

## MISSION

WE WILL PROACTIVELY PROVIDE FINANCIAL SOLUTIONS.  
WE WILL CREATE PERSONAL GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES.  
WE WILL WILLINGLY SHARE TO BETTER THE PLACE WE LIVE.  
WE WILL ENHANCE SHAREHOLDER VALUE.

VISION: YOUR PREMIER CHOICE FOR FINANCIAL SOLUTIONS.



## CORE VALUES

RESPECT IS FOREMOST. WE WILL BE PROFESSIONAL, CONFIDENTIAL AND DIRECT AT ALL TIMES.  
CHANGE IS A CONTINUOUS SERIES OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT.  
TEAMWORK IS KNOWING WHEN TO ASK FOR HELP AND KNOWING WHEN TO OFFER HELP.



July 2009

## July 2009

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*In an effort to keep our mailing list updated, if you know of someone who would like to be added to our mailing list or if you wish to be removed, please call 701-352-0242.*

## HELPLESS VS. CLUELESS

**No matter what direction you lean politically, most folks need of assistance due to circumstances that are often**

These folks in need are often independent and want to get back on their economic feet as soon as possible. They want this phase in their life to be temporary, not permanent. These individuals are often categorized as helpless -- not to be confused with the clueless.

On the other hand, most people struggle with continuing to help the clueless. These are the types of people who have simply chosen to be ignorant, uninformed, and oblivious to what's going on around them. They have become proficient masters at figuring out how to make themselves out to be the victim of society and find reasons why they can't achieve any sense of self-reliance or independence -- and they want you and I to pay.

They have figured out how to extract resources and money out of social programs and other entitlements. These clueless types often take away from the limited resources that should be used to assist those who truly are in need.

These fine clueless folks don't have a clue (pardon the pun) on where the money they think is owed to them comes from -- nor do they care. It's their goal to convince the political system that they are owed these permanent entitlements.

It's disconcerting that this uninformed clueless category of our society is growing -- and growing rapidly. They

appeal to politicians, and the politicians are appealing more and more to them. Remember, the clueless have also figured out how and whom to vote for.

We need to have a revival and sense of renewal in this country in which we return to the principles, ideals, and self-sufficiency value system that over the past 233 years have built this nation into the greatest country in the world's history. It starts by each individual taking responsibility for his/her own actions and his/her own futures. We need to reverse the disturbing trend of so many people becoming takers rather than givers -- and a government that seems to be of the same mind-set.

This country is in serious economic and moral decline, folks. It's time to take our head out of the sand. It's time to stop the denial and start figuring out what the long-term solutions will be -- and I don't believe the answer lies in big government.

That said, we need to acknowledge that we've been in a decade where greed, self-indulgence, and a general breakdown of morality contributed to this decline.

At the end of the day, I think it still starts at home. You, as parents, set an example for your kids. Your parents did the same for you, as your grandparents did for your parents. We're still largely products of our environment and upbringing. We

## ... still feel it's their honorable and moral duty to help those who are genuinely in need beyond their control. It's simply the proper and ethical thing to do.

... need more people who are willing to step up, take responsibility, and be part of the solution -- not part of the problem. If you want things to get better, you have to get better.

Lastly, to think we're going to fix all of this without any personal pain and sacrifice, forget it. Whether you were part of the problem or not, the fix is going to require all of us to take some bad-tasting medicine. The sooner we realize it, the better and less bitter tasting it will be.

### Economic News:

I'm very glad we live, work, and bank in the region of the country that we do. The rest of the country could take an economic lesson or two from this part of the country.

From a national perspective, here's the most disturbing item: right now, it's estimated that the U.S. government is borrowing 50 cents of each dollar it is spending. Think about this ... it's ludicrous!

One of the big problems we have with government is we have so few people who are making these decisions who ever ran a business, were an entrepreneur, or had much of any real-life business experience.

They all have backgrounds in government jobs and are career public employees. Many have backgrounds in academics where most everything is theory and ideology. While I have no doubt they are well-intertwined,

they simply don't have a real good feel or pragmatic understanding for how the private sector actually works.

