

The Buckeye Beacon

Today & Tomorrow, Buckeye Community Bank is Your Partner for Growth

Vol 4 • Issue 2

Spotlight On:

GROSS PLUMBING

Often the difference between success and failure is the ability to identify and capture opportunities. It's that kind of foresight, mixed with a measure of risk-taking and diligence, which has allowed Gross Plumbing Inc. to grow from humble beginnings to a firm that impacts the local economy.

In the mid-1950s, Jim Gross knew the hardware business well and decided to set out on his own by purchasing an existing hardware store in Lorain that would become Gross Hardware. Shortly after starting his company, his older brother, Bob, joined him and the two worked hard to grow a successful family operated business.

As the original Gross team of Jim and Bob were establishing their hardware business, home appliances, like washing machines and clothes dryers, were gaining popularity in homes around the area. Gross Hardware sold appliances, which usually need to be wired to a power supply and hooked up to water systems. Realizing the tremendous opportunity that existed, the company soon became Gross Plumbing and Electrical and expanded to add expertise in electrical and plumbing work that helped to fuel the development of the company of today. As the business grew, the duo decided to focus on plumbing and heating services, while selling the successful electric service to a Gross employee.

"The Gross Plumbing of today has everything to do with the opportunities they went after, as well as the work ethic and skills they taught us," said Dan Gross, Jim's son, who took over as company president in the late 1980s. "Yes, it takes hard work, smarts, treating people right and being good at what your company does."

After graduating from high school, all four of Jim's sons, Dan, Bob, Gary and Bill, worked in the business. In 1990, Dan and Guy bought and began operating the firm, which also includes family members Martha and Dan Jr. Brothers Gary and Bill still had plumbing in their DNA and seized an opportunity to buy and operate a separate plumbing company. The company, located on Lake Avenue in Elyria, focuses on offering commercial, institutional and industrial clients plumbing, fire protection services, heating and cooling expertise and sheet metal fabrication. However, according to Dan, the team also continues to service a handful of loyal residential clients who had been there along the way.

"The secret ingredient is having outstanding employees on your team and doing things to keep them around," Dan said. "You grow to trust and rely on each other, and that is what we have found from Buckeye Bank. In the good times – and when we have faced some challenges – they are always there for advice, guidance and support and that means a lot to us."

"Dan and Guy have demonstrated the great ability to respond quickly, seize opportunities and overcome adversity to continue growing," said Buckeye President and CEO Bruce E. Stevens. "Gross Plumbing is very customer-oriented, and, like Buckeye Community Bank's team, they live in the community, have built strong relationships and understand local needs. We are pleased to work with them in serving businesses and strengthening our local economy."

For more information on Gross Plumbing, visit www.grossplumbing.com.

SHARE THE SPIRIT



This spring, Dr. Jeremy Watson, of Watson Wellness, discussed the benefits of sugar detoxing with the Buckeye Community Bank team. He examined the dangers of putting too much sugar into one's body and challenged the staff to take charge of their own health.

Sugar has no nutritional value other than adding calories to your diet. Of concern is the amount of added sugars in our diets, which are often hidden in foods that may not even taste sweet. Further, empty sugar calories can increase a person's risks for chronic illnesses.



Since Dr. Watson's presentation, the Buckeye staff has increased their awareness of their nutrition. Further, they have developed a support network to encourage each other to make healthier choices and reach their full potential.

With greater energy, the team hopes to share enthusiasm and participate in the programs that Dr. Watson has to offer. Watson Wellness, located in Amherst, is a longtime Buckeye customer and has graciously shared his knowledge on the importance of taking care of the body on previous occasions.

Information for Watson Wellness, Inc. can be found at www.watsonwellness.net, and his presentations can be found on his Facebook page at fb.com/watsonwellnessinc.





Bruce E. Stevens
President

A Letter from the President

This edition of the Buckeye Beacon shows the importance and impact of the bank’s client base and the involvement of the staff in the local community. This interaction is the foundation of the bank. The bank’s positive first quarter results are a reflection of interdependence, beginning with our valued clients.

The Gross Plumbing firm has provided value to the local community for several decades. As the business has evolved through excellent and challenging times, it has thrived by taking care of its clients. The bank is privileged that Gross Plumbing has chosen Buckeye Community Bank as its banking partner. Jim Gross was a board member of the former City Bank of Lorain. In that capacity, he was aware of the importance of a bank that would support its clients in both good and trying times.

