



FLORIDA BANKERS ASSOCIATION

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Florida Banks Respond to Hurricane Michael Crisis

Banks extend account assistance, contribute volunteer hours and donate more than \$2.7 million to support region's recovery

TALLAHASSEE—Before Hurricane Michael made landfall, Florida bankers were making preparations. Disaster response planning, backup data technologies and even staying open as long as possible before the storm are just a few examples. Immediately after Hurricane Michael, Florida banks of all sizes have stepped up to meet the needs of impacted communities and FEMA-declared disaster areas by making financial donations, extending account assistance and supporting employees and residents.

Florida's banking industry has generously donated more than \$2.7 million in direct assistance to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund, the Florida Disaster Fund and other organizations that are working to meet needs in the impacted areas.

“Beyond the important efforts of donating food, water and supplies through drives, Florida banks have stepped up and offered large financial donations to support both the immediate and long-term needs of the communities that were hardest hit,” said Sanchez. “True to character, banks of all sizes have done what they can to jumpstart the recovery and, therefore, the economies of our Northwest Florida neighbors.”

In order to help the Florida Panhandle recover, banks have made financial donations, contributed volunteer hours and offered account assistance. Banks are also helping residents in a variety of ways, including the following services:

- ATM fees have been waived for customers using out-of-network ATMs and for non-customers using bank ATMs.
- Banks have been proactively waiving or refunding late, overdraft and monthly fees for customers in impacted areas and some banks have suspended negative credit reporting and collections calls for a period of 90 days.
- When needed, banks have been working individually with customers to provide payment extensions for auto, credit card and mortgage payments.
- Disaster-recovery financial services have been put into place that include waiving check-cashing fees, penalty-free CD withdrawals, waiving loan processing fees for new loans and offering low-rate lines of credit.

“Any bank customer who suffered through Hurricane Michael and, as a result, faces payment challenges is strongly encouraged to contact his or her bank to discuss options,” said Sanchez.

Banks serving the impacted region may also offer:

- Online banking systems and bank apps for customers to securely access their accounts, pay bills, deposit checks or make peer-to-peer payments;
- Special assistance, toll-free phone lines;
- Web pages with storm-specific information;
- Assistance programs to help customers experiencing distress with their specific needs;
- Mobile banking units and temporary ATMs for cash accessibility.

“Leadership is what we expect from our bankers and I am so proud that our members have stepped up to serve their communities,” said President and CEO of the Florida Bankers Association Alex Sanchez. “The negative impacts of Hurricane Michael have already been met by positive actions from our bankers and others. All FBA members are concerned about recovery and are supporting impacted areas in a variety of ways.”

Members of the Florida Bankers Association (FBA) with operations in the worst hit areas of the Panhandle include: **Ameris Bank, Bank of America, BB&T, Centennial Bank, Community Bank, First Federal Bank, First Florida Bank, First National Bank Northwest Florida, Hancock Whitney, JPMorgan Chase, MidSouth Bank, PeoplesSouth Bank, Regions Bank, SmartBank, Summit Bank, SunTrust, Trustmark and Wells Fargo.**

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The Florida Bankers Association (FBA) is the voice of Florida’s banking industry, which is composed of small, regional and large financial institutions that together employ tens of thousands Floridians, safeguard more than \$500 billion in deposits and extend more than \$135 billion in loans. Established in 1888, the FBA is one of Florida’s oldest trade associations; its members hold more than 90 percent of the state’s deposits.