**>>FROM THE TOP**

**“Our advocacy efforts extend well beyond campaign season.”**

By Tim Zimmerman, Chairman, ICBA

Tim Zimmerman is CEO of Standard Bank, Monroeville, Pa.

As voters head to the polls this month, it is comforting to know that community bankers have laid a solid foundation for ourselves in the political sphere. With so many important issues at stake on Election Day, ICBA and the nation’s community banks have done everything in our power to advance policies that will benefit localized lending and economic growth.

Our advocacy efforts extend well beyond campaign season. We have a Government Relations team in Washington that is second to none. And due to our industry’s sterling reputation, community bankers have proven to be our own best advocates.

In numerous meetings with members of Congress in their districts during the August recess and in recent weeks, community bankers have brought our most pressing policy priorities directly to lawmakers. Meanwhile, community bankers nationwide have used ICBA’s Be Heard Action Center to contact policymakers on issues ranging from the Subchapter S tax deduction and fair lending to the Bank Secrecy Act and more. These messages from community bankers make a real difference in Washington, so keep them coming.

We’re directly engaging constituents as well. ICBA recently delivered tens of thousands of mailings to the constituents of 13 pro-community bank members of Congress to increase awareness of their critical role in the passage of the S. 2155 regulatory relief law and other policies benefiting Main Street communities. (See this month’s Checks & Balances section for more on that project.)

These examples help to show the culture of advocacy that we’ve developed—and need to preserve. At ICBA Community Banking LIVE in March, I challenged everyone in that convention hall in Las Vegas to go back home, identify other bankers who are not involved, and show them how easy and rewarding it is to be heard in Washington. We must be both advocates and mentors to preserve our franchises.

That’s why I was so pleased to attend ICBA’s recent advocacy training session in Pittsburgh. There, nearly 30 community bankers from several states learned advanced techniques to more effectively communicate with policymakers. This kind of education will pay long-term dividends as our policy battles continue.

Our mission is to create and promote an environment where community banks flourish, which we accomplish through teamwork at the national, state and local levels. While I am comforted on this Election Day by our many policy accomplishments, we cannot be tempted to rest on our laurels. Community bankers must ensure that we stay fully engaged in the policymaking process today, next year, and for generations to come.

Connect with Tim @TimZimPgh

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**Did you know?**

ICBPAC—the only federal PAC dedicated exclusively to representing community banks—contributed $1.9 million to more than 300 federal candidates and committees for the 2015-16 election cycle.