President Obama is not an entrepreneur. To the best of my knowledge, neither is anyone close to him -- not a single aide, advisor, Cabinet member, or House committee chair. John McCain was not an entrepreneur either. President Bush was a bit better in this area, but not much.

The problem is how few of these people making these major economic and policy decisions that will impact Americans for decades have ever had to manage a business where you had to make a profit. They've never had to meet payroll, take a real risk with their own money, or balance a company checkbook. Think about it - it's scary.

I have directly and indirectly known some rather smart people with good business judgment that have gone into politics. Just about all of them, at some point, stopped being a good independent thinking business person and started being a politician -- with their primary concern being approval ratings and getting re-elected. To that end, there is merit to term limits.

All of this would seem to explain why we're essentially in the process of nationalizing the banking, automobile, investment, health care, and insurance industries. I can't believe that the government knows what's

better for us than we, the people, do. We're somewhat in uncharted waters with many of our economic problems. A lot of new initiatives and programs are being proposed and implemented -- many without success. It reminds me of the Mae West quote, *"Between two evils, I always pick the one I never tried before."*

Remember, a government that is powerful enough to give you everything you want is just as powerful to take it all away.

More than 200 years ago Alexander Tyler wrote of the Athenian Republic which had fallen 2,000 years earlier:

*"A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the voters discover that they can vote themselves money from the public treasury. From that moment on, the majority always votes for the candidates promising the most benefits from the public treasury with the result that a democracy always collapses over loose fiscal policy, always followed by a dictatorship."*

Think about this for a moment and consider if we're on the same path. Remember, this was written 200 years ago about a democracy that fell more than 2,000 years ago. I hope the U.S. isn't destined to repeat history.

Continued on page 4



## IS THERE SUCH A THING AS A "NORMAL" SUMMER IN NORTH DAKOTA?

As I have traveled around the North Dakota and Minnesota countryside, I can't help but wonder what a "normal" weather pattern is. Maybe it's the average of all the extremes? The Red River Valley experienced record flooding this past spring. Devils Lake is at record flood stage once again. Lake Sacajawea has risen more than 20 feet just this spring alone. All of this has happened in the first six months of the year. In the past month we have seen over seven inches of rain in one day in the Bismarck area, where they also experienced record snowfall last winter. There was more than six inches of rain in one day just south of Fargo with baseball size hail.

It is amazing that the majority of the crops in the Red River Valley were even planted. They may have been planted later than normal, but in general, at this point, they look good. Ag producers in Choice Financial's footprint are certainly geared up and equipped to cover a lot of ground in a short period of time. I visited with one producer that hooked up his beet and bean planter in mid-April and unhooked it in mid-June after spending only 10 days actually planting with the unit.

In other parts of the state, particularly from Devils Lake to Langdon, producers have not been so fortunate. There are estimates of less than 50 percent of the crops in those areas being planted. This has a negative impact on not only the farmers but also all businesses on main street in the towns and communities affected. If the crops aren't planted, there are less crop inputs that will be needed. No crop to harvest will

mean less seasonal work in the fall. There are certainly adverse consequences to most everyone involved. Most producers were fortunate to carry crop insurance to cover part of their losses.

Choice Financial writes a large book of crop insurance. We are fortunate to insure crops in 12 states from Florida to Oregon. Crop insurance helps our farm customers manage both production and market risk. With unusual weather patterns like we are getting accustomed to, along with high input costs, it is hard to think about farming without crop insurance. Spending the dollars on the front end to help protect your farm and manage your risk will payoff in the long run. If you currently have your insurance with Choice Financial, we would like to say thank you and if you don't, we would like to meet with you. Please feel free to give us a call anytime to set up an appointment.

As we hope for a more "normal" summer, perhaps we should be careful what we wish for.

**Dan Johnson**  
**Grafton President**



## ECONOMIC M

### Economic Facts and Statistics:

I come across a lot of what I think are interesting facts and statistics that -- at least for me -- help paint a clearer picture of what's going on economically. I'd like to share some of those with you.

