Independent Banker

December 2020

Flourish by RRR

[pull quote] “After a very challenging 2020, I encourage you and your loved ones to end the year strong and fill up with hope for what 2021 may bring.”

**As the song says,** “It’s the most wonderful time of the year,” and this year, our communities, customers and employees are likely looking forward to the holiday season more than ever.

After a very challenging 2020, I encourage you and your loved ones to end the year strong and fill up with hope for what 2021 may bring. While that’s a tall order, I have no doubt that community bankers will come through in bringing needed joy and inspiration this December and into the New Year.

That may be because, as a third-generation banker, some of my best childhood memories involve being with my community bank family and the many traditions associated with this special time of year. From delivering Thanksgiving boxes to those in need to lighting farolitos—paper bags filled with sand and a candle that are a tradition in New Mexico—our community bank brought people together during the season. It always felt like an honor to be at the center of that community spirit and see the happiness that it brought to everyone involved.

But I expect I’m not alone in these merry musings; community bankers nationwide give similar accounts of their holiday histories. While each story offers a window into the unique traditions of the community, at their core, these reminiscences are about bringing people together to create positive moments this time of year.

This sense of collective community experience defines who we are as community bankers. Employees, large and small business customers, and consumer clients all become our bank family, and when you have that perspective, decisions are made for the right reasons. Year-round, community banking is more than a job; it’s who we are.

That mindset makes community banks beautiful and purposeful places to work. We contribute to a mission that’s bigger than a bottom line: We serve our communities. As you read through this month’s Best Community Banks to Work For feature, I hope you’ll see a little of your institution reflected in the stories. Because we all embody a culture of community—something that sets us apart as employers and as an industry.

So, as the year comes to an end and you etch out your resolutions for the year ahead, I hope one of them will be to continue bringing your community together in new ways, even if that means being distanced or virtual. Now more than ever, the world needs more of what community banks have to offer. I, for one, am looking forward to seeing all that you will bring to your communities this month and in 2021.

Wishing you and yours a very merry holiday season and a happy New Year!

**What you need to know**
As you work with your team to firm up your 2021 professional goals, consider Community Banker University training courses. They are constantly updated to help you in supporting your communities in this new normal.

**Connect with Rebeca @romerorainey**