

WINTRUST®

CHICAGO'S BANK®
WISCONSIN'S BANK®

Welcome

TO OUR FELLOW SHAREHOLDERS...

Welcome to Wintrust Financial Corporation's 2015 annual shareholders' letter. We thank you for being a shareholder.

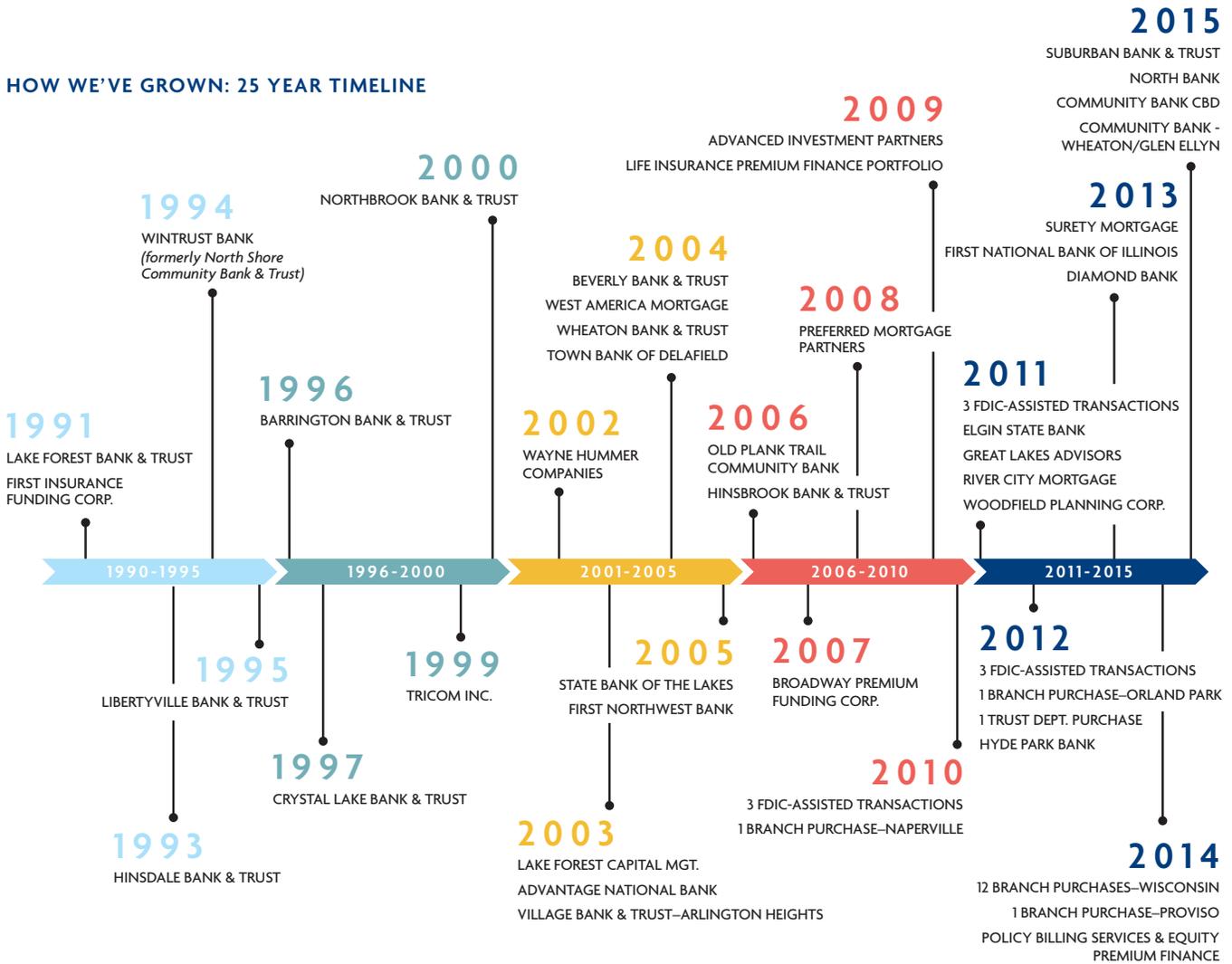
WINTRUST

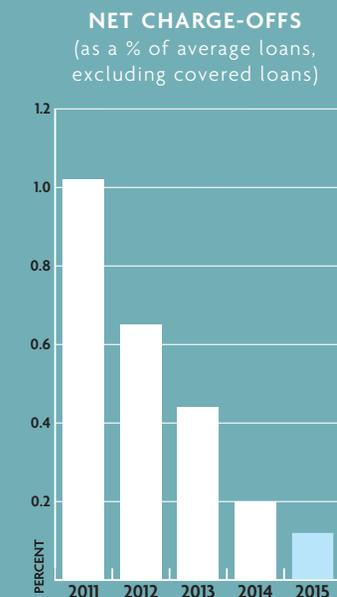
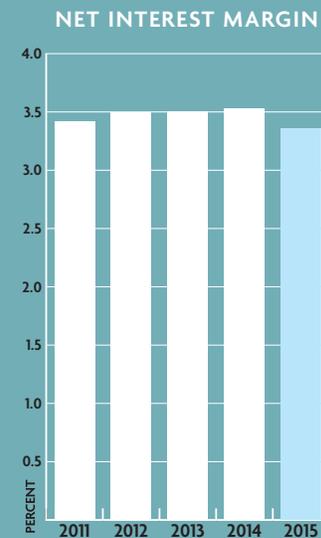
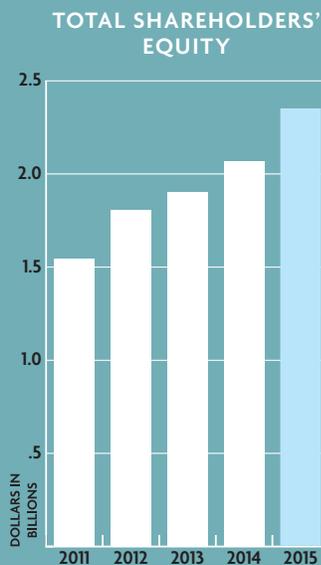
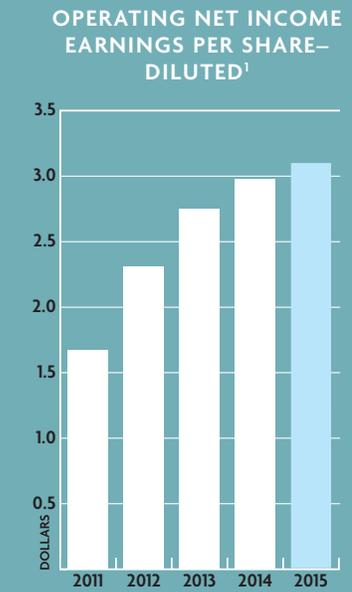
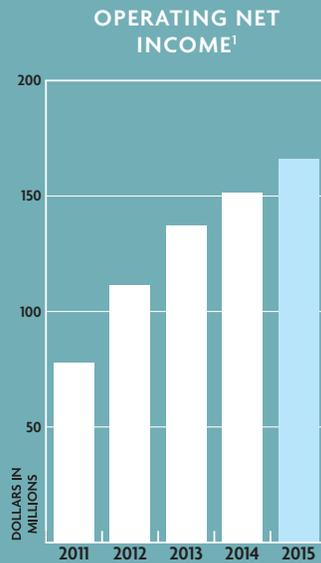
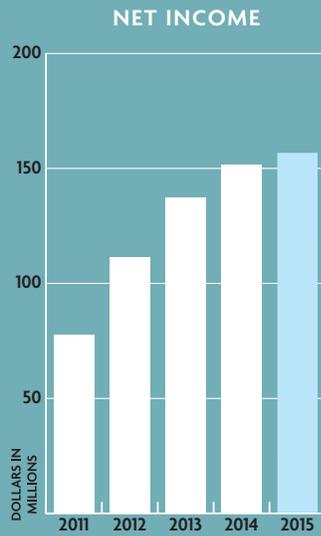
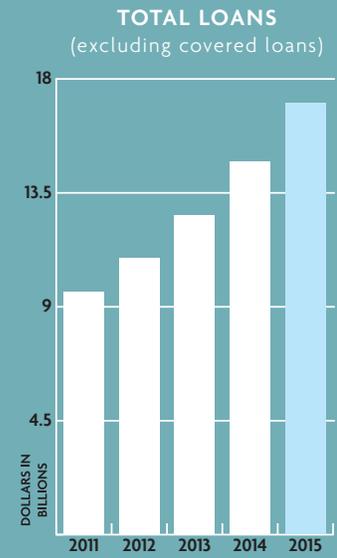
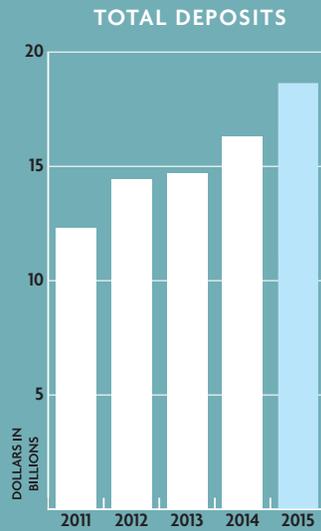
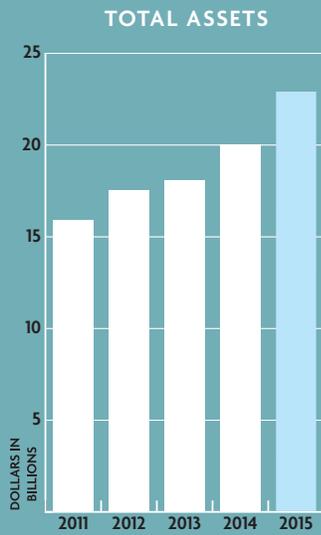
25 YEARS OF TRUE COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The close of 2015 signifies an important milestone in Wintrust's history: 2016 is your Company's 25th anniversary. The following pages give an overview of 2015, but they should also give you a great sense of pride in seeing just how far we've come. Some of you have been with us from the beginning, some of you have jumped aboard along the way, but each of you has helped create the Company we are today. For a quarter century, we've been supporting the greater Chicago area with solid financial solutions and unmatched customer service.

Thank you for the last 25 years. Here's to the next!

HOW WE'VE GROWN: 25 YEAR TIMELINE





Operating net income is reported net income excluding acquisition and non-operating compensation charges. Acquisition and non-operating compensation charges incurred prior to 2015 are considered insignificant.

Dollars in thousands except per share data. Years ended December 31.

	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
SELECTED FINANCIAL CONDITION DATA (AT END OF YEAR)					
Total assets	\$ 22,917,166	\$ 20,010,727	\$ 18,097,783	\$ 17,519,613	\$ 15,893,808
Total loans, excluding covered loans	17,118,117	14,409,398	12,896,602	11,828,943	10,521,377
Total deposits	18,639,634	16,281,844	14,668,789	14,428,544	12,307,267
Junior subordinated debentures	268,566	249,493	249,493	249,493	249,493
Total shareholders' equity	2,352,274	2,069,822	1,900,589	1,804,705	1,543,533
SELECTED STATEMENTS OF INCOME DATA					
Net interest income	\$ 641,529	\$ 598,575	\$ 550,627	\$ 519,516	\$ 461,377
Net revenue ¹	913,126	813,815	773,024	745,608	651,075
Net income	156,749	151,398	137,210	111,196	77,575
