

INDEPENDENT BANK CORP /MI/
Form DEF 14A
March 19, 2009

UNITED STATES SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20549
SCHEDULE 14A

Proxy Statement Pursuant to Section 14(a) of the Securities
Exchange Act of 1934 (Amendment No.)

Filed by the Registrant

Filed by a Party other than the Registrant

Check the appropriate box:

Preliminary Proxy Statement

Confidential, for Use of the Commission Only (as permitted by Rule 14a-6(e)(2))

Definitive Proxy Statement

Definitive Additional Materials

Soliciting Material Pursuant to §240.14a-12

INDEPENDENT BANK CORPORATION

(Name of Registrant as Specified In Its Charter)

(Name of Person(s) Filing Proxy Statement, if other than the Registrant)

Payment of Filing Fee (Check the appropriate box):

No fee required.

Fee computed on table below per Exchange Act Rules 14a-6(i)(4) and 0-11.

1) Title of each class of securities to which transaction applies:

2) Aggregate number of securities to which transaction applies:

3) Per unit price or other underlying value of transaction computed pursuant to Exchange Act Rule 0-11 (set forth the amount on

which the filing fee is calculated and state how it was determined):

4) Proposed maximum aggregate value of transaction:

5) Total fee paid:

Fee paid previously with preliminary materials.

Check box if any part of the fee is offset as provided by Exchange Act Rule 0-11(a)(2) and identify the filing for which the offsetting fee was paid previously. Identify the previous filing by registration statement number, or the Form or Schedule and the date of its filing.

1) Amount Previously Paid:

2) Form, Schedule or Registration Statement No.:

3) Filing Party:

4) Date Filed:

SEC 1913
(02-02)

**Independent Bank Corporation
230 West Main Street
Ionia, Michigan 48846**

March 24, 2009

Dear Fellow Shareholder,

It is our pleasure to invite you to attend the 2009 Annual Meeting of Shareholders of Independent Bank Corporation at 3:00 p.m., Eastern Time, on Tuesday, April 28, 2009 at the Ionia Theatre, 205 West Main Street, Ionia, Michigan 48846.

The Annual Report, which we mailed to you, summarizes Independent Bank Corporation's major developments during 2008 and includes the 2008 consolidated financial statements.

Whether or not you plan to attend the Annual Meeting, please complete and mail the enclosed proxy card promptly so that your shares will be voted as you desire. **You may also vote by telephone or by the Internet by following the instructions for using the automated telephone and Internet voting systems provided on the proxy card.**

Sincerely,

Michael M. Magee, Jr.
President and Chief Executive Officer

INDEPENDENT BANK CORPORATION

**NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF SHAREHOLDERS
APRIL 28, 2009**

Date: April 28, 2009
Time: 3:00 p.m., Eastern Time
Place: Ionia Theatre
205 West Main Street
Ionia, Michigan 48846

We invite you to attend the Independent Bank Corporation Annual Meeting of Shareholders to:

1. Elect three directors to serve three-year terms expiring in 2012;
2. Ratify the appointment of Crowe Horwath LLP as independent auditors for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2009;
3. Consider and vote upon a proposal to amend our Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation to increase the authorized shares of common stock from 40 million shares to 60 million shares;
4. Participate in an advisory (non-binding) vote to approve the compensation of our executives, as disclosed in this Proxy Statement; and
5. Transact any other business that is properly submitted before the Annual Meeting or any adjournments or postponements of the Annual Meeting.

The record date for the Annual Meeting is February 27, 2009 (the Record Date). Only shareholders of record at the close of business on that date can vote at the Annual Meeting. We mailed this Notice of Annual Meeting to those shareholders. Action may be taken at the Annual Meeting on any of the foregoing proposals on the date specified above or any date or dates to which the Annual Meeting may be adjourned or postponed.

We will have a list of shareholders who can vote at the Annual Meeting available for inspection by shareholders at the Annual Meeting, and, for 10 days prior to the Annual Meeting, during regular business hours at the offices of Independent Bank Corporation, 230 West Main Street, Ionia, Michigan 48846.

