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First Commerce Earns National Recognition for Giving Back to Local Business Community

Credit Union National Association Selects FCCU as top recipient of the 2020 Dora Maxwell Social Responsibility Award

Tallahassee, FL – The Credit Union National Association (CUNA) announced First Commerce Credit Union as first-place winner of the 2020 Dora Maxwell Social Responsibility Community Service Award for its #LocalStrong initiative, which was launched at the onset of the pandemic to support local businesses. The Dora Maxwell Award is presented annually to credit unions for outstanding social responsibility projects in their communities. First Commerce received top honors among credit unions across the country in the \$250 million to \$1 billion asset size category. First Commerce was the only credit union in Florida and Georgia to be recognized this year.

From its start in Tallahassee, where First Commerce is headquartered, the #LocalStrong initiative created a wave of support spreading across the U.S. and into Canada helping to infuse more than \$1 million into local economies during a time of great need. Upon launching #LocalStrong, First Commerce quickly challenged other credit unions, businesses and organizations to join the movement by implementing similar programs. Each time, they accepted. The League of Southeastern Credit Unions (LSCU) and the Southeastern Credit Union Foundation also accepted and helped take #LocalStrong to a whole new level by launching a regional program to match funds of participating credit unions across Florida, Georgia and Alabama. From there, #LocalsStrong took off, moving across the United States and into Canada.

“It is truly an honor for First Commerce to be recognized for our #LocalStrong initiative,” said First Commerce CEO Cecilia Homison. “This effort exemplifies what First Commerce and our team members stand for – people helping people. #LocalStrong was a meaningful way for us to give back and let small businesses know we are always here for them. The most inspiring part of #LocalStrong was how personal it became for our team. They jumped in to help the people and organizations they knew needed it most.”

First Commerce created #LocalStrong in March 2020, as communities began closing down in response to the pandemic leaving many small business owners struggling to stay afloat. The #LocalStrong initiative provided immediate, local support for small businesses. The idea was simple. First Commerce empowered its team members to make purchases online or over the phone from locally owned businesses by giving them each \$25 to purchase a product, service, or gift card/gift certificate from a favorite local business. Team members could then choose to donate their purchases to a local organization or individual in need. The first wave was so

successful, First Commerce funded a second wave for its 200 team members. Ultimately, First Commerce provided nearly \$10,000 in support to communities across North Florida and South Georgia.

As one of many team efforts inspired by #LocalStrong, the First Commerce Accounting Department pooled together their money and came up with a plan to pay it forward. Team members contacted the Activities Director at Center Pointe, which is a nursing home facility, and asked about ways they could help. Immediately, the Activities Director responded, "They would love cupcakes!" The team called Small Cakes Cupcakery and ordered sweet treats for the residents and patients. And, during the ordering process with the Baker at Small Cakes, they shared how touched and excited they were for the support.

CUNA's National Awards Committee selects the 2020 recipients from the winning entries submitted by their local credit union trade associations. This is the first time First Commerce has won a First Place National Dora Maxwell award. In previous years, First Commerce has received recognition from CUNA and LSCU for internal programs to assist team members, community service and financial literacy, as well as its MyWay checking account designed for young adults age 18-29.

For details, stories and photos related to #LocalStrong, as well as other ways First Commerce supports the communities it serves, visit [FirstCommerceCU.org/community](https://www.FirstCommerceCU.org/community). Also search #LocalStrong on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.



Cecilia Homison, First Commerce CEO



First Commerce team members deliver cupcakes to residents and patients at Center Pointe.

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ABOUT FIRST COMMERCE CREDIT UNION

Established more than 80 years ago, First Commerce is an award-winning, full-service community credit union with more than \$900 million in assets and more than 200 team members. In 2018, First Commerce was ranked among the top 100 credit unions in deposit growth in the nation and is a top-ranked auto lender in North Florida and South Georgia. First Commerce is passionate about empowering the local business and entrepreneurial community, including hosting the annual Power Forward Speaker Series, which brings global entrepreneurs to Tallahassee, as well as being the primary sponsor of TCC Spark, which seeks to educate and inspire local entrepreneurs. Our subsidiary, Six Pillars Financial Advisors, offers a wide range of financial planning and investment services. For details, visit FirstCommerceCU.org or call 850.488.0035. Federally insured by NCUA. Equal opportunity lender.

ABOUT THE DORA MAXWELL AWARD

The Dora Maxwell Award is presented to credit unions for outstanding social responsibility projects in their communities. Activities may include: solving core community problems, coordinating supply drives for the needy, raising money or organizing special events for charitable organizations, or mentoring students. Dora Maxwell was an original signer of CUNA's constitution and a tireless organizer of hundreds of credit unions throughout the United States. She also developed volunteer organizer clubs and worked diligently with organizations on behalf of the poor.