



NEWS RELEASE

March 20, 2008

For More Information Contact:
Robert J. Wingert
217/529-2265

For Immediate Release

Illinois Community Banks are Safe and Sound

Springfield -- Illinois consumers should rest comfortably during this turbulent economic period because their local community banks are operating safely and soundly, according to Robert Wingert, president of the Community Bankers Association of Illinois (CBAI).

“Community banks aren’t part of the subprime mortgage mess afflicting several large banks and investment firms like Bear Stearns. Locally owned banks traditionally operate more conservatively and are well-capitalized,” Wingert noted. “Consumers and small businesses should look to community banks to protect their deposits and borrow money at competitive rates.”

Kent Siltman, CBAI chairman and CEO of Citizens First State Bank in Walnut, Illinois, said, “Illinois has more bank charters than any other state in the nation. Our consumers and businesses benefit from this highly competitive banking market. We serve our local markets and make decisions right here where we know our customers.”

Siltman emphasized that, unlike the big banks and investment firms that take larger risks in pursuit of larger fees, community banks are not packaging and securitizing subprime loans and selling them into the secondary markets. “Consumers should recognize that community banks are a tremendous asset to their respective communities, providing stable and reliable financial services.”

Located in Springfield, CBAI is a full service association with nearly 500 community bank members.

-30-