

May 3, 2011

Dear Member of Congress:


During this time of unprecedented change in the regulation of the financial sector, and with the important contributions that financial institutions are making every single day to the nation's economic recovery, we wanted to point out to you that you have a number of institutions in your state which are uniquely equipped to promote economic development and other community based endeavors.

Known as mutual community banks, these institutions have a long history and continue to play an important role in promoting the economic life of their communities. American Bankers Association (ABA) is proud that these institutions are a significant part of our membership, and we wanted to make sure that you are aware of the unique features and capabilities that they provide.

For more information about the vibrant tradition of mutual community banks and their role in the success of our nation's economy, ABA has produced a fact sheet, *Today's Mutual Community Banks*, which you will find at <http://www.aba.com/aba/documents/Mutuals/MutualFactSheetp1.pdf>.

As always, please let us know if you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,



Frank Keating



# Today's Mutual Community Banks

Dating from the early 1800s, the mutual charter is almost as old as the nation itself. Formed to provide banking services and credit access for ordinary citizens, whether state or federally chartered, they continue this tradition today.

Today's mutual banks and mutual holding companies are at the heart of a robust, consumer-oriented, community banking industry:

- 655 mutual institutions, including 162 mutual holding companies, held more than \$273 billion in assets as of September 30, 2010.
- Their median asset size was \$211 million.
- 216 mutuals had assets under \$100 million.
- 55 mutuals had more than \$1 billion in assets.

## Mutual Holding Companies

Mutual holding companies (MHCs) were first permitted at the federal level in 1987, in the Competitive Banking Equality Act. The MHC structure preserves the mutual interest while providing a holding company's flexibility and encouraging innovation and creativity.

MHCs can:

- Continue as mutuals and as independent entities.
- Facilitate controlled capital growth through limited stock offerings.
- Facilitate growth through branch or line of business purchase, mergers and acquisitions.

## Mutual Governance

The directors or trustees of mutuals set policies and oversee management's operations. They also decide about corporate organization and the best means to serve the interests of the community. Because they are not subject to the pressures of stockholders interested in maximizing shareholder value, they can maintain their focus on preserving a healthy, viable mutual community bank that serves the community.

Directors and trustees are elected in different ways:

- Depositors and sometimes borrowers elect directors at federally chartered mutual savings associations and state chartered mutuals.
- Another form of governance, using the corporator form, is common with some New England state chartered mutuals. Representing the community at large, corporators elect the board of trustees.

## ABA and Mutuality: Working Together

With the vast majority of the nation's 655 mutual banks among its members, ABA is the preeminent national organization for mutual institutions, and the leading advocate in promoting and protecting the mutual charter and culture, and enhancing its competitiveness.

- Mutual community bankers play a leading role in ABA's leadership: three members of the ABA board of directors, including our treasurer, lead mutually chartered banks or holding companies.
- A 13-member Mutual Institutions Executive Committee leads the 110 ABA member Mutual Institutions Council.
- ABA's annual Mutual Community Bank Conference is the only national meeting dedicated solely to mutual institutions.
- An annual Mutual Survey catalogues the issues most important to mutual institutions.
- ABA's Mutual Exchange is the only national newsletter that focuses on issues of vital importance to mutual institutions.
- Mutual members enjoy access to ABA's team of a dozen mutual experts with a combined 200 years of experience.

For more information about the vibrant tradition of mutual community banks and their role in the success of our nation's economy, please contact Alex Maroulis-Cronmiller, VP, Council and Committee Management, American Bankers Association, at [acronmil@aba.com](mailto:acronmil@aba.com).



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