

Charter Bank's Chronicle

Fall 2012

GO **BANK SHOP DINE** **LOCAL**sm

The Future Begins Here!

At Charter Bank, it is our privilege to be one of a number of successful community banks across the country using local decisions to play a vital role in the economic success of the community in which we live.

Each of us demonstrates our commitment to keeping our community a thriving place to raise our families. When we "Go Local," we make a real difference in the lives of our neighbors by making a hometown investment in the future of our community.

"Buying Local" is by no means a new idea, but the practice has increased in popularity in the years following "The Great Recession." Buying local helps neighbors by bolstering the local economy.

Keeping Dollars Local

According to economic studies, for every \$100 spent at a chain store only \$12 is circulated back into the local economy. By contrast, if that same \$100 would be spent at a local business, it translates into \$45 in local circulation. That math makes a strong case that banking, shopping, and dining locally enriches friends, neighbors and the community's economy as a whole.

Reducing Environmental Impact

Local purchases generally require less transportation, thereby lowering transportation costs and the associated pollution. Also, shoppers who buy in their own community travel shorter distances, thereby reducing pollution.

Reinvesting in Community

Local business owners live and work in the community, and therefore they are soundly invested personally and financially in the community. In fact, a recent study shows 91 percent of small business owners volunteer or provide donations to local causes. Locally owned businesses build strong communities by sustaining vibrant town centers, linking neighbors in a web of economic and social relationships, and contributing to local causes.

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You Can Bank On It

by Paul Kohler, President

Our featured article in the *Chronicle* explains the benefits of “going local.” It shouldn’t be a surprise that our community prevails when all of its residents do their banking, shopping, and dining right here in the Chippewa Valley. However, what may be a surprise is that Charter Bank is the only commercial bank headquartered in Eau Claire. In fact all banking operations are located right here at 1010 West Clairemont Avenue.

We take great pride in the fact that our entire staff and management lives in the Eau Claire area. Because most of our employees have resided here for decades, we know this community. This gives Charter Bank and our clients a significant advantage. This is especially true for commercial loan customers who need lenders that understand their businesses. When a borrower requires a quick response on a loan, our seasoned lenders can provide timely loan decisions. Many “big Wall Street banks” may take weeks or even months to approve a single loan. They just don’t understand our community like we do. In fact, we like to joke that “Big Banks” think Country Jam is something you put on toast, when all of us in Eau Claire know it is a great musical festival held every year in July.

We are proud to be part of this vibrant community by providing financial services, jobs and charitable giving. Our employees volunteer countless hours through different charitable organizations, schools, and youth programs. In the last year alone Charter Bank gave over 50 scholarships for local kids, totaling almost \$50,000. Our Women’s Financial Council also hosts an annual art show for area high schools. This past year Charter Bank donated to over 50 different non-profits in the Chippewa Valley. We are happy to do so because it makes this a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

In addition, Charter Bank has been known for paying our depositors an above-average rate compared to our competitors. If you have a savings or money market account at another institution, compare the rate to a similar account here at Charter Bank to see what you are missing.

I invite you to do all of your banking locally, as it benefits us all! Remember our slogan: Charter Bank, good for you ...and our community too.

Paul Kohler

Paul Kohler, President

Good for You

...and Our Community Too!



Customer Appreciation Week in June

Hot Dog! (And More!)

“More” was the program for our happy customers who joined us, celebrating June, the month we opened in 1980.



The week-long event featured contests, flowers, lots of ice cream, gallons of lemonade, and oh, yes, hundreds of hot dogs!

One contest winner received the “Be a Tourist in Your Own Town” prize, and the bank offered a drive-up shredding service for documents! With all of that ice cream and lemonade, it was truly a “cool” event.

You can be sure we will be ready next year with some new “hits” to add to the “old standards.”

Meet Your Money Managers

Shannon Moeller

joined the Charter Bank team in June as Human Resources Assistant. A graduate of UW-Stout, she holds a bachelor of science degree in Business Administration with a minor in Human Resources. The native of Chippewa Falls is very pleased now to own her home in Eau Claire. Shannon enjoys many sports, especially volleyball, and when she has free time outside, she “soaks up some rays,” hits the trail with her four-wheeler and relaxes...unless of course her lawn needs mowing.



