

# Bank Notes

A FEW WORDS FROM BANKFIRST



Enjoy the difference.

SUMMER 2012

## 12 REASONS TO LOVE BANKFIRST!

*Celebrating Expansion into Volusia County Market*



Ormond Beach



Port Orange



(L-R): James T. Barnes, Jr., BankFIRST Chairman; Dennis E. Brinn, BankFIRST Port Orange Area President; Allan E. Keen, BankFIRST Vice Chairman. Photo: Absolute Photography

The Volusia Team is headed-up by financial services and community banking industry veterans, Rafael A. Ramirez, Jr., President, Volusia County, and Dennis E. Brinn, Area President, Port Orange. Ramirez previously served as President and CEO of East Coast Community Bank, and Brinn joins BankFIRST after having served as President and CEO at Sunshine State Community Bank (now Florida Community Bank) in Port Orange.

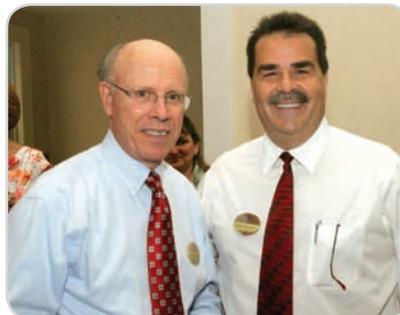
In late Spring 2012, a number of clients, friends and community dignitaries gathered at LPGA International to celebrate the bank's expansion,



(L-R): Rafael A. Ramirez, Jr., BankFIRST President, Volusia County; Donald J. McGowan, BankFIRST President and CEO, Thomas P. Abelmann, Senior Executive Vice President/Chief Operating Officer; James T. Barnes, Jr., BankFIRST Chairman; and Anne Kelley Fray, Senior Executive Vice President/Chief Credit Officer. Photo: Absolute Photography

Have you heard the news? BankFIRST is on the move, and has expanded into Volusia County. Now, there are twelve exciting reasons to love BankFIRST!

In January 2012, BankFIRST was pleased to announce the acquisition of East Coast Community Bank, a \$79 million community bank, with two branch office locations in Ormond Beach and Port Orange. "We are excited to have expanded our franchise into the Volusia County marketplace, and extend BankFIRST's tradition of Gold Star Quality Service to the Volusia market," commented BankFIRST's President and CEO, Donald J. McGowan.



(L-R): Donald J. McGowan, BankFIRST President and CEO, and Rafael A. Ramirez, Jr., BankFIRST President, Volusia County. Photo: Absolute Photography

and the camaraderie and business partnerships that have developed since East Coast Community Bank's founding in 1997.

"We share the common focus of providing business clients with a high level of personal service. Combining these two community banks significantly increases our lending capability in the Volusia market," said Ramirez. "We are thrilled to be a part of the family."



## ATM deposits just became *easier*.

No envelope required

Deposits made by 7 p.m.  
will post with today's business

Now available at all BankFIRST Financial Center locations!

BankFIRST ensures that your accounts are protected to the fullest extent possible.

Visit [www.bankfirst.com](http://www.bankfirst.com) to learn more!

# LETTER FROM *the* PRESIDENT

## *Recession Ruminations*

Prior to being elected President and CEO of BankFIRST, I was the founder and CEO of Flagship Bank in Worcester, Massachusetts. During the last recession in the early '90's, Worcester had an unemployment rate of over 11%, and a devastated urban core with large numbers of foreclosed and abandoned properties.

As a bank CEO, I learned many difficult lessons from those days - the need to maintain a high quality, well-diversified loan portfolio with no significant concentrations in real estate, to keep large amounts of capital on the bank's balance sheet to weather the storm, and to recognize loan problems early and to set necessary loan loss reserves. But the most important takeaway that I gleaned from that recession was the need to be empathetic with the economic issues our clients were facing by helping them as much as possible within regulatory constraints, as well as the reality that a recession can also be one of the best times to actually grow a bank.

When I arrived at BankFIRST close to nine years ago, I was so delighted to have found a bank in Florida that had a senior management team that actually "got it". An institution that grew its balance sheet in a controlled and high quality manner and did not get caught-up in Central Florida's halcyon days of speculative real estate investment and lending. A bank that, through controlled growth and high profitability, increased its capital account to industry leading levels. A bank that had been built for the long run and not for a "flip".



