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PRESS RELEASE

January 16, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Technology as Vital as a Trusted Banker

FNCB drives technology to be the leader among community banks

By now we're familiar with paying bills online and mobile banking, but nearly a decade and a half ago, it may have been difficult to imagine as part of a normal banking routine. First National Community Bank (FNCB) started its forward-thinking drive toward technology in 1999 with customer convenience, security and ease-of-use as its top-of-mind concerns.

The objective was to offer the same innovative technology as big banks, while continuing to provide the personal touch only a community bank can offer. It's a goal that started with a simple online banking service and evolved into a powerful suite of technological financial tools.

When FNCB introduced online banking, the offerings were limited but provided a valuable service to their customers as noted by FNCB Vice President, Operations Manager Theresa Surma, "We started offering online banking as a convenience for our customers who were able to check their balances, transfer funds and pay bills."

Further adding, "Today, however, we have a whole new set of technologies to consider. The biggest advances have come in mobile banking and related applications."

"With the release of mobile and online banking tools that include iPhone and smartphone apps, person-to-person payments, online personal finance management tools, and the soon to be released mobile remote deposit capture—the ability to use a smartphone to take a picture of a check for deposit, FNCB established itself ahead of many community banks its size by anticipating changing customer demands and keeping up with or outpacing the technology curve."

As the demand for technology grew, so did concerns for account security -- FNCB put that at the top of the list during every planning stage, Surma continued, "Protecting our customers is of paramount importance. So it just made sense to provide customers the same technology and security used by the nation's largest financial institutions so that late and reluctant adopters could be assured virtual peace of mind. We take customer security very seriously."

"Our online banking products are no different than those offered by big banks," said Pat Ehnot, FNCB Electronic Banking Operations Analyst. "Using industry standard technologies (SSL) and security certificates, with 128 bit encrypted communication, they are every bit as powerful and safe."

Spurred by America's cell phone demand, mobile banking has grown at a faster rate than the inception of online banking. According to a recent report by Forrester Research, mobile banking is growing rapidly in the United States. Five years from now, there will be 108 million mobile banking users in the U.S., accounting for about 46 percent of all bank account holders in the country.

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Due in large part to tech-savvy leaders in FNCB's electronic banking department who had the foresight to be prepared for rapid changes in technology, the result was a bank that positioned itself to exceed the needs of an increasingly mobile consumer base.

"We have always believed in providing our customers with the tools to help them achieve financial wellness, which includes offering exceptional service and the latest advances in technology," said Ehnot. "We firmly believe our new mobile banking products will give our existing and future customers the ability to manage their finances in a convenient, safe and secure manner."

Since their late summer launch, the new FNCB apps have proven to be extremely popular. More than one-quarter of their online banking customers have downloaded a smartphone app and the Bank has experienced strong adoption of its online personal finance management tool. "Customers can manage all their finances in one place, with one password. That's a huge convenience. It also makes budgeting and the ability to track spending super easy. Our customers have really responded favorably to it," he added.

"With all the tools available, I think people are realizing it's like having a bank branch in their pocket," said Ehnot.

It's been a whirlwind few years for online and mobile banking and this barely scratches the hi-tech surface. As growing user demands accelerate technology offerings at dizzying speeds, there are sure to be countless financial tools introduced and capable of things we find difficult to imagine today. Just as in 1999, FNCB is committed to providing customers the best of the best financial technology, ever-focused on security and ease-of-use for its customers.

"The future of online and mobile banking is constantly evolving, said Surma. "Since day one, we have been strategically focused on being the community banking leader in technology. We will continue to monitor the financial technology arena and offer our customers the most innovative and secure tools to meet their increasing demands."

FNCB will continue to provide an online banking experience that utilizes the latest advancements in technology without losing the personal experience of true community banking.

As Surma put it, "We don't mind you putting one of our branches in your pocket, as long as you know we're still right here in your community when you need us. That's what separates us from the big banks and we like it that way."

ABOUT FNCB

Founded in 1910, FNCB supports its mission: Simply a better bank™ with an endless commitment to the communities they serve. With 21 branches throughout Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, and Wayne counties, FNCB is the largest community bank in Northeastern Pennsylvania leading the way in personal, small business and commercial banking solutions. For more information, visit www.fncb.com

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