the Deployment and Management training, Rasmussen and Hardy learned how to install Proxmox VE, configure virtual machines and containers, and manage virtual environments. The course equips them to build stable, secure, and scalable infrastructure to support DCN's internal and customer facing systems.

The Clustering and Shared Storage training focused on linking multiple Proxmox servers so they operate as a single, resilient system. This expertise allows DCN to deliver strong uptime, streamline management, and provide stronger protection against hardware failures.

Rasmussen has been with DCN since 2021 and is cloud services specialist, working with all aspects of DCN's cloud services infrastructure. Hardy joined DCN in August 2025 as systems administrator, supporting the technical needs of the DCN team.

## Bismarck

The North Dakota Continuum of Care (ND CoC) conducted a Point-in-Time (PIT) Count of the people in the state who are experiencing homelessness on Jan. 28, 2026. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires CoCs to conduct an annual count of sheltered people experiencing homelessness. While a count of people who are unsheltered is only required in odd numbered years, the ND CoC conducts the count annually. Each count is planned, coordinated, and carried out locally.

The goal of HUD's CoC Program is to promote a communitywide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness. The program provides funding to support efforts to end homelessness, promotes access to and effective utilization of programs, and optimizes the self-sufficiency of individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

**North Dakota Housing Finance Agency** acts as the Collaborative Applicant for the state's CoC whose geographic area encompasses all 53 of North Dakota's counties, its cities, towns, and unincorporated areas, as well as the state's five federally recognized tribes. More information about the ND CoC is available online at <https://ndcontinuumofcare.org>.



Branden Rasmussen

# CLASSIFIEDS

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



## Third-Party Risk Analyst Bismarck//Mandan, ND



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Are you a detail-oriented risk professional with a strong understanding of vendor and third party risk management? Starion Bank is seeking a **Third-Party Risk Analyst** to support and strengthen our Third-Party Risk Management (TPRM) Program.

This role is ideal for someone who enjoys analyzing risk, coordinating due diligence, partnering with stakeholders across the organization, and contributing to strong governance and regulatory compliance.

Location: On-site in Bismarck/Mandan, North Dakota. This position may be eligible for a hybrid work arrangement.

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- Maintain schedules and tracking for ongoing monitoring and periodic reviews, including higher-risk and critical vendors
- Contribute to the maintenance and enhancement of third-party risk policies, procedures, tools, and documentation
- Partner closely with internal stakeholders and, when needed, external legal counsel to support sound third-party risk decisions

### Qualifications:

- Three to five years of experience in third-party risk management, vendor management, risk management, compliance or a related field.
- A Bachelor's degree in business, finance, risk management, information systems, or a related field preferred, or the equivalent combination of education and experience.
- Strong analytical skills with ability to assess complex risk and summarize findings clearly and demonstrated ability to evaluate common third-party risk evidence
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Phone: 512-982-9813

[robert.todd@odpbusiness.com](mailto:robert.todd@odpbusiness.com)



### BHG Financial Institutional Network

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Davie FL

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Phone: 954-263-6399

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### SBS Cybersecurity

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Madison SD

Contact: Cole Kratovil, Account Executive

Phone: 605-923-8722

[cole.kratovil@sbscyber.com](mailto:cole.kratovil@sbscyber.com)



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### **Professional Lines**

**Financial Institution Bond**  
**Directors & Officers Liability**  
**Cyber-Privacy Liability**

### **Property & Casualty Lines**

**Property-Liability-Business Auto**  
**Umbrella Liability**  
**Workers Compensation**  
**Foreclosed Property**

### **Lending Lines**

**Mortgage Impairment**  
**Force Placed Hazard and Flood**  
**Lenders Single Interest**  
**Commercial Asset Lenders Single Interest**