Net operating income ²	165,736	151,398	137,210	111,196	77,575
Net income per common share—basic	3.05	3.12	3.33	2.81	2.08
Net income per common share—diluted	2.93	2.98	2.75	2.31	1.67
SELECTED FINANCIAL RATIOS AND OTHER DATA					
PERFORMANCE RATIOS:					
Net interest margin ³	3.36 %	3.53 %	3.50 %	3.49 %	3.42 %
Non-interest income to average assets	1.29	1.15	1.27	1.37	1.27
Non-interest expense to average assets	2.99	2.92	2.88	2.96	2.82
Net overhead ratio ^{3,4}	1.70	1.77	1.60	1.59	1.55
Efficiency ratio ^{3,5}	68.49	66.89	64.57	65.85	64.58
Return on average assets	0.75	0.81	0.79	0.67	0.52
Return on average common equity ³	7.15	7.77	7.56	6.60	5.12
Return on average tangible common equity	9.44	10.14	9.93	8.70	6.70
Average total assets	\$ 21,009,773	\$ 18,699,458	\$ 17,468,249	\$ 16,529,617	\$ 14,920,160
Average total shareholders' equity	2,232,989	1,993,959	1,856,706	1,696,276	1,484,720
Average loans to average deposits ratio (excluding covered loans)	92.0 %	89.9 %	88.9 %	87.8 %	88.3 %
Average loans to average deposits ratio (including covered loans)	93.1	91.7	92.1	92.6	92.8
COMMON SHARE DATA AT END OF YEAR					
Market price per common share	\$ 48.52	\$ 46.76	\$ 46.12	\$ 36.70	\$ 28.05
Book value per common share ³	\$ 43.42	\$ 41.52	\$ 38.47	\$ 37.78	\$ 34.23
Tangible common book value per share ³	\$ 33.17	\$ 32.45	\$ 29.93	\$ 29.28	\$ 26.72
Common shares outstanding	48,383,279	46,805,055	46,116,583	36,858,355	35,978,349
OTHER DATA AT END OF YEAR⁸					
Leverage ratio	91 %	10.2 %	10.5 %	10.0 %	9.4 %
Tier 1 capital to risk-weighted assets	10.0	11.6	12.2	12.1	11.8
Common equity Tier 1 capital to risk-weighted assets	8.4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total capital to risk-weighted assets	12.2	13.0	12.9	13.1	13.0
Tangible Common Equity ratio (TCE) ^{3,7}	7.2	7.8	7.8	7.4	7.5
Tangible Common Equity ratio, assuming full conversion of preferred stock ^{3,7}	7.7	8.4	8.5	8.4	7.8
Allowance for credit losses ⁶	\$ 106,349	\$ 92,480	\$ 97,641	\$ 121,988	\$ 123,612
Non-performing loans	84,057	78,677	103,334	118,083	120,084
Allowance for credit losses ⁵ to total loans (excluding covered loans)	0.62 %	0.64 %	0.76 %	1.03 %	1.17 %
Non-performing loans to total loans (excluding covered loans)	0.49	0.55	0.80	1.00	1.14
NUMBER OF:					
Bank subsidiaries	15	15	15	15	15
Banking offices	152	140	124	111	99

