

# NEWS

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## **ICBA: Community Banks Vital to National Economy** *Community Banking Month Celebrated during April*

**Washington, D.C. (April 15, 2008)**—The Independent Community Bankers of America (ICBA) and 1<sup>st</sup> State Bank – as part of the annual celebration of Community Banking Month in April – are leading a chorus of community banks nationwide asserting that community banks are vital to the nation and its economic health.

“The local community banker understands community needs and can make quick decisions regarding funding for housing, job creation, small businesses and other local economic needs. As locally owned and operated institutions, community banks are integral to their communities and engage in community reinvestment and community development on a daily basis. One of our primary missions is to ensure our local communities are vibrant and thriving,” said Cynthia L. Blankenship, ICBA chairman and vice chairman and chief operating officer of Bank of the West, Irving, Texas. “The nearly 5,000 community bank members of ICBA offer a wide variety of products and services from standard savings and checking accounts to online banking and remote check deposit to help their customers manage and grow their money.”

“We’re close to our customers and we’re close to our communities,” said Rick Goedert, President & CEO, 1<sup>st</sup> State Bank. “ICBA Community Banking Month is just one way 1<sup>st</sup> State Bank shows our appreciation for our customers.”

Finally, Blankenship called attention to the important relationship between community banks and small businesses. “We understand the needs of small business owners because community banks are also small businesses,” said Blankenship. “Community banks are a vital to small business, providing funding for their expansion and innovation. In our changing economy, small businesses will continue be the engine for new job creation and economic growth.”

Read more about ICBA and ICBA’s Community Banking Month at [www.icba.org](http://www.icba.org).

### **About ICBA**

*The Independent Community Bankers of America, the nation’s voice for community banks, represents nearly 5,000 community banks of all sizes and charter types throughout the United States and is dedicated exclusively to representing the interests of the community banking industry and the communities and customers we serve. For more information, visit [www.icba.org](http://www.icba.org).*

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