Inside Benchmark

A snapshot of what's happening at Benchmark Community Bank

Spring 2015 Member FDIC

Future Bankers? 21 students get to learn all about banking at Benchmark

Jenny Clark, Human Resources Director, talks about careers in banking

On March 17, as part of the Virginia Bankers Association Bank Day, Benchmark invited high school seniors with a GPA of 3.0 or above to visit the bank to see and hear firsthand what it's like to be a banker. Many of the students were able to visit the headquarters in Kenbridge; others spent time in various branches. Both public and private schools were represented.

In Kenbridge, the students heard presentations from each of the various departments and were able to tour each area of the bank including the Operations Center. Attendees are then invited to apply for one of the VBA's six Bank Day scholarships. As part of the application process, they are asked to write an essay about their experience and how the bank they visited plays a role in the community.

And the recognition just keeps coming:

Benchmark is no stranger to the awards scene. The bank has been recognized for excellence numerous times and in a number of areas. This year is starting off no differently. Recently, the 2013 annual report, along with the community commitment report published for that year, was voted the best annual report by bankers from across the state. The awards are given at the Virginia Bankers Association Annual Retail and Marketing Conference which takes place each March.

At the branch level, both South Hill and South Boston/Halifax were named Best Bank in the annual Readers' Choice awards implemented through the local newspapers. This is the 3rd time the Halifax branches and the 5th time the South Hill branch have been honored with the award.

Benchmark custom calendar growing in popularity

Benchmark has given out calendars to its customers almost since inception. Many have had lovely photos but were usually of places far away. A few years ago, the marketing department started researching the idea of creating a calendar that would depict the beauty, vitality, and community spirit of Southside Virginia. The idea took off. Since 2012, the Benchmark calendar has been a tribute to the people and communities that Benchmark serves. It is now a hot item. The 2015 editions went fast!

Each year that the custom calendar is produced, a new approach is taken. In 2012, places and events were featured; in 2013, kids and pets; in 2014, families, and in 2015 historic photos of the area.

For 2016, we would like to feature area people who stand out through their vocation, volunteerism, or talent. These people might be artists, athletes, entrepreneurs, philanthropists, firefighters, or writers - anyone who, in the opinion of others, shines! Go to bcbonline.com/calendar to nominate someone!

Mortgage business booming

Although news about home sales and mortgages seems to change daily - up, down, back up - and has for a while, mortgage applications at Benchmark have been abundant and steady for several years now. 2015 is starting no differently. As a matter of fact, with consumer confidence finally starting to rise, the number of closings is up significantly from last year.

The success of the bank's mortgage program can be attributed to a number of things. First, Benchmark offers a broad selection of mortgage types including FHA, VA, USDA, and, of course, conventional. And for unusual situations, there are several in-house solutions. But just as important are Benchmark's experienced, "go-the-extra-mile" mortgage lenders. They truly do their best to put home buyers and owners refinancing in the right product at a great rate.

If you know someone shopping for a home, tell them to try Benchmark's popular new online pre-qualification form!

To review either the 2013 or the 2014 annual report, go to bcbonline.com or pick up a copy at any branch.