1. Net revenue includes net interest income and non-interest income. 2. Operating net income is reported net income excluding acquisition and non-operating compensation charges. Acquisition and non-operating compensation charges incurred prior to 2015 are considered insignificant. 3. See Item 7, "Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations—Non-GAAP Financial Measures/Ratios," within our Annual Report on Form 10-K for a reconciliation of this performance measure/ratio to GAAP. 4. The net overhead ratio is calculated by netting total non-interest expense and total non-interest income, annualizing this amount, and dividing by that period's total average assets. A lower ratio indicates a higher degree of efficiency. 5. The efficiency ratio is calculated by dividing total non-interest expense by tax-equivalent net revenue (less securities gains or losses). A lower ratio indicates more efficient revenue generation. 6. The allowance for credit losses includes both the allowance for loan losses and the allowance for unfunded lending-related commitments, but excluding the allowance for covered loan losses. 7. Total shareholders' equity minus preferred stock and total intangible assets divided by total assets minus total intangible assets. 8. Asset quality ratios exclude covered loans.

IF YOU BUILD IT...

According to one of the greatest baseball movies, "If you build it..." people will come. That's something that applies well to Wintrust. We've spent a quarter century building this Company and they *have* come: customers of all ages, ethnicities and backgrounds; local businesses of all sizes in a variety of industries; partner organizations and non-profits; outstanding, talented employees; and you, our shareholders, have all been drawn to our unique model.

What started as a small storefront in Lake Forest has grown into a substantial player in this market. With 152 community bank locations, a variety of specialty niche groups and a number of companies, we are the one-stop-shop for any financial need. We've built a Company that provides expertise in every financial area we cover. This is what we do and we do it well.

2015 marked an important milestone in our Company's history: our prominent physical presence in Chicago baseball. Wintrust's involvement with the Cubs

and the White Sox was about so much more than baseball. It brought us to a whole new level of recognition. Our name loomed large above every play at Wrigley, and was a prominent fixture for every car passing The Cell on the Dan Ryan Expressway. It also sent an important message to this city: Only Chicago's Bank understands the importance of sponsoring both teams. We didn't choose the Cubs and Sox randomly. These are our teams. We're actual fans. This is our home.

From a marketing perspective, this year was all about baseball. With the introduction of the new video board at Wrigley Field, people certainly learned our name. And, thanks to some promising young rookies, we got a lot of traction out of our Cubs partnership in particular. It might have seemed like fun and games, but the focus on baseball was a strategic decision to help us grow our presence and recognition as major players in our markets. According to our 2015 Season Highlights, it worked.

2015 MARKED AN IMPORTANT MILESTONE IN OUR COMPANY'S HISTORY: OUR PROMINENT PHYSICAL PRESENCE IN CHICAGO BASEBALL.



WINTRUST

15
SEASON
MILESTONES

YEARS OF PROFITABILITY

19

CONSECUTIVE

TOTAL ASSETS

\$23B

15% INCREASE
FROM 2014

NET OPERATING INCOME

\$165.7M

NEW
RECORD!

TOTAL DEPOSITS

\$18.6B

26% NON-INTEREST
BEARING ACCOUNTS

TOTAL LOANS
EXCLUDING COVERED LOANS

\$17.1B

19% INCREASE
FROM 2014

ADDED NEW LOCATIONS

12

9- ACQUISITION
3- DE NOVO

OPENED 231 S. LASALLE

IN THE HEART OF THE
FINANCIAL DISTRICT



THE GREAT AMERICAN PASTIME IS ALL ABOUT TRADITION

We've had consistent growth, but it's never interfered with us being the Company we've promised to be. We were built on traditional values. We believe in outstanding customer service, a strong community focus and a concentration on giving back. This is what we focused on in 1991. This is what defines us today.

Even as the financial industry, the markets, and technologies change, the demand for customer focus does not. We've always promised the same or better products as the big banks, the same or better technology, but then we shower them with a level of service you can only find at a true community bank. Just as the nostalgic traditions of baseball never go out of style, neither does community banking.

That doesn't mean we aren't nimble. We've expanded services, improved technology and renovated buildings, but we've never lost sight of the traditional values we were built on. Just like at Wrigley Field, adding a new video board doesn't change the team you've always rooted for.

The financial industry and bank regulatory environment haven't made it easy for community banks. But, we've found our way by adapting *and* staying

true to our core values. It seems to be working. Our customers continue to rate us high in the areas we're most concerned with: customer service, knowledge, and community focus.

According to our Net Promoter Score (NPS), a measurement across industries that evaluates customer satisfaction, we continue to excel. The NPS starts with one question: "How likely are you to refer our company to your friends and family?" Respondents answer using a scale, one to ten. Those who answer nine and ten are considered "promoters." Six, seven and eight are "neutral." Those who answer with five or less are considered "detractors." The NPS is the percentage of promoters minus the percentage of detractors. Our score is nearly two times the banking industry average.

Our traditional approach to banking practices has also served us well. We didn't grow to be a nearly \$23 billion company with risky lending or one income source. We've consistently practiced conservative underwriting, asset diversification (which we'll visit in more detail later) and income diversity to keep us healthy in a compressed interest rate environment and beyond. Like much of the industry, as rates didn't move much in 2015, we felt

the effects. Our net interest margin decreased slightly to 3.36% primarily as a result of lower yields on earning assets. But, our growing non-interest bearing deposit accounts now represents 26% of our total deposits. With rates still compressed, our cost of funds held relatively steady at 0.54%. This all resulted in a net interest income increase of 7% over 2014 due to asset growth.

We continue to use the tools at our disposal for long-term income growth and to prepare for a higher interest rate environment: variable rate lending, fixed rate loans with interest rate swaps, non-interest bearing deposits and long-term, fixed-rate Certificates of Deposit. And, we continue to provide added-value services, like treasury management and commercial account enhancements to better diversify our income sources and better serve our customers. Unlike our big bank competitors, we're not increasing our income through nuisance fees. These smart, traditional banking practices put the long-term health of our company and our customers over short-term income gains.