Mary Jacob

joined Charter Bank in July as a part time teller. As a junior at UWEC, she is pursuing a degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders. Mary has lived in Eau Claire three years having moved from south-eastern Wisconsin. Studying and helping customers at the bank still leave Mary time to enjoy bicycling and walking her dog. She doesn’t think the Packers and Brewers are great. She knows.



Features at Your Fingertips - New Online Services That are Good for You

Reorder Checks Online!

Reorder Your Checks Online

Simply visit the Personal Checking/Money Market page and click Re-Order Checks Online.



Sign Up for Online Banking

It's simple to sign up for Online Banking from the convenience of your own computer. Visit our website, and click Online Banking/ Enrollment Form to get started.



Bank-To-Bank Transfers

Use your Online Banking account to transfer funds between financial institutions. It's easy to set up your accounts. You can get started today!



Downloads

You can now download your online banking transactions directly into Quickbooks. While viewing your account details, choose "Download" and select your preferred download format from the dropdown menu.



Technology Tools and Tips That Are *Good for You* The Three Most Popular Scams to Steal Your Identity

E-criminals leave no stone unturned and persist tirelessly to invent new strategies to rob your confidence and steal your personal information. We do not think of criminal schemes as "popular," but in the online underworld, these are The Big Three:

Phishing: Direct Link to Trouble

In this scam, you receive an email from an entity claiming to be your bank, or perhaps your credit card company. In many instances you will be notified there is an issue with your bank account or credit card number. In the body of the email there commonly is a link, leading to a fake website. Its design could be remarkably similar to your real bank's website. The fake website will ask for your username and password, thereby collecting your real bank login information. You may even receive emails purporting to be from banks or credit card companies, of which you are not even a customer. This is a red flag, signaling a scam email.

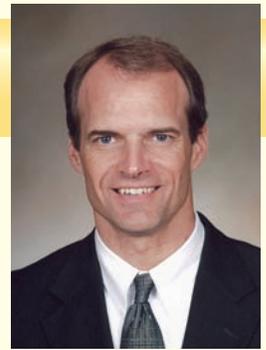
How can you protect your interests? *Don't click the link.* Open a new internet window and directly enter your *real* bank's website. If you have the least suspicion of foul play, contact us immediately!

Pretext for Larceny

The setup begins with a phone call from "your bank," alerting you, "There is a problem with your account." At this point, the scam artist hopes you are nervous enough to provide your Social Security number to "resolve the problem." *Don't do it!* What may seem to be a normal call should be a large, bright red flag! No legitimate financial institution would ever call you to ask for such confidential information!

Take charge! *Do not* disclose any information to anyone on the phone. Tell the caller (scammer) you will have to call back later. *Immediately*, call your bank representative with an alert about the call. We have the ability to contact other customers about possible scams.

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Can You Raise Your Social Security Income by Reapplying for Benefits?

Popular Social Security Loophole Closed, But All is Not Lost

Presented by Kent Martinson, Prepared by Marketing Library.Net Inc.

The reset button has been removed! A few years back, the distinguished economist Laurence Kotlikoff alerted people to a loophole in the Social Security framework: retirees could dramatically increase their Social Security benefits by reapplying for them years after they first applied.

The loophole allowed retirees – upon paying back the equivalent of the Social Security benefits they had received to the federal government – to complete some simple paperwork to reapply for federal retirement benefits at a later age. Thereby, they would increase the size of their Social Security checks. Figuratively speaking, they could boost their SSI after repaying an interest-free loan from Uncle Sam.

You cannot do this any longer.

