

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**5 bankers receive top honor
from Indiana Bankers Association**



FRENCH LICK, Ind. (Sept. 18, 2026) – The Indiana Bankers Association recognized five members of the state’s banking community with Leaders in Banking Excellence awards, the Association’s highest honor. The awards were presented at a ceremony on Monday, Sept. 14, as part of the IBA’s Annual Convention at the French Lick Springs Resort.

CLASS OF 2026 HONOREES

Alvin “Al” Fritschle, First Bank, Carmi, Ill.

Travis Holdman, KeyState, Markle

Mark “Doc” Holt, First Farmers Bank & Trust Company, Converse

Matthew W. Howrey, North Salem State Bank

D. Grant Whaley, The Farmers and Merchants Bank, Boswell



Honorees are chosen for their positive impact not only on Indiana’s banking industry but on the communities they serve. They are nominated by IBA-member organizations and approved by the IBA Board of Directors. Details about each honoree can be found at the end of this release.

“This year’s class of honorees showcases the diversity of talent that makes Indiana’s banking community so strong, with backgrounds ranging from ‘traditional’ bankers to a real-estate attorney, former banking regulator and even a veterinarian,” said Amber R. Van Til, president and CEO of the Indiana Bankers Association. “It is our honor to recognize their achievements and contributions to our industry and their local communities by adding them to the IBA Wall of Excellence.”

Speakers at the ceremony included Indiana Senate Pro Tem Rodric Bray, R-Martinsville; Director Thomas C. Fite, Indiana Department of Financial Institutions; IBA Chairman David M. Findlay, chairman and CEO of Lake City Bank, Warsaw; Amber R. Van Til, IBA president and CEO; and a video message from U.S. Sen. Todd Young, R-Ind. Each honoree was invited to offer comments reflecting on their career and the industry and then received an ebony keepsake plaque.

A permanent Wall of Excellence at the Association’s office in Indianapolis displays plaques commemorating all 52 LBE honorees inducted since the award’s inception in 2018.

For more information about IBA Leaders in Banking Excellence, including past honorees, visit indiana.bank/Leaders-Banking-Excellence.



(from left) Matt Howrey, president and CEO of North Salem State Bank; Mark “Doc” Holt, president and CEO of First Farmers Bank & Trust, Converse; Travis Holdman, SVP-business development with KeyState; Grant Whaley, chairman of The Farmers and Merchants Bank, Boswell; and Al Fritschle, chairman of First Bank, Carmi, Ill., were honored by the Indiana Bankers Association as Leaders in Banking Excellence, the Association’s highest honor, at a ceremony at French Lick Springs Resort as part of the IBA’s Annual Convention on Sept. 14, 2026. (photo courtesy NH Creative)

ABOUT ALVIN FRITSCHLE

Al Fritschle served as the fifth president of First Bank. He joined as a senior lender in the 1986, quickly being named president in 1989. Over the next three decades of his leadership, the bank opened its first branch and expanded its service offerings to include insurance, brokerage, wealth management and title services. It was also under Fritschle's leadership that the bank crossed the border and began operating in Indiana, where the bank quickly expanded until it had more branches in Indiana than Illinois. Overall the bank grew from roughly \$60 million in total assets to more than \$600 million before he transitioned to chairman & CEO in 2019 and retired from daily work in 2022. Fritschle is the Chairman of the Absher Charitable Foundation board, a past president of the Carmi Chamber of Commerce and Carmi Kiwanis Club, and former Carmi Hospital board member.

ABOUT SEN. TRAVIS HOLDMAN

Travis Holdman works in business development for KeyState, which provides investment subsidiary, tax credit investment and captive solutions services for community banks. He served on the board of MarkleBank beginning in 1992 and as president from 1996 until 2006 when it merged with Grabill Bank to form IAB Bank. There he served as chairman & CEO of the holding company until 2008. As MarkleBank CEO, he was appointed by Gov. Mitch Daniels to serve on the Indiana Dept. of Financial Institutions' board of directors and elected by his fellow bankers to serve as chairman of the Community Bankers Association of Indiana. An attorney focused on estate planning and real estate law, Holdman was elected to the Indiana State Senate in 2008, eventually serving as Senate Majority Caucus Chair, chairman of the Insurance & Banking Committee and later as chairman of the Tax & Fiscal Policy Committee.

ABOUT MARK A. HOLT

Mark Holt is president and CEO of First Farmers Bank & Trust, Converse. He joined the bank's board of directors in 1997 and joined its professional staff as an executive officer in 2015. Holt was named president in 2019, at which point he rejoined the board. He was then named CEO as well as president in April 2020. In his time with the bank, it has grown from \$150 million in total assets to \$3.5 billion; from 40 employees to more than 400; its market cap increased 43%; and it completed 13 acquisitions. Holt serves on the boards of the Indiana Bankers Association, AgriNovus and the Indiana Ag-Biosciences Economic Initiative, and is a past president of the Wabash Valley Veterinary Association. "Doc" graduated in 1985 from Purdue University as a doctor of veterinary medicine and owned and operated a practice in Marion for more than 30 years.

ABOUT MATTHEW W. HOWREY

Matt Howrey has served as president and CEO of The North Salem State Bank since 2010. Prior to joining the bank in 2008 as chief financial officer, he served as a bank examiner for the Indiana Department of Financial Institutions. During his tenure, the bank has grown from \$125 million in assets to nearly \$800 million and is routinely one of the highest performing community banks. Howrey served as chairman of the Indiana Bankers Association in 2025 and played a vital role in the development of the IBA's Financial Services Academy. He also serves numerous community and economic development organizations, and actively volunteers as a coach and fundraiser for youth sports. Howrey was named a Distinguished Hoosier by Gov. Mike Braun in 2025 and was named a Rising Star in Banking in 2013 by Northwestern Financial. He earned bachelor's and MBA degrees from Indiana University.

ABOUT D. GRANT WHALEY

D. Grant Whaley served the banking industry for 28 years, including 20 years with the Farmers and Merchants Bank, Boswell. He retired from daily leadership responsibilities in March 2026 after serving as chairman & CEO of the bank but continues to serve as chairman of the board. Whaley previously served on the boards of the IBA Service Corp. and IBA Insurance Agency as well as the IBA Ag Banking Committee and the Indiana Grain Indemnity Corporation board. Beyond his professional accomplishments and service to banking, he coached soccer, little league baseball and AAU basketball and served as a church youth leader. He also served on the boards of the Benton Community Foundation and Faith Church Legacy Foundation. Whaley graduated from Purdue University and completed the Graduate School of Banking at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

ABOUT THE INDIANA BANKERS ASSOCIATION

The Indiana Bankers Association supports Indiana banking through issues advocacy, professional education, and products and services that enhance financial institutions' ability to help build better communities.

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