Our traditional banking practices also serve us well when it comes to credit decisions. We continue to come out ahead of our peer group for net charge-

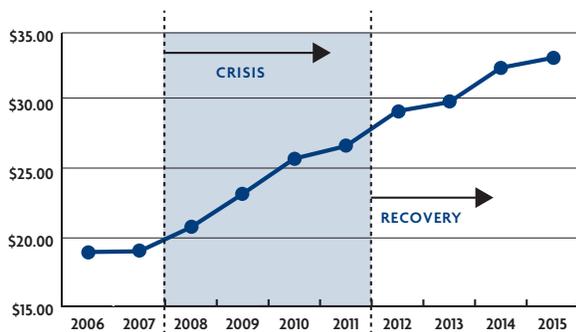


offs as a percentage of total loans, excluding covered loans, which in 2015 declined to 0.12% compared to 0.20% in 2014. Our total non-performing assets as a percentage of total assets, excluding covered assets, declined to 0.56% compared to 0.62% at the end of 2014.

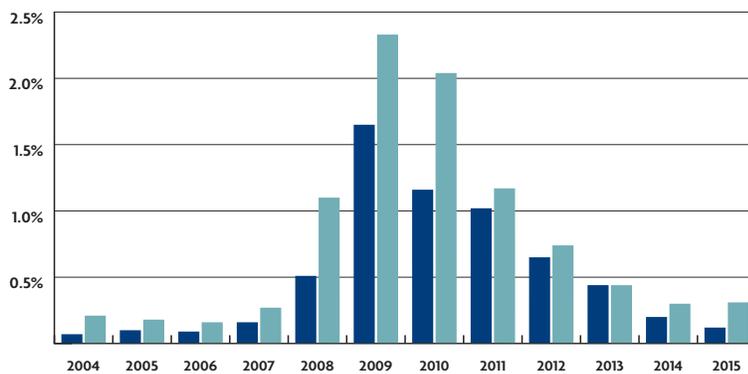
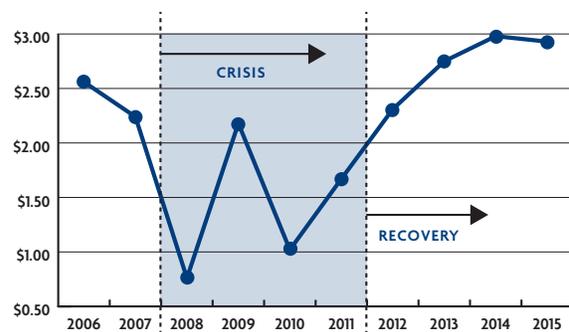
And, staying true to those traditions has worked for you, too. Year to year, we've continued to increase our tangible common book value per share, through the economic crisis and beyond. And, in 2015, our operating net income was \$165.7 million or \$3.10 per diluted common share. As you know,

we're a Company that's focused on delivering value to our shareholders. Our overall trends over the past decade demonstrate that commitment.

TANGIBLE COMMON BOOK VALUE PER SHARE



EARNINGS PER DILUTED COMMON SHARE



NET CHARGE-OFFS RATIO (WINTRUST VS. PEER GROUP)

- WINTRUST
- PEER GROUP

Peer group data is per the Federal Reserve's Bank Holding Company Performance Report





WE'VE GOT OUR BASES COVERED: WINTRUST COMMUNITY BANKS

No one player takes a team to the World Series. The game relies on the entire team—each member playing an important role—to bring home a win. The same applies to Wintrust. But, if we're assigning positions, our community banks cover a few: namely first, second and third base. Our 152 community banks make us who we are and give us the avenue to sell all the other things we do. Because of our banks—which stretch across the Chicago area, southern Wisconsin and northwest Indiana—we've got our bases covered.

Everything we do as an organization supports the banks and each bank location encompasses everything we do. Customers have access to any of our specialized companies or groups through their relationship with the banks. Wealth management guidance, mortgage and treasury management solutions, even our niches—like our award-winning SBA lending group, named Illinois Lender of the Year by the SBA—can be accessed through the banks. These are services that require

expertise and proficiency and we can offer them to every person who walks through our banks' doors.

You'll often hear us say we have the tools and technology of the big banks with the personal focus you can only find at a true community bank. That could not be more true in 2015. In fact, last year, we led the industry with the release of Cardless Cash. This tool lets users pre-order money from an ATM through our mobile banking app and access the cash by scanning a code that pops up on their smart phone. The process removes the card from the equation. This offers convenience and, with no card to skim or steal, added security.

We also added a person-to-person payment feature to mobile banking that lets users electronically send money. This tool allows our customers to easily share funds to cover dinner with friends or to conveniently pay the babysitter. Both of these features have encouraged mobile banking usage. In 2015, more than 22% of checking customers, and

nearly 50% of those under 40, used our mobile banking app.

To say baseball played a big role is no exaggeration. The release of our Cubs and White Sox Checking accounts inspired our "You Decide" campaign. We asked customers to show northside or southside pride by opening their chosen account with matching debit card. The push gave us great exposure across the area, even beyond baseball, resulting in nearly 21,000 new accounts—whether Cubs, Sox or any of our other checking accounts—reaching more than 8,800 new households in 2015. That's compared to approximately 19,200 accounts and approximately 7,800 new customer households in 2014.

The campaign also gave us a unified message across our banks and allowed our employees to show their team spirit in unique and quirky ways. Bankers decided for themselves with shirts and displays at the banks and at events throughout the summer. It also marked our first collective push across social media by encouraging people to show





EVERYONE NEEDS A SEVENTH INNING STRETCH

Every day, our employees give it their all and then walk off the field. Each and every one makes us what we are by delivering on the promises we make as a Company. It's important that they have the work-life balance that keeps them coming back to play the game.

It's a heavy responsibility to create a corporate environment that nurtures employee development, growth and satisfaction. It's something we take very seriously. We know it's imperative that our people feel supported as they, in turn, support our customers, communities, shareholders and each other.

According to our employees, whose survey results gave us this recognition, we're doing alright: For the second year in a row, Wintrust was named one of the Chicago Tribune's 2015 Top Work Places. Their longevity also indicates our success.

We know we have good players on our team. We want to keep them. This is one area we continue to revisit and improve so that every employee feels valued. As we grow, we want to keep working to ensure that each employee feels like they're part of the action. At Wintrust, no one should be warming the bench.

us which team they "decided" with #DecideCubs or #DecideSox. For each hashtag, we donated \$0.25 to Cubs or White Sox Charities.