If you plan to attend the Annual Meeting but are not a shareholder of record because you hold your shares in street name, please bring evidence of your beneficial ownership of your shares (*e.g.*, a copy of a recent brokerage statement showing the shares) with you to the Annual Meeting. Whether or not you plan to attend the Annual Meeting and whether you own a few or many shares of stock, the Board of Directors urges you to vote promptly. You may vote by signing, dating and returning the enclosed proxy card, by using the automated telephone voting system or by using the Internet voting system. You will find instructions for voting by telephone and by the Internet on the enclosed proxy card.

By Order of the Board of Directors,

Robert N. Shuster

Corporate Secretary

March 24, 2009

**Independent Bank Corporation
230 West Main Street
Ionia, Michigan 48846**

2009 PROXY STATEMENT

This Proxy Statement is furnished in connection with the solicitation, beginning approximately March 24, 2009, by our Board of Directors, of proxies for use at the Annual Meeting of Shareholders. This meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 28, 2009, at 3:00 p.m. (local time) at the Ionia Theatre, 205 West Main Street, Ionia, Michigan 48846.

If the form of the Proxy accompanying this Proxy Statement is properly executed and returned, the shares represented by the Proxy will be voted at the Annual Meeting of Shareholders in accordance with the directions given in such Proxy. If no choice is specified, the shares represented by the Proxy will be voted for the election of directors listed as nominees, for the ratification of the independent auditors, for the amendment to our Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation to increase the authorized shares of common stock from 40 million to 60 million and to approve the compensation of our executives.

To vote by telephone, shareholders of record (shareholders who have been issued a certificate representing their shares) may call toll free on a touch-tone telephone 1-800-PROXIES (1-800-776-9437) and follow the recorded instructions. To vote by Internet, go to the site <http://www.voteproxy.com> and follow the instructions provided.

If your shares are held through a bank or a broker (referred to as street name), you may also be eligible to vote your shares electronically. Simply follow the instructions on your voting form, using either the toll-free telephone number or the Internet address that is listed.

A Proxy may be revoked prior to its exercise by delivering a written notice of revocation to our Secretary, executing a subsequent Proxy or attending the meeting and voting in person. Attendance at the meeting does not, however, automatically serve to revoke a Proxy.

This proxy statement, including the Notice and Form of Proxy, along with our Annual Report is available at <http://www.snl.com/irweblinkx/docs.aspx?iid=100319>. Information on directions to the site of our Annual Meeting is available on our website at www.IndependentBank.com.

VOTING SECURITIES AND RECORD DATE

As of February 27, 2009, the Record Date for the Annual Meeting, we had issued and outstanding 23,017,551 shares of common stock. Shareholders are entitled to one vote for each share of our common stock registered in their names at the close of business on the record date. Votes cast at the meeting and submitted by proxy are counted by the inspectors of the meeting, who are appointed by us.

As of February 27, 2009, no person was known by us to be the beneficial owner of 5% or more of our common stock, except as follows:

Title of Class	Name and Address of Beneficial Owner	Amount and Nature of Beneficial Ownership	Approximate Percent of Class
-----------------------	---	--	-------------------------------------

Edgar Filing: INDEPENDENT BANK CORP /MI/ - Form DEF 14A

Common Stock, \$1 par value	Dimensional Fund Advisors LP ⁽¹⁾ Palisades West, Building One 6300 Bee Cave Road Austin, TX 78746	1,183,220	5.14%
Common Stock, \$1 par value	Independent Bank Corporation Employee Stock Ownership Trust (ESOT) 230 West Main Street Ionia, Michigan 48846	1,294,728	5.62

- (1) Based on information set forth in a Schedule 13G filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on February 9, 2009, by Dimensional Fund Advisors LP reporting sole power to vote over 1,155,320 shares and sole power to dispose or direct the disposition of 1,183,220 shares.

Our ESOT holds shares of common stock pursuant to the terms of our Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) The Principal Financial Group administers the ESOP and serves as directed trustee. Our ESOP Administrative Committee has investment power with respect to the shares of common stock held by the ESOT and has voting power to the extent that the ESOP participants do not direct the voting of the shares of common stock allocated to their accounts.

