

Bank of the West Financial Elder Abuse Prevention Efforts

Bank of the West is committed to protecting elders, and to training our staff to identify elder financial abuse. Since 2005, Bank of the West has partnered with a nonprofit organization, Elder Financial Protection Network (EFPN), in the fight against elder financial abuse. In 2007 we deepened our relationship with EFPN by creating and launching a community awareness program focused on this topic.

Our "Be Aware, Protect Your Assets" seminars invite senior citizens, their family members and caregivers to listen to presentations from trusted community partners and local law enforcement on how to protect against identity theft, check scams and other forms of financial fraud. Bank of the West piloted this program in Northern and Central California, and based on the success and demand for this type of service, we created a Be Aware seminar tool kit, which allows our branch managers to host seminars in their communities. Since the inception of this program and the creation of the tool kit, Bank of the West has hosted Be Aware Seminars in California, Arizona, Iowa, Utah, New Mexico and Oklahoma.

In 2009, Bank of the West partnered with EFPN again to produce a 30 minute documentary titled "Be Wise, Be Aware: Preventing Financial Elder Abuse". This documentary aired five times on California's NBC Bay Area affiliate in the first half of 2010 and features stories from elder abuse survivors and experts addressing the topic of how to protect elders for financial exploitation. This Documentary is currently available on You Tube and can be viewed at this website: <http://www.bewiseonline.org/media/nbc/nbcdocumentary.shtml>

On March 25, 2010, Bank of the West received the Visionary Leadership Award from EFPN at its Call to Action event, which brought together hundreds of professionals representing financial institutions, law enforcement, social services, elder justice advocates and the legal community to share best practices and express our collective determination to prevent elder financial abuse.

Steve Vallejo, VP/Corporate Security Director, at Bank of the West is an EFPN board member and was interviewed in March by NPR radio affiliate KQED. He speaks about the "crime of the century," citing examples of elder financial abuse that help listeners understand steps they can take to prevent fraud against themselves or someone they love. You can listen to the interview here: <http://www.kqed.org/epArchive/R201003250900>.

About the Elder Financial Protect Network (EFPN):

EFPN is an award-winning nonprofit organization that offers community education events and training for financial professionals. Founded in 2000 and based in San Francisco, California, EFPN partners with financial institutions and financial professionals throughout the United States to halt and prevent elder financial abuse. EFPN also works directly with elders to empower them to avoid financial exploitation.

In December 2009, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) awarded Elder Financial Protection Network the FDIC Chairman's Award for Innovation in Financial Education.