Today, BankFIRST stands strong as one of the very few community banks in Central Florida that has not only survived this recession, but has also profitably grown its franchise. With the recent acquisition of East Coast Community Bank in Volusia County, BankFIRST now has assets in excess of \$700 million and 12 offices located in Orange, Lake, Seminole, Brevard and Volusia Counties.

With an investment in the very latest technology, and one of the most sophisticated ATM, cash management and online banking product suites of any community bank in the country, BankFIRST has consistently maintained a strong commitment to quality service, and continued support to our local communities through socially responsible banking.

Thank you for being clients of BankFIRST. We will continue to work hard to gain your trust and banking business.

Sincerely,

Donald J. McGowan  
*President and CEO*

## PCI COMPLIANCE AND YOUR BUSINESS



As a business owner, are you familiar with the industry recommendations regarding Payment Card Industry (PCI) Compliance? At BankFIRST, we want to assist you in taking the necessary steps to ensure that you and your business are in line with the PCI Data Security Standards (DSS).

The PCI Council has now mandated that all merchants must maintain specific compliance safeguards. We understand the risks and financial costs that a compromise may pose, and the significant impact that a compromise may present to your business. In support of this important mandate, we are requiring all merchants to validate their PCI DSS compliance status with BankFIRST.

By ensuring that your business is PCI Compliant, you are protected from fines - some as high as \$500,000 for the first offense - if you happen to be breached. In April 2012, we added a number of benefits at no additional charge, to better safeguard our Merchant Services customers, including:

▶ **Live Help Desk Support** - assistance with your PCI Compliance certification available from 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. M-F (877) 277-1176 or [support@pcihelpcenter.com](mailto:support@pcihelpcenter.com)

▶ **\$50,000 Data Breach Insurance** - coverage of up to \$50,000, which includes the mandatory forensic audit required by the PCI DSS when a data breach is suspected, credit card replacement costs and added expenses, assessments and fines levied by card sponsors for data breaches, and data breaches caused by employee dishonesty and/or the physical theft of data and computer hacking.

Contact a Business Solutions Representative today for more information at (407)-622-3630, or visit [www.bankfirst.com](http://www.bankfirst.com), and enter "PCI Compliance" in the search bar to complete a brief survey.



## Lock Down Your Account with Trusteer

In an effort to further protect you and your BankFIRST Online Banking account against fraud, we strongly encourage customers who have enrolled in this service to download Rapport - dedicated online banking security software developed by Trusteer. In addition to your current anti-virus software and firewalls already in place, with Rapport you will:

- Shield your Online Banking Account from prying eyes
- Safeguard your Online Banking identity
- Protect your Online Banking log-in details
- Trusteer Rapport helps you secure your browser from financial malware attacks and fraudulent websites



Visit [www.bankfirst.com](http://www.bankfirst.com) to learn more, and to enable Trusteer in your browser.  
**At BankFIRST, your security is always our FIRST priority!**



Protect yourself from becoming a victim of fraud or identity theft.

Visit BankFIRST's Online Fraud Education Center today!

# SBA EXPRESS SUCCESS

*Carbide Industries, LLC*



In 2005, after my return from my military tour in Iraq, I decided it was time to assert myself and become more independent from the large companies that I had worked for in the past. While I certainly respect and gained knowledge from every company that I worked for previously, I knew I had more potential and wanted the opportunity to own my own business. I had been in the multi-family cabinet business for many years as an installer and salesman and saw an opportunity in the marketplace.

I started our business in our garage, with the help of my son and my wife. We started to take contracts for construction materials and installation labor for kitchen cabinets and countertops in the multi-family market. We quickly acquired contracts that required us to supply kitchen and vanity cabinets, plastic laminate countertops, cultured marble tops and granite countertops. As we began to acquire jobs, working from the garage was no longer a viable option and we needed to find a commercial location to stock our material and build our kitchen cabinets. The next major issue - if we were going to be successful - was that we would have to purchase material upfront and be able to float money for about 90 days. In order to continue to grow, we saw the need for additional financing.