Our Administrative Committee is comprised of three of our officers: Robert N. Shuster, James J. Twarozynski and Laurinda M. Neve. Except for the shares of common stock allocated to their respective accounts as participants in the ESOP, each member of our Administrative Committee disclaims beneficial ownership of the shares held by the ESOT.

ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

Our Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation provide that our Board be divided into three classes of nearly equal size, with the classes to hold office for staggered terms of three years each. Our Bylaws permit our Board of Directors to establish the size of our Board from three to fifteen members. Our current Board has fixed the size of our Board at ten members. Robert L. Hetzler, Michael M. Magee, Jr., and James E. McCarty are nominees to serve three-year terms expiring in 2012. Each of these directors are incumbent directors previously elected by our shareholders.

The Proxies cannot be voted for a greater number of persons than the number of nominees named. In the event that any nominee is unable to serve, which is not now contemplated, our Board may designate a substitute nominee. The proxy holders, to the extent they have been granted authority to vote in the election of directors, may or may not vote for a substitute nominee.

In addition to the nominees for director, each director whose term will continue after the meeting is named in the following table. Each nominee and director owned beneficially, directly or indirectly, the number of shares of common stock set forth opposite their respective names. The stock ownership information and the information relating to each nominee's and director's age, principal occupation or employment for the past five years has been furnished to us as of February 27, 2009, by the respective nominees and directors.

A plurality of the votes cast at the Annual Meeting of Shareholders is required to elect the nominees as directors. Accordingly at this year's meeting, the three individuals who receive the largest number of votes cast at the meeting will be elected as directors. Shares not voted at the meeting, whether by abstention, broker non-vote or otherwise, will not be treated as votes cast on this matter.

The Board of Directors recommends a vote FOR the election of each of the three nominees.

	Amount and Nature of Beneficial Ownership(1)	Percent of Outstanding
Nominees for three-year terms expire in 2012		
Robert L. Hetzler (age 63) Mr. Hetzler is the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Independent Bank Corporation. Mr. Hetzler is the retired President of Monitor Sugar Company (food processor). He became a Director in 2000.	58,761(2)	.24
Michael M. Magee, Jr. (age 53) Mr. Magee is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Independent Bank Corporation. Prior to his appointment as President and CEO as of January 1, 2005, Mr. Magee served as Chief Operating Officer since February 2004 and prior to that he served as President and Chief Executive Officer of Independent Bank since 1993. He became a Director in 2005.	209,359(3)	.85
James E. McCarty (age 61) Mr. McCarty is the retired President of McCarty Communications (commercial printing). He became a Director in 2002.	38,804(4)	.16

Directors whose terms expire in 2010

Donna J. Banks, Ph.D. (age 51) Dr. Banks is a retired Senior Vice President of the Kellogg Company. She became a Director in 2005.	14,431(5)	.06
Jeffrey A. Bratsburg (age 65) Mr. Bratsburg served as President and CEO of Independent Bank West Michigan from 1985 until his retirement in 1999. He became a Director in 2000.	145,221(6)	.59
Charles C. Van Loan (age 61) Mr. Van Loan served as President and CEO of Independent Bank Corporation from 1993 until 2004 and as executive Chairman during 2005. He retired on December 31, 2005. He became a Director in 1992.	103,899	.42

	Amount and Nature of Beneficial Ownership(1)	Percent of Outstanding
Directors whose terms expire in 2011		
Stephen L. Gulis, Jr. (age 51) Mr. Gulis is the retired Executive Vice President and President of Wolverine Worldwide Global Operations Group. He became a Director in 2004.	33,867(7)	.14
Terry L. Haske (age 60) Mr. Haske is a CPA and Principal with Anderson, Tuckey, Bernhardt & Doran, P.C. since 2008. Prior to 2008 he was the President of Ricker & Haske, CPAs, and P.C. He became a Director in 1996.	70,591(8)	.29
Clarke B. Maxson (age 69) Mr. Maxson served as Chairman, President and CEO of Midwest Guaranty Bancorp, Inc. (Midwest) from its founding in 1988 until July 2004 when he retired. Midwest was acquired by Independent Bank Corporation in July 2004, at which time Mr. Maxson joined the Board of Directors of Independent Bank East Michigan (which merged into Independent Bank in September 2007). He was appointed as a Director of the Company in September 2007.	22,744	.09
Charles A. Palmer (age 64) Mr. Palmer is an attorney and a professor of law at Thomas M. Cooley Law School. He became a Director in 1991.	114,737	.47

