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**First Mid Bank & Trust Highlights Women-Owned Small Business Month**  
*October is National Women's Small Business Month*

**St. Louis, MO (October 9, 2024)** According to Forbes, there are over 14 million women-owned small businesses in the United States, generating \$2.7 trillion in annual revenue and employing almost 12.2 million people. During National Women's Small Business Month in October, First Mid Bank & Trust (First Mid) wants to recognize the importance of women-owned small businesses and highlight some of its community partners.

Bonni Burns, Owner and Founder of BAM Marketing Agency in St. Louis, opened her doors 16 years ago with a vision of creating a marketing agency specializing in traditional media management. With First Mid's support, she gradually grew her business into a full-service marketing agency that specializes in traditional and digital media, public relations, and creative development, among other service lines. The company, which now has more than 30 employees, is one of the fastest-growing women-owned businesses in St. Louis and the Metro East area.

"First Mid has played an instrumental role in the success of my business, beginning with one of my most valued mentors, Dennis Terry, the former CEO of First Clover Leaf Bank, prior to its acquisition by First Mid," Burns said. "Steve Cooper, Division President at First Mid, has been a consistent and trusted partner throughout BAM's growth. From all our business banking accounts to a variety of personal accounts, First Mid has been our go-to for financial advice. We truly feel like we're in a partnership, not just working with a bank."

First Mid also backed Amy Hitchinson's journey to improve early childhood education. Hitchinson started The Ivy Academy, a place for children between 6 weeks to 12 years of age. With two locations in Northern Illinois, Elgin and Geneva, The Ivy Academy offers infant care, preschool, kindergarten, and after-school care, regardless of financial circumstances. During the COVID pandemic, Hitchinson opened a third facility, the North End Youth Center in Elgin. Despite facing challenges like government regulations, she has stayed committed to positively impacting her community through her business.

"My advice for other women who want to start a business is simply go for it," Hitchinson said. "Don't give in or give up. Keep pushing forward and believe in your dreams. View obstacles as hurdles to overcome rather than brick walls. First Mid has been instrumental in supporting my ventures, and I am thankful to Commercial Lenders Rick Zonts and Paul Stagen for their belief in me. Beyond commercial lending, I also work with First Mid on community initiatives, including mortgage education classes for staff and parents, as well as various community events."

Another entrepreneur, Brisa Berumen-Dixon, worked with Jacki Martin, First Mid Commercial Lender in Rockford, IL, to help start her business. Berumen-Dixon saw the need for specialized wheelchair and stretcher transport services in her hometown of Rockford. Her background in the medical field allowed her to recognize the importance of secure, affordable, and dependable transportation to essential appointments. This led to the creation of Seabreeze Non-Emergency Medical Transport.

“As a minority woman in the transportation sector, I encountered unique obstacles,” Berumen-Dixon said. “Still, my unwavering commitment and resilience guided me through the certification process to establish my business. I am grateful for First Mid’s support, which has been crucial for our growth. Jacki’s backing has been essential for Seabreeze NEMT, which helps wheelchair and stretcher-bound individuals reach medical appointments and eases the burden on the Rockford Fire Department.”

For anyone interested in starting or expanding their business, visit [www.firstmid.com/commercial-lending](http://www.firstmid.com/commercial-lending).

**About First Mid Bancshares, Inc.:** First Mid Bancshares, Inc. is the parent company of First Mid Bank & Trust, N.A., First Mid Insurance Group, and First Mid Wealth Management Company. First Mid is a \$7.6 billion community-focused organization that provides financial services including banking, insurance, wealth management, brokerage, and ag services through a network of locations in Illinois, Missouri, Texas, and Wisconsin, and a loan production office in Indiana. Together, our First Mid team takes great pride in providing solutions and services to our customers and communities and has done so since 1865. More information about the Company is available on our website at [www.firstmid.com](http://www.firstmid.com). Our stock is traded in The NASDAQ Stock Market LLC under the ticker symbol “FMBH”. Member FDIC | Equal Housing Lender.