

PlainsCapital Bank Expands To New Region Of Houston (Houston Chronicle)

PlainsCapital Bank expanded its Houston footprint with a branch in The Woodlands to serve the growing Montgomery County region. "PlainsCapital Bank was looking for a growth area and selected The Woodlands as their place for expansion," said Danny Schroder, the bank's Woodlands Market president. "The general Montgomery County area is going to double in population over the next five to 10 years."

The branch, at 1699 Research Forest Drive, is the sixth in the Houston market for PlainsCapital, which is part of Dallas-based Hilltop Holdings. The others are concentrated inside Loop 610 and near the Galleria.

PlainsCapital joins Woodforest National Bank, PNC Bank and Frost Bank among the institutions that are expanding in the region.

Schroder, who came on board in December to grow the commercial lending business, wondered about the fate of the branch as the coronavirus began to spread throughout the community in March.

On HoustonChronicle.com: [Chronicle 100: JP Morgan Chase dominates Houston's banking landscape](#)

"I really thought the bank might put it on hold," Schroder said. "They didn't hesitate at all, and went completely forward with the building."

The bank opened in June after slight delays in getting materials to build out the space, which had previously been occupied by a different bank. The furniture was spaced out farther than originally planned to allow for social distancing.

The lobby is open by appointment only, but bankers are readily available to meet customers on short notice, Schroder said.

Customers are required to wear masks, which are available if needed, he said. The bank is cleaned frequently with industrial grade disinfectant and hand sanitizer is set out.

On HoustonChronicle.com: [PNC Bank debuts retail branches in Houston market](#)

The branch's six employees come to the office, but for a time rotated shifts, working one week at the bank and the next at home, Schroder said.

Hilltop, which has \$15 billion in assets, has a large presence in Dallas and Lubbock. It is relatively small in Houston, ranking No. 41 by deposits, according to the FDIC.

Two years ago, Hilltop added three Houston branches with the acquisition of The Bank of River Oaks. It has grown from \$369 million in local deposits at that time to \$510 million today, according to the bank.

Clients needing operating lines of credit and equipment lending make up a large portion of the bank's business, as does real estate lending, Schroder said.

"There's definitely a significant demand for multifamily and single-family new construction that we're seeing," he said.

In addition to residential, other sectors that are experiencing demand across The Woodlands area include technology services, biosciences, some petrochemical companies and anything relating to the outdoors, such as RV sales, gardening supplies and swimming pools, said J.J. Hollie, CEO of The Woodlands Chamber of Commerce.

Sectors hard hit by the pandemic include oil and gas, restaurants and hospitality, Hollie said, adding that conditions are not expected to improve for hospitality until companies resume travel and meetings.

PlainsCapital, which has a loan portfolio of about \$500 million in the Houston market, does not have a large focus on energy lending, but could be impacted by low oil prices by lower demand from companies that provide support services to the industry, Schroder said.

katherine.feser@chron.com

twitter.com/kfeser