- Twenty-five percent of American workers have decided to delay retirement in the last year.
- Twice as many Americans own their home free and clear of debt than those where the amount of their mortgage exceeds the value of their home.
- Here's government for you -- it costs the U.S. Mint nine cents to make a nickel.
- The 19 largest banks in the U.S. that recently underwent "stress testing" comprise a whopping 67 percent of all assets in the U.S. banking system. It's time to break these big banks up.
- The average monthly health care premium for an employer-sponsored health plan covering a family of four was \$1,057 for 2008.
- Here's good news and bad news -- the personal U.S. savings rate at the end of April was 5.7 percent compared to 0.2 percent just one year earlier. It's good that Americans are saving, but in the short-run, these dollars are not being spent to stimulate the economy. Long-term it's still a good trend.
- Excluding Arizona, Florida, Nevada, and California, only one percent of the mortgages in the other 46 states are in foreclosure.
- The total production capacity of automakers world-wide is about 86 million vehicles annually. Total sales in 2009 are expected to be about 30 million vehicles less (56 million).
- For the first time ever, households in the U.S. have paid off more debt than they

# NEWS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

have taken on for two quarters in a row.

- The U.S. is on pace to incur a budget deficit this fiscal year that is four times higher than last year's (\$1.84 trillion vs. \$455 billion).
- The U.S. government is projected to spend about \$4 trillion during the 2009 fiscal year, equal to **\$1 billion of government spending every 2.2 hours throughout the year!**
- Wealth losses since early 2007 have totaled an estimated \$13.9 trillion -- with \$3.9 trillion coming in the declining value of housing.
- There will be some pretty good investing opportunities in the coming months and years -- cash and liquidity (or access to them) will be king. Remember, **sometimes big opportunities swing on small hinges.**
- Notwithstanding the huge deficits we're incurring, the current recession is actually a pretty close mirror to one the U.S. experienced in the 1970's. It's a very interesting comparison.
- The productivity of an average American worker over the **10 years ending 12/31/08 is up 28.7 percent or 2.6 percent per year.** To put it in another way, the workload that would

have taken 40 hours to complete in 1998 can now be done in 31 hours. This begs the question, where did the extra nine hours go?

- 62 percent of personal bankruptcies were the result of excessive medical bills.
- Future job opportunities? Think about becoming a nurse or a trucker! It's estimated the U.S. workforce will experience a shortage of at least 300,000 nurses by 2020 and 100,000 truck drivers by 2014.

## TARP Update:

- There are now four North Dakota based banks that have taken Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) government money - State Bank and Trust, BNC Bank, Bank Forward, and BlackRidge.
- It has been interesting to monitor the public's reaction to tax-payer funded bailout programs, and as a result, the number of banks across the country that have either rejected the money or are paying the money back as quickly as possible.
- According to the Treasury Department, many banks that received TARP funds have not increased their lending -- ironically, the primary reason many

banks gave the public for taking the money.

- It's interesting to read and listen to the positive spin many of these banks are trying to give the public for taking the government's money.
- Choice Financial did not receive, nor did we even apply for any TARP money -- that's simply not our entrepreneurial culture. We don't want government to be a shareholder nor do we believe it's the government's role or responsibility to capitalize our bank.

**Until next time,**



**Lynn Paulson**  
CEO/Editor



Here's a great story that illustrates the power of the human mind worrying about things that aren't even there.

*"I'm trapped." "No one knows where I am." "It's cold in here." "I don't have anything to eat." "I am going to starve to death!" "It's freezing in here!" "I am getting weaker." "No one will find me." "I am freezing to death!"*

Those must have been just a few of

the thoughts that consumed a man accidentally trapped in a train's refrigerated boxcar. Unfortunately, when a railroad worker opened the abandoned boxcar just three days later, the man was dead. To make the situation even sadder, the temperature in the boxcar was 56 degrees -- a temperature that would not have caused the man to die.

So what did cause his death? The autopsy of this perfectly healthy man revealed he died of natural causes. At

the heart of those unnatural causes was his destructive thinking. He convinced himself he would die if he didn't have food or a warm environment to survive until someone found him.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said it best. *"We become what we think about all day long."* Think positive!



