



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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941/306-0105

Gateway Bank of Southwest Florida Directors Garner Industry Recognition

January 15, 2009 – (Sarasota, Florida) – Shaun P. Merriman, President and CEO of Gateway Bank of Southwest Florida has announced the achievement of a number of recognitions by members of the board of directors of the bank.

Director David E. Sessions, President and Chief Executive Officer of Willis A. Smith Construction, Inc., was named CEO of the Year in the construction and real estate category by *Tampa Bay CEO* magazine.

Gateway Bank of Southwest Florida Chairman Charles J. Bartlett of the law firm of Icard, Merrill, Cullis, Timm, Furen & Ginsburg achieved recognition as one of the Best Lawyers in America in the category of commercial litigation. The Recognition is awarded by Best Lawyers, the oldest and most respected peer-review publication in the legal profession.

Director Katie Klauber Moulton, president of The Colony Beach & Tennis Resort, was recently honored by the American Academy of Hospitality Sciences as one of the leading hoteliers in the world.

In making the announcement, Merriman commented, "It has always been an objective of this organization to have the bank take an active leadership role in the business community, and these recognitions are reflective of this goal." Merriman continued, "We are privileged to have a directorate with a commitment to excellence equal to our own."

About Gateway Bank of Southwest Florida: Gateway Bank of Southwest Florida is an independent community bank serving business and consumer banking customers in Sarasota and Manatee counties.

The Manatee Avenue Banking Center is the second Gateway Bank location in Southwest Florida. It is located on the northwest corner of 21st Street West and Manatee Avenue West. Gateway Bank operates a full service banking center in the Center Pointe Plaza at 2033 Main Street in downtown Sarasota, one block east of South Washington Boulevard. The bank will open a third banking center at 6204 North Lockwood Ridge Road and University Parkway in March 2009.

The shareholders and directors of Gateway Bank of Southwest Florida are primarily residents of Sarasota and Manatee counties. The Board of Directors includes: Charles J. Bartlett – Icard, Merrill, Cullis, Timm, Furen and Ginsburg, PA; Dr. Gary K. Bockhold – Center for Sight; Dr. P.T. “Bud” Fleuchaus – Gateway Financial Holdings of Florida, Inc.; David J. Grain – Grain Capital, LLC; David K. Maholias – Gateway Financial Holdings of Florida, Inc.; Shaun P. Merriman – Gateway Bank of Southwest Florida; Gavin W. Meshad – JWM Management, Inc.; Katherine K. Moulton – The Colony Beach & Tennis Resort; Wayne M. Ruben – Ruben-Holland Development, LLC; David E. Sessions, Willis A. Smith Construction Inc.; and Jan E. Smith – Jan Smith and Company.

Further information regarding Gateway Bank of Southwest Florida may be obtained by contacting Shaun P. Merriman, President and CEO at 941-306-0105.

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