Just as the year saw a centralized marketing campaign, in a continuing effort to reassess our operations, we centralized some of our services in 2015 as well. Because of our unique structure, this is one area we navigate carefully. Our customers are always our top priority, so we are vigilant that our operational decisions don't impact any customer-facing services. But, as we continue to grow and navigate a constantly changing regulatory environment, there are some organizational and operational functions that make more sense at the corporate level. We will continue to evaluate areas within our Company where we can implement operational efficiencies.

Most importantly, our banks still have the potential for growth. Just as in the previous few years, we have focused on growing our reach and households through acquisition without aggressive

savings and CD rates. And, because many of our recent bank acquisitions came with branch locations that were relatively small, it offers an opportunity to focus growth at these under-utilized branches. We believe we can grow deposits and loans at smaller branches without a commensurate increase in operating costs, allowing us to leverage existing infrastructure. We like to call this the "kinetic" leverage that will allow us to reduce our operating expense ratios.

And, as is our practice, we continue to appeal to our communities by being active, valuable participants. In 2015, our banks hosted more than 890 events and seminars; offered 458 community sponsorships; and put in more than 7,800 service hours with local organizations and non-profits and those hours only include the activity tracked for Community Reinvestment Act purposes.





EVERY TEAM NEEDS A POWER HITTER

If every team needs a heavy hitter, ours is commercial banking. The commercial banking group continues to hit it out of the park (pun intended).

Wintrust Commercial Banking found its new home in 2015. The group moved into the prominent building at 231 S. LaSalle St. in the heart of Chicago's financial district. Shared amongst some of the other Chicago-based Wintrust companies, the building gives the groups—and Wintrust as a whole—a notable downtown presence.

No one can argue with Wintrust Commercial Banking's player stats: The group added more than 300 new relationships for the fifth consecutive year and grew middle market loans by 19% and related deposits by 29%. In 2015, we also grew our commercial real estate portfolio by more than \$1 billion with the portfolio ending the year totaling \$5.5 billion, a 23% increase over 2014.

We also continued our effort to expand and focus on specialized lending teams. In 2015, we expanded our lease and equipment finance operation capabilities with the addition

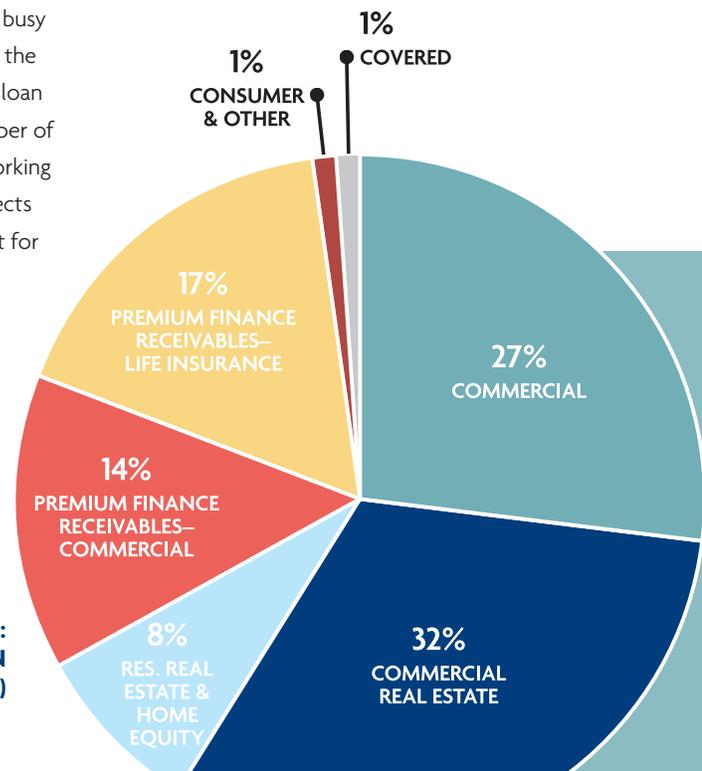
of Wintrust Commercial Finance, an equipment-focused financing group headquartered in Texas. The group compliments our other leasing operations, Wintrust Equipment Finance and Wintrust Capital, and provides sophisticated loan and lease solutions to commercial companies in a variety of industries throughout the United States. Since forming in April, the group has expanded into a team of 12 professionals with more than \$217 million in total assets. Our entire lease portfolio now stands at more than \$289.3 million.

Wintrust Construction, Engineering & Architecture (CEA) also had a busy year. Since its inception in 2014, the group solidified \$250 million in loan commitments and banks a number of preeminent contractor firms working on a number of important projects across the area. Keep an eye out for "financed by Wintrust" signs.

Our diversified loan portfolio has served us well over the years and we have our niche groups to thank for this. Particularly, our premium finance companies.

In 2015, FIRST Insurance Funding, Property & Casualty Division U.S., originated approximately \$5 billion in loan volume and ended the year with nearly \$2.1 billion in outstandings. The company's number of units financed increased by 3% or 6,259. First Insurance Funding of Canada continues to be the second largest premium finance company in Canada and ended the year with more than \$278 million in outstandings on loan volume of nearly \$617 million. First Insurance Funding, Life Division, added \$914 million in new loan volume, ending 2015 nearly 40% higher than 2014, and with outstandings of more than \$2.9 billion.

**LOANS:
\$17.3 BILLION
(INCLUDING COVERED LOANS)**





THE OUTFIELD: WINTRUST MORTGAGE AND WINTRUST WEALTH MANAGEMENT

Wintrust Mortgage and Wintrust Wealth Management cover the outfield. Both companies enable us to provide service variety, ensure no opportunities get past us and, as mutually beneficial partners, throw opportunities back to our banks. Many of the companies' loan officers and financial advisors work within our banks and help strengthen our local customer relationships and bring in new ones.

Wintrust Mortgage continues to be one of the largest mortgage originators in the Midwest. The company has 55 locations in 12 states as well as office locations at several of our banks. Wintrust Mortgage's purchase volume as a percentage of total volume has exceeded industry averages over the last several years and 2015 was

no different. The company was at approximately 61% with the industry at 54%.

The company made a push for first-time homebuyers in 2015 offering seminars to educate prospective homeowners about how to begin the process. Much like our banks, Wintrust Mortgage works to provide more than just mortgage services by offering education to potential clients.

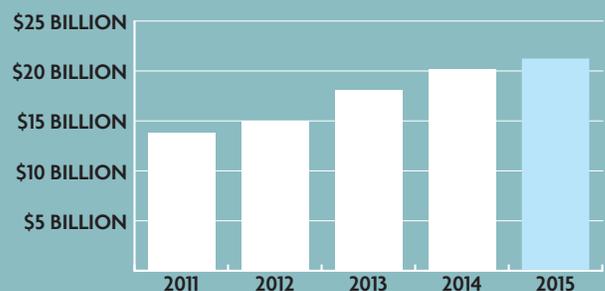
Wintrust Wealth Management continued to grow assets under administration by 5% from 2014 reaching more than \$21 billion. The company saw a 3% revenue increase as well, up from \$71.3 million in 2014 to \$73.5 million in 2015.