- (1) Except as described in the following notes, each nominee or incumbent director owns the shares directly and has sole voting and investment power or shares voting and investment power with his or her spouse under joint ownership. The table includes shares of common stock that are issuable under options exercisable within 60 days.
- (2) Includes 10,609 shares held in a spousal trust and 381 shares in a trust with respect to which Mr. Hetzler shares voting and investment power.
- (3) Includes 26,945 shares allocated to Mr. Magee's account under the ESOT and includes 10,226 common stock units held in a deferred compensation plan.
- (4) Includes 9,722 common stock units held in Mr. McCarty's account under our deferred compensation and stock purchase plan for non-employee directors that are payable in our common stock upon retirement. Includes 5,660 shares held in a spousal trust and 1,067 shares held by a corporation owned by Mr. McCarty.
- (5) Includes 3,997 common stock units held in Dr. Banks' account under our deferred compensation and stock purchase plan for non-employee directors that are payable in our common stock upon retirement. Includes 6,000 shares held in a spousal trust.
- (6) Includes 11,756 common stock units held in Mr. Bratsburg's account under our deferred compensation and stock purchase plan for non-employee directors that are payable in our common stock upon retirement.

- (7) Includes 13,808 common stock units held in Mr. Gulis' account under our deferred compensation and stock purchase plan for non-employee directors that are payable in our common stock upon retirement.
- (8) Includes 6,615 shares owned jointly with Mr. Haske's father with respect to which Mr. Haske shares voting and investment power and includes 1,200 common stock units held in Mr. Haske's account under our deferred compensation and stock purchase plan for non-employee directors that are payable in our common stock upon retirement .

SECURITIES OWNERSHIP OF MANAGEMENT

The following table sets forth the beneficial ownership of our common stock by our Named Executives, set forth in the compensation table below, and by all directors and executive officers as a group as of February 27, 2009.

Name	Amount and Nature of Beneficial Ownership(1)	Percent of Outstanding
Michael M. Magee	209,359(2)	.85
Robert N. Shuster	173,953	.71
David C. Reglin	162,261	.66
William B. Kessel	63,299	.26
Stefanie M. Kimball	22,849	.09
All executive officers and directors as a group (consisting of 18 persons)	2,605,249(3)	10.57

- (1) In addition to shares held directly or under joint ownership with their spouses, beneficial ownership includes shares that are issuable under options exercisable within 60 days, and shares that are allocated to their accounts as participants in the ESOP.
- (2) Includes 10,226 common stock units held in a deferred compensation plan.
- (3) Beneficial ownership is disclaimed as to 1,167,474 shares, all of which are held by the ESOT.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND BOARD MATTERS

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

For many years, our Board of Directors has been committed to sound and effective corporate governance practices. The Board has documented those practices in our Corporate Governance Principles. These principles address director qualifications, periodic performance evaluations, stock ownership guidelines and other corporate governance matters. Under those principles, a majority of the members of our Board must qualify as independent under the rules established by the NASDAQ stock market on which our stock trades. Our principles also require the Board to have an audit committee, compensation committee and a nominating and corporate governance committee, and that each member of those committees qualifies as independent under the NASDAQ rules. Our Corporate Governance Principles, as well as the charters of each of the foregoing committees are available for review on our website at www.IndependentBank.com under the Investor Relations tab.

CODE OF BUSINESS CONDUCT AND ETHICS AND CODE OF ETHICS FOR SENIOR FINANCIAL OFFICERS

Our Board has also adopted a Code of Business Conduct and Ethics that applies to all of our employees, officers and directors. In addition, the Board has adopted a Code of Ethics for Senior Financial Officers, which includes our principal executive officer, principal financial officer and controller. Each of these codes is posted on our website and can also be obtained free of charge through our Corporate Secretary at 230 West Main Street, Ionia, Michigan 48846.

Any changes to or waivers of either code for our CEO or senior financial officers will be disclosed on our website.

