



# the intersection

*Where Community and Opportunity Meet*

## A LETTER FROM TIM PURMAN — PRESIDENT/CEO

At Forte Bank, we know one thing that continuously sets us apart is our service and relationship-based focus. Not only do we know our customers from a financial perspective, but we KNOW them from a personal perspective. In fact, approval ratings for community banks exceed those of megabanks and online lenders according to a Federal Reserve **small business credit survey**.

At Forte Bank, we won't jeopardize our hard-earned reputation by selling goods and services our customers don't want or need. We don't rely on impersonal credit scores or lend by committee in another state to determine to whom we extend credit. We bank one customer, one loan at a time. It's been our philosophy since the bank's founding 115 years ago, and it continues to help us serve the unique needs of our customers today.

Community banks like Forte Bank play a leading role in the financial health of the communities we serve. We are drivers of economic mobility, financial inclusion, and access to financial services. We put our tax dollars to work right here in Washington County, helping support local police and fire departments, schools and other municipal services. Plus, community banks



fund more than 60 percent of the nation's small businesses (which account for two out of three new U.S. jobs annually), and more than 80 percent of agriculture loans.

We don't just support the community's financial health, either. We have a vested interest in strengthening the community through philanthropic outreach and participation in local civic groups because our team members live here, too.

As a community bank, our fates are linked, so when good things happen for you, Forte Bank and our communities win as well. We are grateful to all of you for supporting us. If you know someone who is not our customer, we encourage you to refer them to Forte Bank so they, too, can experience the value of an independent community bank.



Lori Mihm

## Happy Retirement, Lori!

After nearly 40 years of service, Lori Mihm, Vice President, Real Estate and Consumer Lender, is retiring from Forte Bank. Her last day is Dec. 31, 2022. Lori has been a team player her entire career. She has vast knowledge about the mortgage industry and has always offered clients expert counsel to help them make the best decisions. Her dedication to her customers is unrivaled, and that's evident by the number of people who have been repeat customers. Lori will be sorely missed at Forte Bank, but we are so happy that she'll be able to spend more time with family and friends and enjoy the great outdoors up north. *Thank you for your dedication, Lori!*



## Holiday Banking Hours

Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 24 — **CLOSED**

Day after Thanksgiving, Friday, November 25 — **OPEN** regular business hours (8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.)

Christmas Eve Day, Saturday, December 24 — 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Christmas Day Observed, Monday, December 26 — **CLOSED**

New Year's Eve Day, Saturday, December 31 — 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

New Year's Day Observed, Monday, January 2 — **CLOSED**





## Lock in a Great Rate!

Boost your savings with our **9-Month Bump-Up CD special**. If rates increase, you can bump it up one time. We'll even contact you to let you know! Or, increase your yield with our **21-Month CD special**. *Save confidently with Forte Bank!*

**2.01% APY**

9-MONTH BUMP-UP CD SPECIAL

**4.06% APY**

21-MONTH CD SPECIAL

### Ladder Your Investment

Consider taking advantage of both CD specials to ladder your investment. Investing part of your money in the 9-month CD and part of it in the 21-month CD gives you access to some of your money in a shorter period of time, while also allowing you to take advantage of the highest rate.

*Annual Percentage Yield accurate as of the date of publication. \$1,000 minimum deposit required to earn APY. Rate may change after opening the Bump Up CD at the customer's option. Penalties may be imposed for early withdrawal. Limited time offer.*



Erick Levandoski

### Welcome, Erick!

Erick Levandoski is Forte Bank's new Vice President, Retail and Mortgage Operations. Erick joins us from Prime Financial Credit Union where he worked for 12 years and held the positions of Director of Mortgage Services and Business Lending, and VP of Consumer Lending and Collections. Prior to this, he was with Tri City National Bank as the Assistant VP of Commercial Lending. Erick comes well prepared to lead the retail and mortgage operations area with hands on experience in underwriting, processing, and servicing. *We are thrilled you're with us, Erick!*



Cathleen Slack

### Welcome, Cathleen!

We are pleased to announce the hiring of Cathleen Slack as Vice President of Human Resources. Cathleen brings nearly 25 years of Human Resources leadership to the Forte Bank team. In addition to her experience, she holds her Bachelor of Business Administration and PHR and SHRM-CP certifications. She also is a graduate of the Graduate School of Banking-Human Resources School in Madison. She joins Forte Bank having spent the last four years with Premier Bank in Fort Atkinson, as VP/Director of Human Resources, and previously was the Director of Human Resources at Triton Trailers in Hartford. Cathleen and her family currently reside in the Hustisford area. *We're so happy you're here, Cathleen!*



