

A Legacy Continued

President's Letter 2023



Customers, Community Members, and Shareholders,

In the summer of 2022, the decision to convert from a mutual savings bank to a publicly traded regional commercial bank was just another step in our history of expanding services to our region. Looking at our past to understand how and why we have evolved is instructive at times like this.

We trace our origins to J.F. Sidle & Son Furniture Store. Our banking roots began when the furniture store offered to finance the purchase of its goods. 1889 the Van Wert Building & Savings Co., located inside the furniture store, was formed. The first location, separate from our furniture store, opened in 1932, and we renamed ourselves Van Wert Federal Savings and Loan Association in 1936. We celebrated our 100th year of serving the community in 1989, but due to issues in the savings and loan world in the United States at that time, we changed our name to Van Wert Federal Savings Bank in 1990.

Our conversion from a mutual bank to a publicly traded regional commercial bank is another step along the journey to expand our ability to offer the financial products our community needs and to allow our local bank to continue to grow and prosper. Our conversion allowed us to accomplish four key goals.

Reward our customers – As a mutual bank, we were run for the benefit of our depositors, but they did not truly participate in the bank's success. Upon conversion, our depositors became bank owners by purchasing the bank's stock. Now they can directly benefit from our growth and success.

Provide for our community – Our customers were all from our community. Thus, our owners are in our community. Any increase in stock price, dividends, and the like will benefit those who work, live, play, and pray in our region. As we expand our services and the areas we serve, our community, as owners, will benefit from this expansion.

Better serve our region – As a regional commercial bank, we can provide additional services in the types of loans offered, deposit products made available, and the size and complexity of these products our region needs. As banks kept getting bigger, it became apparent that having people making decisions about providing capital to our region needed to be made by those who live next to us, work with us, and know us as individuals, not a number in some far-away conference room. We want our customers to know their bankers personally.

Ensure our legacy – With the additional capital provided by the conversion, the ability to offer more products and services, and the potential to expand the areas we serve, we create an even more solid foundation to build and grow with. We have slowly watched local banks be acquired and merged into bigger banks headquartered farther and farther away. Unfortunately, we have observed a few big banks fail because they were too far away from providing what a community needs. With the additional capital we raised and the access to more capital and other financial resources, we are even stronger today.

The focus of the past year was not solely on change. It was about addition - additional products, additional services, additional abilities, additional talents, additional strength, and additional resiliency. We look forward to expanding the role we can play for every individual, business, not-for-profit, and government agency in our region as we move toward the future. We look forward to our region and its people growing with us as we continue our journey.

Sincerely,

Gary Clay
Executive Chairman

Michael D. Cahill
President and CEO