

First Southwest Bank Named Community/Rural Lender of The Year by the Colorado Small Business Administration

As a Small Business Administration Preferred Lender, First Southwest Bank has worked diligently on Paycheck Protection Program loans for their customers and new customers, since COVID-19 relief needs began.

ALAMOSA, COLO., (September 25, 2020) — This week, First Southwest Bank (FSWB) was awarded Community/Rural Lender of the Year by the Colorado Small Business Administration (SBA) during their virtual conference for National Small Business Week. Independent Bankers of Colorado partnered with the SBA to host the conference and recognize lenders that are championing and aiding small businesses across the state.

Sherry Waner, FSWB's Chief Development Officer, accepted the Community/Rural Lender of The Year award on behalf of the bank.

"We're grateful for this award and thank the SBA for their vested interest and continued support in Colorado. Businesses in rural Colorado are often challenged with being able to meet traditional commercial lending underwriting standards and without SBA's Programs, many of the businesses that we work with would be unable to obtain necessary funding to start, sustain, grow or scale their companies," says Waner. "At FSWB, we try to bridge this gap and break down barriers by enabling more entrepreneurs to access available financing with the utilization of SBA Guaranteed loans and other resources that we have developed in our partner 501c-3 non-profit, First Southwest Community Fund. Having SBA as a partner is critical to the ongoing economic success and viability of businesses in rural areas of our state — and we are making a difference."

Examples of rural businesses across the state that FSWB has helped through SBA loans include GEOMAT, Phoenix Recycling, Espinoza Consulting Services, Agile Space Industries, Chinook Medical Gear and Ace Towing.

Furthermore, during the ongoing small business impacts of COVID-19, First Southwest Bank has completed 805 Paycheck Protection Program loans through the SBA to small businesses across Colorado, to date. We're proud to be serving the small businesses, entrepreneurs and nonprofits in Colorado during this time.

"As a locally-owned community bank and a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), our values — especially 'make a difference' — are always at the forefront of everything we do," says Kent Curtis, FSWB CEO. "During the COVID-19 pandemic our team has been working around the clock, serving our rural communities and their small businesses with timely and relevant relief efforts — a constant focus of ours, only strengthened by these times."

About First Southwest Bank

Serving the San Luis Valley and rural Colorado for more than 100 years, First Southwest Bank offers personal and business banking at their seven branches, with an emphasis on businesses supporting rural communities. First Southwest Bank and their employees actively live-in and give back to our communities, volunteering with more than 40 local organizations, and donating to 115. As a CDFI bank, First Southwest Bank is focused on cultivating valuable relationships, investing in economic and social doers, and fostering a well-lived rural culture. More information about First Southwest Bank is available at [fswb.com](https://www.fswb.com). *Member FDIC, Equal Housing Lender*

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