**>>FLOURISH**

“We look forward to serving you and your community bank in the year ahead.”

Rebeca Romero Rainey

President and CEO, ICBA

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Happy New Year, community bankers! I hope you all enjoyed the holidays and are ready to start 2019 off right with all that ICBA has to offer. I’m of course talking about advocacy, education and innovation: the three pillars for which ICBA is known.

I know many of you are eager to get started on your New Year’s resolutions. And if you haven’t already, I encourage you to also come up with a community banking resolution—one that helps you flourish as a professional.

Regardless of your priorities, I hope you know that ICBA is here for you every step of the way with tools and resources to help you and your bank flourish. Here are some ideas:

**Advocacy:** I encourage you to take advantage of ICBA’s Be Heard grassroots resources. Set a goal to send a grassroots alert every time you see a request from our team either in NewsWatch Today or in your inbox. We moved mountains in 2018 with the passage of the Economic Growth and Regulatory Relief Act (S.2155), but with a new Congress and new staffs to educate on community banking’s priorities, there will be plenty of opportunity this year to flex our advocacy muscles and make more change happen.

**Education:** If you haven’t registered yet for our national convention, ICBA Community Banking LIVE, March 18–22 in Nashville, Tenn., now is the time. You’ll save if you sign up by the early bird deadline on Jan. 25. I look forward to this event every year and have found it to be an incredible opportunity to network with my community banking peers and gain the knowledge I need to stay current. With more than 60 workshops and 10 tracks, you’ll be well on your way to completing your education resolution before spring. And to keep the momentum going, check out what’s available through Community Banker University.

**Innovation:** Last year, ICBA released a Fintech Strategy Roadmap to help you with your innovation planning. (If you haven’t seen it yet, you can do so at <i>icba.org/fintech<i>) We’re now offering you even more help on this front with the new ICBA ThinkTECH Network, powered by FinXTech Connect. Launching early this year and free to all ICBA members, this directory is the next step in our drive to promote community bank/fintech partnerships (see more on page 72). I wish I had this when I was running my bank!

I wish you all a happy and healthy 2019. If there’s anything that we at ICBA can do to make the year more productive on the professional front for you, don’t hesitate to reach out to me or my staff. We’re here to serve you, and we look forward to serving you and your community bank in the year ahead.

Where I’ll Be This Month

I will be at the ICBA ThinkTECH Accelerator in Little Rock, Ark., as we launch the bootcamp phase of the program.