A Costly Loophole Closed

In late 2010, the Social Security Administration (SSA) closed the loophole. Too many retirees were using the repayment tactic, and the SSA's tolerance had worn thin. (The Center for Retirement Research at Boston College figured that the strategy had cost the Social Security system between \$5.5 and 8.7 billion!)^{1,2}

Under the new rule accumulated Social Security benefits can no longer be repaid with the goal of having the SSA recalculate benefits based on the retiree's current age. You can only withdraw your request for Social Security benefits once, and you are only

allowed to reapply for benefits within 12 months of the first month of entitlement.^{1,3}

A Strategy for Married Couples

Couples can still potentially increase their SSI. This involves using the “file and suspend” strategy once one spouse has reached “full retirement age” (FRA).

As an example, consider this fictional couple. Eric applies for Social Security at age 66 (his FRA). Immediately after filing for Social Security benefits, he elects to have his benefit checks stopped or postponed. Since he has technically filed for benefits at full retirement age, his wife Fiona is eligible to begin receiving “spousal benefits.”

Her benefits are a combination of her own benefits *plus* the extra benefits coming to her as a spouse, both reduced by a small percentage for each month that she is short of her FRA. (If she is younger than her FRA, she *cannot* apply to only receive a spousal benefit.)⁴

Meanwhile, Eric's Social Security benefits are poised to increase as long as his checks are halted or deferred. Since Eric has hit FRA, he now has the chance to accrue “delayed retirement credits” (DRCs) and have his benefits enhanced by “cost of living adjustments” (COLA's) between now and the month in which he turns 70.⁴

Calculate Before You Claim!

Before you claim Social Security benefits, run the numbers. Knowing when to apply for Social Security is crucial. As it may be one

of the most important financial decisions you make for retirement, it cannot be made casually. Be sure to consult the financial professional you know and trust before you apply.

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Citations.

- 1 www.socialsecurity.gov/pressoffice/pr/withdrawal-policy-pr.html [12/8/10]
- 2 www.cbsnews.com/8301-505123_162-7841858/the-end-of-social-securitys-interest-free-loan/ [12/9/10]
- 3 www.financial-planning.com/fp_issues/2011_3/under-the-radar-2671684-1.html [3/1/11]
- 4 www.foxbusiness.com/personal-finance/2012/01/30/social-security-qa-how-to-maximize-benefits/ [1/30/12]

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Tech Tips – continued

The Criminal Interview

Flattery is a subtle vice, and you may receive it in a telephone call claiming you are a “great candidate” for a company. You will receive this “great company's” offer of an interview. Afterward, you will be told it was a “great interview” etc. All you will have to do to get the ball rolling is to provide your social security number in advance of a follow-up interview to confirm you truly are the one and only.

The first line of defense is the same as before: *Do not ever give your Social Security number over the phone!* No legitimate employer will

immediately ask for your Social Security number until a formal hiring is confirmed in writing.

Be Prepared!

Please keep these “Big Three Scams” flagged in red at the top of your mind. With prompt notification from you, we can go to work immediately to block the scam and try to stay one step ahead of E-criminals' criminal efforts. Rely on your friends at Charter Bank to work quickly and thoroughly to protect your interests!

Source: Article Factory

Supporting the Local Economy

As we discussed in the spring/summer edition of the *Chronicle*, Charter Bank reviews business loan opportunities, using a different evaluation process than some “megabanks” by weighing financial accountability and character in the decision-making process. Making loans to small businesses, we clearly see the direct benefits of supporting our local economy. Many of our friends and neighbors work at locally owned businesses. Supporting the local business owner means supporting them.

Offering Superior Service and Products

Research has shown that to compete successfully small business owners focus on quality customer service and quality products. They are more likely to go above and beyond, providing extra services and acting as knowledge resources. Because they are involved in operating the business, they tend to be experts in their field. Small, local businesses also tend to have a variety of unique product offerings. Merchandise offered in retail shops are not on a national sales plan. Rather, they represent the business owner’s interests and the interests and needs of local customers.

“Mob” Action?!

Do you remember the advertising for “Small Business Saturday” earlier this year? Have you seen press releases or messages on social media sites for Cash Mob? The Cash Mob initiative is a small but powerful movement that continues to generate incredible momentum for small businesses. Using social media, the grassroots campaign organizes a group of people to support a local business. At a predetermined time, members of the group will arrive at the business, each with about \$20.00 to buy its products and services.

