investor presentation

- Third Quarter 2026

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY LENDER EQUAL HOUSING LENDER FDIC

first® first financial bancorp

forward looking statements disclosure

Certain statements in this presentation constitute "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995, Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and Rule 175 promulgated thereunder, and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, and Rule 3b-6 promulgated thereunder, which statements involve inherent risks and uncertainties. Examples of forward-looking statements include, but are not limited to, statements regarding the operations of First Financial Bancorp. and its subsidiaries (the "Company", "First Financial", "we", "us", or "our"), such as (i) our future operating or financial performance, including revenues, income or loss and earnings per share, (ii) future common stock dividends, (iii) our capital structure, including future capital levels, (iv) our plans, objectives and strategies, and (v) the uncertainties and assumptions that underlie our forward-looking statements. Such statements are often characterized by the use of qualified words (and their derivatives) such as "may," "will," "anticipate," "could," "should," "would," "believe," "contemplate," "expect," "estimate," "continue," "plan," "project" and "intend," as well as words of similar meaning or other statements concerning opinions or judgment of First Financial or their respective management about future events. Forward-looking statements are based on assumptions as of the time they are made and are subject to risks, uncertainties and other factors that are difficult to predict with regard to timing, extent, likelihood and degree of occurrence, which could cause actual results to differ materially from anticipated results expressed or implied by such forward-looking statements. Such risks, uncertainties and assumptions include, among others, the following:

- economic, market, liquidity, credit, interest rate, operational and technological risks associated with First Financial's business;
- future credit quality and performance, including our expectations regarding future loan losses and our allowance for credit losses;
- the effect of and changes in policies and laws or regulatory agencies, including the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act and other legislation and regulation relating to the banking industry;
- management's ability to effectively execute its business plans;
- pursuit of mergers and acquisitions, including costs or difficulties related to any acquisitions and/or integrations of any acquired companies;
- the possibility that any of the anticipated benefits of First Financial's prior, in process, or contemplated acquisitions will not be realized or will not be realized within the expected time period;
- the possibility that any of acquisitions that have not yet been consummated, such as the acquisition of Finward Bancorp, is not consummated for any reason, including the failure to satisfy any closing conditions, termination of a merger agreement by either party, or the failure to receive any required regulatory or shareholder approvals;
- the effect of changes in accounting policies and practices;
- changes in consumer spending, borrowing and saving and changes in unemployment;
- changes in customers' performance and creditworthiness;
- the costs and effects of litigation and of unexpected or adverse outcomes in such litigation;
- current and future economic and market conditions, including the effects of changes in housing prices, fluctuations in unemployment rates, U.S. fiscal debt, budget and tax matters, geopolitical matters, trade and tariff policies, and any slowdown in global economic growth;
- our capital and liquidity requirements (including under regulatory capital standards, such as the Basel III capital standards) and our ability to generate capital internally or raise capital on favorable terms;
- financial services reform and other current, pending or future legislation or regulation that could have a negative effect on our revenue and businesses, including the Dodd-Frank Act and other legislation and regulation relating to bank products and services;
- the effect of the current interest rate environment or changes in interest rates or in the level or composition of our assets or liabilities on our net interest income, net interest margin and our mortgage originations, mortgage servicing rights and mortgage loans held for sale; the effect of a fall in stock market prices on our brokerage, asset and wealth management businesses;
- a failure in or breach of our operational or security systems or infrastructure, or those of our third-party vendors or other service providers, including as a result of cyber attacks;
- the effect of changes in the level of checking or savings account deposits on our funding costs and net interest margin; and
- our ability to develop and execute effective business plans and strategies.

forward looking statements disclosure

These factors are not necessarily all of the factors that could cause First Financial's actual results, performance or achievements to differ materially from those expressed in or implied by any of the forward-looking statements. Other factors, including unknown or unpredictable factors, also could harm the results of First Financial. Although First Financial believes that its expectations with respect to forward-looking statements are based upon reasonable assumptions within the bounds of its existing knowledge of its business and operations, there can be no assurance that actual results of First Financial will not differ materially from any projected future results expressed or implied by such forward-looking statements. Additional factors that could cause results to differ materially from those described above can be found in First Financial's most recent annual report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2025, quarterly reports on Form 10-Q, and other documents subsequently filed by First Financial with the Securities Exchange Commission ("SEC"). Investors are cautioned not to rely too heavily on any such forward-looking statements. First Financial urges you to consider all of these risks, uncertainties and other factors carefully in evaluating all such forward-looking statements made by First Financial. Forward-looking statements speak only as of the date they are made, and First Financial undertakes no obligation to update or clarify these forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise, except to the extent required by applicable law.

Non-GAAP Financial Measures

This presentation contains certain financial information determined by methods other than in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States (GAAP). Such non-GAAP financial information should be considered supplemental to, and not as a substitute for, or superior to, financial measures calculated in accordance with GAAP. However, we believe that non-GAAP reporting provides meaningful information and therefore we use it to supplement our GAAP information. We have chosen to provide this supplemental information to investors, analysts and other interested parties to enable them to perform additional analyses of operating results, to illustrate the results of operations giving effect to the non-GAAP adjustments and to provide an additional measure of performance. We believe this information is helpful in understanding the results of operations separate and apart from items that may, or could, have a disproportional positive or negative impact in any given period. For a reconciliation of the differences between the non-GAAP financial measures and the most comparable GAAP measures, please refer to the reconciliation tables in the appendix at the end of this presentation.

forward looking statements disclosure

No Offer or Solicitation

This presentation does not constitute an offer to sell or the solicitation of an offer to buy any securities or the solicitation of any vote or approval with respect to the proposed transaction between First Financial and Finward. No offer of securities shall be made except by means of a prospectus meeting the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and no offer to sell or solicitation of an offer to buy shall be made in any jurisdiction in which such offer, solicitation or sale would be unlawful prior to registration or qualification under the securities laws of such jurisdiction.

Important Additional Information and Where to Find It

In connection with the proposed transaction, First Financial filed a Registration Statement on Form S-4 (the "Registration Statement") with the SEC to register the shares of First Financial capital stock to be issued in connection with the proposed transaction, which became effective with the SEC on September 28, 2026. The Registration Statement includes a proxy statement of Finward and a prospectus of First Financial (the "Proxy Statement/Prospectus"), and First Financial and Finward may file with the SEC other relevant documents concerning the proposed transaction. BEFORE MAKING ANY VOTING OR INVESTMENT DECISION, INVESTORS AND SHAREHOLDERS ARE URGED TO READ THE REGISTRATION STATEMENT AND PROXY STATEMENT/PROSPECTUS REGARDING THE PROPOSED TRANSACTION AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS FILED WITH THE SEC, AS WELL AS ANY AMENDMENTS OR SUPPLEMENTS TO THOSE DOCUMENTS, BECAUSE THEY WILL CONTAIN IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT FIRST FINANCIAL, FINWARD AND THE PROPOSED TRANSACTION AND RELATED MATTERS.

A copy of the Registration Statement, Proxy Statement/Prospectus, as well as other filings containing information about First Financial and Finward, may be obtained, free of charge, at the SEC's website (www.sec.gov). Copies of documents filed with the SEC by First Financial will be made available free of charge in the "Investor Relations" section of First Financial's website, https://www.bankatfirst.com/about/investor-relations.html. Copies of documents filed with the SEC by Finward will be made available free of charge in the "Investor Relations" section of Finward's website, https://www.investorrelations.ibankpeoples.com. The information on First Financial's and Finward's websites is not, and shall not be deemed to be, a part of this communication or incorporated into other filings either First Financial makes with the SEC.

Participants in the Solicitation

First Financial, Finward and certain of their respective directors, executive officers, management and employees may be deemed to be participants in the solicitation of proxies in respect of the proposed transaction between First Financial and Finward. Information concerning First Financial's participants is set forth in the Proxy Statement, dated April 16, 2026, for First Financial's 2026 annual meeting of stockholders as filed with the SEC on Schedule 14A. Information concerning Finward's participants is set forth in the Proxy Statement, dated April 3, 2026, for Finward's 2026 annual meeting of stockholders as filed with the SEC on Schedule 14A. Additional information regarding the participants in the solicitation of proxies in respect of the proposed transaction and interests of participants of First Financial and Finward in the solicitation of proxies in respect of the proposed transaction is included in the Registration Statement and Proxy Statement/Prospectus to be filed with the SEC. Free copies of these documents, when available, may be obtained as described in the preceding paragraph.

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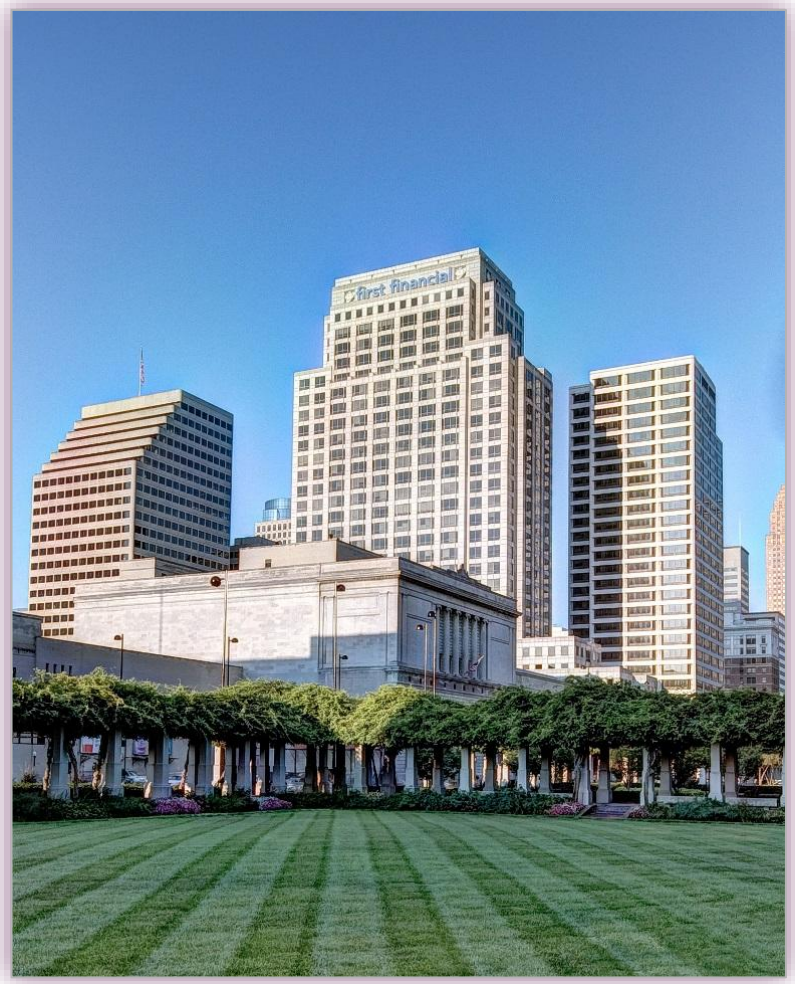
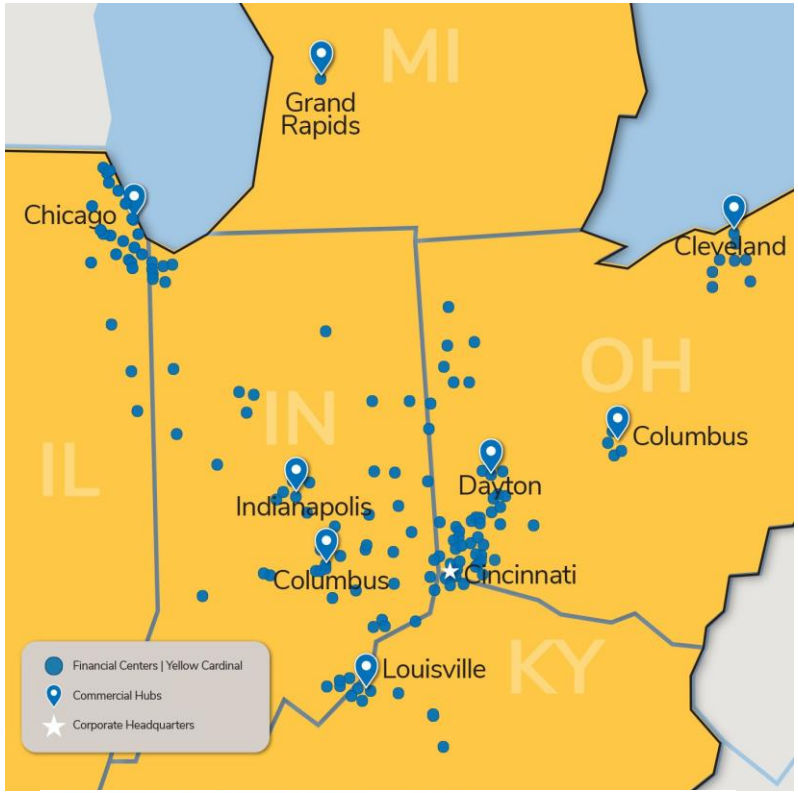