DETERMINATION OF INDEPENDENCE OF BOARD MEMBERS

As required by our Corporate Governance Principles, our Board has determined that each of the following directors qualifies as an Independent Director, as such term is defined in Market Place Rules 4200(a)(15) of the National Association of Securities Dealers (the NASD): Donna J. Banks, Jeffrey A. Bratsburg, Stephen L. Gulis, Terry L. Haske, Robert L. Hetzler, Clarke B. Maxson, James E. McCarty, Charles A. Palmer and Charles C. Van Loan. Our Board has also determined that each member of the three committees of the Board meets the independence requirements applicable to those committees as prescribed by the NASDAQ listing requirements,

and, as to the audit committee, under the applicable rules of the Securities and Exchange Commission. There are no family relationships between or among our directors, nominees or executive officers.

MEETING ATTENDANCE

Each of our directors is expected to attend all meetings of the Board, applicable committee meetings, and our annual meeting of shareholders. Each of our directors attended our 2008 annual shareholders meeting. During 2008, the Board held 11 meetings; each director attended at least 75% of the aggregate number of meetings of our Board and Board committees on which they served.

BOARD COMMITTEES AND FUNCTIONS

Copies of the charters of each of these committees are available on our Website at www.IndependentBank.com. Our Board of Directors has three standing committees: audit, compensation and nominating and corporate governance.

Our audit committee, which met on 9 occasions in 2008, consists of directors Bratsburg, Gulis (Chairman), Haske and Maxson. Our Board has determined that Mr. Gulis qualifies as the Audit Committee Financial Expert, as that term is defined in the rules established by the Securities and Exchange Commission. The primary purpose of the audit committee is to assist the Board in overseeing (1) the quality and integrity of our accounting, auditing and reporting practices, (2) the performance of our internal audit function and independent auditor, and (3) our disclosure controls and system of internal controls regarding, finance, accounting, legal compliance, and ethics that management and our Board have established.

Our compensation committee, which met on 6 occasions in 2008, consists of directors Banks, Bratsburg, Gulis, Van Loan and McCarty (Chairman). This committee reviews and makes recommendations to the Board on executive compensation matters, including any benefits to be paid to our executives and officers. At the beginning of each year, the Committee meets to review our CEO's performance against the Company's goals and objectives for the preceding year and also to review and approve the corporate goals and objectives that relate to CEO compensation for the forthcoming year. The Committee also evaluates the CEO and other key executives' payouts against (a) pre-established, measurable performance goals and budgets, (b) generally comparable groups of executives, and (c) external market trends. Following this review, the Committee recommends to the full Board, the annual base salary, annual incentive compensation, total compensation and benefits for our chief executive officer. This committee is also responsible for approving equity-based compensation awards under our Long-Term Incentive Plan. Base salaries of executive officers, other than our CEO, are established by our CEO.

This committee is also responsible to recommend to the full Board, the amount and form of compensation payable to directors. From time to time, the committee relies upon third party consulting firms to assist the committee in its oversight of the Company's executive compensation policy and our Board compensation. This is discussed in more detail in the Compensation Discussion and Analysis included in this Proxy Statement.

Our nominating and corporate governance committee, which met on 4 occasions in 2008, consists of directors Banks, Haske, McCarty, Van Loan and Palmer (Chairman). This committee is responsible for making recommendations on the qualification and standards to serve on our Board, identifying board candidates and monitoring our corporate governance standards.

Our Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation contain certain procedural requirements applicable to shareholder nominations of directors. Shareholders may nominate a person to serve as a director if they provide written notice to us not later than sixty and no more than ninety days prior to the first anniversary date of the preceding year's annual meeting. The notice must include (1) name and address of the shareholder who intends to

make the nomination and of the person or persons nominated, (2) a representation that the shareholder is a current record holder and will continue to hold those shares through the date of the meeting and intends to appear in person or by proxy at the meeting, (3) a description of all arrangements between the shareholder and each nominee, (4) the information regarding each nominee as would be required to be included in a proxy statement filed under Regulation 14A of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 had the nominee been nominated by the Board of Directors, and (5) the consent of each nominee to serve as director. Our nominating and corporate governance committee does not currently utilize the services of any third party search firm to assist in the identification or evaluation of board

member candidates. However, the committee may use the services of such a firm in the future if it deems necessary or appropriate.

