

2026 Excellence & Innovation Forvis Mazars Award

Presented by CBAI
For Member Banks of the Community Bankers Association of Illinois

Nominations Wanted

Now is your chance to recognize CBAI member banks that use innovative ideas to demonstrate commitment to their employees, customers, shareholders, and community. Visit cbai.net to find the fillable online nomination form.

Entry deadline is Friday, May 29, 2026. Reach out to Valerie Johnston or Madie Tertocha (listed above) with any questions.

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901 Community Drive
Springfield, IL 62703-5184



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Dear CBAI Member:

Community banks work hard to succeed in today's challenging environment. Forvis Mazars and the Community Bankers Association of Illinois (CBAI) recognize your efforts. That's why we created the Excellence & Innovation Forvis Mazars Award presented by CBAI. Now in its 28th year, the award honors the best ideas developed by Illinois community banks and thrifts.

Nominations should showcase how banks demonstrate key factors that contribute to their success in today's environment: exemplary performance, community leadership, and entrepreneurial spirit. We've chosen previous winners for their successful philanthropic efforts, targeted community improvement projects, or innovative products and creative marketing support.

The 2026 winner will be recognized as a community leader and top Illinois financial institution at CBAI's 52nd Annual Convention & Expo and will receive \$1,000 to donate to the charity of its choice. We look forward to receiving your nomination!

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Bert Purdy.

Bert Purdy, Partner
Forvis Mazars

Handwritten signature of Kraig Lounsberry.

Kraig Lounsberry, President
Community Bankers Association of Illinois

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The Award

The 2026 Excellence & Innovation Forvis Mazars Award presented by CBAI recognizes CBAI member banks that go above and beyond to demonstrate their commitment to their customers, employees, shareholders, and the community through innovative outreach programs.

Since 1999, CBAI and Forvis Mazars have honored financial institutions for their efforts to build a healthy future for themselves and their communities by developing an innovative way to serve customers or enhance corporate citizenship. By giving this award, we strive to:

- Encourage CBAI members to improve their performance and contribute to the growth and success of their communities
- Generate new ideas and programs for customers, employees, shareholders, and the community
- Raise awareness of what's necessary for success

Previous Winners

2025

First National Bank in Pinckneyville

The First National Bank in Pinckneyville was selected as the 2025 award winner for its program, BankChats. This program is designed to bring financial literacy to the forefront with both its customers and the larger community. By putting together fun activities, games, and special events, The First National Bank in Pinckneyville was able to reach a broad audience to create a comfortable environment to discuss fraud and how to avoid it, financial planning, and how to ask the right questions when considering your financial decisions.

2024

Bank of Springfield

In 2022 the Bank of Springfield launched its program, Keys to Homeownership. The program assists lower-income borrowers with the costs associated with a mortgage. The program offers a \$1,000 closing cost credit for borrowers with income under 80% of the area median income where the purchased property is located. The credit can be applied to one-time costs, including appraisal and recording fees, and in addition, the borrowers are offered financial counseling and resources, including budgeting and home maintenance.

2023

Beardstown Savings in Beardstown, Illinois, was the recipient of the 2023 Award for its community project, Banking the WHOLE Community. With a very diverse community in a small, rural area, management was determined to bridge the gap between all ages, all backgrounds, at all levels of banking. One of the difficulties of having a diverse community is overcoming a language barrier and it was becoming increasingly difficult for both the bank customers and the bank staff to effectively communicate. With this barrier in mind, Beardstown Savings came up with the idea to partner with Worldwide Tech Connections to offer a robust translation service to their customers. This service can be used on any mobile device, desktop, or phone. Thanks to this innovative idea, the bank has essentially eliminated the communication barrier for its current and prospective customers and built a system where any staff member can serve any customer.

2026 Award Ceremony

We will announce the winner during CBAI's 52nd Annual Convention & Expo, which will be held September 17-19, 2026 in Indianapolis, Indiana. The winning institution will receive a \$1,000 prize to donate to the charity of its choice as well as an award symbolizing its innovation and excellence.

Deadline & Judges

Nominations must be received by Friday, May 29, 2026. CBAI will choose a panel of judges to review entries and select a winner.

Eligibility

Any CBAI member bank or thrift can participate. The award honors institutions for developing innovative products or services or for serving the community while achieving financial success. Examples of potential nominees include:

- A new deposit product and marketing program for senior citizens that results in significant growth
- Internet-banking innovations that help local businesses flourish
- A community restoration program that re-establishes a thriving neighborhood or district

You do not need to be a Forvis Mazars client to win this award.

Nominations will be judged by overall quality and initiative contribution. Any CBAI member bank or thrift member, shareholder, or customer may nominate an institution, and institutions are encouraged to nominate themselves. As many as three programs showcasing an institution's innovation or service excellence may be submitted.

Entries must include the completed nomination form and samples of representative promotional material, if applicable.

Photographs, videos, and other media are encouraged, but not required.

For More Information

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