

Summit's 'Bank Local' philosophy helps improve the area's economy

BY GARY QUACKENBUSH FOR
SUMMIT STATE BANK

“Customers receive better service when they ‘Bank Local,’” said Thomas Duryea, President of Summit State Bank. “Bank Local advantages include having access to personalized, one-on-one relationships with banking professionals that can help improve your business. Summit is all about providing service, not just money.”

The staff and management at Summit have broad, value-added experience, which helps to distinguish its brand of banking. “Many of our customers own and operate small businesses without CPAs, attorneys and in-house financial departments. Our officers have their fingers on the pulse of what’s happening in the community, and you can speak directly with them when you have questions or need advice. At Summit, you can pick up the phone and speak with our President, the Chief Financial Officer, or me any time,” said Chief Credit Officer Guy Dana.

Summit is Sonoma County’s top-rated bank, having received the highest Bauer Financial rating of all Sonoma County-based banks. With 60 employees, five branch offices and a \$300 million dollar loan portfolio, Summit is not only well diversified, but its breadth of coverage enables the bank to gain critical insights into the market’s needs, as well as vital factors impacting the local economy.

“Doing business with a Sonoma County-based bank should be your first choice when seeking local business loans – banking locally makes a difference when it comes to providing local jobs and supporting local nonprofits,” Mr. Duryea said. “We offer a full competitive array of

deposit and loan products to meet customer needs. Above all, we work to provide our customers with the best possible service. Banks generally have all the same products, but when it comes to providing our customers with a high-quality service experience, we strive to set Summit apart from the rest. We have played a leading role as a sponsor of the ‘Go Local’ program and see tangible results that are making a difference in our community’s economy, since every dollar we lend gets spent here.”

Adopting a Bank Local strategy helps to keep funds in the community and puts them to work close to home, where they can do the most good – rather than being sent out of the area to be loaned elsewhere. Furthermore, every dollar put back into the economy has a multiplier effect, producing three or more dollars of cash flow and extended value.

“Our success is your success. We support our customers by buying their products, using their services and promoting their businesses whenever possible, including our Featured Partner displays within our branches. As a bank committed to serving its local community, we are seeing an increase in our customer base,” said Mr. Duryea. “Overall, our relationship-based deposits were up more than 50 percent during 2009, and nonprofit deposit accounts increased by 60 percent during the same period.”

Summit’s Nonprofit Partnership Program is a special account program for 501(c)3 not-for-profit organizations designed to enhance their fundraising efforts. Through this program, Summit makes an annual contribution of 25 to 75 basis points, based on average annual account balances prorated for the portion of the year the account is open. “Estab-

lishing strong community relationships is a hallmark of our business,” said Chief Financial Officer Dennis Kelley.

For example, with a \$100,000 average balance in a non-interest bearing Summit account (analyzed business accounts are included), such an account would receive 75 basis points, or \$750, as an annual contribution.

With Summit savings, money market and interest-bearing demand deposit accounts with an average balance of \$100,000, Summit pays 25 basis points resulting in a \$250 annual contribution.

In addition, Summit also sponsors local community events and offers statement-stuffer opportunities, along with its annual guaranteed donation program.

“Being one of only a few SBA Preferred Lenders in our community, we’ve seen an uptick in Small Business Administration loan activity since the beginning of the year when the SBA expanded its lending policies. This is proving to be a shot in the arm for our local businesses,” said Mr. Dana.

With the wine industry’s extensive contribution to Sonoma County’s GDP, Summit continues to support this sector with 10 percent of its lending. “Our diversified loan portfolio also includes manufacturers, health care, distributors, professional service providers, restaurants, plumbers and other contractors. We virtually mirror a cross-section of our community,” he said.

Summit is big enough to serve the community and yet small enough to provide ready access to key decision makers, which is a key to success. “When you bank ... Bank Local. We live and work here, and we are ready to serve you,” Mr. Duryea said.