About First Financial Bancorp

Financial Performance

Appendix

our franchise







$22.3B
in assets

$13.9B/$17.7B
loans / deposits

$6.4B
wealth AUC[1]

2.08%
3Q Adj. PTPP ROAA[2]

NASDAQ: **FFBC**

Headquarters: **Cincinnati, Ohio**

Founded: **1863**

Banking Centers: **151**

Employees: **2,251**

Market Cap (9/30/26): **$3.3B**

Dividend Yield (9/30/26): **3.3%**

CET1 Ratio: **12.54%**

Lines of Business

Commercial
- C&I, O-CRE, Treasury,
- ABL, ESOP, Equipment Finance,
- Bannockburn Global Forex

Retail Banking
- Consumer, Small Business

Mortgage Banking

Wealth Management / Affluent Banking

Investment Commercial Real Estate

Commercial Finance
- Oak Street Funding / Franchise
- Summit Funding Group
- Agile Premium Finance

first financial bancorp

[1] Includes brokerage assets under care.
[2] Non-GAAP financial measure which management believes facilitates a better understanding of the Company's financial condition. See Appendix for Non-GAAP reconciliation.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY LENDER EQUAL HOUSING LENDER FDIC

key investment highlights

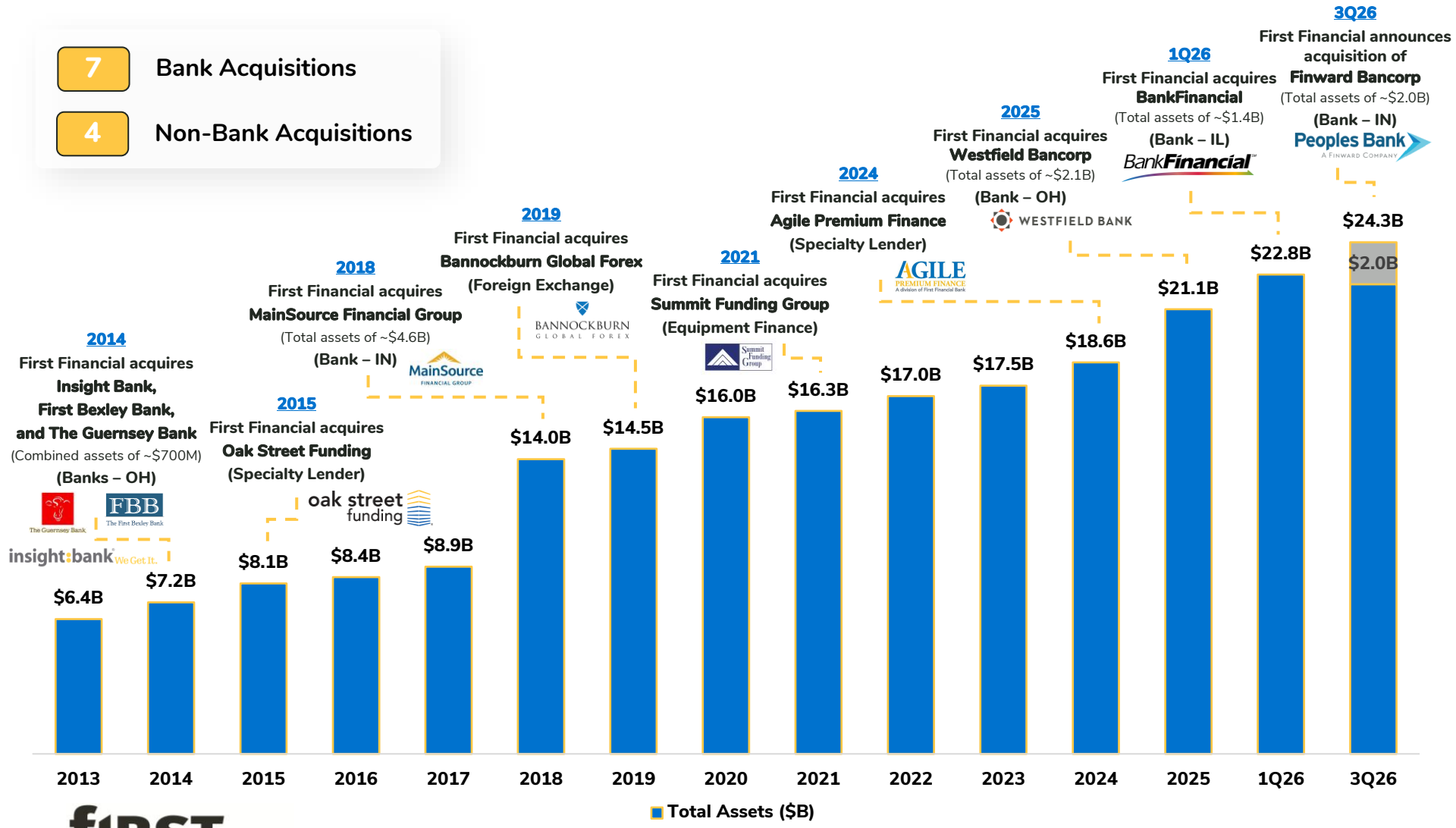
- ✓ **Proven & sustainable business model for more than 160 years**
  - Conservative operating philosophy with 144 consecutive quarters of profitability
  - Well managed through past credit cycles
- ✓ **Premier Midwest franchise with top quartile[1] profitability**
  - Top quartile[1] ROATCE, NIM, and fee income as a percentage of revenue
- ✓ **High quality balance sheet & robust capital position**
  - Low loan / deposit ratio and ~13% CET1 ratio as of 9/30/26
- ✓ **Prudent risk management & credit culture with strong asset quality**
  - Top quartile[1] ACL coverage and low NPAs
- ✓ **Track record of well-executed acquisitions with well-defined M&A strategy**
  - Includes both bank and non-bank acquisitions
- ✓ **Strategically distinct**
  - Local banking centered in legacy markets with a focus on growing core deposits
  - Sophisticated commercial and wealth banking model that positions us to be the alternative to “Big Banks”
  - National strategy that adds diverse fee streams while also complementing our Commercial Bank offerings
- ✓ **Experienced and proven management team**

[1] Profitability metrics measured against the KBW Nasdaq Regional Bank Index (“KRX”) as of or for the quarter ending 6/30/26.

an experienced & successful acquirer

7 Bank Acquisitions

4 Non-Bank Acquisitions



Note: Excludes ~$4 million acquisition of Brady Ware Capital in 2023.

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITY LENDER EQUAL HOUSING LENDER FDIC

a top quartile performer

☑ *Indicates 2Q26 Peer Top Quartile* ☑ *Indicates 2Q26 Peer Median*

		KRX Constituents			first financial bancorp	
		Bottom Quartile	Median	Top Quartile	2Q26	
Top Quartile & Diversified Profitability	ROAA[1]	1.13%	1.31%	1.51%	1.50%	☑
	ROATCE[1]	13.8%	15.2%	17.0%	19.7%	☑
	Net Interest Margin	3.25%	3.65%	3.85%	3.98%	☑
	Noninterest Income / Net Revenue[1]	13.5%	17.8%	20.8%	27.4%	☑
Liquid Balance Sheet With Strong Credit and Capital	Loans + HTM / Deposits	97%	93%	86%	78%	☑
	Cash + AFS Securities / Assets	14%	16%	22%	25%	☑
	ACL / Gross Loans	1.04%	1.20%	1.34%	1.38%	☑
	NPAs / Assets	0.59%	0.41%	0.29%	0.43%	☑
	CET1 Ratio	11.4%	12.3%	13.5%	12.3%	☑
	Total RBC Ratio	14.0%	14.7%	15.7%	15.8%	☑
	Consolidated CRE / RBC	270%	217%	171%	162%	☑

[1] First Financial's ratios are non-GAAP financial measures which management believes facilitate a better understanding of the Company's financial condition. See Appendix for Non-GAAP reconciliations.
Source: S&P Capital IQ Pro. All data calculated as of or for the quarter ending 6/30/26 unless otherwise noted.

consistent best-in-class earnings

	Return on Average Assets		Return on Tangible Common Equity		Earnings Per Share Growth	
	first financial bancorp	KRX Top Quartile[1]	first financial bancorp	KRX Top Quartile[1]	first financial bancorp	KRX Median[1]
1-Year	1.36% ✓ 73% Percentile Rank	1.38%	17.4% ✓ 87% Percentile Rank	16.1%	13% 35% Percentile Rank	24%
3-Year	1.34% ✓ 77% Percentile Rank	1.30%	18.2% ✓ 92% Percentile Rank	15.1%	1% 26% Percentile Rank	4%
5-Year	1.37% ✓ 84% Percentile Rank	1.31%	19.3% ✓ 95% Percentile Rank	15.6%	8% ✓ 76% Percentile Rank	4%
10-Year	1.31% ✓ 77% Percentile Rank	1.29%	17.3% ✓ 93% Percentile Rank	14.9%	8% ✓ 42% Percentile Rank	9%

[1]KRX calculated as the top quartile or median of the current 50 KRX constituents.
Source: S&P Capital IQ Pro. All data calculated as of or for the period ending 6/30/26 for comparability purposes.

first financial bancorp

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY LENDER EQUAL HOUSING LENDER FDIC

key company brands

Diversified financial holding company with comprehensive and innovative solutions for individuals and businesses

first financial bank

Full suite of diversified financial products for individuals and businesses

$22.3 Billion
Assets

$17.7 Billion
Deposits

yellow CARDINAL ADVISORY GROUP
a first financial company

Wealth & asset management services for individuals and businesses

$6.4 Billion
Assets Under Care

$37 Million
LTM Revenue

$530 Million
LTM Wealth Advisory Sales

BANNOCKBURN GLOBAL FOREX

Foreign currency advisory, hedge analytics, and transaction processing for closely held enterprises

12 Offices
Across the U.S.

$70 Million
LTM Revenue

oak street funding

Specialty lender to insurance industry, RIAs, CPAs

$1.1 Billion
Loans

$296 Million
Deposits

$281 Million
LTM Originations

SUMMIT Funding Group
a first financial bank company

Full-service equipment financing company

$1.5 Billion
Leases/Loans

$794 Million
LTM Originations

$87 Million
LTM Fee Income

AGILE PREMIUM FINANCE
A division of First Financial Bank

Specialty lender for commercial customers to finance insurance premiums

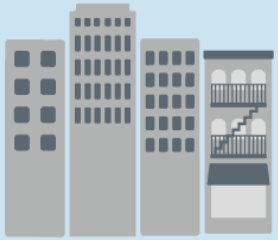
High Yielding and High Quality Portfolio

