



PRESS RELEASE

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

Gateway Bank of Southwest Florida Uses Random Acts of Kindness to Meet New Neighbors on University Parkway

Gateway Banker Uses Five Dollar Bills for Calling Cards

May 22, 2009 – (Sarasota, Florida) – Gateway Bank has recently opened a new banking center located near the intersection of University Parkway and Lockwood Ridge Road. To achieve name recognition within the area, the bank implemented a direct mail program culminating with an open house, held on May 9th, attended by over 200 local residents.

During the week leading up to the Open House, Gateway Bank took a unique approach to making new friends in the area by dispatching Assistant Vice President and Banking Center Manager Deborah Vaughan into the community to meet local residents. As a way to break the ice, Vaughan introduced herself by handing out product samples – crisp, new five dollar bills.

Vaughan visited a number of local businesses, introducing herself to patrons at McDonald's, First Choice Haircutters, Filippos Pizzeria, Peaches Restaurant and an Amoco Station. In all, she handed out 20 five dollar bills along with invitations to the upcoming open house and was warmly received.

“With all of the perceived unrest in the local banking industry these days, we wanted to do something that would leave an impression on the people we met,” commented Shaun P. Merriman, President and CEO of Gateway Bank. Merriman continued, “Handing someone unexpected money has a tendency to get people’s attention.”

The University Parkway banking center is home to several local veteran bankers. Vice President and Commercial Banker, Ross Vollmer, formerly with Regions Bank assists business clients. Group Vice President, Rick Barber, formerly with Regions Bank heads Mortgage Banking operations.

The banking center 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.

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.

--(###)--