

**Coffee Talk – Q3 2021**  
**2021 – The Montana Advantage**

We all have reasons why we love Montana and choose to make it our home. For some, it is the beautiful environment, clean air and big sky. For others, it is the enjoyment of the great outdoors with all the recreational opportunities. Still others cherish our unique way of life and caring neighbors. Whatever your reason, Montana is truly special.

During the last year and a half, Montana’s uniqueness has become more apparent to all of us – both for residents and for others across the United States. This newfound appeal is a double-edged sword. A growing population provides enhanced economic opportunities – more customers, increased job openings, greater tax revenues and higher property values. Unfortunately, this influx of new residents and visitors puts greater pressure on our infrastructure, pushes employment demands beyond our capability to keep up and drives housing affordability out of range for many Montanans. I am hopeful we will work through these challenges to become a better state. Montana’s resourcefulness is nothing short of amazing.

Similarly, our state is attracting a slew of new financial services providers. These organizations now see Montana as the land of opportunity. Some are large international banks, brokerages, and insurance agencies, some are super-regional credit unions, while others are from a state or two away with local sounding names. Also, interestingly enough, two of the biggest banks headquartered in Montana accelerated their focus out of the state with more and larger acquisitions. When Montana and Montanans become subordinate to others in a dozen or so states, they become subjected to “one-size-fits-all” management philosophies and practices that reflect the needs of those other states rather than our Montana values.

At Stockman, we have a lot of places we can do business, and we choose Montana and only Montana. We have been focused on serving our neighbors here since 1953. We are privately held, family owned and operated. Our services and products are specifically designed for Montanans and our unique lifestyle. Stockman bankers know this state from the development market in Billings, the agricultural conditions in the Golden Triangle, to the affordable housing needs in Missoula County and so much more. Stockman Wealth advisers understand the costs of retirement here, the opportunities and pitfalls of selling a farm or small business and our generally conservative nature. Stockman Insurance agents have a broad range of experience and expertise in the perils, and related insurance coverage, specific to Montana. Another organization can worry about what’s happening on the coasts. Our concentration, our focus and our dedication stays right here at home in Montana with you.

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