$381 Million
Loans

$730 Million
LTM Originations

complementary market centric strategies

METRO MARKETS



Louisville, KY
Columbus, OH
Indianapolis, IN
Dayton, OH
Cleveland, OH
Chicago, IL
Grand Rapids, MI

▼ Lower brand awareness
Low market share

Loans $4.6B / Deposits $5.1B

- Build relationships through becoming the Premier Business Bank
- Bank the business, the business owners and the employees
- Leads to targeted growth across all business lines

COMMUNITY MARKETS



Southern IN
South Central IN
Northwest IN
Northern OH

▲ High brand awareness
High market share

Loans $1.8B / Deposits $5.2B

- Deepen relationships
- Expand product offering
- Word-of-mouth referrals
- Leads to organic growth

HEADQUARTERS



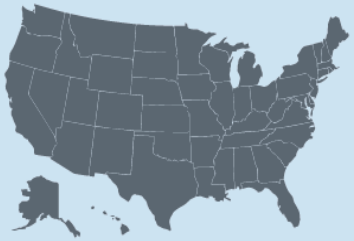
Greater Cincinnati
Northern KY

4th in market share
All business lines represented

Loans $4.6B / Deposits $7.1B

- Significant branch network
- Alternative to larger banks
- Mass player, based on brand, reputation and legacy
- Visible presence
- Large associate population

NATIONAL



Industry Specific

▶ Niche offering

Loans $3.0B / Deposits $0.3B
Fees* $100.3MM

- Oak Street Funding
- First Franchise Capital
- Bannockburn Global Forex
- Summit Funding Group
- Agile Premium Finance

Note: Financial data as of 9/30/26. Greater Cincinnati/Dayton loan and deposit balances include large public fund relationships, special assets, loan marks, and other out of market and corporately held balances.
*Includes leasing business expense

diversified lines of business

FIRST first financial bank

Go-to-Market Strategies

COMMERCIAL BANKING

Vision
To be known and operate as the Premier Business Bank and to provide banking solutions to the business, to the owner(s) and to their employees.

Target Audience
- High Demander
- $10MM-100MM Sales Revenue
- 50+ Employees

Current Portfolio

Relationships	7,899
Commitments	$5.6B
Balances	$3.5B
Business Deposits	$3.2B
Pub Fund Deposits	$2.0B

Value Proposition
We offer the products of our large regional competitors and, through personal relationship building, we become their trusted financial partner.

Business Line Goals
- Loan Growth
- Deposit Growth
- Fee Revenue

RETAIL BANKING

Vision
Achieve organic growth by creating long-lasting relationships by finding ways to help our clients succeed.

Target Audience
- Consumers
- Small Business

Goals
- Core Deposit Growth
- Client Retention
- Share of Wallet
- Business Banking

Value Proposition
Centers on our ability to remain relevant and offer the products and services that our larger competitors do, but with a level of client intimacy that is difficult for larger competitors to sustain. Our clients look to us as their partner, and we will seek to provide them every product and service that they need—but nothing that they don't.

Current Portfolio

	Consumer	Business	Pub Funds
Number of Clients	335,912	36,901	
Total Deposit Balance	$8.4B	$1.7B	$0.1B
Total Loan Balance	$1.3B	$0.4B	

MORTGAGE

Vision
To be known as a premier mortgage lender in our communities by leveraging our relationships, exceptional client service and a comprehensive selection of product options to assist our clients in obtaining their dream of homeownership.

Target Audience
Clients looking to purchase or refinance a home less than $2.5MM

Current State

Qtr Orig Volume	$222MM
Avg loan size	$304K
LTM Fees	$26.3MM
Servicing Portfolio	$4.8B
Loan Balance	$1.9B

Business Objectives
- Grow the business
- Focus on CRA
- Regulatory Compliance
- Customer Satisfaction

Value Proposition
A team of mortgage experts that deliver a fast, consistent experience for our clients by offering a suite of products to meet the needs of all client segments.

WEALTH MANAGEMENT

Vision
Utilize a holistic wealth management approach to grow, preserve and protect client wealth.

Target Audience

Mass Affluent:	$150-$499K HH income $250K-$1MM in AUM
High Net Worth:	$500K+ HH Income $1MM-$10MM in AUM
Plan Sponsors:	$1-$20MM Plan Size 100+ Participants

Value Proposition
- Convenient and efficient venue to comprehensively address all financial/banking needs
- Investment Management Process
- Expertise - Trust, Estate, Financial Planning, RPS
- Best in Class Brokerage Platform

Current Portfolio

	Relationships	Assets
Trust & Investments	2,927	$4.2B
Brokerage	4,689	$1.9B
RPS	76	$0.3B

Business Line Goals
- AUC Growth
- New Client Acquisition
- Maintain Top Quartile Investment Outcomes

INVESTMENT COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

Vision
To be recognized by professional developers and investors as the market leader. Through constant monitoring and application of our strategy we will build a high performing portfolio with acceptable risk and excellent financial returns.

Current Loan Portfolio

Central & Northern OH	$0.7B
Southern OH	$1.7B
Indiana	$0.4B
Chicago	$0.1B
Healthcare	$0.3B
Small Exposure	$0.1B
Affordable	$0.1B
Other	$0.4B
Total	$3.8B

Current Deposit Portfolio

Total	$0.4B

Business Line Goals
- Loan Growth
- Swap Revenue
- Deposit Growth

Target Audience
Professional investors/developers with proven track-record to weather down-cycles

COMMERCIAL FINANCE

Vision
To be the market leader in client experience for commercial financing by delivering unique and diverse product offerings through cutting-edge technology and exceptional client service.

Target Audience
- Insurance Businesses
- Registered Investment Advisors
- Multi-Unit Restaurant Franchisees
- Certified Public Accountants
- Commercial Automotive Portfolios
- Clients looking for Equipment Leasing and Financing Expertise
- Commercial customers with insurance premium financing needs

Current Portfolio

Oak Street Funding	$1.1B
First Franchise Capital	$0.2B
Summit Funding Group[1]	$1.5B
[1] Includes operating leases	
Agile Premium Finance	$0.4B
Total	$3.2B
Deposits	$0.3B

Business Line Goals
- Portfolio Growth
- Revenue Growth

Value Proposition
Fulfill the unique financing needs of our customers while providing extraordinary service and industry expertise

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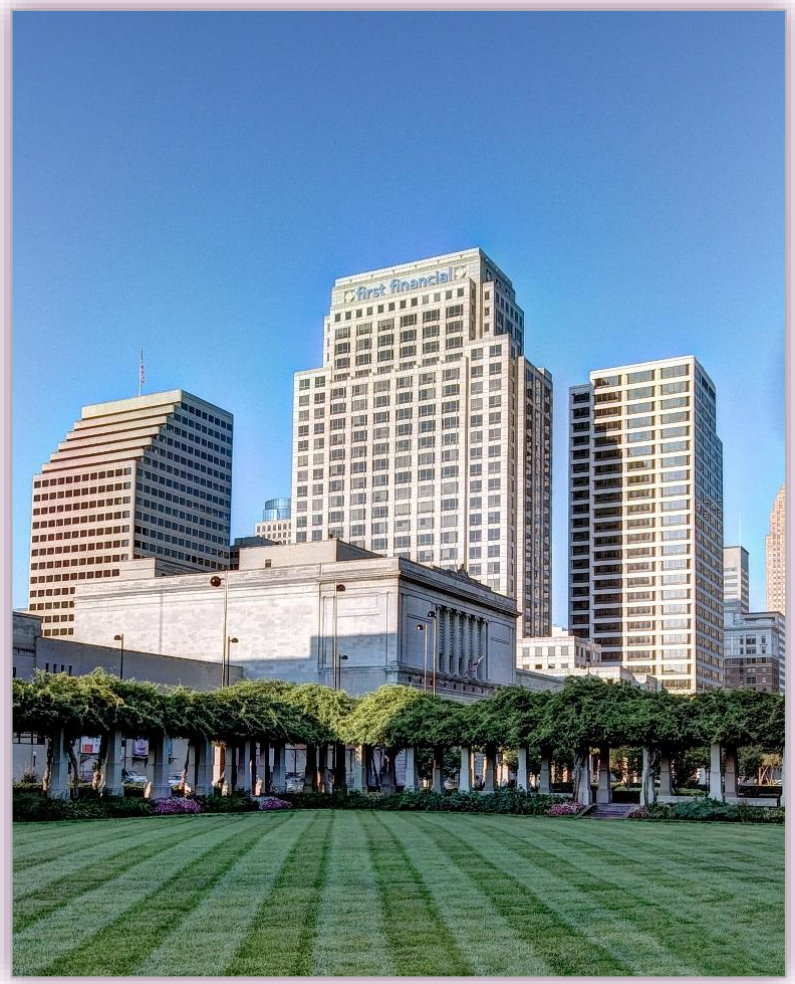


About First Financial Bancorp

Financial Performance

Appendix

3Q 2026 results

144th Consecutive Quarter of Profitability

Profitability

- Net income – $81.2 million or $0.77 per diluted share. Adjusted[1] net income – $87.8 million or $0.84 per diluted share
- Return on average assets – 1.44%. Adjusted[1] return on average assets – 1.56%
- Return on average shareholders' equity – 10.87%. Adjusted[1] return on average shareholders' equity – 11.76%
- Return on average tangible common equity – 18.67%. Adjusted[1] return on average tangible common equity – 20.19%

Income Statement

- Net interest income – $196.3 million
- Net interest margin of 4.05% on a GAAP basis; 4.07% on a fully tax equivalent basis[1]
- Noninterest income – $77.7 million; $77.6 million as adjusted[1]
- Noninterest expense – $165.7 million; $156.9 million as adjusted[1]
- Efficiency ratio – 60.5%. Adjusted[1] efficiency ratio – 57.3%
- Effective tax rate of 18.2%. Adjusted[1] effective tax rate of 18.8%

Balance Sheet

- EOP assets decreased $125.5 million compared to the linked quarter to $22.3 billion
- EOP loans increased $170.2 million compared to the linked quarter to $13.9 billion; 4.9% on an annualized basis
- Average deposits increased $52.4 million compared to the linked quarter to $17.7 billion
- EOP investment securities decreased $106.2 million compared to the linked quarter
- Loan to deposit ratio – 78.6%

Asset Quality

- Provision expense – $8.9 million
- Net charge-offs – $7.2 million. NCOs / Avg. Loans – 0.21% annualized
- Classified Assets / Total Assets – 1.26%
- NPA / Total Assets – 0.45%
- ACL / Total Loans – 1.38%

Capital

- Total capital ratio – 15.83%
- Tier 1 common equity ratio – 12.54%
- Tangible common equity ratio – 7.81%. Adjusted[1] tangible common equity ratio – 9.65%
- Tangible book value per share – $15.65

[1] Non-GAAP financial measure which management believes facilitates a better understanding of the Company's financial condition. See Appendix for Non-GAAP reconciliation.

