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THE SPOTLIGHT

Bank Independent serves community, gives back



By: Maria Camp

“While a lot of banks may offer similar services, it’s how we deliver our products and how we treat our customers that makes a difference,” explained Ashley Balch, public relations manager for Bank Independent. Within Franklin County, the bank has two locations in Russellville and two in Red Bay. In total, the bank has more than 30 locations across seven counties in North Alabama and employs around 675 people. Some locations are open until 8 p.m. The bank prides itself on providing customers with a wide range of services in ways designed to help more easily transact business. “Our customer service and our extended hours really set us apart from a lot of the other banking institutions,” Balch said. “Calling customer service at Bank Independent means talking to somebody right here in town. You’re not getting a third-party service or a call center somewhere.” Some locations include deposit ATMs, and others feature sync live ATMs, a relatively new feature the

bank has been rolling out that allows a customer to pull up to the ATM and touch a button to talk to a local teller through live video chat. The Sync Live ATMs also allow for getting exact change in increments of hundreds, twenties, fives, ones, quarters, nickels and pennies. Customers can also take advantage of online banking services through the bank’s Sync Live app and the Bank Independent website; however, the bank has community goals outside of helping their customers more easily handle their financial transactions. “We have a 501(c)(3) organization called the Helping Hands Foundation,” Balch explained. “It was started in 2011 after the April 27 tornadoes came through, and our team members were looking for a way to give back.” He said the program started as an initiative and turned into a foundation in the past year. “All of our team members get eight paid hours a year to go volunteer at the charity or foundation of their choice. We also do

share drives throughout the year where we collect money or items through our sales offices. What’s collected in Franklin County stays in Franklin County. We have a food drive, a shelter drive to collect items for animal shelters, a school share and a toy share around Christmas. We partner with the Franklin County Department of Human Resources to help us distribute donations. This helps us keep the donations within the county.” “Our vision is to be the bank of choice in the communities we serve, and our mission is to make a positive difference in people’s lives,” Balch added. “We’re proud to be an active part of the communities we serve.” For more information about locations and services, visit the bank’s website, bankindependent.com.



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