



PRESS RELEASE

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

Gateway Bank of Southwest Florida Climbs to 5-Star BauerFinancial Rating for 2nd Quarter 2011

September 26, 2011 – (Sarasota, Florida) – Shaun P. Merriman, President and CEO of Gateway Bank of Southwest Florida announced today that the bank has achieved the prestigious **5-star “superior” rating** from Coral Gables-based BauerFinancial (www.bauerfinancial.com), an independent ratings firm. BauerFinancial announces bank ratings on a quarterly basis, and 5-star is considered the top rating. Established in 2008, Gateway Bank received its first rating (4-star) for the second quarter of 2010. The bank maintained its 4-star rating for four consecutive quarters before achieving the 5-star.

“We have worked hard to build a strong community bank in this challenging economy,” said Merriman. He continued, “We’ve maintained strong capital ratios and have a low percentage of loan delinquencies. Our focus is on growing the bank with high quality earning assets.”

Bauer began rating financial institutions in 1983 and analyzes the health of a bank based on capital levels, profits, loan delinquencies, repossessed assets, reserves, regulatory compliance and asset quality. Banks are designated ratings ranging from zero to five stars based on the analysis. Gateway is one of only two 5-star rated banks in the Sarasota-Manatee County region. In addition, there are currently no 4-star rated banks in the region.

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

Gateway Bank operates three full service banking locations. The main office is located at 1100 South Tamiami Trail in Sarasota. The University Parkway banking center is located at 6204 North Lockwood Ridge Road, and the Manatee Avenue Banking Center is located on the northwest corner of 21st Street West and Manatee Avenue West.

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; David J. Grain – Grain Management; 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 – Resort Management Consultants; Wayne M. Ruben – Ruben-Holland Development, LLC; and David E. Sessions, Willis A. Smith Construction Inc.

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