3Q 2026 highlights

- **Received Federal regulatory approval for Finward acquisition**
  - Expected close 1/1/27; subject to the receipt of state regulatory and Finward shareholder approvals

- **Strong adjusted[1] quarterly earnings driven by robust net interest margin and record adjusted[1] noninterest income**
  - Adjusted[1] earnings per share – $0.84; 11% increase from the third quarter of 2025 and highest in Company history
  - Adjusted[1] return on assets – 1.56%
  - Adjusted[1] pre-tax, pre-provision return on assets – 2.08%
  - Adjusted[1] return on average tangible common equity – 20.2%

- **Solid loan growth during the quarter**
  - Total loan balances increased $170.2 million, or 4.9% on an annualized basis, compared to the linked quarter
  - Quarterly growth driven by C&I, Consumer and Summit

- **Moderate deposit growth during the quarter**
  - Average deposit balances increased $52.4 million, or 1.2% on an annualized basis
  - Growth in interest-bearing demand accounts, money market accounts and retail CDs offset a decline in brokered CDs, savings, and noninterest-bearing accounts
  - Excluding brokered CDs, average deposits increased $144.0 million
  - Average noninterest bearing deposits were 20.3% of average total deposits

- **Net interest margin (FTE)[1] of 4.07% increased 9 bps from linked quarter**
  - 4 bp increase in cost of funds
  - 13 bp increase in asset yields

[1] Non-GAAP financial measure which management believes facilitates a better understanding of the Company's financial condition. See Appendix for Non-GAAP reconciliations.

3Q 2026 highlights

- **Noninterest income of $77.7 million; $77.6 million as adjusted[1]**
  - Double digit percentage growth from linked quarter in wealth management income, bankcard income, and client derivative fees
  - Foreign exchange income increased $4.4 million, or 33.5% from linked quarter
  - Strong leasing business income of $23.0 million

- **Adjusted[1] noninterest expense of $156.9 million; 5.2% increase from second quarter**
  - Adjustments[1] include $7.5 million of acquisition related expenses, $0.8 million of amortization of tax credit investments and $0.6 million of other expenses not expected to recur
  - Increase from prior quarter driven by higher compensation costs tied to fee income, credit collection costs and healthcare costs
  - Efficiency ratio of 60.5%; 57.3% as adjusted[1]

- **Credit quality in line with expectations**
  - Total ACL of $209.8 million; provision expense of $8.9 million
    - Loans and leases - ACL of $191.7 million
      - 1.38% of total loans
    - Unfunded Commitments - ACL of $18.2 million
  - $7.2 million in net charge-offs; 0.21% of loans on an annualized basis
  - Nonperforming assets increased 2 bps to 0.45% of total assets
  - Classified assets increased to 1.26% of total assets primarily due to the downgrade of a single ICRE relationship

- **Capital ratios remain strong despite the significant decline in AOCI**
  - Total capital ratio of 15.83%
  - Tier 1 common equity of 12.54%; 21 bp increase from linked quarter
  - Tangible book value of $15.65
  - Tangible common equity of 7.81%; 9.65%[1] excluding ($387.1) million of AOCI
  - Board of Directors approved quarterly dividend of $0.26 to be paid in 4Q26

[1] Non-GAAP financial measure which management believes facilitates a better understanding of the Company's financial condition. See Appendix for Non-GAAP reconciliations.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY LENDER EQUAL HOUSING LENDER FDIC

adjusted net income[1]

The table below lists certain adjustments that the Company believes are significant to understanding its quarterly performance.

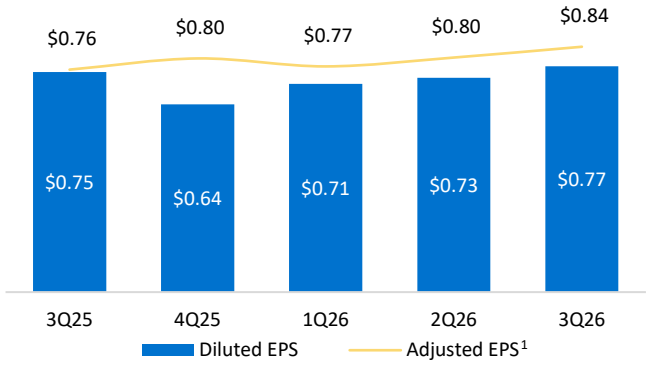
	3Q 2026		2Q 2026	
	As Reported	Adjusted [1]	As Reported	Adjusted [1]
Net interest income	$ 196,256	$ 196,256	$ 190,377	$ 190,377
Provision for credit losses-loans and leases	$ 8,975	$ 8,975	$ 12,933	$ 12,933
Provision for credit losses-unfunded commitments	$ (72)	$ (72)	$ (4,743)	$ (4,743)
Noninterest income	$ 77,658	$ 77,658	$ 73,791	$ 73,791
less: gains (losses) on security transactions	-	247 A	-	(336) A
less: gain on bargain purchase	-	- A	-	3,189 A
less: other	-	(191) A	-	(986) A
Total noninterest income	$ 77,658	$ 77,602	$ 73,791	$ 71,924
Noninterest expense	$ 165,736	$ 165,736	$ 161,542	$ 161,542
less: amortization of tax credit investments	-	774 A	-	669 A
less: merger-related expenses	-	7,460 A	-	11,641 A
less: other	-	623 A	-	129 A
Total noninterest expense	$ 165,736	$ 156,879	$ 161,542	$ 149,103
Income before income taxes	$ 99,275	$ 108,076	$ 94,436	$ 105,008
Income tax expense	$ 18,093	$ 18,093	$ 17,980	$ 17,980
plus: after-tax impact of tax credit investment @ 21%	-	331	-	918
plus: tax effect of adjustments (A) @ 21% statutory rate	-	1,848	-	2,220
Total income tax expense	$ 18,093	$ 20,272	$ 17,980	$ 21,118
Net income	$ 81,182	$ 87,804	$ 76,456	$ 83,890
Net earnings per share - diluted	$ 0.77	$ 0.84	$ 0.73	$ 0.80
Pre-tax, pre-provision return on average assets	1.92%	2.08%	1.84%	2.03%

[1] Non-GAAP financial measure which management believes facilitates a better understanding of the Company's financial condition. See Appendix for Non-GAAP reconciliations.

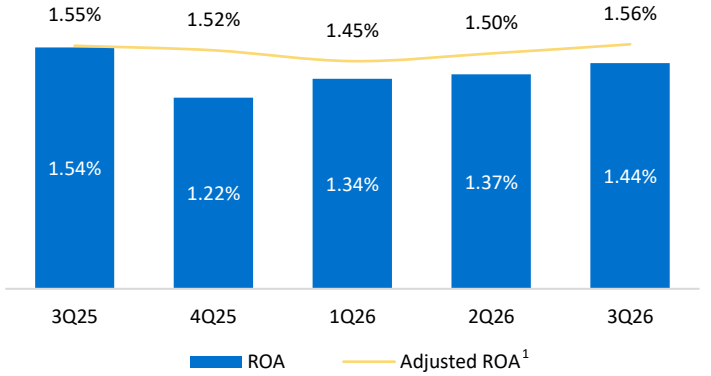
All dollars shown in thousands, except per share amounts

profitability

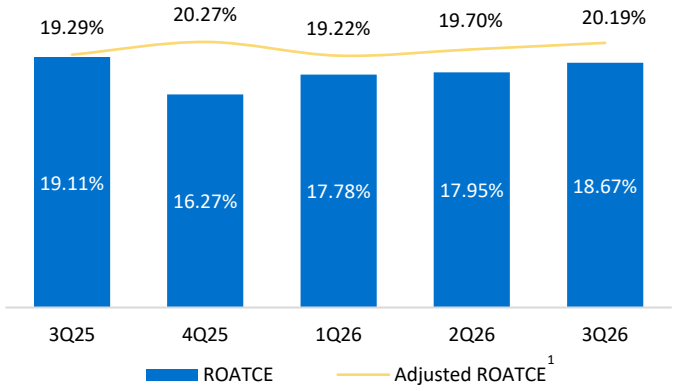
Diluted EPS



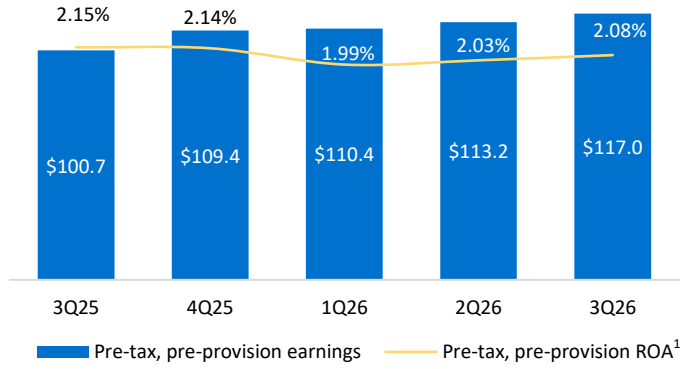
Return on Average Assets



Return on Avg Tangible Common Equity



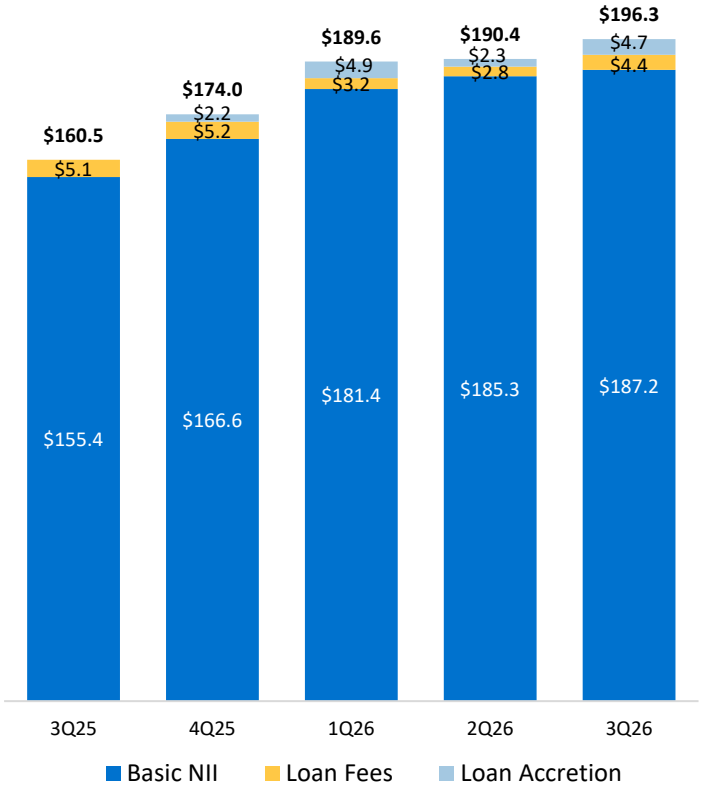
Adjusted[1] Pre-tax, Pre-Provision Earnings



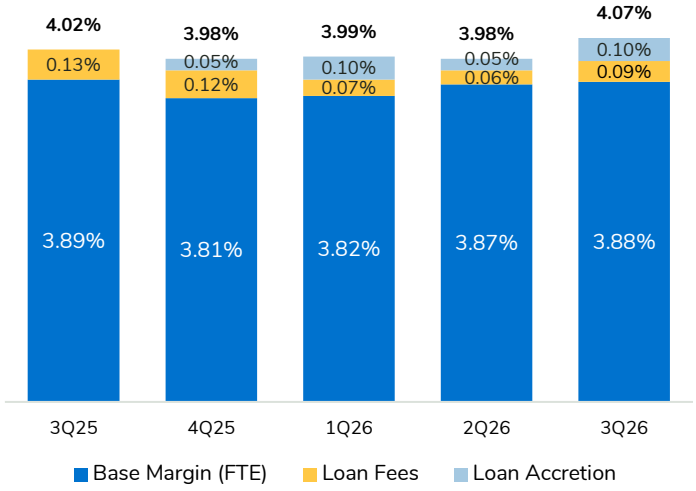
[1] Non-GAAP financial measure which management believes facilitates a better understanding of the Company's financial condition. See Appendix for Non-GAAP reconciliation.

net interest income & margin

Net Interest Income



Net Interest Margin (FTE)



3Q26 NIM (FTE) Progression [1]

2Q26	**3.98%**
Asset yields/mix	0.08%
Loan accretion	0.05%
Funding costs/mix	-0.04%
3Q26	**4.07%**

[1] Non-GAAP financial measure which management believes facilitates a better understanding of the Company's financial condition. See Appendix for Non-GAAP reconciliation.