Wealth Management's continued success is a result of the coordinated efforts of its four reputable and talented teams. Wayne Hummer Investments offers comprehensive brokerage and insurance solutions, The Chicago Trust Company offers trust and estate planning, Great Lakes Advisors assists with proprietary asset management, and Wintrust Wealth Services provides financial solutions to private clients. Each pillar of Wintrust Wealth Management works with the community bankers, commercial bankers and mortgage loan officers to provide well-rounded, customized financial solutions for clients. In 2015, Wintrust Wealth Management's downtown-based employees also moved into the building at 231 S. LaSalle.

WINTRUST MORTGAGE FIVE-YEAR ORIGINATIONS/VOLUME & LOCATION GROWTH



WEALTH MANAGEMENT ASSETS UNDER ADMINISTRATION





THE NICHE: PREPARED TO THROW WHATEVER'S NEEDED

Most pitchers concentrate on four different pitches at most. We specialize in so many more. Our asset niches offer variety, with the accuracy of knowing what to offer when. In other words, solid pitching skills.

We rely on our niche groups to help us continue to grow without overreaching for credits contained within core banking portfolio loan areas. These groups allow us to truly be experts at what we do. These specialty services are the reason we're able to refer to our banks as "one-stop-shops". We offer proficiency in very specific areas. Our niche groups have also given our employees the freedom to find a specialty. Many of our niches were created based on a banker in another area identifying a need. It keeps our bankers growing and branching out into industries that fit them and benefit the long-term health of the Company.

OUR PITCHES (OR NICHE)

Community Advantage is one of the leading providers of financial services for homeowner communities in the Midwest. The group supports condominium, townhouse and homeowner associations with financing, treasury management tools, reserve investments and online account services.

FIRST Insurance Funding is one of the largest insurance premium financing companies in the U.S. The company offers finance programs that provide funding and financial services tailored to each client's individual needs.

FIRST Insurance Funding – Agency Lending provides exceptional lending options for insurance agencies. This group offers custom commercial loans based on an agency's strategic needs.

FIRST Insurance Funding – Life Division offers insurance premium financing for life insurance. The division focuses on providing solutions specifically for each individual, or company, looking to fund the cost of premiums.

FIRST Insurance Funding of Canada specializes in insurance premium financing for the Canadian market. The company offers pre-approved terms, competitive rates and flexible payment options for funding insurance premiums.

Tricom Funding provides staffing financing and administrative services. The company focuses on payroll funding for staffing companies, payroll processing, accounts receivable financing, and back office and administrative support.

Agriculture Banking provides crop insurance products to farmers, and offers lending and financial services to commercial agriculture companies for daily and long-term operational needs. The group assists with transportation, distribution and equipment financing and provides farm service agency guarantees and Farmer Mac II rate options.

Wintrust Business Credit offers creative and competitive asset-based lending to middle-market companies. The division also provides revolving lines of credit on accounts receivable and inventory, as well as term loans secured by equipment and real estate.

Wintrust Construction, Engineering & Architecture focuses on the unique banking needs of the Chicago area's construction industry. Based on industry knowledge and experience, the team delivers a well-rounded relationship offering working capital lines of credit, term loans, treasury management tools, investment management and personalized banking services.

Wintrust Retirement Plan Services ensures that companies attract and retain the best employees with a variety of competitive retirement plans, including defined benefit and IRA-based. It can also assist with employer-sponsored college savings plans.

OUR PITCHES (OR NICHEs) cont.

Wintrust Asset Finance focuses on customized company leasing opportunities. The team and its additional groups, Wintrust Business Credit, Wintrust Commercial Finance, and Wintrust Equipment Finance, provide flexible leasing solutions to help with acquisition, expansion, day-to-day business management and migration of hardware and software capital asset needs.

Wintrust Franchise Services provides banking solutions for franchisees throughout the country. The team offers loan products and resources to get a new franchise up and running, or to support one that's already well-established.

Wintrust Funds Group provides commercial banking services for private investment funds, investment management companies and third party administrators.

Wintrust Government Funds helps to provide financial solutions for school districts, park districts, municipalities and other local government entities. The division offers a full suite of retail and business banking options, and specialized municipal offerings, to deliver customized packages.

Wintrust Government, Non-Profit & Healthcare provides financial solutions for mission-based organizations. The group offers tailored financing packages and services to support hospitals, non-profits, educational institutions and local government operations.

Wintrust Mortgage Correspondent supports credit unions, banks and mortgage bankers to purchase residential mortgages for sale in the secondary market. The group offers a delegated correspondent option for clients who deliver a whole-closed loan for purchase or a non-delegated correspondent option for clients who need underwriting support.

Wintrust's Mortgage Warehouse Lines provide short-term revolving lines to mortgage originators in order to fund mortgages before they sell such loans to secondary markets.

Wintrust Professional Practice Group provides loans for dental, optometry, veterinary, physician and pharmaceutical practices. The group also offers financing for practice acquisition, buy-in, expansion or the refinance of existing debt.

Wintrust SBA Lending provides expertise in Small Business Administration loans. The group has extensive knowledge of SBA Express, SBA 7a and CDC/504 Loans and can provide guidance on the appropriate loan type and how to complete the process.

Wintrust Ventures is a division that focuses on the unique needs of start-ups. The group is positioned to provide guidance, networking opportunities, knowledge, financing, wealth management tools and, in some instances, investment, to support Chicago's innovation community.

Wintrust Loan Capital Markets provides financing solutions through partnerships with premier lenders and investors. The group focuses on originating, structuring and arranging credit facilities for middle-market, commercial real estate and private equity firms.



A GAME IS ONLY AS GOOD AS ITS RULES

Like any good baseball game, someone's got to keep the teams honest about the play. If the burdensome regulatory environment is the umpire, our compliance, fair lending and Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) efforts are our coaches ensuring we play by the rules. We may not always like the call, but we never want to get thrown from the game for arguing too strongly with the umpire. It is critical for our organization to play inside the foul lines and keep it fair.

We have a strong focus on providing great services to our diverse communities across the board, including low-to-moderate income

areas. We're sincere in offering solutions that really support those areas including our Money Smart Education Series; first-time homebuyer and credit score seminars; Everyday Loan solutions; and free checking and forced savings accounts. To be specific, in 2015, our organization hosted more than 890 seminars and classes to help educate more than 11,740 people.

So far, our record is pretty "outstanding." Seven of our 15 bank charters (47%) have received Outstanding CRA ratings compared with the most recent bank national average from 2014, 6.4%. The rest of our banks are rated as "Satisfactory," which

is the second highest rating on the four-point scale.

Although, the umps are a big part of our game, our goal is always to make sure they don't interfere with what we do. We continue to find a way to comply with increased regulations (sometimes begrudgingly) while ensuring our customer experience isn't diminished.



