

Buckeye State Bank: Rooted in History, Built for Columbus

How Buckeye State Bank is Redefining Local Business Banking

COLUMBUS, OH, UNITED STATES, March 3, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In a city powered by entrepreneurship, innovation, and rapid growth, [Buckeye State Bank](#) has separated itself from the pack to become one of Columbus' most prominent financial institutions. With many business owners feeling overlooked by large national banks, Buckeye has stepped up to fill the gap, offering what big institutions can't: flexible solutions; quick, local decision-making; and employee-owners who understand Ohio businesses.

Reimagining an 140-Year-Old Legacy

Buckeye is truly a multifaceted institution. It sticks to the historic roots the bank was founded upon while looking ever forward. In 2014, a diverse group of Columbus-area business leaders, including former Ohio State football stars Dan "Big Daddy" Wilkinson and Stanley Jackson, reinvented the bank, then Citizens Bank of DeGraff, by purchasing and rebranding it to Buckeye State Bank.

Despite the rebrand, Buckeye has inherited the oldest surviving Ohio bank charter, a rare distinction that



Buckeye State Bank Team at a Groundbreaking



anchors the modern institution deeply in Midwestern banking traditions.

Moving forward, the bank aims to continue building off its roots by forming a community-focused, locally accountable bank designed to support Columbus businesses with speed, innovation, and personalized service.

Strategic Expansion Centering Around Community

Since its [relaunch](#) 11 years ago, Buckeye has grown exponentially by expanding commercial and personal banking relationships and community support. Despite the expansion, the bank has remained true to its values and commitment to servicing local deposits and reinvesting them back into the community's economy through loans to support local businesses and consumers. Buckeye's goal isn't to become bigger, but better for the community.

Its growth has earned Buckeye recognition as one of Columbus' fastest-growing businesses for four consecutive years, all while maintaining a prestigious BauerFinancial 5-star rating, which is awarded to banks demonstrating exceptional financial strength.

Employee-Owned, Relationship-Driven

At the heart of Buckeye's differentiation is its employee ownership model, where team members aren't just bankers but owners. This model creates a culture of service where accountability and pride are built into every interaction. At Buckeye, local business owners don't wait weeks for loan approvals or need to navigate layers of bureaucracy. Instead, they receive answers quickly from employee-owners who understand their needs.

"When your banker is also an owner, you get faster answers and more flexible options," says Shawn Keller, CEO, president, and cofounder. "Business owners value responsiveness, and that's exactly what we deliver. When our clients win, our shareholders and employees win."

Built for Columbus Businesses

While large financial institutions rely heavily on rigid processes and standardized products, Buckeye thrives on [relationship-based banking](#). By building strong relationships with customers, each branch can understand its community's industries, challenges, and opportunities. This allows capital and decisions to stay local, providing the best support right at home.

Through its partner-first mindset, Buckeye can support businesses from commercial lending and real estate financing to treasury depository services and growth capital.

Standing Out

With new companies starting up or moving to Columbus every day, the area's business sector is

ever evolving, slowly becoming a major economic hub in the Midwest. Buckeye is keeping in step with the changes and providing businesses with a unique financial institution, one with the strength of a historic bank, the agility of a modern, community-based institution, and the accountability of an employee-owned company.

For business owners seeking a financial partner, not just a provider, Buckeye offers a model built on trust, heritage, and hometown commitment. In a city defined by ambition, creativity, and grit, Buckeye remains firmly dedicated to empowering the entrepreneurs and business leaders who shape Columbus' future.

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