

NEWS

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ICBA Securities Capital Markets Broadens Reach, Scope for Community Bank Stocks

Washington, D.C. (April 25, 2006)—The Independent Community Bankers of America (ICBA) announced the Capital Markets Division of ICBA Securities, an ICBA subsidiary corporation, is expanding to both coasts of the United States, enabling it to serve community banks nationwide.

The expansion is made possible by the just-announced acquisition by Howe Barnes Investments, Inc. Chicago, of Hoefer & Arnett, Inc, San Francisco. Both are full-service brokerage and investment firms. Howe Barnes is the exclusive capital markets provider to ICBA members through ICBA Securities' Capital Markets Division.

“This merger agreement significantly expands the reach of ICBA’s capital markets partner, Howe Barnes, with coast-to-coast capabilities, nearly doubling the market making, research and corporate finance activities available to community banks,” said C.R. “Rusty” Cloutier, chairman of ICBA Services Network and president and CEO of MidSouth Bank, Lafayette, La. “Through this merger, community banks can draw on the expertise of investment banking pros who have experience in both local and national markets.”

“Combining these two firms gives community banks more access to capital markets services,” said Jim Reber, president of ICBA Securities. “The merged firm will include market making activities for 500 community bank stocks which speaks to the breadth of Howe Barnes Hoefer & Arnett’s capabilities.”

Combined, the firm will have approximately 140 associates in eight offices throughout the United States. Daniel E. Coughlin, Howe Barnes, president and CEO, will head the combined organization. William F. Sammon will continue to serve as director of capital markets for both ICBA Securities and Howe Barnes Hoefer & Arnett.

About ICBA

The Independent Community Bankers of America, the nation’s voice for community banks, represents the largest constituency of community banks of all sizes and charter types in the nation, and is dedicated exclusively to representing the interests of the community banking industry.

About ICBA Securities

ICBA Securities Inc. is the member-directed securities broker/dealer of the Independent Community Bankers of America (ICBA). ICBA Securities provides community banks with quality bank portfolio investment products, services and educational programs. Visit www.icbasecurities.com.

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