



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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Gateway Bank of Southwest Florida Receives LEED® Certification Plaque from U.S. Green Building Council for University Parkway Banking Center Location

Facility is the sixth banking center in the state of Florida to be LEED® certified

August 16, 2010 – (Sarasota, Florida) – Shaun P. Merriman, President and Chief Executive Officer of Gateway Bank of Southwest Florida, announced today that Gateway Bank was presented with the prestigious Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) Certification for its banking center located at the intersection of University Parkway and Lockwood Ridge Road. The ceremony took place at the University Parkway facility on August 4th, and thirty people were in attendance. Chris Hice, local Chair of the Myakka River Branch of the Florida Gulf Coast Chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council presented the plaque, which is made out of recycled glass. Speakers in addition to Merriman were Drew M. Smith, President of Two Trails Green Consulting and project administrator for LEED® commissioning; John LaCivita, Vice President of Willis A. Smith Construction, Inc.; and Michael R. Carlson, Owner of Carlson Studio Architecture.

Merriman remarked, **“With 5,820 branch banking centers in the state of Florida, Gateway Bank is proud to be one of the six (or 1% of the total) that are LEED® certified.”** The University Parkway location opened for business in March, 2009, and is the first banking center in Sarasota County to be LEED® certified. Merriman continued, “We will continue to promote the benefits of this green facility – not only the economic, but also the fact that it’s the right thing to do for the environment.”

Local Presence of the U.S. Green Building Council

The Florida Gulf Coast Chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council has three branch locations – Tampa Bay branch (covering six counties), Southwest Florida branch (covering five

counties), and Myakka River branch (covering Sarasota and Manatee counties). Hice remarked, “The Myakka River Branch began in February, 2009, and has quickly grown to almost 150 members.” Carlson and Smith are on the Board of Directors.

Renovations

A former Regions Bank location, the University Parkway facility was built in 1996, and presented many challenges to the planning and building team. The Sarasota architectural firm, Carlson Studio Architecture, designed the renovation and Willis A. Smith Construction handled the actual construction. Both Carlson Studio Architecture and Willis A. Smith Construction are recognized leaders in the green building initiative on the west coast of Florida.

Obtaining LEED® certification is a challenging task, especially for buildings that were constructed in the 1980’s and 1990’s, according to Carlson. “LEED® certification is overseen by the U. S. Green Building Council (USGBC) and requires third party verification and inspection of all aspects of design and construction.”

Towards the goal of being LEED® compliant, the University Parkway Banking Center was renovated using materials which minimize the impact on the environment. Building materials with high recycled content were used, including exterior walls made of reused masonry block and a full brick veneer that is painted a lighter color to help reflect solar radiation. In addition, a number of energy saving features were employed, including specially designed low-e glass exterior windows and energy conscious lighting, heating and air conditioning. Special low chemical interior paints, carpeting, casework and cabinets were selected to reduce indoor air contamination. Ultra low-flow toilets were installed, as well as low-flow restroom faucets. In addition, green pest control and cleaning services are employed.

Measured Energy Savings

LaCivita reported that in order to determine energy savings during the first year of operation, an analysis was performed between the University Parkway facility and the Gateway banking center located on Manatee Avenue, which is not LEED® certified. Annual power bills were compared, and divided by building square footage for a true comparison. The University Parkway facility’s power bill was 41.4% less than Manatee Avenue’s. Considering that renovations to University Parkway related to energy efficiency cost an additional \$24,000, the project is expected to payoff in 3.2 years.

Make It Green Initiative

Merriman commented, “We believe in environmental awareness and have made a commitment to being a leader in the industry as it relates to the green initiative.” To that end, the bank has established a program to assist clients in minimizing the environmental impact of banking transactions. The Gateway “*Make It Green*” initiative allows Gateway clients to receive incentives for utilizing bank services which reduce paper usage.

Merriman continued, “Banking generates a lot of paper, and we see very simple ways to reduce paper consumption by using electronic banking features such as online banking with bill pay, e-statements and direct deposit, just to name a few.” He added, “We will reward clients who help reduce the impact that traditional banking has on the environment.”

Under the “*Make It Green*” program, clients who sign up for e-statements, direct deposit, a Gateway debit card and online banking with bill pay will receive free gifts from the bank. Among the free gifts are large capacity reusable shopping bags to reduce the amount of plastic bags placed into the landfills and free document shredding services.

Community Involvement

Merriman also announced the commitment of the company to obtain compliance with the Sarasota County Green Business Partnership standards within the next twelve months. “We are currently investigating the steps we need to take to be a part of the Green Business Partnership, reinforcing our commitment to the highest environmental standards.” The company is also active with the Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce’s Green Business Leadership Council. Merriman concluded, “While we understand there are limitations to what can be done with existing structures, wherever possible, we encourage others to also take necessary steps to have environmentally friendly facilities.”

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; 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; 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.