# The Choice Voice

## Choice Financial CUSTOMER

### Ryan Radermacher Casselton, N.D.

Ryan began his farming career in 1986 around the Casselton, N.D. area by renting 800 acres of land from a neighbor. Since then, he has steadily grown his farming operation and now raises corn, wheat, soybeans and sugar beets. He employs three part-time employees who assist with field-work during the busy spring and fall planting and harvest seasons. To add his family ties in, Ryan's father Ron also helps work on the farm year-round as needed. Ryan's two sons, Wade (15) and Ross (14) also help and do all the mowing duties around the farm site. The boys enjoy farming and may someday take over the farm operation.

The boys enjoy farming and may someday take over the farm operation.



The farm operation keeps Ryan extremely busy, but he also keeps busy off the farm by being a community-focused individual. He sells American Crystal beet seed to area farms and does all the ordering and delivery of seed. He's been the assistant fire chief of the Casselton Volunteer Fire Department for the past eight years and has been volunteering for the fire department for the past 23 years. Ryan is also president of the Central Cass Booster Club.

When asked about his thoughts regarding the challenges for the future of agriculture, Ryan responded that he is optimistic, but sees volatile grain prices, high input costs and higher land costs. He realizes farming has its ups and downs and appreciates working with a bank who understands those challenges as well.

Ryan has been a customer of Choice Financial since 2001. He enjoys working with an agricultural-based bank and says *"It's important to me to work with a bank that knows and understands agriculture. Choice Financial has helped me expand my operation to*



*where it is today."* He went on to say that *"It's a one-stop shop for all my banking needs from free Online Banking and Bill Pay, to crop insurance and investments."*



One of Ryan's favorite services is Online Bill Pay, since it saves him valuable time.

Ryan appreciates the friendly hometown atmosphere of the bank and that all the employees know him by name. He jokes and says the 3 c's of Choice are conversation, cookies and Coca-Cola.

# TOMER PROFILES:

## Henderson P&D Inc. Grand Forks, N.D.

Henderson P&D Inc. is one of the companies that Sarah and Christian Henderson own. They have three companies, Henderson P&D Inc., Hendegaard Transport, LLC and Lakes Transit, LLC. The Hendersons do business with FedEx Ground. FedEx Ground contracts to independent contractors and the contractors provide pick-up and delivery services for purchased or designated routes. Henderson P&D Inc. is the name of the first company when they started providing service to a route out of Grand Forks, Hendegaard Transport LLC is the company for their over-the-road semis in which their employees haul to and from various hubs in the U.S., and Lakes Transit, LLC is the company that services routes in Bemidji.

Sarah and Christian, who met in high school and married in 2003, earned degrees at the University of North Dakota. Sarah with a bachelor's degree in management and MBA, and Christian with a commercial aviation degree. About a year after they married, they came across a newspaper advertisement in Grand Forks about someone selling a delivery route. Since they were looking to make some extra money, they bought their first route and truck in August 2004.

Sarah and Christian bought the rights to a contract with FedEx Ground, providing service to particular zip codes (compiled into a route). Henderson P&D Inc. exclusively serves the routes, as their employees pick up packages at

the FedEx Ground terminal, and deliver packages to the designated route.

In less than five years, Sarah and Christian (between their three companies) own six delivery routes, four line haul routes, 14 trucks, and manage 19 full and part-time employees. They currently manage their business from their home, but with continued expansion, hope to purchase a shop with an office in the next few years.

In November 2008, they had three delivery routes in the Grand Forks area. In December; they added four line haul routes; and in May, added three more delivery routes in Bemidji. Their growth has been tremendous within the past six months and they have proven that hard work does pay off. Sarah and Christian admit the best part of their job is being able to be their own bosses, doing something for yourself and knowing you have the ability to stay as small or grow as big as you like. They realize the amount of success or failure of the business is ultimately in their hands.

