

# The Buckeye Beacon

20th Anniversary Edition

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

Vol 4 • Issue 4

## SPOTLIGHT ON

# Buckeye Community Bank Founders

In the late 1990s, there was a growing sense that banks that had served Lorain County for decades had suddenly started moving away from serving the businesses vital to the local economy. At the time, several local institutions had disappeared after acquisitions by larger banks or had transferred decision making to other areas of the country.

Local businessman Billy S. Rowland recognized the real need and remarkable opportunity to serve the small and mid-sized businesses of Lorain County with an independent, community-minded bank. Rowland gathered a group of community leaders to work on launching Buckeye Community Bank in October 1999. Peter J. Corogin and Charles E. Baumgartner share the distinction of being founding board members who actively sit on Buckeye's Board of Directors today.

"We all shared the view that the marketplace was contracting and changing drastically at the time," said Baumgartner, who is a partner with Brouse McDowell but started his career in banking before attending law school. "There was a need to build on a foundation of working with local businesses to keep the community strong and working."

In creating Buckeye, the founding group placed a premium on building an institution that was committed to making decisions locally. Responsive leaders and personalized service would mean that good people, ideas and businesses did

not become casualties of a large banking system that would tie them up in red tape, Corogin said. "It was an honor and a great experience to join these fantastic leaders in the beginning as we worked on launching Buckeye," said Corogin, CEO of Lake Erie Electric. "As a community bank, we knew our success was tied to the success of the area and we were committed to Lorain County. It is still true today that growth in the community benefits everyone."

While the launch of Buckeye came during the time of Y2K concerns, it was the challenges of the recent economic downturn mixed with vastly increased compliance requirements that would

little bigger by now, if it wasn't for Bruce Stevens' making it through the downturn with steadfast leadership, I'm not sure where we would be today."

As Buckeye continues its sensible growth pace, both Baumgartner and Corogin said they are pleased that the bank's leadership and board are actively engaged in meeting the new challenges of appealing to a new generation of business leaders and preparing the team to transition into bank leadership roles during the coming years.

"I am most proud that we are still here serving the community today," Baumgartner said. "Several institutions,

when they heard the first sounds of guns on the horizon during the economic downturn, started to run away from local clients who were facing challenges. We will never condone poor practices or worse, but if you are trying and have your business on the right

path, then we will listen and help. We are a sterling example of what can be done when you are focused and have demonstrated leadership."

"We treat customers extremely well, provide great service and products, and the investors are seeing blue skies ahead which is something to be proud of today," Corogin said. "We work hard to be part of the community and help impact local business. There is still a great need for Buckeye."



Billy S. Rowland



Charles E. Baumgartner



Peter J. Corogin

challenge Buckeye's steady growth and survival.

"Bruce Stevens has been a tremendous fit for the bank. He knew the business, has a high level of integrity and displayed the kind of steady, unflinching leadership that was needed during very challenging times," Corogin said of Buckeye's President and CEO.

Baumgartner echoed the praise stating, "While I think we all hoped we would be a



## A Letter from the President

Bruce E. Stevens  
President

The basis for the formation of Buckeye Community Bank was to be client-centered with the primary focus on the business community. Under the leadership of our Chairman Billy Rowland and the founding board members, they recruited and developed a staff committed to client service.

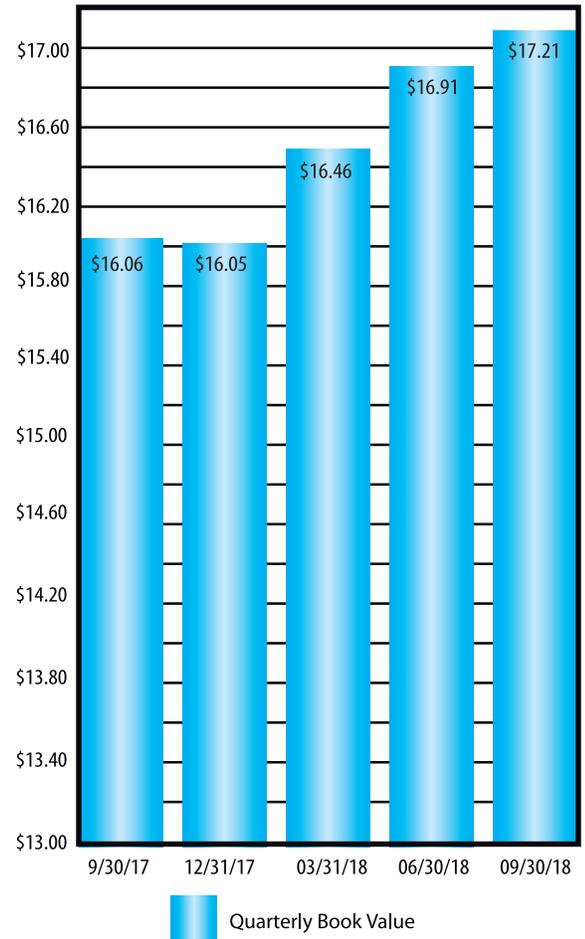
As we enter our 20th year, we are fortunate to benefit from the support of two of the original founding board members, Charles Baumgartner and Peter Corogin, as well as three members of the initial staff: LuAnn Krumlauf, Rita Piatt and Ben Norton. While many of the board and staff have changed over these twenty years, the adherence to delivering quality and prompt financial service to our client base remains central to our business model. The unwavering support and commitment Chuck, Peter, LuAnn, Rita and Ben have provided assure the continuity required to sustain our value proposition.