Julie Harter

### Congratulations, Julie!

We are thrilled to announce Julie Harter's promotion to Asst. Vice President, Real Estate and Consumer Lender in our Hartford office. Julie has more than 25 years of experience in the financial industry, including as a mortgage broker, mortgage processor, and most recently serving as a Retail Mortgage Assistant to Lori Mihm and Wendy Christenson. Julie has been training with Lori and Wendy since spring 2019 and is well-versed in what it takes to get loans from application to closing. She enjoys talking with customers about their financing options and is dedicated to helping them identify the best solution to fit their needs. We have absolute confidence Julie will smoothly transition into this new role and provide Forte Bank clients with superior customer service. *Please help us congratulate Julie!*

### Consumer Loans

At Forte Bank, we offer consumer loans for some of life's bigger purchases and your changing financial needs. Maybe you're looking to purchase a car, boat or other recreational vehicle. Or, maybe you'd like to consolidate debt or cover a large, unexpected expense. Take advantage of our competitive rates and short- and long-term loans. We take time to listen to your individual needs and advise and educate you on the best solution. **Tammy Tongusi** is the bank's newest consumer lender and recently has helped customers purchase new cars and a boat! Please see Tammy or one of the other consumer lenders (**Wendy, Lori and Julie**) with questions.

## Fall/Winter recipe

### Mint Grasshopper Torte

*This recipe comes from Lisa Mueller who works in Deposit Operations. Lisa and her sister, who is a Home Economic teacher, both enjoyed this dessert for the first time while helping their mom at a church Christmas party. They wanted to request the recipe from the maker, only to find the person was going to be traveling for months. It became a personal challenge for Lisa and her sister to replicate the recipe just from taste (this was before cell phones and Pinterest). After several attempts, they felt they had nailed it. The recipe is still a top request from family members during the Christmas to New Year holiday (and sometimes even St. Patty's Day)!*

#### CRUST AND FILLING

1 package mint Oreo® cookies  
1/4 cup butter, melted  
8 ounce package cream cheese, softened  
1/2 cup powdered sugar  
8 ounces Cool Whip®  
Green food coloring  
1/2 teaspoon peppermint extract  
1 bag of Andes Candies

Crush cookies and mix with melted butter. Pat into 9x13 pan. Bake at 350° for 10 minutes; let cool. Cream together cream cheese and powdered sugar. Fold in Cool Whip, food coloring and extract. Spread on top of cooled crust. Sprinkle with Andes Candies but reserve 1/4 cup.

#### TOPPING

2 cups milk  
2 small boxes chocolate instant pudding  
8 ounces Cool Whip

Mix milk and pudding until thick. Spread on top of cream cheese layer. Then spread Cool Whip over pudding layer. Sprinkle with remaining candies; refrigerate.



### Tammy Tongusi

Asst. Vice President  
Retail Banker and  
Consumer Lender

ttongusi@  
fortebankwi.com

262-670-3867

*Loans subject to credit approval.*

# Review Your Tax Withholdings *at the End of 2022*

## Why to Check Your Withholding

The IRS doesn't require you to file a return unless you owe money. However, it does allow you to deduct certain taxes from your income, such as state and local sales taxes, property taxes, mortgage interest, charitable contributions, student loan interest and some medical expenses. If you don't pay enough federal income tax during the year, you'll end up owing additional taxes later. You might think that paying less in taxes now means getting a larger refund later. Not necessarily. Some states and cities charge a fee on refunds, so even though you're not paying much in taxes now, you might still owe a lot later. If you want to see how much you've already paid in taxes, check your withholding. To do this, go to [www.irs.gov/individuals/tax-withholding-estimator](http://www.irs.gov/individuals/tax-withholding-estimator). You can learn about your filing status, exemptions and deductions, and find out what your tax liability is. Once you know how much you owe, you can decide whether you want to change your withholding amount or just make sure you're withholding enough.



*For information specific to your personal financial situation and investment goals, please contact Forte Financial Advisors at 262-673-8926.*

Securities and advisory services are offered through Cetera Advisor Networks LLC, member FINRA/SIPC, a broker-dealer and registered investment adviser. Cetera is under separate ownership from and other named entity. **Investments are: Not FDIC/NCUSIF insured - May lose value - Not financial institution guaranteed - Not a deposit - Not insured by any federal government agency.**

## Using the Tax Withholding Estimator from the IRS

Through the IRS website and Tax Withholding Estimator tool, you can estimate the federal income tax you want your employer to withhold from your paycheck. This is tax withholding. See how your withholding affects your refund, take-home pay or taxes due. To use this tool, you'll need:

- Your pay stubs for all your jobs
- Your spouse's pay stubs
- Additional income information (side jobs, investments, etc.)
- Your most recent tax return

Your results are only as accurate as the information you provide so be sure to input the correct information to the best of your knowledge.

## When to Check Your Tax Withholding

When you have a major life event, it's a good idea to check your tax withholdings. This can help you stay on the same tax track as you were before your life change. Life changes that can impact your tax withholdings are a new job, major income change, marriage, childbirth and even a home purchase. If there are no large life changes, you can check your tax withholdings at the end of the fiscal year and make any needed adjustments on a new Form W-4: Employee's Withholding Certificate.