The biggest challenge they have had to encounter is learning to delegate tasks to others, rather than taking it all upon themselves. With the rapid growth of their business, they have had to hire additional employees and it has been an adjustment to break up their duties and distribute them. It is also a challenge for them to find down-time, as their trucks are on the road 24/7 and their phones are always ringing.

Between their three companies, they own multiple routes which cover the Grand Forks, N.D. area including Devils Lake, Langdon, Walhalla, Cavalier, Neche, and Park River; the Bemidji, Minn. area including Baudette, Kelliher, Big Falls, Little Fork, Blackduck, and International Falls. Their semis run out of Grand Forks, St. Paul, Minn., Atlanta, Ga. and Memphis, Tenn.

When asked what they liked most about banking with Choice Financial Sarah answered, *"The first thing I noticed was that Choice Financial makes you feel as though you matter." We are always greeted by name and love that we have formed relationships with numerous people within Choice Financial.* Christian answered, *"Being young owners you get treated differently but when we went into Choice Financial we were treated with respect and they didn't judge us on our age."*

Sarah and Christian would like to expand regionally by increasing the shippers that their routes pickup daily packages from.

For any information regarding shipping or any other questions, please contact Sarah and Christian at [hendegaard.transport@gmail.com](mailto:hendegaard.transport@gmail.com).

## Your Credit Score: More Than Just a Three-Digit Number

Your three-digit credit score is indeed more than just a number. It can control many aspects of your financial life. From your ability to secure a loan for the purchase of a new car or home, to helping you get a better rate for insurance, there is power in these three little digits.

It's never too early to get started on building a good credit score. Two of our valued Choice customers, Wayne and Avis Lessard have helped their son, Craig, build a strong personal financial base. And Craig has agreed to share his story.

Craig Lessard's parents have long promoted the benefits of a good start to building strong credit history. Craig started working on the family farm around age 15. He earned a wage for his work, and opened a checking account and debit card at Choice as a secure place to manage his finances. Many lenders view basic bank accounts that are handled well as a sign of stability. *"I remember my mom and dad always talking to me about managing my money wisely, even throughout my college years,"* states Craig. *"I don't think there is any age that is too young to start. Giving kids an allowance, opening a Choice savings account and showing them how to save is a good start."*

As Craig entered high school, his parents helped him purchase his first car. With the help of their Choice Financial banker, they secured a loan in Craig's name, helped him stay on top of the payment schedule, and then paid the loan off

ahead of schedule. Craig's parents helped him build a good credit foundation in three important ways: 1) by paying off the loan quickly; 2) establishing a current payment history by making the payments timely; and 3) with responsible parents as co-signers, he was able to piggyback off their good credit.

Today, Craig enjoys a credit score in the mid-700s. By lending standards, this is considered 'excellent credit.' He indicates that his excellent credit score has helped him secure the highest level of coverage at the lowest premium rate for his auto and homeowners insurance.

Craig shared with us his thoughts on what to do to build a good credit score. He believes it starts at home, where children are taught money management skills at an early age. It also helps to establish a good relationship with your banker, who can assist in guiding you to make sound financial decisions. Other tips include:

- Only carry one credit card. Keep it current and in good-standing.
- Avoid building large amounts of debt. Think carefully about your purchasing decisions and stay away from 'impulse' buys.
- Look at your friends and their financial situations. You'll easily be able to distinguish those that have low debt levels versus those that have high debt levels. You'll see where you want to be in terms of leverage and debt load.

Pretty good advice from a 24-year old! Craig's strong financial foundation will help him remain successful in his career as well, where he currently works for a real estate investment firm in Denver, Colo.

A few more simple tips for maintaining a good credit score:

- First and foremost, make all your payments on time. Or even a few days ahead of the due date. As simple as this seems, one missed payment can reduce your score.
- Plan your debt. Plan so that you aren't taking on too much debt in a short period of time. For example, don't get a vehicle loan if you are looking for a home loan. Wait another year before getting that new vehicle.
- Avoid closing old accounts and opening new ones. If you have a good payment history on old accounts (such as a credit card), keep them open and active in a responsible manner.
- Don't spend more than what you have. Spend only what you have cash for. Save credit cards for emergencies, such as unexpected car repairs that you didn't budget for.
- Check your credit reports. You can get one free credit report per year (freecreditreport.com). Get it so you can review your personal credit-worthiness and ensure there aren't mistakes or potential identity theft.