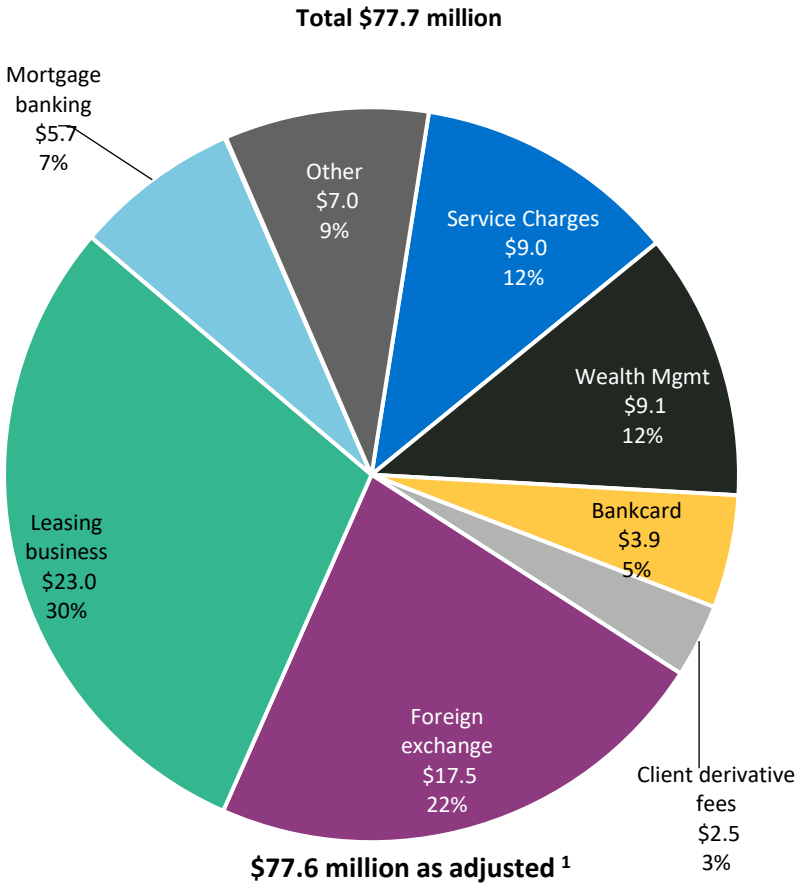
All dollars shown in millions

first financial bancorp

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY LENDER EQUAL HOUSING LENDER FDIC

noninterest income

Noninterest Income



3Q26 Highlights

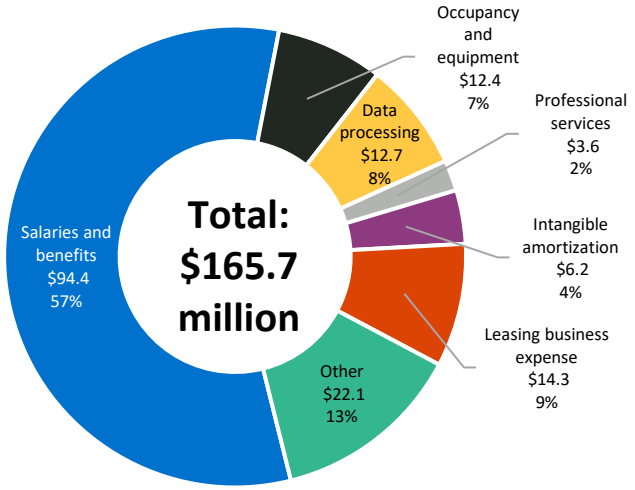
- Adjusted[1] noninterest income 28% of net revenue
- Foreign exchange income increased $4.4 million, or 33.5%, from second quarter to $17.5 million
- Wealth management fees of $9.1 million increased $0.9 million, or 10.7%, compared to the second quarter
- Client derivative fee income increased $1.1 million, or 74.0%, from the linked quarter to $2.5 million
- Bankcard income of $3.9 million increased $0.8 million, or 27.4%, compared to the second quarter
- Leasing business income increased $0.2 million, or 1.0%, from the linked quarter to $23.0 million

[1] Non-GAAP financial measure which management believes facilitates a better understanding of the Company's financial condition. See Appendix for Non-GAAP reconciliations.

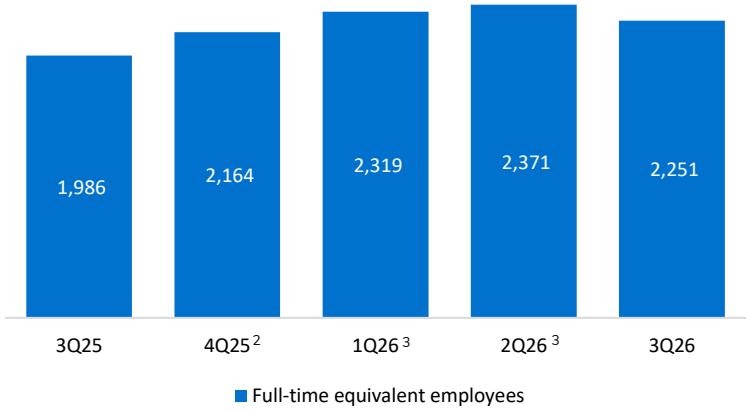
All dollars shown in millions

noninterest expense

Noninterest Expense



Full-time Equivalent Employees

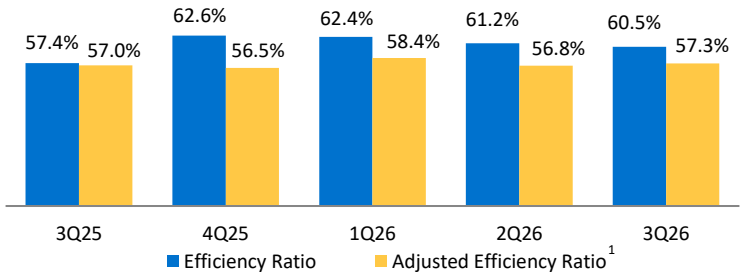


[2] Includes 169 FTE from Westfield acquisition
[3] Includes 156 FTE from BankFinancial acquisition in 1Q and 154 FTE in 2Q

3Q26 Highlights

- Adjusted[1] noninterest expense increased $7.8 million, or 5.2% from linked quarter
  - Efficiency ratio of 60.5%; 57.3% as adjusted[1]
  - Increase driven by compensation costs tied to fee income, as well as increases in credit collection and healthcare costs
- $8.9 million of adjustments[1] include:
  - $7.5 million of acquisition related expenses
  - $0.8 million of amortization of tax credit investments
  - $0.6 million of other costs not expected to recur

Efficiency Ratio

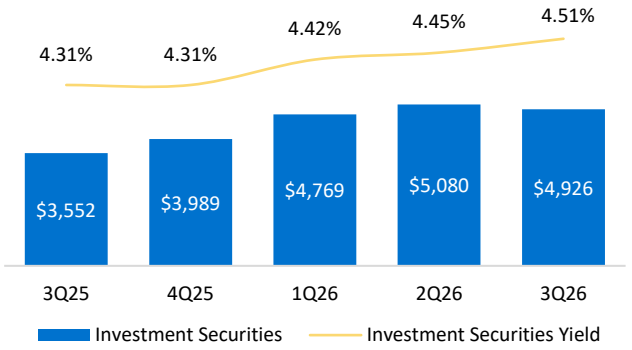


[1] Non-GAAP financial measure which management believes facilitates a better understanding of the Company's financial condition. See Appendix for Non-GAAP reconciliations.

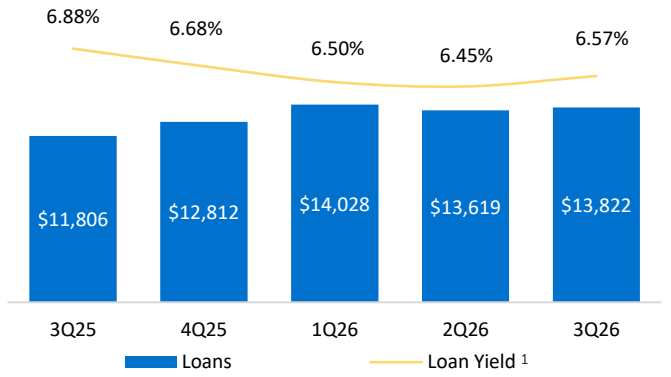
All dollars shown in millions

average balance sheet

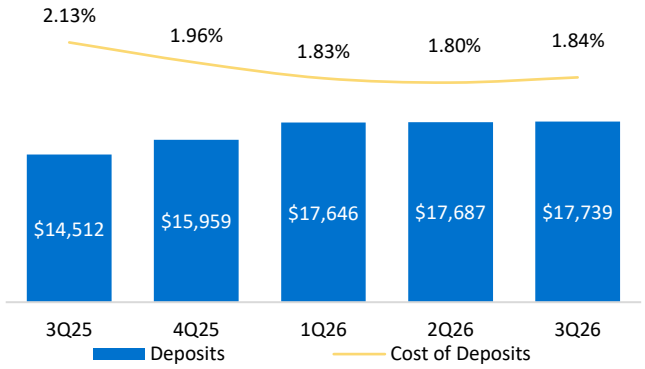
Average Securities



Average Loans



Average Deposits

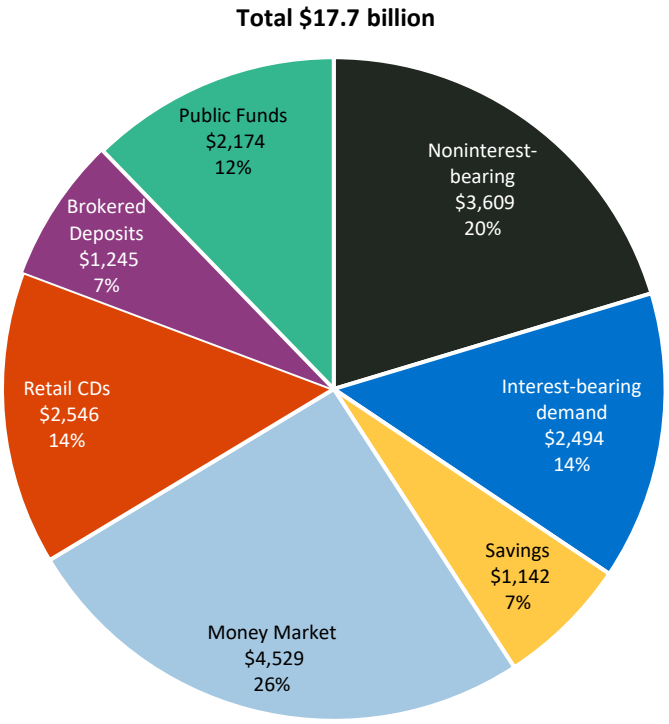


All dollars shown in millions

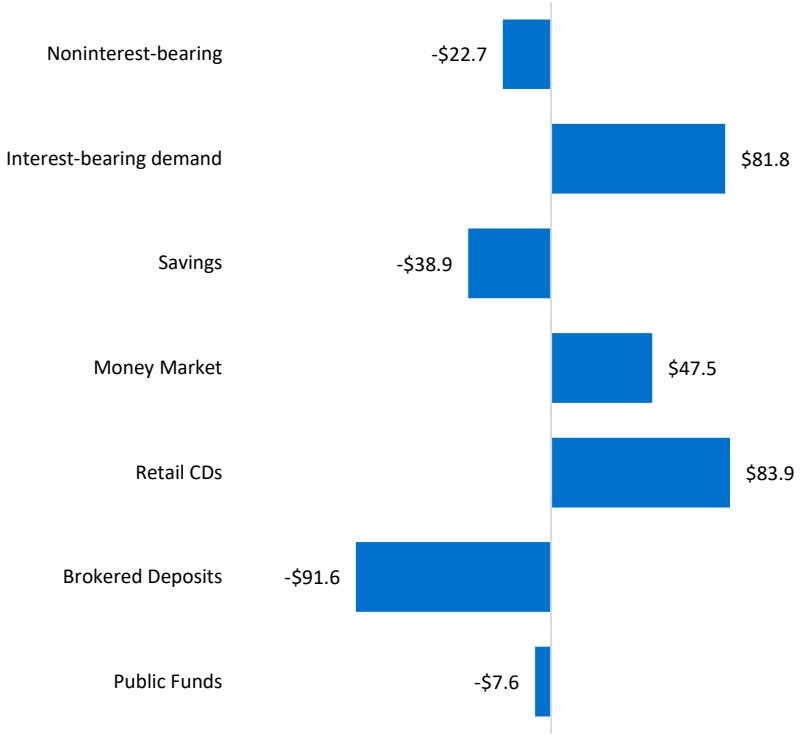
[1] Includes loans fees and loan accretion

deposits

Deposit Product Mix (Avg)