As a member of the Buckeye Community Bank family, Kelly Sawyer has exhibited a strong recognition and commitment to our clients and our staff that serves our customers. The bank has encouraged and supported this interaction through its Employee Relations Committee. Kelly heads the committee and the bank has had several outreach initiatives that provide support to our community. This interaction is “a two-way street” with our staff supporting the community in ways outside of the normal banking activities.

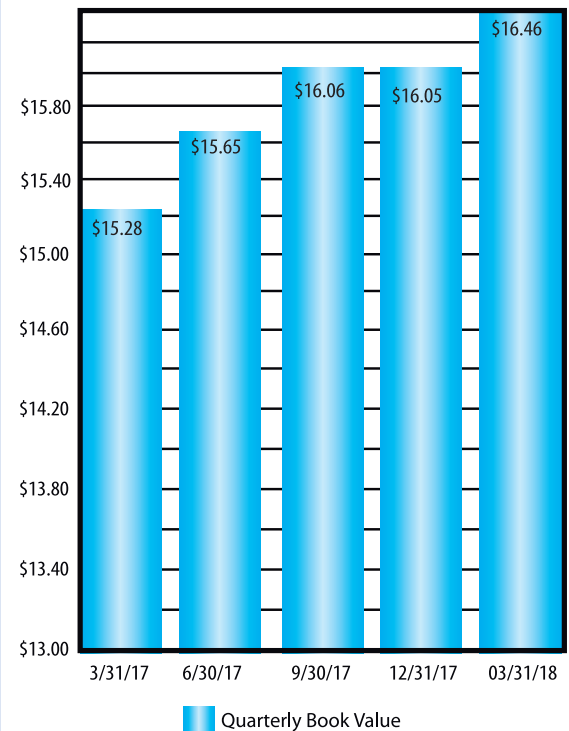
Our neighbor and client Dr. Jeremy

Watson has on more than one occasion presented the importance of a healthy lifestyle to inspire our staff. The most recent of these being the benefits of sugar detoxing. The wellbeing of our team is of great importance to their families and the bank.

Our financial performance of the first quarter is an outcome and reflection of the commitment of the bank to client and client to the bank. In comparison to first quarter 2017, net income grew by \$83 thousand or 24.85%. Some of that growth is due to the bank’s corporate tax rate being reduced to 21% from 34%, but that is not the entire reason. The income before gains (losses) on security transactions, loan loss provision and taxes increased by \$39 thousand or 6.75% indicating the bank’s core performance has improved aside from the tax change.

The increased performance continues to be attributable to management’s diligence in maintaining an efficient and clean balance sheet that continues to grow. The persistent execution of these initiatives, along with the commitment to our clients and community, has led to an increase in our shareholder value with growth in book value per share from \$15.28 to \$16.46 or 7.72% quarter over quarter. Our interaction with clients continues to be a fundamental part of Buckeye. Our commitment to our community will allow for continued growth throughout the years to come.

FINANCIAL POSITION



Buckeye Bancshares, Inc. stock may be available for sale in the near future.

If you are interested, please contact Bruce Stevens at 440-233-8806 or bestevens@buckeyebank.com.

This is the increase in book value of Buckeye Bancshares, Inc. Due to the limited availability and inactive market of any community bank stock, market value may differ. This is a reflection of past performance of Buckeye Bancshares, Inc. and should not be considered a projection of future performance. Funds held in corporate stock are not insured by the FDIC or any other government agency. Investments involve varying degrees of risk, including loss of principal.



Buckeye Bank Recognizes First Mate Kelly Sawyer, Loan Operations Specialist

What Does Your Work Involve at Buckeye?

As a Loan Operations Specialist, my primary role involves interacting with other team members to prepare the documentation needed for a customer's application and approval of a new loan. Also, I focus on maintenance of approved loans to address any required modifications or issues that may arise. The position requires that you are continuously learning, a team player and have a creative, problem-solving mentality to serve our customers better. I also head the internal Employee Relations Committee, which provides a direct channel of two-way communication with the leadership and works on several internal and external activities throughout the year.

When Did You Join Buckeye?

I joined Buckeye in June 2015. Previously, I held various roles of increasing

responsibility at a local bank and at an alternative investment company that helped people diversify their portfolios. I'm a graduate of Elyria High School and studied at Lorain County Community College.

What Keeps You at Buckeye?

I really like the fact that we focus on small businesses and are the only community bank building relationships that meet the needs of the area. I believe in what we do here, which is extremely important. We - and I mean everyone here - work hard every day to take care of our customers. Our team is focused on a dedication to service, which is what separates us from other banks. Plus, it is rewarding to work with a tremendous group that is fun and incredibly knowledgeable.

