



## **F&M Bank Announces Executive Leadership Appointments to Support Continued Growth and Strategic Execution**

June 25, 2026

ARCHBOLD, Ohio, June 25, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- F&M Bank today announced several executive leadership appointments designed to strengthen operational execution, enhance legal and compliance capabilities, advance its people strategy, and position the organization for continued growth.

Since 2018, F&M has experienced significant growth, expanding from approximately \$1.1 billion to \$3.55 billion in assets, increasing its workforce from 282 to 499 employees, and growing its network from 24 to 38 banking offices. These leadership enhancements reflect the bank's continued commitment to serving customers, supporting employees, creating shareholder value, and executing its long-term strategic plan.

"As F&M continues to grow, it is important that our leadership structure evolves alongside the organization," said Lars Eller, President and Chief Executive Officer. "These appointments strengthen our ability to execute strategically, make timely decisions, and continue delivering the relationship-focused banking experience our customers and communities expect."

### **Eric Faust Named Chief Operating Officer**

F&M has promoted Eric Faust to Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer.

Faust joined F&M in 2022 as Chief Risk Officer and has successfully led the Bank's enterprise risk management, compliance, internal audit, and Bank Secrecy Act functions while helping build a strong risk framework to support the organization's continued growth.

As Chief Operating Officer, Faust will oversee Bank Operations, Compliance, Legal, Enterprise Risk Management, Information Technology, and Information Security, ensuring F&M's strategic priorities are translated into operational excellence across the organization.

"Eric has been instrumental in strengthening our risk framework and guiding the organization through a period of tremendous growth," Eller said. "His leadership, strategic perspective, and operational discipline make him exceptionally well-suited to serve as our Chief Operating Officer."

### **Melody Charlton Joins F&M as Chief Legal and Compliance Officer**

F&M also announced the appointment of Melody Charlton as Chief Legal and Compliance Officer.

Charlton brings extensive legal and regulatory expertise to F&M, having held compliance leadership positions with Prudential Financial, GE Capital, Bank of the Sierra, and Northrim Bank. She has also served as a licensed practicing attorney, a course facilitator for the American Bankers Association, and an examiner with the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland.

In her role, Charlton will establish F&M's in-house legal function while leading the bank's compliance organization. The addition of this position reflects the bank's continued investment in supporting its increasing size and complexity while enhancing legal oversight, managing legal expenses, and advancing strategic initiatives.

"Melody's depth of experience in both banking law and regulatory compliance will be a tremendous asset as we continue to grow," Eller said. "Bringing this expertise in-house enhances our ability to support the organization while strengthening our legal and compliance capabilities for the future."

### **Benét Rupp Continues as Chief People Officer**

F&M also announced that Benét Rupp will continue serving as Executive Vice President and Chief People Officer, following a successful interim leadership period.

Rupp previously served as F&M's Chief People Officer and later Chief Administrative Officer before returning to the organization in late 2025 to provide stability and leadership for the Human Resources function. Since her return, she has helped advance the bank's strategic focus on organizational culture, employee experience, leadership development, and workforce excellence.

"Benét has been instrumental in strengthening our people strategy during an important period of growth," Eller said. "Her leadership, experience, and commitment to our employees continue to make a meaningful impact, and I'm excited to have her leading this critical area of our organization."

### **Dave Gerken Expands Leadership Responsibilities**

F&M also announced an expansion of responsibilities for Dave Gerken, Executive Vice President and Chief Lending Officer.

Gerken joined F&M in 2016 and was promoted to Chief Lending Officer in 2024. In his expanded role, he will provide leadership and strategic guidance to the bank's Regional Presidents, supporting growth initiatives, aligning regional execution, and helping move decision-making closer to customers while maintaining strong credit quality and service standards.

"Dave has consistently demonstrated outstanding leadership, deep market knowledge, and a strong commitment to relationship banking," Eller said. "Expanding his role will further strengthen our regional strategy and help ensure we continue delivering local decision-making while supporting disciplined growth."

"F&M's success has always been driven by our people," Eller added. "These leadership appointments position us to continue executing our strategy while remaining focused on building lasting relationships with our customers, investing in our employees, and creating long-term value for our shareholders."

### **About F&M Bank**

F&M Bank is a local independent community bank that has been serving its communities since 1897. F&M Bank provides commercial banking, retail banking and other financial services. Our locations are in Butler, Champaign, Fulton, Defiance, Hancock, Henry, Lucas, Shelby, Williams, and Wood counties in Ohio. In Northeast Indiana, we have offices located in Adams, Allen, DeKalb, Jay, Steuben and Wells counties. The Michigan footprint includes Oakland County, and we have Loan Production Offices Muncie, Indiana, and Perrysburg and Bryan, Ohio.

#### **Safe harbor statement**

Farmers & Merchants Bancorp, Inc. ("F&M") wishes to take advantage of the Safe Harbor provisions included in the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Statements by F&M, including management's expectations and comments, may not be based on historical facts and are "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended. Forward-looking statements are typically identified by words such as "believe," "expect," "anticipate," "intend," "plan," "seek," "estimate," "project," "target," "goal," "will," "would," and similar expressions. Actual results could vary materially depending on risks and uncertainties inherent in general and local banking conditions, competitive factors specific to markets in which F&M and its subsidiaries operate, future interest rate levels, legislative and regulatory decisions, capital market conditions, deposit flows and pricing, liquidity and access to wholesale funding, interest rate and asset-liability management, credit quality (including commercial real estate exposures), collateral values, inflation and macroeconomic conditions, changes in laws and regulations (including capital and liquidity requirements and the implementation of "Basel III Endgame"), FDIC assessments, stress testing and supervisory expectations, cybersecurity and third-party/vendor risks, competition and technological change, geopolitical events, severe weather and natural disasters, agricultural sector conditions, the accuracy of CECL estimates and other accounting judgments, capital and dividend restrictions, and other risks described in F&M's filings with the SEC. F&M undertakes no obligation to update any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise, except as required by law. For more details, please refer to F&M's SEC filing, including its most recent Annual Report on Form 10-K and quarterly reports on Form 10-Q. Such filings can be viewed at the SEC's website, [www.sec.gov](http://www.sec.gov) or through F&M's website [www.fm.bank](http://www.fm.bank).

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