The nominating and corporate governance committee has not established specific, minimum qualifications for director nominees. Our Corporate Governance Principles mandate that directors possess the requisite background and experience to make a strong, positive contribution to Independent Bank Corporation and our shareholders. Our nominating and corporate governance committee is responsible for reviewing the qualifications and independence of the members of the Board. This assessment includes a consideration of the skills, experience and diversity of the prospective candidates. In light of these general requirements, our nominating and corporate governance committee reviews the suitability of each person nominated to our Board. These same standards and suitability requirements are applicable to all director nominees, regardless of the party making the director nomination.

The committee has not received any recommended director nominations from any of our shareholders in connection with our 2009 annual meeting. The nominees that are standing for election as directors at the 2009 annual meeting are incumbent directors that were previously elected by our shareholders.

MAJORITY VOTING

Our nominating and corporate governance committee and Board have discussed and considered the adoption of majority voting for directors. The Board favors the general concepts of majority voting which would essentially proscribe the election of any nominee who received fewer votes cast in his or her favor for election than were withheld. However, our Bylaws and the Michigan Business Corporation Act provide that directors are to be elected by a plurality of votes cast, except as otherwise provided in our Articles. Due to various initiatives under consideration to either modify applicable laws or otherwise address some of the practical implications that arise from majority voting, the Board has elected to defer, at this time, any action or recommendation on this matter.

SHAREHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE BOARD

The Board of Directors has implemented a process by which a shareholder may send written communications to the Board's attention. Any shareholder desiring to communicate with the Board or one or more of our directors may send a letter addressed to the Company's Corporate Secretary at P.O. Box 491, Ionia, Michigan 48846. The Secretary has been directed to promptly forward all communications to the full Board or the specific director indicated in the letter.

REPORT OF OUR AUDIT COMMITTEE

The information contained in this report shall not be deemed to be soliciting material or filed or incorporated by reference in future filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission, or subject to the liabilities of Section 18 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, except to the extent that we specifically incorporate it by reference into a document filed under the Securities Act of 1933 or the Securities Exchange Act of 1934.

Our audit committee has met with management and the independent auditors to review and discuss our audited financial statements as of and for the year ended December 31, 2008.

Our audit committee obtained from our independent auditors the written disclosures and the letter required by applicable provisions of the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board regarding their independence. Our audit committee has also discussed with our auditors any relationships that may impact their objectivity and independence and satisfied itself as to our auditors' independence.

Our audit committee has reviewed and discussed with our independent auditors all communications required by generally accepted auditing standards, including those described in Statement on Auditing Standards No. 61, as amended, Communication with Audit Committees. Our audit committee also discussed, with and without management present, the results of our independent auditors' examination of our financial statements.

Based on the reviews and discussions referred to above, the audit committee has recommended to our Board of Directors that the financial statements referred to above be included in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2008.

Stephen L. Gulis, Jr.
Jeffrey A. Bratsburg

Clarke B. Maxson
Terry L. Haske

**DISCLOSURE OF FEES PAID TO
OUR INDEPENDENT AUDITORS**

Crowe Horwath LLP (Crowe) has been the Company's independent auditors since 2005. Under its charter, the Audit Committee is solely responsible for selecting and reviewing the qualifications of the Company's independent auditors.

The following sets forth the fees paid to our independent auditors for the last two fiscal years:

	Year Ended December 31,	
	2008	2007
Audit fees	\$ 390,000	\$ 390,000
Audit related fees(1)	33,000	48,000
Tax fees(2)	86,000	105,000
All other fees	9,000	4,000
Total	\$ 518,000	\$ 547,000

- (1) Consists primarily of fees related to an audit required under a Housing and Urban Development loan program and accounting review of various transactions during each year.
- (2) Consists primarily of fees related to the preparation of corporate tax returns and also includes amounts for tax advice and tax planning services.

Pre-Approval Policy

Our audit committee has established a pre-approval policy for procedures for audit, audit related and tax services that can be performed by our independent auditors. For 2008 and 2007, all of these fees were pre-approved by the audit committee under that policy. Subject to certain limitations, the authority to grant pre-approvals may be delegated to one or more members of the audit committee. A copy of this policy is available on our Website at www.IndependentBank.com.