What Do You Do for Fun?

I spend as much time as I can with my



husband, Bill, and my young daughter, Abbe. I am very involved in my church as a board member, as well as a worship leader, treasurer and I lead the planning for outreach and community events. In my spare time, I enjoy restoring old furniture, interior decorating and party planning.

Mobile Buckeye Direct

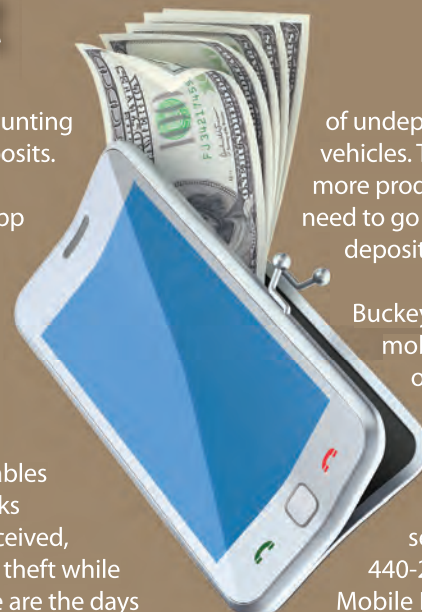
Buckeye Community Bank introduces Mobile Buckeye Direct to save you time and increase the speed of your deposits getting processed. The new mobile remote deposit capture (mRDC) is a quick, easy way to make a deposit with a smartphone or tablet from virtually anywhere, at any time.

When using the Buckeye app, your employees in the field can easily and quickly take a picture of the front and back of the check. Enter the amount of the item, select the deposit button and sign out of the app. The next time your employee comes into the office, he or she can deliver the processed checks to your office team,

who can update your accounting software to reflect the deposits.

All deposits through the app can be processed Monday through Friday. Once Buckeye receives the check image, it is ready to be processed, cleared, settled and posted.

Mobile Buckeye Direct enables your team to deposit checks individually, as they are received, reducing the risk of loss or theft while improving cash flow. Gone are the days



of undeposited checks left in vehicles. The office staff can be more productive since they will not need to go to the bank to make a deposit.

Buckeye's safe and secure mobile banking option offers you the ultimate convenience, ability to confirm valid deposits and expands current mobile banking services. Contact Diana at 440-233-3939 to learn about Mobile Buckeye Direct.



105 Sheffield Center • Lorain, OH 44055

Step Up in the Community to Stand Out



With more people heading online to shop or look for recommendations on service providers, creating meaningful connections with your local community is a sound strategy to keep you competitive.

Technology might provide great convenience and seemingly lower prices, but is unable to replace one-on-one interactions that cement a local firm's reputation and loyal base. When firms demonstrate a sense of purpose and are seen as good, engaged citizens in the local marketplace, nearly 90 percent of customers said they trust the quality of service and are more likely to shop with the business, according to research by Deloitte Consulting.

Local businesses possess numerous advantages making them more vital to the community than online or out-of-town shops. Not only are local companies owned and staffed by our neighbors and friends, but they also are

often more personal, create close-to-home experiences, are locally minded and impact the economy directly daily.

A relationship between businesses and communities is mutually beneficial. Here are a few ways to increase your business' value awareness in your community.

- Open your doors and show your know-how: Connect with your current and potential clients by holding in-store classes and events to share your team's knowledge. Activities can include demonstrations, educational talks, consultations and heading up a local interest club to share your company's subject experience and help people solve their most common problems.
- Lead local causes: Use your familiarity and staff's skills to be seen as a community asset for a challenge or issue meaningful to you and your business. By utilizing time, talent and resources to address a problem facing the community you have the opportunity to stand out as a real corporate and community champion. Accomplish your goals by connecting with local nonprofits to support efforts. Simple ideas can include allowing employees to volunteer their time during the workday or sponsor an event and create a community presence.
- Provide expertise to a neighborhood group:

Encourage your staff to get involved by serving on a community organization or local government board. Also, have team members become more connected to other business owners and professionals in the area. It strengthens word-of-mouth marketing for your business and can provide to be a valuable tool in attracting and retaining talented employees.

- Be a great partner: Your team might not have the in-house staff to organize or plan events and outreach, so look for other business you might be able to team up with on planning and execution. Look for partners that provide complementary services and interact with the same type of customer you target but are not in direct competition with your firm. You can cut costs and expose your products and services to new potential customers by partnering with another local business.

“All progress
takes place outside the
comfort zone.”
Michael John Bobak