Independent Banker

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[pull quote] *“When community bankers join their voices, they are a powerful force, taking the industry to new levels.”*

**We’re in a season** of unprecedented industry change, particularly when we look at faster payments. In August, the Federal Reserve announced the launch of FedNow, a round-the-clock, real-time payments and settlement service. For the first time in more than 40 years, the Federal Reserve will be standing up a new payments system, the penultimate example of industry change.

This new payments system has been a long time in the making. For years, ICBA has advocated for the Federal Reserve to play an operational role in real-time payments. Our message has remained consistent and our voices strong. The Fed must have a role in real-time payments for three reasons:

**1. To guarantee access for all banks.** A Fed-operated real-time settlement system means there will be industry-wide access to real-time payments.

**2. To ensure a level playing field for all banks.** Fed involvement will eliminate a monopoly in the service, creating healthy competition to the real-time service run by the nation’s largest financial institutions.

**3. To drive payments innovation.** Expanding access to real-time payments will incite innovation and ensure a cohesive market.

With FedNow, the Federal Reserve has responded to our requests—and we have you to thank for it. The countless hours you spent responding to the Fed’s initial request for comment, crafting messages for your members of Congress, placing phone calls to the Fed and Congress, conducting meetings on Capitol Hill, and writing op-eds and blog posts ensured our victory. So, thank you for your efforts, and for all that you continue to do to support this important development in real-time payments.

But it’s not the time to rest on our laurels. While we are celebrating this victory, we’ve also begun rolling up our sleeves to make this new system a reality. In the short term, the Fed has asked for input via its public request for comment. ICBA will be responding on behalf of community bankers, and we encourage you to consider a reply from your bank. We’re offering resources to help support that effort through our advocacy team. Responses are due Nov. 7, 2019.

As we look back on this success and the continued triumphs to come, one fact remains crystal clear: When community bankers join their voices, they are a powerful force, taking the industry to new levels. We flourish in times of change, precisely because we’re ready to embrace the potential that awaits

**Where I’ll Be This Month**   
I will be meeting with the Council of State Community Bank Associations and then gathering with ICBA leadership bankers at our fall meetings in West Virginia.

**Connect with Rebeca @romerorainey**