For any company to sustain and grow, the business model must be valid. A valid business model must deliver a quality product or service at a fair price point for which those in the market are willing to pay. Our bank faces and understands this principle in the same way our business clients face this challenge on a daily basis. It remains this bond of bank-to-client and client-to-bank that is central to the long-term success of all parties that remain engaged in our market. We desire to hear and understand “the stories” of our clients in order to better serve them. The Buckeye Community Bank professionals have earned the market recognition of working with clients in both good and difficult times, and the successful execution of this interaction enhances the economy we all serve. The aforementioned process is what a “community” bank means to its local marketplace.

The financial results represent the “scorecard” as to how well we are delivering on our value proposition. Through several measurements, Buckeye Community Bank is recognized as a high-performing institution. More importantly, it validates our business model and the corresponding ability to pursue current and future opportunities. We further understand our obligation to deliver sound results to our shareholders. The bank’s net income is up 19.7% YTD over last year for the same time period. The earnings per share are \$1.34, representing an increase of 19.6%, and the book value per share increased to \$17.21 for a 7.2% increase over 2017.

In this issue, you will find a listing of financial institutions that have come and gone in our market. While they exited for a variety of reasons, the central proposition was that their respective business model and or financial results ceased to be valid. Through our commitment and execution to our founding principles, we look forward to the next 20 years.

## 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](mailto: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 Community Bank Celebrates 20th Anniversary

Launched with a focus on partnering with local businesses to provide access to capital and increase economic growth locally, Buckeye Community Bank is celebrating its 20th year. Founded in October 1999, Buckeye continues to champion small and mid-sized businesses in Northeast Ohio by providing access to funding that may not be otherwise available due to a wave of local banking institutions disappearing.

Not many community banks have weathered the past two decades in the face of economic and regulatory challenges to remain community owned and operated with a staff that lives, works and contributes to the communities it serves," said Buckeye President and CEO Bruce E. Stevens. "This important milestone has been achieved through the collaborative efforts of our staff and their focus on building lasting customer relationships, providing local expertise and returning value to our shareholders while having an impact on the businesses that fuel our economy."

