



News Release

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First Fidelity Bank Receives Oklahoma's Inaugural BKD Award

*OBA & **BKD, LLP** co-sponsor award, recognizing high-performing OBA member banks & thrifts*

Oklahoma City, OK – Roger M. Beverage, president and CEO of the Oklahoma Bankers Association (OBA), and Kim W. Shoemake, partner with the Oklahoma City office of **BKD, LLP**, announce First Fidelity Bank of Oklahoma City is the recipient of the 2007 BKD Award for Excellence and Innovation, the first such award in Oklahoma. Co-sponsored by OBA and BKD, one of the 10 largest CPA and advisory firms in the United States, the award recognizes high-performing OBA members that implement innovative ideas demonstrating commitment to their bank and community.

“First Fidelity Bank’s ‘Integrated Business Core’ program, through commitment to local partnership, is an innovative way to support real-world education—with significant results,” said Beverage. “We want to share this exemplary success story to encourage others to be pacesetters and increase awareness of contributions community banks and thrifts make to the communities they serve.”

This inaugural award, presented at the recent OBA annual convention in Oklahoma City, honors First Fidelity Bank for its sponsorship of the Integrated Business Core (IBC) program, now in its 12th year. In partnership with the University of Oklahoma Michael F. Price College of

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Business, the IBC program includes 12 academic hours in which up to 80 students per semester create and manage a start-up company and a community service project. Students develop a business plan to present to First Fidelity Bank, which can loan up to \$5,000 per company. Students then operate their businesses, using profits to finance their community service project.

Since its inception in 1995, student companies—selling T-shirts, posters, hot dogs, DVDs and more—have been consistently profitable. All told, students have spent more than 21,500 hours working in local communities, and student companies have donated more than \$561,000 to charities and generated more than \$1 million in revenues.

“We are excited to be the very first in Oklahoma to receive the BKD Award for Excellence & Innovation, and we appreciate its sponsors, BKD and OBA,” says Steve C. Adamo, vice president of First Fidelity Bank. “Not only does the IBC program give students an opportunity to gain hands-on experience in business practices to help them succeed in their careers, it also introduces the role and importance of community service. We believe in the longstanding value of this kind of effective educational experience and look forward to continuing our partnership with the University of Oklahoma.”

Shoemake commented on the bank's initiative, long-term commitment and level of involvement. “This partnership demonstrates how integrating academic study with real-world business and community experience can payoff handsomely, not only in profits and donations but in lifelong learning,” Shoemake said. “As the IBC program continues to grow in size and popularity, First Fidelity Bank helps to build a pool of business-savvy and community-minded future leaders. This program is a prime example of outstanding corporate citizenship and extraordinary use of an innovative idea, all part of our mission for the BKD Award. We hope this award inspires others to improve their business performance and participate in the growth and success of their communities.”

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About Oklahoma Bankers Association

The **Oklahoma Bankers Association** (OBA) represents more than 270 member banks in the state. Based in Oklahoma City, the OBA (www.oba.com) assists its members with government relations, educational programs, legal and compliance services, communications, insurance products and numerous products and services. The OBA, created in 1897, works with banks to ensure they have the tools they need to support their communities and provides fraud training programs to banks at no charge, financial literacy programs to communities across the state and more. The OBA owns two subsidiaries, the OBA Services Company and the OBA Insurance Agency, which specialize in products and services for the banking industry.

About BKD

BKD, LLP (www.bkd.com) is the CPA and advisory firm of choice for growing companies and high net-worth individuals. As one of the 10 largest such firms in the country and one of the largest in Oklahoma, we help clients go beyond their numbers by applying our technical expertise, unmatched client service and disciplined delivery of solutions to their management and financial needs. BKD's more than 1,600 personnel, including approximately 220 partners, are based in 27 offices within 11 states in the central United States. **BKD Financial Services Group** works with more than 1,000 community-based financial institutions and provides solutions that help strengthen financial performance, improve operations and mitigate risk.