



Hosting a Bank Tour

Members of the Legislature are always eager to touch base with the people in their districts, and welcome the opportunity to spend time with the constituents whose interests they represent. What better way to give Members a first-hand look at your bank's importance to the community than inviting them to the bank for a visit? Even better, collaborate with other financial leaders in the community to set up a "Banking Day" for Members and their staffs. This kind of orientation is mutually beneficial: the Member can make valuable district contacts and may receive local publicity and you and your banking colleagues can lay the foundations for a quality relationship.

Keep in mind that you may have to be flexible when it comes to scheduling an event or meeting with your Member – provide several possible dates, and if a staffer offers to attend in the Member's place, take him or her up on the offer!

At the bank, be sure to provide a way for the Member to meet your employees. Your employees appreciate a chance to meet an elected official. Before or after the tour, consider arranging an informal gathering so that you and your employees have a chance to ask questions, and to tell him or her about your bank. You may want to host a lunch, a coffee break, or a morning breakfast with doughnuts and O.J. Try to keep the entire visit under 2 hours.

During the Member's visit, share with him or her all the beneficial things your bank does for the community – talk about charitable donations and community service projects, and have hard facts available about the number of loans you make per year, and the number of jobs you've helped to create. Finally, show your Member first-hand all that your bank has to do to comply with Washington regulations. This is a perfect time to hammer home to your Member an understanding and appreciation of the hardship that massive amounts of regulatory paperwork can place on your bank.

To publicize your Member's visit, consider putting out a press release and writing an article for PA Bankers' *Advocacy & Insights* or *paBanker* magazine. If you and the Member discussed specific banking issues, you may want to share that information with PA Bankers' staff lobbyists – this sort of inside information is often very helpful on the lobbying front. Finally, be sure to follow up with the Member and his or her staff after the visit and thank them for taking the time to visit with you.