If you'd like more information about reviewing your tax withholdings, please contact the office.

*This material was developed and prepared by a third party for use by your Registered Representative. The opinions expressed and material provided are for general information and should not be considered a solicitation for the purchase or sale of any security. The content is developed from sources believed to be providing accurate information. For specific professional assistance, the services of an appropriate professional should be sought.*



November and December are open season for savvy bargain hunters, but it also puts unsuspecting consumers in the crosshairs of would-be scammers hoping to feast on ill-gotten gains.

Many fraudsters use phony websites for harvesting credit card numbers and other personal data to commit identity theft or sell personal information on the dark web. Here are a few tips to help you shop with confidence during the holidays.



### Open with Care

Beware of "order confirmation" or "delivery notification" emails with links to package tracking information for items you don't remember purchasing.



### Don't Take the Bait

Fraudulent booking sites or email offers with dream vacations that seem too good to be true may serve as clickbait to lure you into disclosing sensitive information.



### Unsolicited Assistance

Scammers sometimes prey on data breach fears and reach out offering assistance to unsuspecting victims. If you receive an unsolicited call asking for personal information, hang up and call the company directly.



### Wolf in Santa Clothing

That Jolly St. Nick letter could be a ruse to obtain personal data from kids that could leave them vulnerable to identity theft and compromised credit years from now.



### Stay Alert

Know where your credit and debit cards are at all times and cover the keypad when entering your PIN for purchases or withdrawing fund from ATMs.

## WARNING SIGNS TO WATCH

Does the site promise **huge discounts** for high-price ticket items or in-demand gifts?

Is the website or email littered with **spelling or grammatical errors**?

Are key pieces of **contact information** (phone numbers, street address) missing?

Does the site lack a **privacy policy** or additional security designations?



## Home (Improvements) for the Holidays?

Are you hoping to make some upgrades to your home in time for the holidays? Maybe you want to purchase some new appliances or furniture.

Put your fall home improvement plans into action with a Home Equity Line of Credit (HELOC) from Forte Bank.

A HELOC delivers benefits beyond traditional loans or credit cards, including:

- Flexibility to borrow what you need, when you need it
- Payments as low as "interest only"<sup>1</sup>
- Quick, convenient access to funds using checks or online transfers.

## Financing for Unique Properties

Forte Bank can help finance unique properties that other banks typically won't, including:

- "Barndominium" homes
- Non-warrantable condos
- Large remodeling projects

While these types of properties are popular, they generally don't qualify for a typical fixed-rate product. If you find yourself in a unique or challenging situation, we might have an option for you with our portfolio ARM products.

### You may also want to use a HELOC to:

- Tackle unexpected expenses
- Consolidate high-interest debt
- Pay for a college education
- Fund large purchases, including a car
- Start a business
- Maintain an emergency fund

Please don't hesitate to call us or visit any branch to learn more about a HELOC.

<sup>1</sup> Refer to the terms of the loan agreement for exact repayment terms.

### Contact Wendy, Lori or Julie!



**Wendy Christenson**  
Vice President & Real Estate and Consumer Lender  
wchristenson@fortebankwi.com  
NMLS #: 417436  
Direct: 262-670-3889



**Lori Mihm**  
Vice President & Real Estate and Consumer Lender  
lmihm@fortebankwi.com  
NMLS #: 417437  
Direct: 262-670-3885



**Julie Harter**  
AVP & Real Estate and Consumer Lender  
jharter@fortebankwi.com  
NMLS #: #1921760  
Direct: 262-709-9036

Loans subject to credit approval.  
Forte Bank NMLS ID# 409428

## Simplified Refi

Forte Bank now is offering a Simplified Refi. You can quickly and easily convert your home equity line of credit (which has a variable rate) to a fixed-rate home equity loan. Documentation is a snap and closing costs are only \$399! Contact one of our lenders today!

Limited to customers who currently have their HELOC at Forte Bank. No cash out allowed other than for closing costs. Loans subject to credit approval.

## Forte Bank is changing its overdraft fees TO BETTER SERVE CUSTOMERS:

- No overdraft fee for items paid when the negative balance is \$25 or less\*
- No more than three overdraft fees will be charged per day
- FREE transfers for customers who have overdraft protection on their account

\* Returned items will still receive a non-sufficient funds (NSF) fee, regardless of amount. Please contact the branch if you have questions.



Your community bank. Your opportunity bank.

**Hartford Office**  
116 West Sumner Street  
Hartford, WI 53027  
262-673-5800

**Richfield Office**  
1297 State Hwy 175  
Hubertus, WI 53033  
262-628-5500

**Slinger Office**  
439 East Washington Street  
Slinger, WI 53086  
262-644-7606