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## **U.S. Small Business Administration Recognizes Midwest BankCentre With Two Prestigious Awards**

### ***SBA Recognizes MBC as Top 504 Loan Program Lender and Top 10 Community Bank in St. Louis***

**ST. LOUIS (June 10, 2024)** --- [Midwest BankCentre](#), the second-largest privately held community bank in the St. Louis region, has received two esteemed awards from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), reaffirming its commitment to supporting small businesses in the St. Louis area. The SBA's St. Louis District Office has honored the Bank with the Top 504 Lender of the Year award and recognized MBC as among the Top 10 community banks for overall SBA lending volume in St. Louis, reflecting its exceptional performance in facilitating 504 and SBA 7(a) loans during the SBA's fiscal year 2023.

In 2023, Midwest BankCentre issued over \$17 million in small business loans, exceeding the amount issued in 2022 by more than four times. "It's our honor to serve small businesses throughout St. Louis and we're thrilled to receive this acknowledgement," said Danny Pogue, president of commercial, consumer and retail sales at Midwest BankCentre. "Our involvement reflects our commitment to our clients' success. By using SBA programs, we can offer the best solutions to fit their needs."

SBA loans provide vital lifelines of capital to small businesses, offering access to funding that might otherwise be difficult to secure through traditional channels. This access to funding helps

businesses expand, pursue new opportunities, hire additional employees, and invest in essential equipment, all contributing to the growth of the St. Louis regional economy.

In October 2022, Midwest Bank Centre achieved SBA Preferred Lender status. As an SBA Preferred Lender, Midwest BankCentre can approve small business loan requests internally without requesting approval from the SBA, expediting the approval process significantly and offering a more streamlined experience for small business owners.

One notable success story is Starlight Academy. Midwest BankCentre assisted Starlight Academy in acquiring their second state-licensed daycare location through a 7(a) SBA loan. This transaction preserved the existence of the small business, safeguarded 11 jobs, and allowed the business to expand and continue to provide essential services to the community.

The Bank also supported Blue Jay Brewing by providing them with an SBA loan for Nicole and Jason Thompson to open their first location in Midtown St. Louis in 2023. "Without a small business loan, we couldn't have made our dream come true. Luckily, a friend recommended Midwest BankCentre, and thanks to their help, we were able to bring our vision to life," Nicole said. The Bank collaborated with the Thompson's during the entire loan process.

Hakim Kassam, with over 25 years of specialized experience in SBA lending, leads the SBA Division at Midwest BankCentre. Assisting him is a dedicated team of ten professionals. Through the 7(a) and 504 U.S. SBA programs, they offer comprehensive financing solutions to small businesses nationwide.

### ***About Midwest BankCentre***

Midwest BankCentre's current assets exceed \$2.75 billion, and deposits total more than \$2.29 billion as of quarter ended 12/31/2024. A mainstay of the greater St. Louis community banking scene since 1906, the Bank employs a staff of about 280 working at 17 bank locations in the City of St. Louis, St. Louis, Jefferson, and St. Charles counties in Missouri and St. Clair County in Illinois and 11 states throughout the United States. The Bank also opened a business production office in Kansas City, Missouri, in 2023. It empowers people, enables businesses, and energizes neighborhoods through the strength of its financial services, including personalized consumer and business banking, business cash management, mortgage lending, home equity loans, financial planning and investments, insurance, and digital banking.

Since 2001, Midwest BankCentre has consecutively achieved the Bauer Financial 5-Star Superior financial rating each quarter. The Bank has been recognized for its success in bringing access to reasonably priced capital to

traditionally underserved markets and elevating financial inclusivity by addressing the banking needs of low- and moderate-income market customers who are often overlooked. Recent awards include the 2023 Innovation in Philanthropy Awards from the St. Louis Business Journal, the 2022 Champions of Diversity & Inclusion Award (for-profits) from the St. Louis Business Journal, and Energage's 2021, 2022, and 2023 National Top Workplace overall award and awards for diversity, equity, and inclusion practices.