



OUR NEIGHBOR CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

Making a Positive Impression



*Perry Forst
President*

The content you will find throughout these pages is a clear reflection of Citizens State Bank and its employees. Please look through this newsletter when you have an opportunity.

Our customers seem to agree that the bank is getting the important (often referred to as “the little”) things right. We feel the business of the bank must be in line with the values of our customers. Our customers appreciate the fact that we live out who we say we are.

I am thankful that so many of our customers volunteer to put together a few sentences that describe their feelings toward and impressions of the bank. Each one of these experiences is unique, yet my hope is that the common theme throughout the years is that the bank cares about and is responsive to the needs of our customers. You will find two more great examples of this a few pages back.

Citizens State Bank makes it a priority to re-invest in our community. We are an active member of our community and we support a wide variety of causes, projects, and organizations both financially and with human capital. For example, the bank has provided scholarship funds to high school graduates for many years. Citizens State Bank has maintained commitments not only to our customers for many years, but also to many causes like sponsoring Pheasants Forever for 24 years and Ducks Unlimited for over 30 years.

Please make note inside of some exciting staff milestones and developments. Marilee has retired after 24 ½ years of service and Kathy has retired after 17 ½ years of service. These are two great employees

who excelled in their roles and who served our customers with professionalism and care.

Citizens State Bank has a high standard to maintain when it comes to the quality of our employees, so with the retirements of Marilee and Kathy we had big shoes to fill. Fortunately, we had an opportunity to add two fantastic employees to the team. Our customers will be pleased with the capabilities and personalities of Martha and Deb.

Each year the bank recognizes employees who have completed another 5-year increment of employment with the bank. In 2017 we had five employees who completed an incredible, combined 95 years of employment at Citizens State Bank. As of year-end 2017, our 22 employees had a combined 418 years of employment with the bank for an average of 19 years per employee. I feel this is very impressive as it demonstrates stability and a long-term commitment between the bank, its employees, and customers.

While we do offer top-notch technology, customer relationships are built on the fact that we make an effort to know and understand our customers. The entire staff knows we must focus on determining and fulfilling the needs of our customers. We also hold ourselves to high standards for ethical conduct and we have the upmost respect for the trust our customers have placed in us. Decisions are made locally with a long-term perspective for the benefit of our customers.

To customers who have started their relationship with us weeks or decades ago, and everything in between - Thank you! For those who are ready to experience a banking relationship that values and respects them as a unique customer – Welcome!

Scholarship Awarded



Citizens State Bank’s \$500 Scholarship Award recipient Kellen Erpenbach

Proud Community Supporter



Citizens State Bank has been proud to support Pheasants Forever for the past 24 years.

Experience Counts

After a frigid winter it sure is nice that spring is upon us. If you are reading this, congratulations as you've made it through another Minnesota winter!

As you know I usually write about what I have run into in these articles and this time is no exception. Recently I have talked to a number of people who have assets in a variety of old work places. Many times they are in a 401k from a previous employer. Most people know it is a good idea (for many reasons I will list later) to get these accounts moved into a roll-over IRA with a good advisor. Many of those people just haven't gotten



Matt Brakefield
Investment Representative

around to moving the accounts. What I have seen a lot of lately are TSP, Deferred Compensation, Employee Stock Option plans and TSA or 403Bs. The folks who have these often are very surprised that they have options with them as well. Many of these account holders I have worked with went to other places first only to find that other professionals didn't have the ability to help them with these more complicated plans.

In truth if these are not handled correctly a tax nightmare can ensue. An advisor like me who wants to work with you both now and throughout your retirement will see these accounts as a tool to provide paychecks for you into the future instead of an opportunity to make a commission.

The benefits you get from rolling these assets over to a reputable advisor are many. You will certainly get more investment choices than you had as most plans offer only mutual funds. Full scale retirement planning is a service that is included with your advisor and not your plan. Retirement income can in some cases be implemented in your plan but is always directed by you within the limited choices you have in the plan versus a well thought out set of investments chosen by your advisor for their income.

As always there is no charge to come see me to discuss these items as well as any other investment questions you may have. Call, email or view my website Icanhelpinvest.com today to set up a time for a meeting.



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Keep Your Money

There are many steps that people can take to stay safe online. The following is a list of five things you should do to keep your money and not give it to scammers.

1. **Phishing and Social Engineering:** Phishing is a tactic to obtain your personal data, such as credit card numbers, passwords, account data or other information. The scam typically attempts to entice email recipients into clicking a link or opening an attachment that results in malware being downloaded to your computer. It is sometimes difficult to tell if the message is from someone you can trust. Banks and credit card companies generally will not ask for this information in an email because they already have it. Do not respond to unsolicited emails and do not open attachments contained in those messages.
2. **Do not call fake tech support numbers.** This scam often starts with pop-ups from fake companies offering to help you with a malware infection. How do you know if they are fake? A real security company would never market to you via pop-up saying they believe your computer is infected. They would especially not serve up a (bogus) 1-800 number and charge money to fix it. If you have security software that detects malware, it will show the detection in your routine scan, and it will not encourage you to call and shell out money to remove the infection. That's a scam trying to infect you. Don't take the bait.



3. **Do not believe the cold callers.** We all know criminals will dial your phone number and try to scam you. "Tech Support" scammers love to call you and pretend to be from Microsoft. They've detected an infection, they say. Don't believe it. Microsoft will never cold call you.
4. **Use anti-virus and anti-spyware programs:** Up-to-date anti-virus software can stop viruses, worms and other malware. Up-to-date anti-spyware programs can stop malware that perform certain behaviors like pop-up advertising, collection of personal information or changing the configuration of your computer.
5. **Enable your firewall:** A firewall is a software program or hardware device that filters inbound and outbound traffic between your network or computer and the internet. A firewall is a valuable tool to protect your data.

