



BRIAN CASSIDY

Tom Hough's Carrollton Bank reported net income of \$5.3 million through June 30.

Carrollton Bank stakes \$1 million on Clayton

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Carrollton Bank is investing more than \$1 million in Clayton as a result of its hiring of top bankers from what had been Southwest Bank.

Carrollton signed a 20-year lease for 7,500 square feet on two floors at 7911 Forsyth, across from the St. Louis County Government Center. Its first-floor lobby opens Oct. 3 after a \$1 million renovation by GS&S General Contractors, said Tom Hough, Carrollton's chief executive. The second floor, where Carrollton opened a branch in 2010, is part of the renovation.

"We've gotten a lot more commercial and industrial loans with the new officers," he said. New officers include Scott Larson, Clayton president; Lvav Spector, a commercial loan lender; and Chris Dickey, treasury management officer. All three worked with Southwest and its successor, M&I Bank.

Carrollton has shown steady growth during the recession. Net income was almost \$5.3 million through June 30, up from \$3.8 million a year earlier. From the end of 2008 through Aug. 31 of this year, total assets grew 35 percent, to \$987 million. Loans grew 23 percent, to \$712 million, and deposits grew 39 percent, to \$835 million.

"Until a few months ago, I didn't realize how important it is for a St. Louis

bank to have a Clayton location," said Hough, who plans to move his office from Des Peres. The bank's seven other locations are built from the original base in rural Carrollton, Ill.

The first floor in Clayton had been occupied for 25 years by UMB, which moved to Centene Plaza. The Carrollton branch has drive-up windows and 12 parking spots.

Redesigns are a strong trend, said Kevin Blair, president and chief executive of New-Ground in Chesterfield, which designs and builds banks. With capital scarce because of regulatory restrictions, banks are redesigning instead of building from scratch.

Carrollton's Illinois branch also benefited from M&I recruits, including Dan Jackson, regional president in Belleville and O'Fallon, and Greg Heggemeier, a commercial lender.

One reason for Carrollton's strong growth is that Hough, the fifth generation to lead the bank, makes his top hires his partners, giving them an ownership interest. They are, in effect, lending their own money and tend to be prudent in doing so, he said. The bank has 70 shareholders, and 53 of them are full-time employees at the bank, which has about 150 employees total.