## FDIC RAISES INSURANCE LIMITS TO \$250,000 UNTIL DECEMBER 31, 2013

Recent legislation increased FDIC-coverage on deposit accounts from \$100,000 to \$250,000 until December 31, 2013. Many people do not realize they can also increase their FDIC insurance coverage beyond \$250,000 at a single institution by titling their accounts in certain ways.

Below are scenarios indicating various ways to title accounts to maximize your FDIC insurance coverage.

Talk to your Choice Financial banker today to learn more.



### Scenario 1

Husband and Wife	
<b>Individual Accounts:</b>	
Husband	\$250,000
Wife	\$250,000
<b>Joint Account:</b>	
Husband and Wife	\$500,000
<b>Individual Retirement Accounts:</b>	
Husband	\$250,000
Wife	\$250,000
<b>Revocable Trust Accounts:</b>	
Husband in trust for wife	\$250,000
Wife in trust for for husband	\$250,000
<b>Total Coverage:</b>	<b>\$2 Million</b>

### Scenario 2

Husband and Wife with Three Children and a Joint Business	
<b>Individual Accounts:</b>	
Husband	\$250,000
Wife	\$250,000
Child A	\$250,000
Child B	\$250,000
Child C	\$250,000
<b>Joint Account:</b>	
Husband and Wife	\$500,000
<b>Individual Retirement Accounts:</b>	
Husband	\$250,000
Wife	\$250,000
<b>Revocable Trust Accounts:</b>	
Husband in trust for wife	\$250,000
Wife in trust for for husband	\$250,000
3 children in trust for Mom	\$750,000
3 children in trust for Dad	\$750,000
Dad in trust for 3 children	\$750,000
Mom in trust for 3 children	\$750,000
<b>Business Account:</b>	\$250,000
<b>Total Coverage:</b>	<b>\$6 Million</b>



## ODDS AND ENDS:

**W**hat fears do you have when the power goes out late at night, and you have complete silence and darkness to ponder your doubts and uncertainties?

There have always been different and weird things that scare Americans. A poll conducted by the Gallup Organization ranked what frightens and jolts us. The top ten fears and why they're scary to us are as follows:

Ranking	The Fear:	Why it's Scary:
#10	Water	You can drown.
#9	Storms	Lightning -- and you can drown.
#8	Public Transportation	Planes, trains, buses -- watch the news.
#7	Crowds	The pushing, the trampling, the mob mentality.
#6	Tunnels and Bridges	Fear of collapse (also under business and economic fears).
#5	Spiders	Just plain creepy.
#4	Heights	You can fall.
#3	Confined Spaces	Coffin complex, we presume.
#2	Snakes	Just plain creepy -- and slithery.
#1	Public Speaking	Test one, two. Is this thing on?

**E**veryone knows of someone who had a new baby in 2008. Here are the top five names for babies born in the U.S. in 2008:

### Girls:

- 1) Emma
- 2) Isabella
- 3) Emily
- 4) Madison
- 5) Ava

### Boys:

- 1) Jacob
- 2) Michael
- 3) Ethan
- 4) Joshua
- 5) Daniel

**M**any folks are consumed by fear or worry about things that will never come to pass. A little fear is okay. It keeps us safe from harm and even death. However, studies show that of the things you fear in life:

- 40 percent never happen
- 30 percent are past
- 12 percent are needless
- 10 percent are pretty small
- 8 percent are real and may even be resolved

This data would indicate that 92 percent of what we fear and worry about is pretty much a waste of time.

**T**he three most destructive or limiting noises in our minds are doubt, fear and hate.

**F**inancing farm operations has always been a big part of Choice Financial's business. Recently, *Ag Lender*, a highly regarded farm publication, ranked the top 100 Ag Banks in the country.