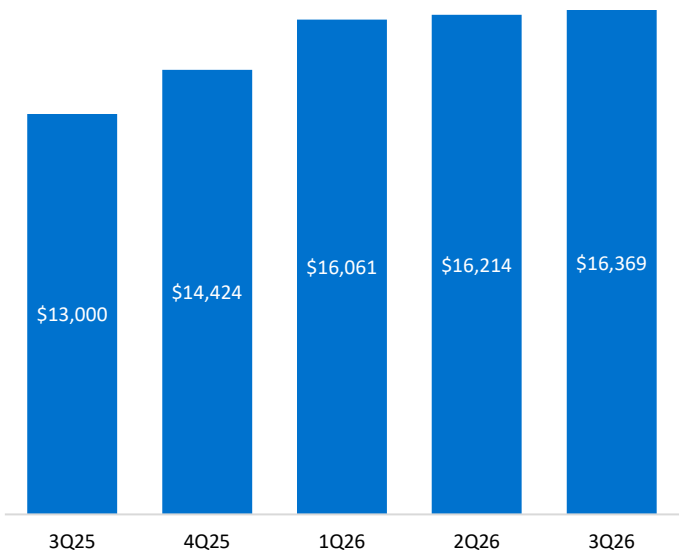
3Q26 Average Deposit Progression



All dollars shown in millions

average deposit trends

Average Deposit Balances



Uninsured Deposits

Uninsured deposits (per call report instructions)	$	7,577
Less: Public funds		2,002
Less: Intercompany deposits		532
Adjusted uninsured deposits		5,043
Borrowing capacity		6,530
Borrowing capacity in excess of adjusted uninsured deposits	$	1,487

Borrowing capacity as a % of adjusted uninsured deposits	129.5%
Adjusted uninsured deposits to total deposits	28.5%

All dollars shown in millions

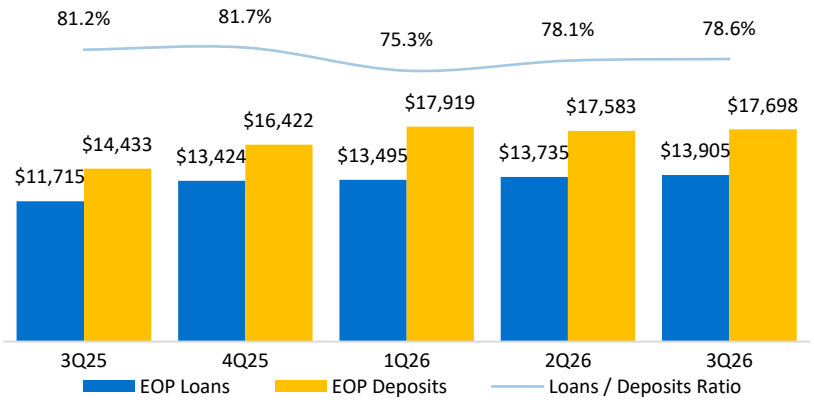
liquidity

Borrowing Capacity

FHLB borrowing availability	$	1,350,058
Fed Discount Window availability		788,167
Holding Company LOC		40,000
Brokered CDs/Deposit placement services		3,276,118
Fed funds		1,076,000
Total as of September 30, 2026	$	6,530,343

All dollars shown in thousands

Loan to Deposit Ratio

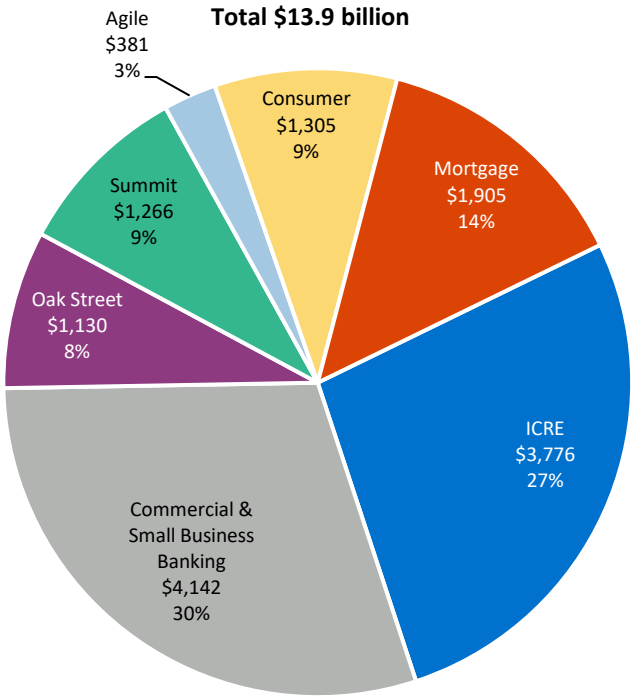


Cash/Investment Liquidity

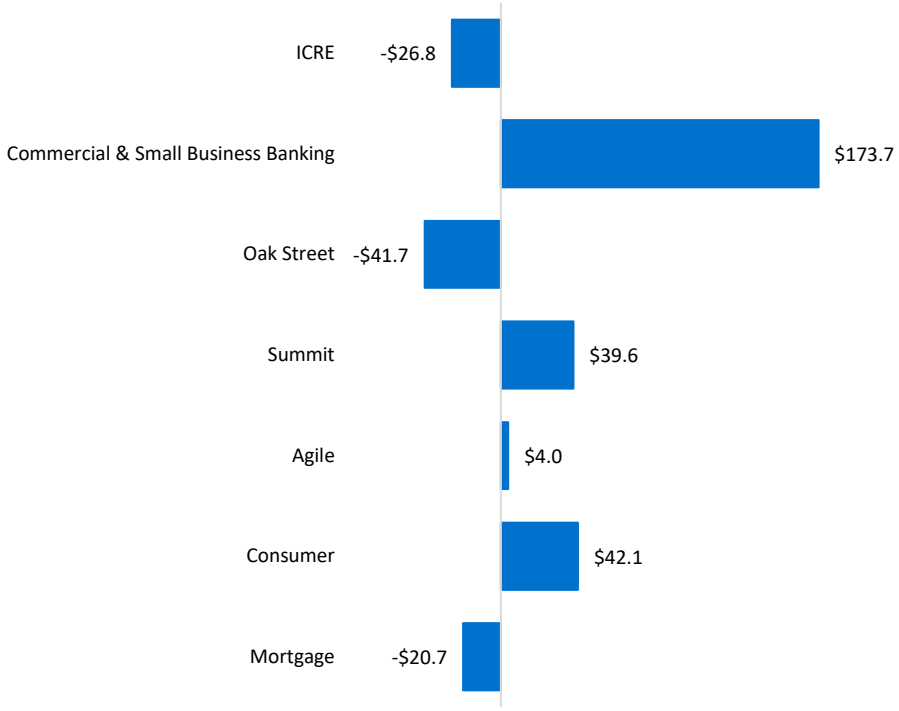
- Interest-bearing deposits with other banks of $567 million
- Investment securities portfolio:
  - 99.2% of investment portfolio classified as available-for-sale
  - $751.9 million of expected cash flow from securities portfolio in next 12 months
  - $448.0 million of floating rate securities with minimal losses
  - Portfolio duration of 4.7 years at September 30, 2026

loan portfolio

Loan LOB Mix (EOP)



Net Loan Change-LOB (Linked Quarter)



Total growth/(decline): $170.2 million

All dollars shown in millions

loan concentrations

C&I and Owner Occupied CRE Loans by Sector[1]

NAICS Sector	9/30/26	% of Total Loans
Finance and Insurance	$1,334.5	9.6%
Manufacturing	1,135.1	8.2%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	663.7	4.8%
Construction	658.5	4.7%
Health Care and Social Assistance	379.8	2.7%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	371.9	2.7%
Wholesale Trade	316.9	2.3%
Retail Trade	304.1	2.2%
Accommodation and Food Services	293.0	2.1%
Transportation and Warehousing	258.1	1.9%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management	212.3	1.5%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	192.1	1.4%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	120.4	0.9%
Information	105.4	0.8%
Utilities	101.3	0.7%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	82.4	0.6%
Educational Services	59.5	0.4%
Public Administration	59.5	0.4%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	53.6	0.4%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	51.6	0.4%
Other	0.4	0.0%
Grand Total	**$6,754.1**	**48.6%**

Investor CRE Loans by Property Type

Property Type	9/30/26	% of Total Loans
Residential Multi Family 5+	$1,073.8	7.7%
Retail Property	875.4	6.3%
Industrial	429.4	3.1%
REIT & Other	353.4	2.5%
Office	346.2	2.5%
Hospital/Nursing Home	274.0	2.0%
Land	116.6	0.8%
Other Real Estate	81.1	0.6%
Hotel	75.9	0.5%
Industrial	54.6	0.4%
All Business Assets	49.1	0.4%
Residential 1-4 Family	46.6	0.3%
Grand Total	**$3,776.1**	**27.2%**

- CRE balances were approximately 170% of risk-based capital at September 30th

[1] Excludes Agile Premium Finance

All dollars shown in millions

area of focus – NDFI exposure

NDFI

- Loans to NDFI totaled $451.0 million, or 3.2% of the total loan portfolio
- 96% of NDFI loans pass rated at 9/30
- Average loan size is $9.4 million; median size is $8.1 million
- Exposure primarily contained to Mortgage Credit Intermediaries (primarily REITs)
  - 58% of total NFDI loans

Private Credit Exposure

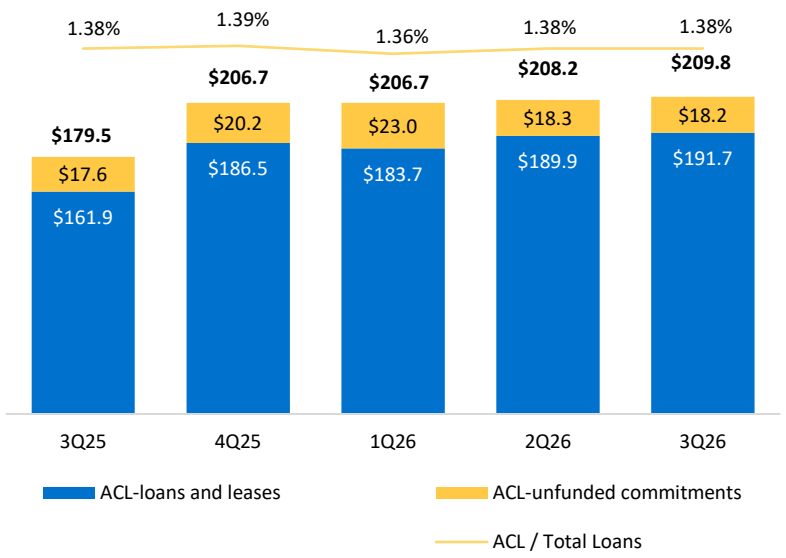
- Direct Exposure
  - $135.3 million outstanding
  - Primarily subscription lines to well-established funds that are either an institutional investor or publicly traded
  - $210.0 million committed