TRAINING: IT'S NOT JUST FOR THE SPRING

To have the best and brightest employees, who continue to excel, we need good training all year long. This is a long-term, Company investment. In 2015, we had a big push for training Wintrust-wide. We've continued to offer internal training programs. This is an area we focus on improving year-to-year. In 2015, Wintrust University held 702 sessions, compared with 421 in 2014, and had 8,957 participants over 5,337 in 2014. Trainings included banker academies, leadership development workshops and technology and systems courses.

We also created a new onboarding training program in 2015. Our unique structure and culture make us a complicated Company to figure out. The focus on new employee training

helps new hires get a better feel for who we are right away. In 2015, many new employees went through the one-day workshop offered once a month throughout the year.

2015 also saw a concentration on more employee-initiated, outside trainings. It's something we encouraged and tracked at the corporate level to ensure employees were seeking training in the areas they deemed most beneficial. A strong focus on training helps us keep up with industry trends and new knowledge so we can continue to offer the best resources and services.

Our commercial, wealth and mortgage groups were also busy with training this year. Wintrust Credit Academy—our credit analyst program to recruit

aspiring commercial bankers—was still strong with 30 people working their way through the two-year program, which includes classroom and on-the-job training opportunities.

Wintrust Mortgage continued to expand its junior loan officer (LO) program in 2015. The average age of LOs is more than 50, so the program—which pairs junior LOs with a mentor for training—focuses on hiring and training young and more diverse LOs.

AND THE CROWD GOES WILD!

To be a great baseball team, it's important to appeal to your fans and keep them cheering for more. That means appealing to all kinds of different groups, areas, industries and people. Over the past few years, we've pushed ourselves into new areas and markets through diversity outreach. That focus continued.

We're lucky enough to serve an area that's rich with diverse communities. Twenty-two percent of our footprint is Latino and 17% African American. And, when we look at the nation's largest consumer markets in 2015, Illinois' African American, Asian, multiracial, and Hispanic consumers, place it in the top ten for each group when it comes to buying power. Even in Wisconsin, the percentage change in buying power for Asian and Hispanic consumers, 39.4% and 30.9% respectively, ranked above the U.S. average between 2010 and 2015. That means, without a doubt, one area of potential Company growth is within some of the more diverse communities we cover.

2015 marked the fourth year of our organized outreach efforts and it continues to offer a lot of potential. Last year we became even more recognizable in these markets. The organizations and groups we work with know that, for us, it's about investing in the areas we serve and not solely about meeting regulations and satisfying exams.

In 2015, at the corporate level, we partnered with 90 organizations, professional associations and chambers of commerce as part of

our commitment to work towards stronger communities.

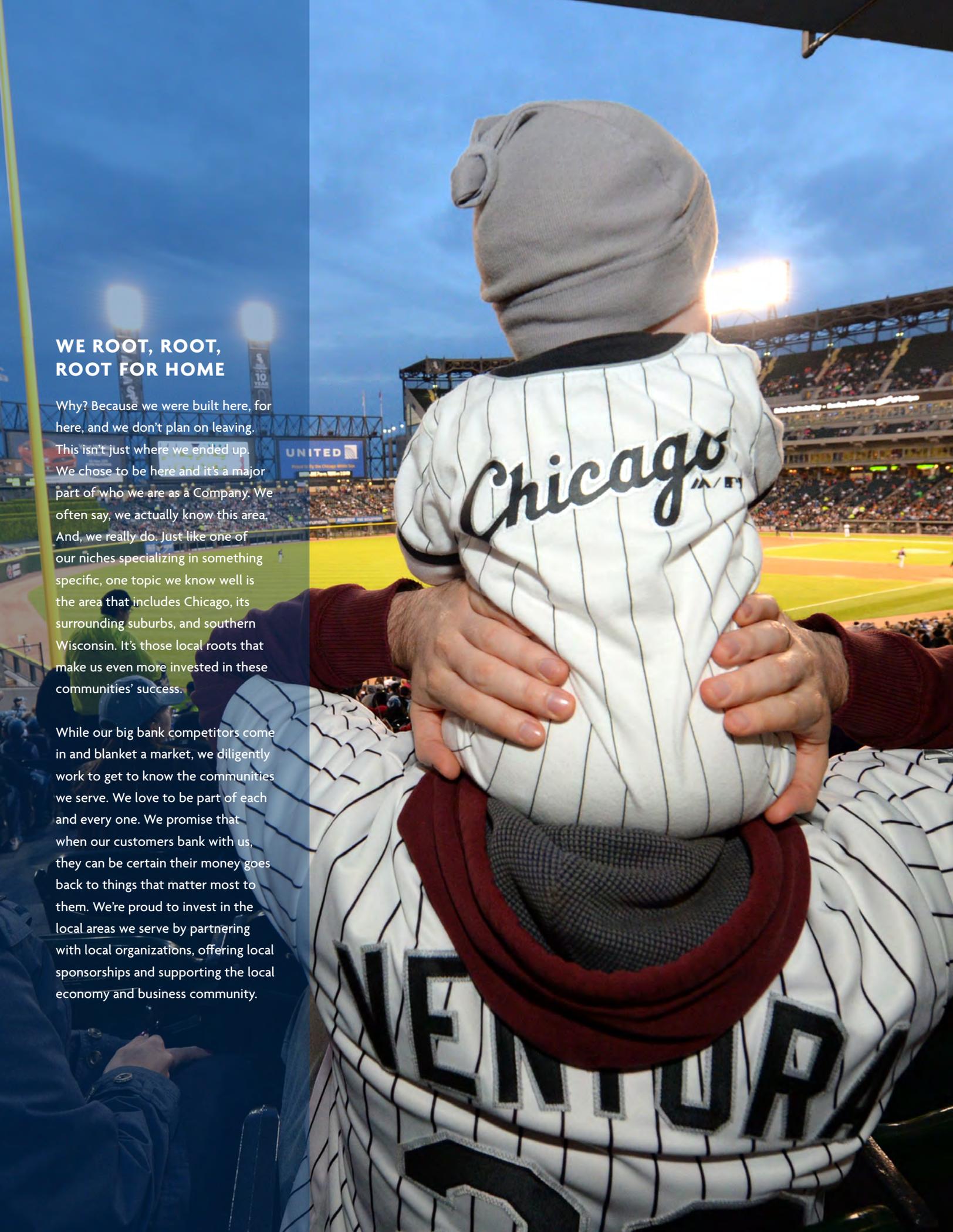
These diverse areas have strong local economies and business communities, so our small business focus also helps our diversity efforts. In 2015, we continued to work to improve our business offerings and relationships. Over the past few years, we standardized our small business solutions and loan offerings. Last year, we revisited some of those decisions to adjust our product features and make them even better.