According to *Ag Lender*, Choice Financial was the 51st largest agricultural lender in the U.S. in 2008, with over \$200 million in agricultural loans, up from 71st position in 2007.

Moreover, in 2008 Choice Financial was ranked the 22nd largest agricultural bank in the country as ranked by total asset size. We were 31st in 2007.

While we continue to be a well-diversified small business and commercial bank, we still have much of our roots planted deeply and firmly in our region's rich farming area.

**A**mericans spent \$26.5 billion at gas stations in April 2009. **This was \$15.2 billion LESS** than the \$41.7 billion spent a year earlier. Americans spent **\$500 million a day less** at gas stations than they did just one year earlier.

**W**hat is the first thing people do after checking into a hotel room? According to a recent survey:

- 34 percent adjust the thermostat
- 25 percent turn on the TV
- 21 percent unpack
- 7 percent check out the free toiletries
- 2 percent plug in their cell phones to recharge

**D**o you want to impress your bank and your loan officer when you want or need a business loan?

Here are three things that *Entrepreneur Magazine* believes can potentially help you get the business loan you need and also three things that might make it a bit more difficult.

#### **The Do's:**

- Come to the meeting with your lender equipped with a well-prepared financing package. Napkin notes typically do not impress your lender.
- Be able to explain the historical operating numbers and assumptions made in your projection. The more factually you can speak about your business, the more confidence the lender will have.
- Pay down your credit balances prior to your meeting with the bank. If you cannot handle your own personal finances, the banker may have doubts about your ability to run a company.

#### **The Don'ts:**

- Try not to base profitability on increasing sales from the previous year in the current economic environment. Show profitability by predicting similar sales levels and reducing overhead if needed.
- Don't give the banker only half the story. Be honest. If you're up-front with your banker, your odds of receiving the money are much better.
- Don't show up at the bank with a brand new Hummer H2 and claim you need to borrow money. This just shows you maybe don't have a firm grip on your business model.

Again, these are just tips from a commercial lender from 21st Century Bank. They may or may not be applicable in all cases. It's more food for thought than hard and fast rules.

## WHAT MAKES CHOICE SPECIAL?

Is it the fresh baked cookies and flavored coffee? Maybe to some; it depends on who you ask. If you would ask a young saver their response may be, "It's getting a sticker and prize whenever I make a deposit into my Adventure Club Savings account and all the fun activities we are able to take part in!" If you ask the question to a newly married couple purchasing their first home, the response may be, "Choice really cares about us, helping us through the process of getting our first mortgage, step-by-step. They make sure we understand our financial responsibilities."

There are so many reasons why Choice is special to so many people. For those who walk through our doors for the first time, or those who visit us daily, you will always receive a warm welcome attached to a friendly smile. Our staff genuinely wants to know about your family and help better guide you through your financial or non-financial needs.

I would like to share a comment from one of our Choice Financial customers that explains why Choice is special to her. *"The staff at Choice calls me by my first name, which is impressive in this day and age. And they always thank me for coming in and extend well wishes for*

*upcoming events. The employees are always friendly, courteous, and go out of their way to help me with whatever it is I need. Even if they are not 100 percent confident, due to the nature of the question, they quickly and kindly find someone to take care of me."*

If you would ask me, as an employee of Choice, what makes us special, I would say how impressed I was when I started working here ten years ago. All staff members are very respectful to each other and their customers. Teamwork within the group is extremely impressive. Whatever it takes to get the job done the employees pitch in with a can-do spirit. Choice employees put all customers as a number one priority for their day. Oh yes, did I mention the fresh baked cookies and flavored coffee are a nice touch too!

I am sure each of you has a story or two you could share about why you think banking with Choice is special. We would like to thank you for making us feel special too!

**Julie Demester**  
**Customer Service Manager & BSA Officer**





**CHOICE FINANCIAL**

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## 2009 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



**Amanda Kingsbury**



**Ashley Reiter**



**Hedan Zeng**



**Tara Romfo**



**Megan Ternquist**



**Rachel Deyle**



**RaeEllen Crockett**