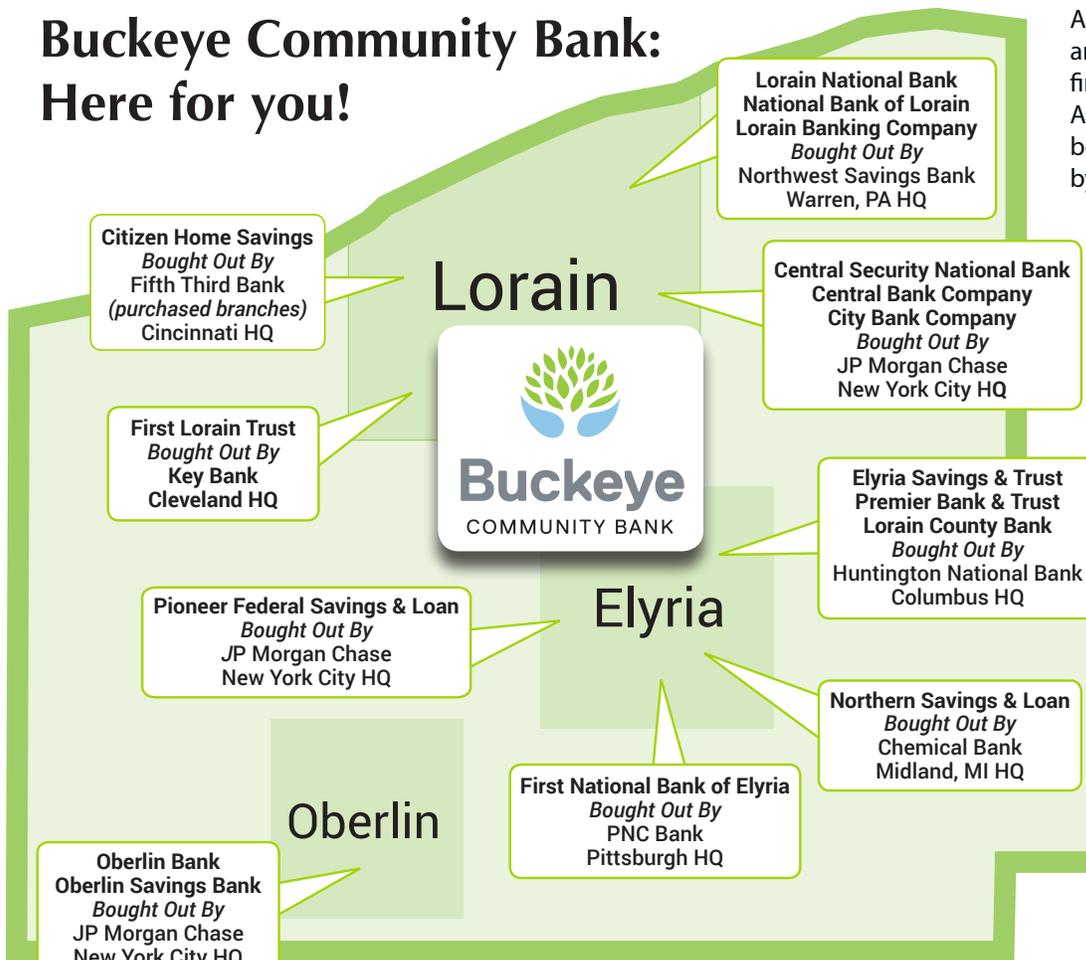


In 1998, recognizing a need for a true community-based option amidst the marketplace's increasing mergers and acquisitions, local entrepreneur Billy S. Rowland assembled and led a group of business and civic leaders to create Buckeye Community Bank. Formally launched in October 1999, the privately-held institution began to provide the resources to meet the needs of local small and mid-sized businesses, placing a focus on personal service and local decision making. "We continue to expand our reach

and portfolio, but we have never lost sight of our roots and the important value of servicing local businesses that make us the bank of choice in the local market we serve," said James A. Park, Chair of Buckeye Bancshares Inc., the parent of Buckeye Community Bank. "No bank survives for 20 years without the support of its customers. We owe a tremendous obligation to our customers for helping the bank navigate the past two decades and position itself for a bright, strategic future."

Since its first day, a hallmark of Buckeye's differential value is the ability to make local decisions and respond to customer's needs quickly and locally, allowing customers to seize real opportunities faster. In a time when many local banks have been acquired by larger regional and national banks, Buckeye has ensured that funding is available to advance local businesses, retain and grow jobs and investments. Buckeye's team believes in being a true partner to all its customers.

## Buckeye Community Bank: Here for you!



As Buckeye celebrates its 20th anniversary, every other locally owned financial institution has disappeared. As more local banks have vanished because of mergers and acquisitions by out-of-town institutions, Buckeye continues to stand strong serving the area by ensuring that there is a funding supply available to local businesses. Local decisions are made here by the Buckeye team who lives in and understands the community's economy and needs, not someone in another city or state.

Buckeye looks forward to supporting our local economy, giving back to the community, building solid relationships, and being your partner for growth today and tomorrow.



# Buckeye

COMMUNITY BANK

105 Sheffield Center • Lorain, OH 44055



LuAnn Krumlauf

Rita Piatt

Being a member of the first team of employees launching a new business can be an exciting opportunity with tremendous responsibility. Lu Ann Krumlauf and Rita Piatt were among the first staffers hired when Buckeye Community Bank launched who remain engaged today.

They say the opportunity to serve local clients was a major attraction for them to join the early Buckeye team. It's also the reason they continue to serve as Buckeye enters its next decade of service.

"I worked at a national bank, and I started to witness how local, loyal customers and employees never seemed as important as those in larger metropolitan areas," said Krumlauf, who serves as Buckeye Corporate Secretary today. "The opportunity to join Buckeye as one of the first employees was exciting, interesting and extremely challenging. Buckeye was, and still is, an institution that demonstrates the importance of its customers, its community and its employees every day."

Piatt too was attracted to the opportunity to impact the local community and economy. "The commitment to our customers has never changed," said Piatt, who serves as Buckeye's Assistant Vice President overseeing compliance and ensuring that the bank complies with the Bank Secrecy Act. "Working for a community bank is very different than working for a large bank. You're not just a body doing a job. People actually care ... and everyone knows people are here to help each other."

Both Krumlauf and Piatt have seen the bank grow while on the ground floor, going from a launch staff of 13 to almost three times that size in 20 years. The Buckeye team continues to embrace the start-up ethic while continuing to deliver results through trusted teamwork.

"One of the biggest changes is the growth in employees during the years," Krumlauf said. "It has been exciting to be part of something that

started small and grew into something great."

Piatt said, "We continue to work hard and keep our commitment to serving the businesses in our community."

When the two joined Buckeye, it was during the concern over Y2K, and many worried that computer coding issue in January 2000 would bring the world's financial systems, as well as other industrial sectors, to a screeching halt. For Krumlauf and Piatt the milestone of Buckeye hitting \$100 million in assets in 2005 was an especially memorable time.

"It has been incredible to see Buckeye and its people continue to grow," said Piatt.

"Having the ability to learn and grow while doing good for the community has been rewarding," Krumlauf added.