Small businesses all over our nation have seen cash mobs pop up and typically double normal sales in a given day! This “buy local” movement supports small businesses and community relationships, and it draws people together. Truly, Cash Mob is a win-win for all parties involved.

Community Banks Help Make It Work

How does community banking fit into the “Buy Local” movement? Simply put, community banks are local banks, characterized by local headquarters and local decision-making to benefit the local community.

As a local business, Charter Bank employs local people and generously gives to community organizations and projects. Charter Bank has the ability to make decisions locally on loans, helping small businesses in the Eau Claire area without lengthy waiting. Similarly, we use a high standard of local service and competitive rates to serve all of our customers, whether they are borrowers or depositors.

In general, banks under \$10 billion in assets provide nearly 60 percent of small business loans between \$100,000 and \$1 million. By banking with a community bank like Charter Bank, people in the Chippewa Valley are able to reinvest into our community with small business loans.

Investing in the local economy by supporting small business does more than benefit the small business owner. It benefits the individual customer, too!

Please join with us! Go Local! Together we will make a positive contribution to our community, our families and our future.

Sources: ICBA; Suite 101; ILSR

Pencil Us In

Tuesday, September 25:

Yom Kippur begins at sundown

Tuesday, October 16: National Boss Day

“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.”

– John Quincy Adams

Wednesday, October 31: Halloween

Banking with us is never a hair-raising experience!

Sunday, November 4: Daylight Savings Time ends

The day the Packers make the Arizona Cardinals wish they had flown south for the winter.

Sunday, November 11: Veterans Day

“In the final choice a soldier’s pack is not so heavy as a prisoner’s chains.” – Dwight D. Eisenhower

Thursday, November 22: Thanksgiving

The bank will be closed and will reopen for business the following day.

“As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.” – John Fitzgerald Kennedy

Sunday, December 9: Happy Hanukkah

Friday, December 21: Winter begins

‘Tis the season when we quit praying for rain and start praying for snow.

Monday, December 24: Christmas Eve

The bank lobby and drive-up will close at noon.

Tuesday, December 25: Merry Christmas!

The bank will be closed and will reopen for business the following day.

Tuesday, January 1: Happy New Year!

The bank will be closed and will reopen for business the following day.

Monday, January 21: Martin Luther King Jr. Day

“I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear.” – Martin Luther King, Jr.

Give Us a Call...Anytime!

- Main Floor Reception (715) 832-4254**
- Main Floor FAX (715) 831-2198
- Deposit Operations FAX (715) 831-2199
- Loan Department FAX (715) 830-5146
- Telephone Banking (715) 832-6299**
- or TOLL-FREE 1-(800) 471-4510**
- Loan Department 831-2188**
- Deposit Operations 831-2192**
- New Accounts 831-2189**
- Tellers 831-2191**



Bank Address: 1010 West Clairemont Avenue
P.O. Box 1146
Eau Claire, WI 54702-1146

www.charterbankec.com



Big Brothers Big Sisters
of Northwestern Wisconsin

Bowl for Kid's Sake

"Bowl for Kids' Sake," is the largest annual fundraiser for Big Brothers, Big Sisters, and BIG is what Charter Bank did. We had *three* teams of bowlers, each raising money for this great cause! We are pleased to report that Charter Bank scored BIG, too, raising over \$8,000 to top the Financial Institution category.



"Happy Birthday!" was the theme for the event celebrating the non-profit organization's 40th year. The Charter Bank team "backed up" our congratulations with a T-shirt "composition." It must have "bowled 'em over" because our team was awarded first prize in the evening's costume contest.



Craig Munson (far left), Big Brothers, Big Sisters' Executive Director, presenting members of the team the official top Financial Institution recognition plaque.

BANK HOURS
MEMBER FDIC

LOBBY:
Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Saturday 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon

DRIVE-UP
Monday-Friday 7:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Saturday 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon

Charter Bank
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