

## ONLINE NEWS

# Networking tip: Host a weekly lunch for clients and contacts

By Bryant Ruiz Switzky

Bankers aren't usually known as networking gurus, but Bethesda-based Congressional Bank CEO John Lane may be onto something with his weekly client lunch strategy.

Congressional, which has five branches and \$354 million in assets, has been hosting weekly lunches in its offices for clients and contacts every Tuesday since the beginning of 2012. I attended the last one of the year today.

Seven Congressional employees and eight outsiders (including myself) sat down in the bank's conference room to sandwiches and fruit. I agreed not to include the names of the people or their organizations, but they included a couple of real estate guys, two money managers, a recruiter and a person with Capitol Hill connections. It was a good mix.

Lane said he began hosting the lunches because he wanted to get in front of more clients and prospects.

"It's a great way to meet a lot of people," he said.

Attendees asked questions that others in the group might answer. Things like economic trends, whether the government contracting sector is a good one to invest in, that sort of thing.

Lane, rocking back and forth in his chair, threw out a mix of business proverbs throughout the meeting on everything from the nature of competition to the importance of doing things differently than others. Among the most cogent:

"You don't need Congress to act to expand your business."

Whether Congress acts or not, Lane's networking strategy might be a good one to consider.



Courtesy Photo  
John Lane is CEO of Congressional Bank, which has been hosting weekly lunches for clients and contacts all year.