	$ in Millions	% Total Loans
NDFI Exposure Summary	$451.0	3.2%
Mortgage Credit	$262.6	1.9%
REIT, Mortgage Warehouse		
Business Credit	$135.3	1.0%
Securitization Lines		
Private Equity Funds	$29.7	0.2%
Subscription Lines		
Consumer Credit Intermediaries	$11.1	0.1%
Consumer Credit Lines		
Other Loans	$12.3	0.1%
Community Development, Farm Credit Lines		

All dollars shown in millions

allowance for credit losses

ACL / Total Loans



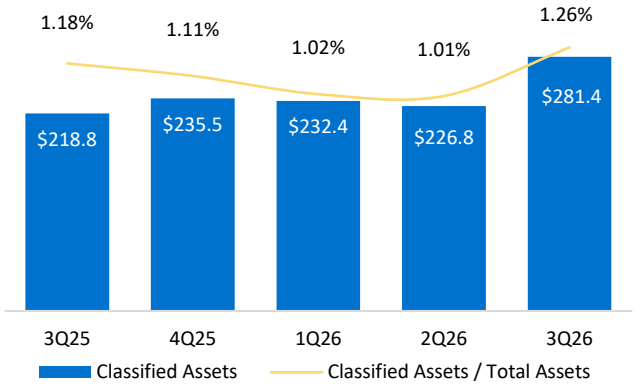
All dollars shown in millions

3Q26 Highlights

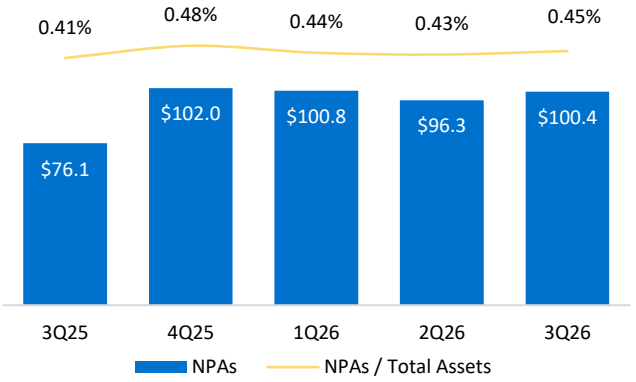
- $209.8 million combined ACL; $8.9 million combined provision expense
- $191.7 million ACL – loans and leases
- ACL 1.38% of total loans; unchanged from second quarter
- Utilized Moody's September baseline forecast in quantitative model
- $18.2 million ACL – unfunded commitments

asset quality

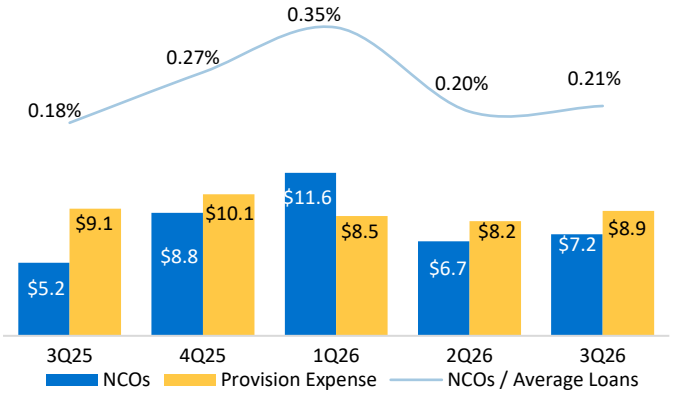
Classified Assets / Total Assets



Nonperforming Assets / Total Assets



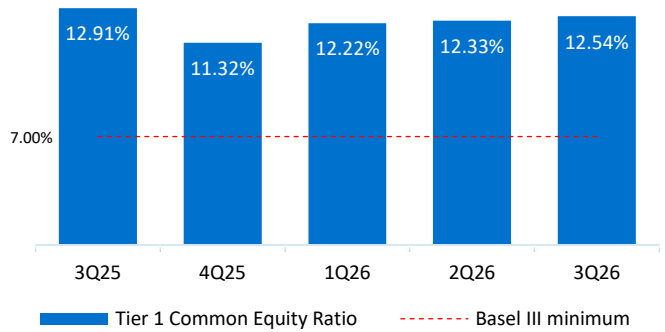
Net Charge Offs & Provision Expense[1]



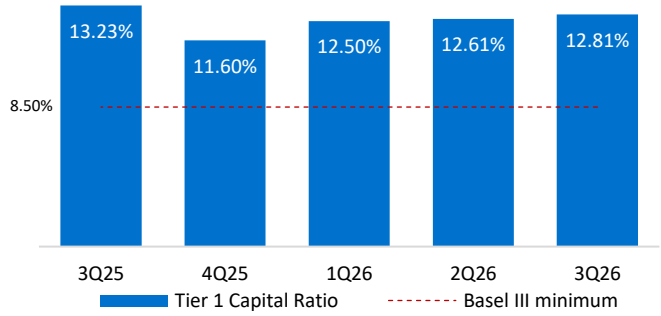
[1] Provision includes both loans & leases and unfunded commitments
All dollars shown in millions

capital

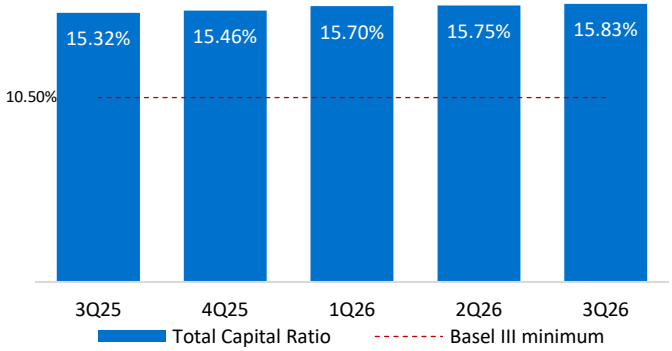
Tier 1 Common Equity Ratio



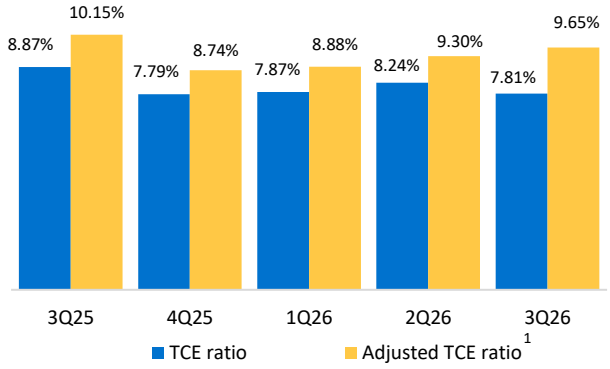
Tier 1 Capital Ratio



Total Capital Ratio



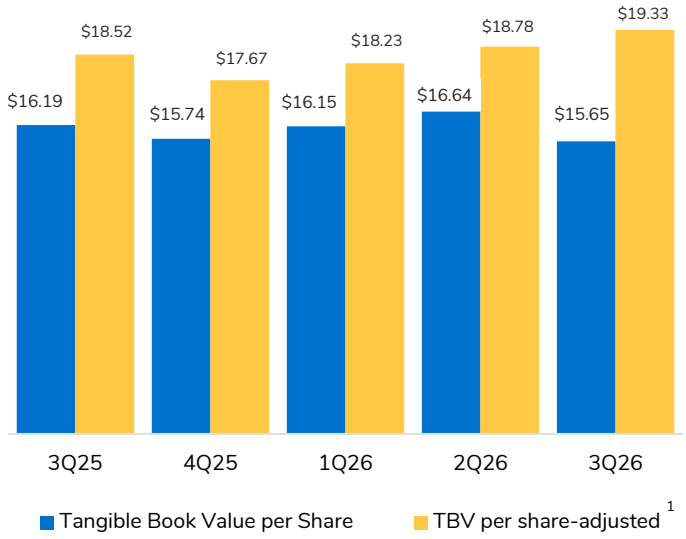
Tangible Common Equity Ratio



9/30 Risk Weighted Assets = $16,693,251
All capital numbers are considered preliminary.
[1] Non-GAAP financial measure which management believes facilitates a better understanding of the Company's financial condition. See Appendix for Non-GAAP reconciliation. Adjusted TCE excludes impact from AOCI

capital strategy

Tangible Book Value Per Share



- Decrease in TBV per share from linked quarter driven by unrealized losses on the investment portfolio

Strategy & Deployment

- 3.3% annualized dividend yield as of September 30th
- 34% of 3Q26 earnings returned to shareholders through common dividend
- Most recent internal stress testing indicates capital ratios above regulatory minimums in all modeled scenarios
- No shares repurchased in 3Q26
- Common dividend of $0.26

[1] Non-GAAP financial measure which management believes facilitates a better understanding of the Company's financial condition. See Appendix for Non-GAAP reconciliation. Adjusted TBV excludes impact from AOCI

outlook commentary[1]

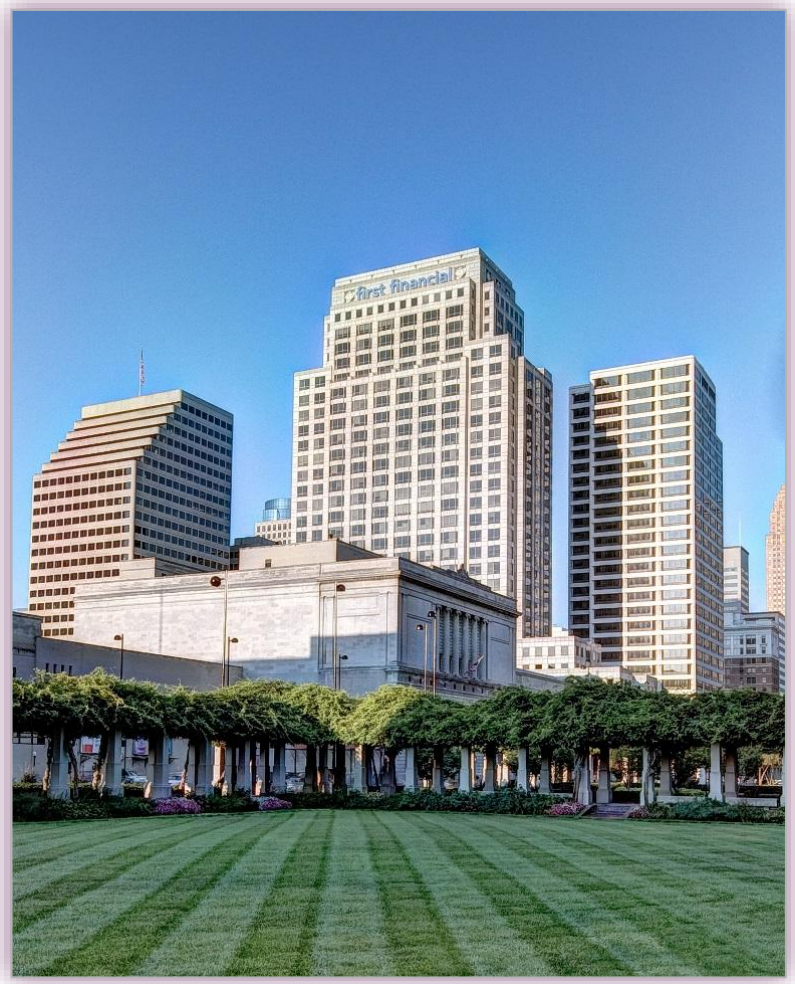
Balance Sheet	• Loan balances expected to increase low to mid single digits on an annualized basis • Core deposit balances expected to increase low single digits
Net Interest Margin	• Expected to be 4.08% - 4.12%; assumes 25 bp December rate hike • Includes 6 bps of loan accretion income; compared to 10 bps in Q3
Credit	• Stable credit costs expected • Stable ACL coverage as a percentage of loans expected