**PROPOSAL SUBMITTED FOR YOUR VOTE RATIFICATION OF THE
APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT AUDITORS**

The audit committee has selected Crowe Horwath LLP (Crowe), as independent auditors for the Company, for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2009. The services provided to the Company and our subsidiaries by Crowe for 2008 and 2007 are described above under the caption Disclosure of Fees Paid to our Independent Auditors.

We are asking our shareholders to ratify the selection of Crowe as our independent auditors. Although ratification is not legally required, the Board is submitting the selection of Crowe to our shareholders for ratification as a matter of good corporate governance. Representatives of Crowe are expected to be present at the Annual Meeting to respond to appropriate questions and to make such statements as they may desire.

The affirmative vote of the holders of the majority of the shares represented in person or by proxy and entitled to vote on this item will be required for approval. All broker non-votes will not be treated as votes cast on this matter; shares voted as abstentions will be counted as votes cast and therefore will have the effect of a negative vote.

If our shareholders do not ratify the appointment, the appointment will be reconsidered by the audit committee and the Board. Even if the selection is ratified, the audit committee, in its discretion, may select a different independent registered public accounting firm at any time during the year if it determines that such a change would be in the best interest of the Company and our shareholders.

The Board of Directors recommends a vote FOR this proposal to ratify the appointment of Crowe as our independent auditors.

**PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE COMPANY S AMENDED AND
RESTATED ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION TO INCREASE OUR AUTHORIZED SHARES
OF COMMON STOCK FROM 40 MILLION SHARES TO 60 MILLION SHARES**

Our Board has unanimously adopted a resolution, subject to shareholder approval, to amend the first paragraph of Article III of our Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation to read as follows:

The total number of shares of all classes of capital stock which the Corporation shall have the authority to issue is sixty million two hundred thousand shares, of which sixty million (60,000,000) shares shall be common stock of the par value of \$1.00 per share, and two hundred thousand (200,000) shares shall be series preferred stock, without par value.

This amendment will increase our authorized common stock from 40,000,000 shares to 60,000,000 shares. The purpose of the amendment is to provide additional shares of common stock for future issuance. As of February 27, 2009 there were approximately 23,017,551 shares of common stock issued and outstanding, 1,568,105 stock options granted but not exercised, 134,672 shares reserved for issuance under our stock compensation plans and a warrant to purchase 3,461,538 shares of common stock. As a result, as of February 27, 2009, approximately 11,818,134 shares of common stock remain available for future issuance. We also have 72,000 shares of Series A preferred stock issued and outstanding at February 27, 2009. This proposed amendment will not affect these shares.

The Board of Directors considers the proposed increase in the number of authorized shares desirable because it would give the Board greater flexibility and provide sufficient shares available for issuance if needed to augment our capital base or for other general corporate purposes.

If our shareholders approve the amendment, it will become effective upon the filing of a Certificate of Amendment to our Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation with the Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth of the State of Michigan, which we expect to occur promptly following the Annual Meeting.

Purpose of the Amendment

The purpose of this proposed increase in authorized common stock is to make available additional shares of common stock for issuance for business and finance purposes in the future. Given the prevailing, uncertain economic conditions, we may desire to issue common stock from time to time in the future to raise additional capital necessary to support our growth or provide a stronger capital base. Increasing the authorized number of shares of

common stock will provide the Company with greater flexibility and will allow the issuance of additional shares of common stock without further shareholder approval, subject to applicable law. The potential uses of the additional authorized shares of common stock may include:

corporate transactions, such as stock splits or stock dividends;

financing transactions, such as public or private offerings of common stock or convertible securities;

debt or equity restructuring or refinancing transactions;

acquisitions;

our stock incentive plans; and

other corporate purposes that have not yet been identified.

At present, the Board of Directors has no immediate or specific plans to issue the additional shares of common stock, nor does it intend to issue any shares except on terms which it deems to be in the best interest of the Company and its shareholders. In addition, there are no current commitments, arrangements, understandings, or agreements, either oral or written, concerning the issuance of common stock subsequent to the requested increase in the number of available authorized shares.

