



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
Contact: Shaun P. Merriman
941/306-0105

Gateway Bank of Southwest Florida Opens University Parkway Banking Center

New Renovated Banking Location Built To Environment-Conscious Standards

April 10, 2009 – (Sarasota, Florida) – Shaun P. Merriman, President and CEO of Gateway Bank of Southwest Florida announced today the bank has successfully opened a third full service banking center serving the Sarasota/Manatee County area. This new banking center, located near the intersection of University Parkway and Lockwood Ridge Road is expected to be among the first banking facilities in the state of Florida to be LEED Certified by the US Green Building Council. LEED certification is defined as Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design.

Towards the goal of being LEED compliant, the University Parkway Banking Center was recently renovated using materials which minimize the impact on the environment. In addition, a number of energy saving features are employed, including specially designed windows and energy conscious lighting, heating and air conditioning. LEED Certification is awarded after construction, and the design of the building as well as the construction were both undertaken with this certification in mind. Carlson Studio Architecture and Willis A. Smith Construction are the respective architect and contractor for the project.

In making the announcement, Merriman commented, "University Parkway is the third Gateway Bank location to open in Sarasota and Manatee counties in the past ten months. We are very optimistic considering the high level of interest and acceptance we have received from the neighboring community." Merriman continued, "We have eagerly anticipated this opening and take pride in the fact this location will be among the very

first banking facilities in the state to obtain LEED Certification. This certification is reflective of our commitment to be environmentally conscious neighbors in the communities we serve.”

The University Parkway Banking Center is located at 6204 North Lockwood Ridge Road and features three drive-thru banking lanes as well as a drive-thru ATM. The bank is easily accessed from both Lockwood Ridge Road and University Parkway.

Retail banking operations are led by Banking Center Manager, Deborah Vaughan, formerly with Superior Bank. To assist business customers, Vice President and Commercial Banker, Ross Vollmer, formerly with Regions Bank, is located at University Parkway. Mortgage Banking operations are headquartered at University Parkway, headed by Group Vice President, Rick Barber, formerly with Regions Bank. In addition, certain administrative functions are located at University Parkway, and the bank anticipates twelve full-time employees will be based at this new facility.

The bank will host a Grand Opening event on Saturday, May 9th from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm that will be open to the public and include a number of family activities.

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

The newly announced University Parkway location is the third Gateway Bank location in southwest Florida. Gateway Bank also operates a full service banking location in the Center Pointe Plaza at 2033 Main Street in downtown Sarasota, one block east of South Washington Boulevard. The bank opened a second banking location in downtown Bradenton on Manatee Avenue West in August 2008.

The shareholders and directors of Gateway Bank of Southwest Florida are primarily residents of Sarasota and Manatee counties. The founding 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 Communications Group, Inc.; 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.

--(###)--