Noninterest Income	• Total expected fee income of $75 - 78 million
	  • Includes $18 - 20 million foreign exchange
	  • Includes $21 - 23 million leasing business income

Noninterest Expense	• Total noninterest expense expected to be $150 - 153 million • Incentive expense will fluctuate with fee income
Capital	• Common dividend unchanged at $0.26

[1] See Forward Looking Statement Disclosure on page 2-4 of this presentation for a discussion of factors that could affect management's expectations and results in future periods.

presentation contents



About First Financial Bancorp

Financial Performance

Appendix

appendix: our markets

- **Greater Cincinnati/Dayton**
  - Loans $5.1 billion
  - Deposits $8.1 billion
  - Deposit Market Share #4 (3.7%)
  - Banking Centers 46
  - Fortune 500 Companies 8
- **Columbus, OH**
  - Loans $1.3 billion
  - Deposits $0.4 billion
  - Deposit Market Share #18 (0.4%)
  - Banking Centers 4
  - Fortune 500 Companies 5
- **Cleveland/Akron/Canton**
  - Loans $1.1 billion
  - Deposits $1.3 billion
  - Deposit Market Share #15 (0.6%)
  - Banking Centers 8
  - Fortune 500 Companies 9
- **Chicago**
  - Loans $0.2 billion
  - Deposits $1.3 billion
  - Deposit Market Share #35 (0.4%)
  - Banking Centers 15
  - Fortune 500 Companies 30
- **Indianapolis**
  - Loans $1.0 billion
  - Deposits $0.5 billion
  - Deposit Market Share #15 (1.0%)
  - Banking Centers 7
  - Fortune 500 Companies 3
- **Louisville**
  - Loans $0.5 billion
  - Deposits $0.5 billion
  - Deposit Market Share #13 (1.1%)
  - Banking Centers 10
  - Fortune 500 Companies 3
- **Grand Rapids**
  - Loans $0.05 billion
  - Deposits $0.09 billion
  - Fortune 500 Companies 1
- **Community Markets**
  - Loans $1.8 billion
  - Deposits $5.2 billion
  - Banking Centers 61
  - Fortune 500 Companies 1
- **National**
  - Loans $3.0 billion
  - Deposits $0.3 billion

All numbers as of 9/30/2026, except fortune 500 companies as of 7/1/2026 and deposit market share as of 6/30/2026. Greater Cincinnati/Dayton loan and deposit balances include large public fund relationships, special assets, loan marks, and other out of market and corporately held balances.

appendix: non-GAAP to GAAP reconciliation

Net interest income and net interest margin - fully tax equivalent

	Three months ended				
	Sep. 30, 2026	June 30, 2026	Mar. 31, 2026	Dec. 31, 2025	Sep. 30, 2025
Net interest income	$ 196,256	$ 190,377	$ 189,610	$ 173,995	$ 160,486
Tax equivalent adjustment	1,114	1,161	1,186	1,227	1,248
Net interest income - tax equivalent	$ 197,370	$ 191,538	$ 190,796	$ 175,222	$ 161,734
Average earning assets	$ 19,247,365	$ 19,304,416	$ 19,393,679	$ 17,448,460	$ 15,968,153
Net interest margin[1]	4.05 %	3.96 %	3.97 %	3.96 %	3.99 %
Net interest margin (fully tax equivalent)[1]	4.07 %	3.98 %	3.99 %	3.98 %	4.02 %

[1] Margins are calculated using net interest income annualized divided by average earning assets.

The tax equivalent adjustment to net interest income recognizes the income tax savings when comparing taxable and tax-exempt assets and assumes a 21% tax rate. Management believes that it is a standard practice in the banking industry to present net interest margin and net interest income on a fully tax equivalent basis. Therefore, management believes these measures provide useful information to investors by allowing them to make peer comparisons. Management also uses these measures to make peer comparisons.

appendix: non-GAAP to GAAP reconciliation

Additional non-GAAP ratios

(Dollars in thousands, except per share data)	Three months ended, Sep. 30, 2026	June 30, 2026	Mar. 31, 2026	Dec. 31, 2025	Sep. 30, 2025
Net income (a)	$ 81,182	$ 76,456	$ 74,445	$ 62,393	$ 71,923
Average total shareholders' equity	2,963,270	2,951,237	2,947,585	2,695,581	2,575,203
Less:					
Goodwill	(1,099,934)	(1,099,742)	(1,099,543)	(1,069,781)	(1,007,656)
Other intangibles	(138,310)	(143,403)	(149,631)	(104,184)	(74,448)
Average tangible equity (b)	1,725,026	1,708,092	1,698,411	1,521,616	1,493,099
Total shareholders' equity	2,881,482	2,987,488	2,940,625	2,769,216	2,631,855
Less:					
Goodwill	(1,099,936)	(1,099,936)	(1,099,543)	(1,099,524)	(1,007,656)
Other intangibles	(135,077)	(140,705)	(145,927)	(118,832)	(73,797)
Ending tangible common equity (c)	1,646,469	1,746,847	1,695,155	1,550,860	1,550,402
Less:					
AOCI	(387,095)	(223,720)	(217,430)	(189,942)	(223,000)
Adjusted ending tangible common equity (d)	2,033,564	1,970,567	1,912,585	1,740,802	1,773,402
Total assets	22,314,155	22,439,679	22,779,815	21,129,379	18,554,506
Less:					
Goodwill	(1,099,936)	(1,099,936)	(1,099,543)	(1,099,524)	(1,007,656)
Other intangibles	(135,077)	(140,705)	(145,927)	(118,832)	(73,797)
Ending tangible assets (e)	21,079,142	21,199,038	21,534,345	19,911,023	17,473,053
Risk-weighted assets (f)	16,693,251	16,456,311	16,127,377	15,890,363	14,166,935
Total average assets	22,321,112	22,391,439	22,459,721	20,256,539	18,566,188
Less:					
Goodwill	(1,099,934)	(1,099,742)	(1,099,543)	(1,069,781)	(1,007,656)
Other intangibles	(138,310)	(143,403)	(149,631)	(104,184)	(74,448)
Average tangible assets (g)	$ 21,082,868	$ 21,148,294	$ 21,210,547	$ 19,082,574	$ 17,484,084
Ending shares outstanding (h)	105,188,323	104,956,458	104,932,829	98,521,726	95,757,250
Ratios					
Return on average tangible shareholders' equity (a)/(b)	18.67%	17.95%	17.78%	16.27%	19.11%
Ending tangible common equity as a percent of:					
Ending tangible assets (c)/(e)	7.81%	8.24%	7.87%	7.79%	8.87%
Risk-weighted assets (c)/(f)	9.86%	10.62%	10.51%	9.76%	10.94%
Adjusted ending tangible common equity to ending tangible assets (d)/(e)	9.65%	9.30%	8.88%	8.74%	10.15%
Average tangible equity as a percent of average tangible assets (b)/(g)	8.18%	8.08%	8.01%	7.97%	8.54%
Tangible book value per share (c)/(h)	$ 15.65	$ 16.64	$ 16.15	$ 15.74	$ 16.19
Adjusted tangible book value per share (d)/(h)	$ 19.33	$ 18.78	$ 18.23	$ 17.67	$ 18.52

appendix: non-GAAP to GAAP reconciliation

Additional non-GAAP measures

(Dollars in thousands, except per share data)	3Q26 As Reported	3Q26 Adjusted	2Q26 As Reported	2Q26 Adjusted	1Q26 As Reported	1Q26 Adjusted	4Q25 As Reported	4Q25 Adjusted
Net interest income (f)	$ 196,256	$ 196,256	$ 190,377	$ 190,377	$ 189,610	$ 189,610	$ 173,995	$ 173,995
Provision for credit losses-loans and leases (j)	8,975	8,975	12,933	12,933	6,030	6,030	9,688	9,688
Provision for credit losses-unfunded commitments (j)	(72)	(72)	(4,743)	(4,743)	2,510	2,510	412	412
Noninterest income	77,658	77,658	73,791	73,791	81,906	81,906	64,767	64,767
less: gains (losses) on security transactions		247		(336)		(1,260)		(12,576)
less: gain on bargain purchase		-		3,189		8,892		-
less: other		(191)		(986)		(1,371)		-
Total noninterest income (g)	77,658	77,602	73,791	71,924	81,906	75,645	64,767	77,343
Noninterest expense	165,736	165,736	161,542	161,542	169,408	169,408	149,531	149,531
less: amortization of tax credit investments		774		669		669		800
less: merger-related expenses		7,460		11,641		14,257		5,658
less: Other		623		129		(357)		1,177
Total noninterest expense (e)	165,736	156,879	161,542	149,103	169,408	154,839	149,531	141,896
Income before income taxes (i)	99,275	108,076	94,436	105,008	93,568	101,876	79,131	99,342
Income tax expense	18,093	18,093	17,980	17,980	19,123	19,123	16,738	16,738
plus: tax effect of adjustments		1,848		2,220		1,745		4,244
plus: after-tax impact of tax credit investments @ 21%		331		918		528		632
Total income tax expense (h)	18,093	20,272	17,980	21,118	19,123	21,396	16,738	21,614
Net income (a)	$ 81,182	$ 87,804	$ 76,456	$ 83,890	$ 74,445	$ 80,480	$ 62,393	$ 77,728
Average diluted shares (b)	105,001	105,001	104,937	104,937	104,615	104,615	97,594	97,594
Average assets (c)	22,321,112	22,321,112	22,391,439	22,391,439	22,459,721	22,459,721	20,256,539	20,256,539
Average shareholders' equity (k)	2,963,270	2,963,270	2,951,237	2,951,237	2,947,585	2,947,585	2,695,581	2,695,581
Less:								
Goodwill and other intangibles	(1,238,244)	(1,238,244)	(1,243,145)	(1,243,145)	(1,249,174)	(1,249,174)	(1,173,965)	(1,173,965)
Average tangible equity (d)	1,725,026	1,725,026	1,708,092	1,708,092	1,698,411	1,698,411	1,521,616	1,521,616
Ratios								
Net earnings per share - diluted (a)/(b)	$ 0.77	$ 0.84	$ 0.73	$ 0.80	$ 0.71	$ 0.77	$ 0.64	$ 0.80
Return on average assets - (a)/(c)	1.44%	1.56%	1.37%	1.50%	1.34%	1.45%	1.22%	1.52%
Pre-tax, pre-provision return on average assets - ((a)+(j)+(h))/(c)	1.92%	2.08%	1.84%	2.03%	1.84%	1.99%	1.75%	2.14%
Return on average shareholders' equity (a)/(k)	10.87%	11.76%	10.39%	11.40%	10.24%	11.07%	9.18%	11.44%
Return on average tangible shareholders' equity - (a)/(d)	18.67%	20.19%	17.95%	19.70%	17.78%	19.22%	16.27%	20.27%
Efficiency ratio - (e)/((f)+(g))	60.5%	57.3%	61.2%	56.8%	62.4%	58.4%	62.6%	56.5%
Effective tax rate - (h)/(i)	18.2%	18.8%	19.0%	20.1%	20.4%	21.0%	21.2%	21.8%

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