Effect of the Amendment

The additional shares of common stock to be authorized by adoption of the amendment would have rights identical to the currently outstanding shares of common stock. Adoption of the proposed amendment and issuance of the common stock would not affect the rights of the holders of currently outstanding common stock, except for effects incidental to increasing the number of shares of our common stock outstanding, such as dilution of the earnings per share and voting rights of current holders of common stock. Under our Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation, our shareholders do not have preemptive rights with respect to our common stock. Thus, if our Board of Directors elects to issue additional shares of our common stock, existing holders of our common stock would not have any preferential rights to purchase such shares.

The additional shares of common stock that would become available for issuance if this amendment is adopted could also be used by us to oppose a hostile takeover attempt or to delay or prevent changes in control or management of the Company. For example, without further shareholder approval, the Board of Directors could strategically sell shares of common stock in a private transaction to purchasers who would oppose a takeover or favor the current Board of Directors. Although this amendment to increase the authorized common stock has been prompted by the business and financial considerations described above and not by the threat of any hostile takeover attempt (nor is the Board of Directors currently aware of any such attempts directed at us), shareholders should be aware that approval of this amendment could facilitate future efforts by us to deter or prevent changes in control.

Under the Michigan Business Corporation Act, our shareholders are not entitled to dissenter's rights with respect to the amendment of the Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation to increase the authorized shares of common stock.

The affirmative vote of the holders of a majority of the outstanding shares of common stock of the Company is required for the approval of this proposed amendment. Both abstentions and broker non-votes will have the effect of a negative vote. Unless otherwise directed by a shareholder's proxy, the persons named as proxy voters in the

accompanying proxy will vote FOR this amendment.

The Board of Directors recommends a vote FOR this proposal to amend the Company s Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation to increase the number of shares of authorized common stock.

**PROPOSAL SUBMITTED FOR YOUR VOTE
ADVISORY (NON-BINDING) VOTE ON EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION**

Set forth under *Executive Compensation* below is our Compensation Discussion and Analysis that describes, among other things, our executive compensation policies and practices. The compensation discussion also summarizes certain executive compensation restrictions and requirements applicable to us as a result of our sale of preferred stock to the U.S. Treasury in December of 2008. One of those requirements is that our shareholders be given the opportunity to express their approval of the compensation of our executives, as disclosed in this Proxy Statement. Under the federal legislation that requires this vote, the shareholder vote is not binding on our Board and may not be construed as overruling any decision made by our Board. However, the compensation committee of our Board will take the outcome of this vote into consideration when making future executive compensation decisions.

Therefore, at the Annual Meeting of Shareholders, our shareholders will be given the opportunity to vote on an advisory (non-binding) resolution to approve the compensation of our executives. This vote proposal is commonly known as a *say-on-pay* proposal and gives our shareholders the opportunity to endorse or not endorse our executive pay program. You are encouraged to read the full details of our executive compensation program, including our primary objectives in setting executive pay, under *Executive Compensation* below.

The shareholders will be asked to approve the following resolution at the Annual Meeting:

RESOLVED, that the shareholders of Independent Bank Corporation approve the compensation of the Company's executives, as described in the *Executive Compensation* section of the Company's 2009 Proxy Statement.

This is an advisory vote only and neither the Company nor its Board of Directors will be bound to take action based upon the outcome of this vote. The compensation committee of our Board will consider the outcome of the vote when considering future executive compensation arrangements.

The Board of Directors recommends a vote FOR this proposal to approve the resolution approving the compensation of our executives.

SHAREHOLDER RETURN PERFORMANCE GRAPH

Set forth below is a line graph comparing the yearly percentage change in the cumulative total shareholder return on our common stock (based on the last reported sales price of the respective year) with the cumulative total return of the Nasdaq Stock Market Index (United States stocks, only) and the Nasdaq Bank Stocks Index for the five-year period ended December 31, 2008. The following information is based on an investment of \$100 on January 1, 2004, in our common stock, the Nasdaq Stock Market Index and the Nasdaq Bank Stocks Index, with dividends reinvested.

January 1, December 31, December 31, December 31, December 31, December 31,
2004 2004 2005 2006 2007