

Merged banks make changes

■ *Wells Fargo/Norwest officials are busy reshaping the operation behind the scenes*

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The signs on 90 offices throughout New Mexico won't change for at least four months, but the merger of Wells Fargo Bank & Co. and Norwest Bank already has reshaped how the operation is run.

The new bank has:

- Combined the New Mexico and West Texas operations into one region;

- Created a trio of new officers to assist the chairman and CEO of the region;

- Moved some formerly local operations out of state;

- Added a new loan center that almost negated the jobs lost with the former moves.

Larry Willard is now chairman and CEO of Norwest Bank New Mexico/West Texas — before, he headed just New Mexico.

The new management layer consists of three bank presidents who now double as managing officers to oversee banks in different parts of the two-state region.

The officers take over from Willard the task of direct oversight of the various community bank presidents.

The new layer is a departure for Willard, who is known for a flat management style. Prior to the merger, he had 30 bank presidents and department heads reporting



WILLARD:
Regional chairman, CEO of Norwest New Mexico/West Texas

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LARRY WILLARD, CEO OF NORWEST NEW MEXICO/WEST TEXAS

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directly to him.

Now, community bank residents report to one of the three managing officers.

All three new presidents have been with the operation since the United New Mexico Bank era. They are:

- Robert A. Jung II of Albuquerque was promoted from resident of business banking to resident of Norwest Bank Albuquerque and managing officer for the Albuquerque, Santa Fe and Belen markets. After a 22-year career with Texas Commerce Bancshares (now Chase Bank Texas), Jung joined United New Mexico as resident in 1990.

- Jed Fanning, president of Norwest Bank Las Cruces for more than three years, was promoted to managing officer for the south central, west and northeast parts of the state. A New Mexico native, Fanning joined United New Mexico in 1989.

- Ron Mullins, president of West Bank Lea County, was promoted to managing officer of West Texas and southeast New Mexico. Mullins began his banking career in 1978. Before joining United New Mexico in

Wells Fargo/Norwest numbers in New Mexico

ASSETS \$3.46 billion as of Dec. 31, 1998

EMPLOYEES: 1,400 statewide. 800 in Albuquerque

NAME CHANGE Wells Fargo signs go up in late summer

BRANCHES About 90 in 40 communities

JOB LOSSES SINCE MERGER: About 110

JOB GAINS SINCE MERGER: About 90

1990, he was president of United Bank and Trust of Abilene, Texas.

Both Fanning and Mullins will continue as presidents of their respective banks.

Three departments which formerly reported to Willard — human resources, marketing and support services — have essentially been eliminated at the local level. They are now shared with bank operations in Arizona and Texas. "I've got dotted lines from those people over to me," Willard said.

In New Mexico alone, Norwest has about 90 branch banks in 40 communities. The signs on the bank buildings are expected to

change in August or September from Norwest to Wells Fargo.

The bank now has 1,400 people statewide, including about 800 in Albuquerque. While about 110 jobs were lost in the merger, 90 jobs were gained in the Consumer Financial Services Center in the North I-25 corridor.

George Mania has struck home twice at the bank in the past five years — Norwest took over the New Mexico City Center in 1994 then joined with Wells Fargo last year.

And with the mergers have emerged a lot of new ways to operate. Willard: "idiot" are some

adjustments to make.

Looking back at his days running United New Mexico Bank, he said, "I could get seven or eight people together and make a decision on any issue one evening and the next morning, be moving full-speed ahead."

Now that Norwest has merged with Wells Fargo to form the nation's seventh biggest bank in terms of assets — \$196 billion — he said, "There are certain areas where you can do that, but there are other areas where you've got to work with people all over the organization."

Willard is a constant in the midst of the changes.

"Every step of the way, through all these organizational changes and buyouts, (Willard) has shown great foresight. He's smart," said Gary Millhollon of First Capital Group Inc., a former United New Mexico executive who left when Norwest took over.

While Willard acknowledged some erosion of power, he said corporate-level management works through his office when they come to New Mexico. "The things I've seen in other big organizations, this is not true," he said.

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over what I'm doing in my region than I might if I were working for one of the other top 10 banks."

The merger of Norwest and Wells Fargo is still a work in progress. While the merged bank's headquarters has officially moved to Wells Fargo's home in San Francisco, Willard said there's been a fragmentation at the corporate management level.

Some of the management stayed in Norwest's old home city of Minneapolis, while others moved. Willard said the office of his direct supervisor relocated from Minnesota to Texas.

"At Norwest, I had two guys between me and the CEO of the company," he said. "Today, I still have two guys between me and the CEO of the company."

Concerning the impact of the merger on employees, Willard said it's "human nature to feel a little insecure. You feel more secure when you can predict what tomorrow's going to be."

"It's a lot harder to manage employees today and bring them through those changes and, as a leader, make it a positive thing and not a negative thing. There's a lot of positive things that come out of change."