*BankFIRST and Rob Berens are - and have been - a key in our success.*

We were loyal customers with a "large bank" for years, but when we explained our needs they were of little help. We had to find an answer as to how we were going to get the upfront money to help us grow. In 2007, we began to search the Internet, and ended at the SBA website. The SBA was offering a program called "Patriot Express" for military veterans, and this is where our lives - and our company's future - took a change for the better. BankFIRST was listed as a financial institution that offered these SBA loans. We contacted them, and were introduced to Rob Berens. Rob showed concern and was interested in helping us acquire this loan. He had us put together a business plan, which he reviewed, and his crew at the bank assisted us in completing the "short" SBA application. Once the paperwork was completed, Rob assisted us in acquiring a bonding agency, an awesome CPA firm, and a great insurance company - all of the components required to expand and grow our business.

Since 2007, we have added another partner with over 20 years of multi-family construction experience, hired 28 full-time employees, sub-contracted to another 30 individuals, and have by the help and grace of BankFIRST and Rob Berens, acquired an additional SBA loan to assist us in purchasing our current location in Groveland.



(L-R): John Parrish, Pamela Parrish, and Lorin Peterson

We also recently purchased manufacturing equipment which will allow us to expand our product line and our cabinet manufacturing plant, with the need to hire an additional 50 - 60 employees in the next two years.

We attribute much of our success to those we have associated ourselves with, and BankFIRST and Rob Berens are - and have been - a key in our success. **Without the help and programs from the SBA and BankFIRST, we would not be where we are today.**

*- John Parrish,  
Owner, Carbide Industries, LLC*



To learn more about BankFIRST's SBA Express Loan Center, visit [www.bankfirst.com/sbaexpress.asp](http://www.bankfirst.com/sbaexpress.asp), or call directly at (407) 654-6599.



## Helping your business do more.

Your Hometown Lending Team.

Our dedicated team of lending professionals is committed to serving as a trusted partner in the development of your company's short and long-term growth strategies. We offer a comprehensive array of lending options, with competitive rates and flexible terms, tailored specifically to you - no matter where your company resides on the small business continuum.

Visit your nearest BankFIRST Financial Center location or [www.bankfirst.com](http://www.bankfirst.com) today to learn more!

### Lending services offered at BankFIRST include:

#### Commercial Real Estate Financing

Secure new or existing real estate with a variety of loan options.

#### Equipment Loans

Borrow the purchase price of the equipment your business needs to stay ahead.

#### Lines of Credit

Revolving and Non-Revolving options to suit your specific business need.

#### Non-Profit Loans

A partnership to make greater Central Florida a better place to live and work.

#### SBA Express

BankFIRST's industry leading SBA Express Loan Center.

#### USDA Loans

USDA-backed loan program assists businesses in rural areas throughout Central Florida.

Looking for financial solutions to help your business grow?

Visit <http://www.bankfirst.com/BusinessServices/BusinessLending.aspx>

## GETTING TO KNOW *Your* BANKERS

**RAFAEL A. RAMIREZ, JR.** - *President, Volusia County*

If you ask BankFIRST Volusia County President, Rafael Ramirez what his passion is outside of his strong ties to his family and the relationships that he has developed through his involvement with the Volusia County community, it's his love of living life to its fullest - and enjoying every moment along the way!



Born in Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico, Ramirez graduated from high school in 1974, and having never traveled abroad, he followed his grandfather's footsteps and attended college in New Orleans at Loyola University. He began his banking career by working in the savings & loan industry during the early 80's while in graduate school. After obtaining his MBA and marrying "the girl of his dreams", Patrice, they moved to Ormond Beach in 1986 to seek a better family life. Patrice and Rafael are the proud parents of three grown children: Rafael (29), works at Chicagoland Speedway; Josie (23), employed at Legoland in Winter Haven; and George, Jr. (19), currently attending his Dad's alma mater.

Ramirez is extremely excited about the opportunities provided by BankFIRST after the merger with East Coast Community Bank. "It is clearly evident that BankFIRST's biggest asset is the outstanding quality of people who work for this fine banking institution, and who share the same family-like attitude for delivering services."

