



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Community Bank & Trust Launches “Bankers Speak 2026” Educational Series to Demystify Commercial Lending

**LAGRANGE, Ga., Jan. 20th, 2026** — Community Bank & Trust, in partnership with the LaGrange-Troup County Chamber of Commerce, has announced the launch of ***Bankers Speak 2026***, a four-part educational speaker series designed to give local business owners, entrepreneurs, and professionals a clear, practical understanding of how banks evaluate commercial loan requests.

Produced and sponsored by Community Bank & Trust, *Bankers Speak 2026* pulls back the curtain on the commercial lending process—helping attendees better understand what lenders look for, how credit decisions are made, and how borrowers can confidently present a strong loan request.

“Too often, the lending process feels opaque or intimidating to business owners,” said Jeremy Gilpin, Chairman of Community Bank & Trust. “Bankers Speak was created to change that—to educate, empower, and build stronger borrower-bank relationships through transparency and real-world insight.”

The four-part series will take place on consecutive Thursdays in February at the LaGrange-Troup County Chamber of Commerce in downtown LaGrange, from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m., and will feature practical, actionable discussions led by seasoned financial professionals.

#### **2026 Bankers Speak Series Schedule:**

- **February 5** – *Banker–Borrower Relationship*
- **February 12** – *Bank Review: Underwriting Process*
- **February 19** – *Credit Application Process*
- **February 26** – *Understanding the Importance of Tax Filing*

Each session is designed to stand alone while also building toward a comprehensive understanding of commercial lending from relationship management and underwriting to documentation and financial preparedness.

The featured speaker for the series is Joe Amato, a vice president at Community Bank & Trust with more than 30 years of experience in corporate restructuring, finance, and project management. Known for his engaging and practical approach, Mr. Amato brings deep expertise across private, academic, nonprofit, and government sectors, helping organizations navigate complex financial decisions with clarity and confidence.

Community Bank & Trust has long been recognized for its commitment to financial education, local business growth, and relationship-driven banking. *Bankers Speak 2026* continues that



tradition by offering a rare opportunity for the business community to hear directly from bankers without jargon, sales pressure, or guesswork.

Attendance is open to business owners, entrepreneurs, finance professionals, and anyone interested in gaining a clearer understanding of commercial lending. Registration details are available through the LaGrange-Troup County Chamber of Commerce

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