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BLACKHAWK BANK EXPANDS TO REACH UNDERSERVED MARKETS

New Location Opens in Diverse Residential and Industrial Neighborhood

ROCKFORD, IL (December 7, 2008) — Despite several economic factors that are negatively impacting our nation's financial institutions, Blackhawk Bank continues to report increased quarterly earnings and has demonstrated growth by opening a new banking center on the corner of 11th Street and Barnum Road in Rockford. An organization with a strong focus on serving and giving back to the community, Blackhawk Bank selected the location of its eighth banking center based on the opportunity to reach an underserved market.

The new location opened on November 11, and a Grand Opening celebration will be held today at 3101 11th St. The bank is welcoming the community and its 11th Street neighbors to attend the open house celebration from 12:00 – 4:00 p.m. and enjoy light refreshments and enter a drawing to win a 42-inch flat screen TV. Customers may visit the 11th Street location to enter the drawing before the winner is chosen on December 19.

Also, in honor of the new center's location and date of opening, Blackhawk is offering an 11-month high interest CD special. The CD may be opened from December 8 through December 19 at any Blackhawk location. Interested customers may see a Blackhawk associate at any location for more details.

A brief news conference will be held from 2 – 2:30 p.m. that will feature remarks from Blackhawk Bank president and CEO Rick Bastian and elected officials on how the bank will contribute to the economic growth and support the thriving diversity of the neighborhood.

“As a community bank, we are truly able to understand the specific needs of the local markets we serve. Looking at the 11th Street corridor, we saw a tremendous opportunity to reach out to the diverse group of industry and residents to offer convenient and specialized services that meet their needs,” Bastian said. “The opening of this new facility isn't just a celebration of growth within Blackhawk, but it is also recognizing new development, jobs and opportunity in the area.”

In January, Blackhawk will host a business after hours event at the new location and invite members of the business community to tour the facility and network with local professionals and bank associates.

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The new facility is a full-service bank with a drive-up ATM, internet banking station, hospitality area and children's play area. Adding to Blackhawk's commitment of providing a convenient banking experience, the new facility includes a feature in the glass tower entrance that allows clients to access the lending offices if the main lobby is closed. This location is Blackhawk's second full-service bank in Rockford.

Blackhawk operates eight banking centers in Beloit, WI; Roscoe, Machesney Park, Rockford, Belvidere and Capron, IL. For more information about the bank, log onto www.blackhawkbank.com.

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