



A key component of the traditional banking business model is bank involvement in the community. Volunteerism seems to be a part of the genetic makeup of a good banker. Bankers volunteer their support for a host of community charitable and civic causes. They contribute their own time and money, while the bank generously provides company funds.

Unfortunately, the public image of the banking industry has been unfairly tarnished by the recent financial crisis. At the same time, banks are often reluctant to call attention to the good things which they and their employees do in support of public-spirited community causes. The combination of these two factors prompted the leadership of the South Dakota Bankers Association to launch the South Dakota Banks Make a Difference project.

A Community-Wide Project

South Dakota Banks Make a Difference is a banking industry-branded template that banks in any community can use to collaboratively address identified needs in their community. Under the leadership of SDBA Chairman Dave Zimbeck, Sioux Falls banks recently developed a framework for a community-wide Banks Make a Difference project.

To raise public awareness and to demonstrate a statewide unity in community service, we have developed a common logo through the generous assistance of CorTrust Bank's in-house marketing agency – CorMark Advertising. Each bank that participates in a statewide or local project will have the opportunity to have their bank's logo shown along with the logos of the other participating banks in that locality.

South Dakota Banks Make a Difference logos can be tailored for use in each community campaign. Participating banks can use the logo to brand any number of marketing efforts.

- Collection boxes placed in bank/branch lobbies.
- Yard signs which can be displayed at hands-on project locations.
- T-shirts worn by volunteers during hands-on projects.

Sioux Falls Project Themes

The Sioux Falls Banks Make a Difference project has two general themes.

- First, banks will collect items for people in need – both the young and young at heart. They have identified food collection drives; diapers and baby supplies (or raising money to buy these items in bulk); and collection of blankets and gently-worn coats, hats and gloves. These are examples of the kinds of drives that can be undertaken in bank offices and bank lobbies which may appeal to employees and bank customers alike.
- Second, knowing there is a need to lend a helping hand in communities that need assistance or helping those who are physically unable to maintain their property, Sioux Falls banks will undertake a campaign to lend a hand where these needs have been identified. The banks realize they have employees who derive great satisfaction when assisting others through physical labor. The project

team will identify the types of projects, both big and small, so that banks no matter their location, size or the extent of their resources can take part.

The objective of the project team is for banks to kick off their Banks Make a Difference projects during the second half of October, which could carry over into November.

Participation of All Banks Encouraged

SDBA leadership hopes banks in communities of all sizes across South Dakota will embrace this philosophy and spirit of Banks Make a Difference to help the citizens of South Dakota better understand the role that banks and bankers play in making our communities great places to live and work.

For more information on how to conduct your own local Banks Make a Difference project, contact SDBA at (800) 726-7322 or (605) 224-1653. Or send an email to Alisa DeMers, SDBA, at ademers@sdba.com.