These are just a few of the many steps you can take to keep your information safe online. Please remember to remain vigilant when online. Be wary of any communication that implores you to act immediately, offers something that sounds too good to be true, or asks for personal information.

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Citizens' Introduces its One-Time Close Construction Loan



*Janette Wroge,
Financial Services
Mortgage Officer*

When you're building or rehabbing a home, traditional construction loans require a loan for the construction phase, then once the home is complete, you're required to take out another loan for the end financing. Our new One-Time Close loan eliminates all the hassle associated with applying for, qualifying, and closing your mortgage a second time. The closing costs for that second closing are gone too! Are you worried about interest rates rising during the construction phase? With our loan, you can lock in your fixed rate before construction even starts. If interest rates drop during the construction period, we'll give you the ability to move to the lower rate! Contact Janette today for more details.

What's New At Citizens State Bank



Martha Pieschel

Martha joined our staff in January, 2018 as the bank's loan assistant.

In her spare time, she plays golf, cards & word games, and enjoys photography.

Martha enjoys watching The Voice and documentaries. One tidbit that most people don't know about her is that she has 5 amazing children ages 16, 19, 24, 26, and 29 .

Martha lives in Chanhassen.



Debra Schrapp

Deb joined our bank staff in February, 2018 as a fulltime teller/bookkeeper with 8 years prior bank experience.

In her spare time, she enjoys being in her vegetable and flower gardens, snowshoeing, bowling, cooking/baking, and fishing. She also enjoys watching The Big Bang Theory, NCIS, MOM, and 2 Broke Girls.

Deb and her husband, Charlie, have 4 grown children and 7 grandchildren (plus another grandchild arriving in June). Deb and Charlie live in rural NYA.

Starting New Chapters



Marilee Widmer and Kathy Kauffmann

During the past 24 ½ years Marilee Widmer has greeted customers with a smile as they entered the drive-up lanes to make a deposit, withdraw some money, or get cash for the weekend. We wish her well as she started retirement March 1, 2018.

Marilee started her banking career after graduating from Central High School. She worked at the First National Bank in Hopkins for six years. The next years involved becoming a farm wife and raising four children. On September 13, 1993, Marilee joined Citizens State Bank as a part-time teller/bookkeeper where she was a valued co-worker and friend.

Kathy Kauffmann joined Citizens State Bank on July 17, 2000 as a full-time Administrative Assistant. On October 1, 2001, she accepted the position of Loan Assistant which she occupied through her retirement day on December 31, 2017. Kathy started her banking career in 1973 at the Citizens State Bank of Green Isle for 6 years in operations. She then left the bank to raise her children. We wish her well as she started retirement January 1, 2018.

The bank and staff valued her professionalism in her day-to-day activities with her co-workers as well as excelling in customer service during her past 17 ½ years.

We are very proud to have had Kathy and Marilee work for us.

Employees Reach Milestone



Citizens State Bank recently recognized 5 employees for the dedicated years of service. They are:

- Sharon Shimota (30 yrs), Michelle Strobel (30 yrs), Rosalie Krueger (10 yrs), Del Peterson (10 yrs), and Roxanne Tracy (15 yrs).

A Dream Turned Into Reality

“This is my story and I needed to share it. I had a dream to take a little pizza shop in Watertown, Minnesota, and create something unique where people gather and enjoy real homemade Northern Italian Food. In late July of 2017, I was working with Lee Hall, Director of the Open to Business Program. I needed a bank who would partner with me so Lee Hall introduced me to Perry Forst and Jason Winter of Citizens State Bank Norwood Young America.

Lee visited with Citizens and brought them our financials and business plan. When you hear “no we can’t help you” or “you have not been in business long enough, sorry” over and over, you start to lose hope. Citizens State Bank is not your everyday “big box chain bank” like the one I was with for years. I had become to feel as if I was just a number on a piece of paper. Within 3 days, Citizens had us approved to purchase our new building and were willing to assist us in making our dream come true. I personally have been in business for 20 years and I have never experienced a bank with such a refreshing understanding of the big picture.



From left to right: Perry Forst, Mario Cortolezzis (Owner/Chef - Mario's Italian Kitchen), Jason Winter, Lee Hall (Associate Director - MCCD Open to Business)

Now, I'm sure that not everyone's story will be the same. At times, maybe their hands are tied and even they won't be able to do everything they want to help. The people at Citizens State Bank are real, genuine people that listen to you. If they can find a way to help you, they will. I appreciate working with Citizens State Bank. I could not be more pleased.”

~ Mario Cortolezzis
Mario's Italian Kitchen, Watertown MN



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Straightforward Banking

“At the bigger banks I was with, it was always easy to buy a car. Commercial loans were the opposite. So many hoops to jump through. Citizens State Bank has a hometown approach and they make commercial lending easy.

Citizens State Bank always has reasonable rates with loan terms that match my needs. I throw a game plan on the table. Citizens designs a loan to fit the game plan instead of me adjusting the game plan to fit the loan.

I'm always honest with Citizens. Citizens is always quick to provide a no bs straightforward answer. If you have to put a deal together in a hurry, Citizens is the bank to go to.

That is why I am happy to say Citizens State Bank Norwood Young America is my bank..”

~ Tom Diethelm



Tom, Rich Schiller (Citizens) and Dave Diethelm



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