We also continued many of the strong partnerships we've formed over the years in order to offer our clients the best resources in the area. Our relationships—like those we maintain with local chambers of commerce, the National Organization of Women Business Owners and SCORE—enable us to support local businesses in ways that go well beyond banking.

This strategy is working. In 2015, our business customers were more diverse—culturally, ethnically and by trade—and more dense across our footprint than ever before. We support 5,200 businesses in diverse areas in more than 1,600 different industries. You can find one of the more than 50,000 businesses that bank with us, on average, every half mile across our footprint.





A photograph of a person in a white Chicago Cubs pinstriped uniform holding a baby in a similar uniform. The person's uniform has "VENTURA" on the back. The baby's uniform has "Chicago" on the back. They are in a baseball stadium at dusk, with stadium lights and a crowd visible in the background.

WE ROOT, ROOT, ROOT FOR HOME

Why? Because we were built here, for here, and we don't plan on leaving.

This isn't just where we ended up. We chose to be here and it's a major part of who we are as a Company. We often say, we actually know this area. And, we really do. Just like one of our niches specializing in something specific, one topic we know well is the area that includes Chicago, its surrounding suburbs, and southern Wisconsin. It's those local roots that make us even more invested in these communities' success.

While our big bank competitors come in and blanket a market, we diligently work to get to know the communities we serve. We love to be part of each and every one. We promise that when our customers bank with us, they can be certain their money goes back to things that matter most to them. We're proud to invest in the local areas we serve by partnering with local organizations, offering local sponsorships and supporting the local economy and business community.



IT'S NOT ABOUT THE SEASON; IT'S ABOUT THE LEGACY

If there's one thing we've learned from our baseball partners, it's that you can't get caught up in each season. It's about the legacy you create as a team. Your Company knows how to play the game for long-term success.

You'll never see us take the risky loans that many of our peers do. You won't see us cutting corners at the risk of creating dissatisfied employees. And, you certainly won't see us trimming costs or eliminating services that negatively impact our customers. In fact, while some of our big bank competitors cut convenient, complementary offerings like coin

counting or drive-up services in 2015, we made it a point to highlight how important those extra things can be to a customer. Like coins, the little things add up.

At the end of the day, we want to know that each and every interaction—whether it's a kid opening her first Junior Saver account, a commercial client solidifying a line of credit, or a community group we're working with—understands the kind of company we are. For us, it always comes back to the reputation we've built with our customers, communities, shareholders and every

relationship we've formed across all of our companies and divisions.

We are a company that strives to offer the best-in-class financial services, but we also do so much more. We understand, invest in, care about, give back to and commit to the communities we serve. That's what it means to be Wintrust.

Thank you for being a shareholder. We hope to see you at our annual meeting at 10 a.m. on May 26, 2016 at our corporate headquarters at 9700 West Higgins Road in Rosemont, Illinois.

Sincerely,

Peter D. Crist
Chairman of the Board (Non-Executive)

Edward J. Wehmer
President & Chief Executive Officer

David A. Dykstra
Senior Executive Vice President &
Chief Operating Officer

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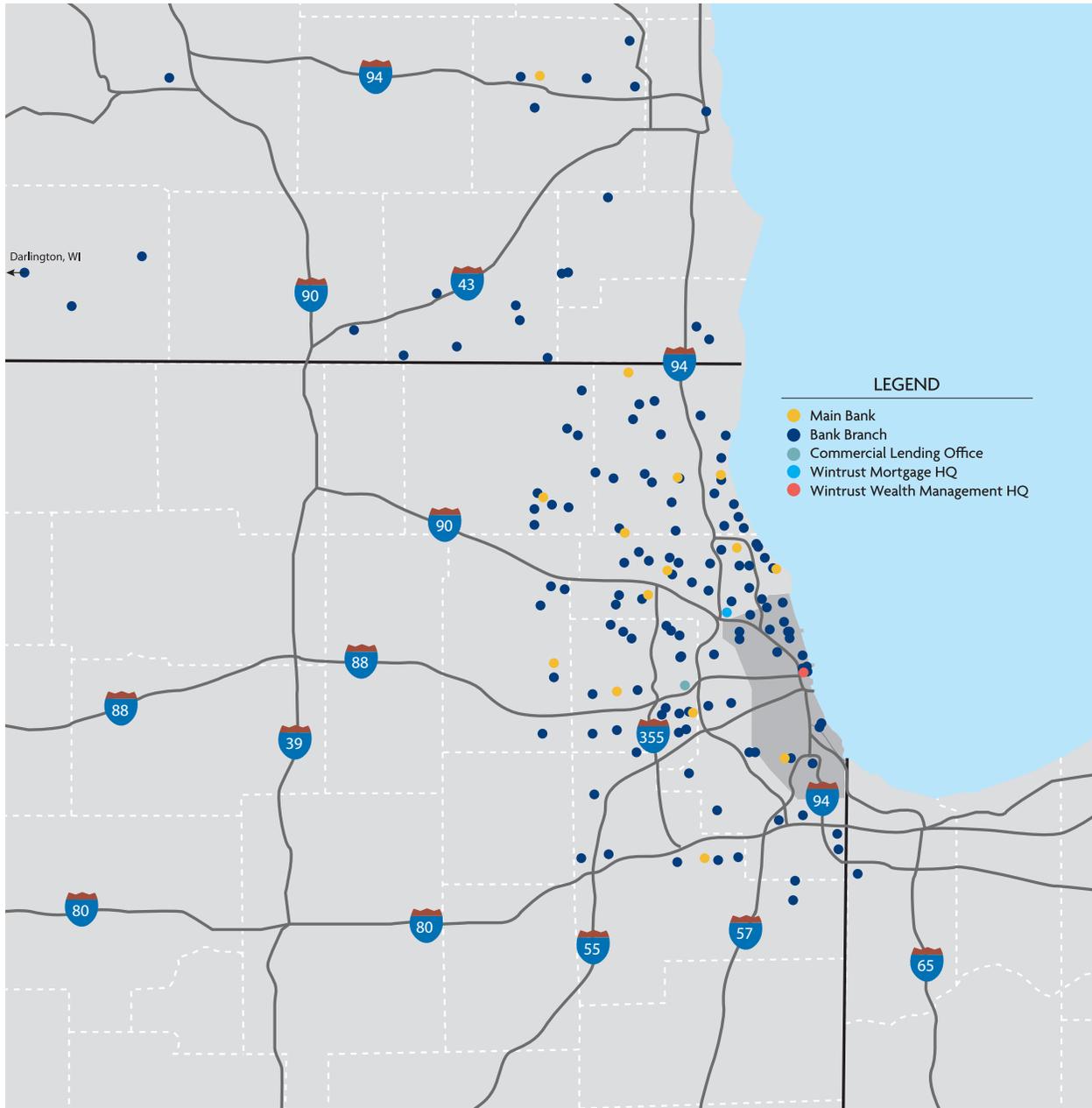
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