Ramirez is an avid golfer (18 handicap), although he admits he's not very good, and enjoys riding his motorcycle and hanging out with his three dogs: Kosmo, Mandy and Buster. His early years provided for a very competitive athletic period, while lettering in high school and college in basketball and volleyball. Unfortunately, he'll tell you "his body has given out" and he now prefers listening to Aerosmith and U2, traveling to exotic destinations around the Caribbean and visiting his native Puerto Rico with his family and rediscovering the island.

By the way, everyone should ask Rafael for his story of his first date with Patrice...32 years ago!



**DENNIS E. BRINN** - *Area President, Volusia County*

BankFIRST Port Orange Area President, Dennis Brinn, is proud of his long-time tenure as a resident of East Volusia County, where he has lived and served as a community banker for more than 36 years. In fact, he began his storied career as a teller after graduating from college, and has progressed through all facets of lending and bank management. Dedicating his career to community banking, Brinn strongly believes that as a community banker, he is considered, "among those best at understanding the needs and challenges of our local business owners and residents, where we have known most of our customers for many years, and we assure that our resources are invested locally to help our communities and customers grow and prosper."

"BankFIRST is the best example of community banking that I have had the pleasure of knowing and I am honored to be part of the team," Brinn commented. "Not only do we have the resources and desire to serve the needs of our community, we have the friendliest and most knowledgeable professionals in every department serving our customers. We offer the products and services of the large regional banks but offer the quality



of service of the 'hometown' bank that our customers desire."

So, what is Brinn's biggest diversion from banking? He'll quickly tell you, it's taking the path least traveled. When time allows, he and his wife enjoy exploring the back roads and small towns of Florida, and vacations are usually Caribbean destinations "off the beaten track". Have you ever driven through Crackertown just outside of Yankeetown, Florida? Or sailed to St. Vincent in the Eastern Caribbean with its black sand beaches and a hike through a tropical rainforest to the top of a dormant volcano? Now, that's his idea of a diversion!

Brinn welcomes you to stop by BankFIRST's Port Orange Financial Center. "I am always happy to share my experiences and discover new places to go," he said.



## AWARDS AND RECOGNITION



Way to go, Elaine Kelton, BankFIRST Viera/Suntree Client Relationship Specialist! For the second consecutive year, she was responsible for spearheading a "Coats for Kids" collection campaign in late 2011. (L-R): Daryl Bishop, BankFIRST Area President, Central Brevard County; Rebekah Derden, BankFIRST Business Solutions Customer Accounts Specialist; Dawn Johnson, Brevard County Commissioner's Office; and A.B. Levya, BankFIRST Assistant Vice President/Business Solutions Officer.



Congratulations once again to Linda McKenzie, BankFIRST Oviedo-Winter Springs Area President, a 2011 and 2012 *Orlando Business Journal's* "Women Who Mean Business" nominee! (L-R): Morgan Matos; Linda McKenzie, BankFIRST Oviedo-Winter Springs Area President; Megan Bobiak, BankFIRST Vice President/Marketing Officer, and Kristina Clements.



Kudos to Todd Houke, BankFIRST Oviedo-Winter Springs Assistant Vice President/Client Relationship Manager, on his graduation from the 2012 Leadership Winter Garden Program. (L-R): Debbi Beers, BankFIRST Winter Garden Vice President/Client Relationship Manager, and Todd Houke.



Bravo to Megan Bobiak, CMFP, BankFIRST Vice President/Marketing Officer on her nomination to the *Orlando Business Journal's* "40 Under 40" - recognizing up-and-coming business leaders! (L-R): Sabrina Collins, BankFIRST Vice President/Business Solutions Manager; Maria Ellis, BankFIRST Vice President/Business Solutions Officer; Megan Bobiak; Julie Kleffel, BankFIRST Executive Vice President/Commercial Sales Leader; and Linda McKenzie, BankFIRST Oviedo-Winter Springs Area President.



In May 2012, members of the BankFIRST Team attended the Support our Scholars Recipient Reception, where four scholarships were awarded to deserving young women. (L-R): Sabrina Collins, BankFIRST Vice President/Business Solutions Manager and SOS Scholarship Chair and XL106.7 DJ Johnny Magic.

How are we doing?

Take a Gold Star survey by visiting: [www.bankfirst.com](http://www.bankfirst.com)!

