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Community

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## Small town bank keeps growing



**Dan Berninger, President of Muncy Bank and Trust Company, photo at top, is standing where a new walkway will be placed to join the two buildings on N. Main Street. Scaffolding is in place and completion for the expansion is expected by late spring. The architect's drawings, below, show where the new 'catwalk' will be placed to join the buildings on N. Main Street in Muncy.**

**MUNCY** - For local residents, it shouldn't come as a surprise that the Muncy Bank and Trust Company is listed in the number one position for their Performance Rating for 2012 according to the most recent report from Financial Management Consulting Group, Russell Springs Kentucky. The rating was based from 198 banks that are headquartered here in Pennsylvania.

President Dan Berninger said the comparison was made from 8 different categories: Net Interest Rank; Non-interest Income; Non-interest Expense; Efficiency Rate; Non-performing Assets; Asset Quality Index; Return on Assets and Return on Equity. There was a wide diversity with banks listed from the smallest assets (15 million) to the largest assets (34 billion). Muncy Bank & Trust even outranked Citizens Bank in Philadelphia.

Why the growth? "There are a lot of good people here who have been here a long time," said Berninger. From the 80 employees, many are local and grew up here. "Like me, they want to see their communities grow. They want people to do well," acknowledged Berninger. The employees are also very involved in their community and participate in many local events. "There has been a lot of growth over the last few years in this immediate area," Berninger said referring to the East Lycoming area, "and that has a lot to do with our success." He also attributes the growth to new

customers, directors and the experienced management employed at the bank. "It benefits all of East Lycoming County," he added.

Last month the bank hosted an informational program for the public, customers and land owners on 'Marcellus Shale 2013, A Look Forward', which was held at the Hughesville Fire Hall and was well attended. Representatives from EXCO Resources and XTO Energy were available to discuss the impacts of natural gas exploration in the region. Also Representative Garth Everett and Senator Eugene Yaw discussed the new Impact Fee, Act 13.

The growth has brought a need for more room and much needed office space. Residents and neighbors will observe scaffolding placed on the bank and some construction taking place at the building next to it on North Main Street, which housed the former H&R Block.

The bank has owned the building since the mid 70's, but up to this time, has always rented it. Tanglewood Construction from Muncy is in the process of renovating the 6,000 square foot facility so the bank can move their offices. "We have no more room upstairs, and we want to continue to grow," Berninger said. "Yes, it would be less expensive to move and build a whole new facility, but since 1893 we have been here, and we want to remain in the town."

Working with Jim Muffly from Tanglewood, a design and construction for a new walkway will be placed between the two buildings to allow easy access back and forth. The offices have already been laid out to utilize the entire first two floors of the building and completion for the project is expected by late spring.

"We are always thinking about expansion in other areas," noted Berninger. "As time goes forward, we will continue to grow and add people as we need them." Berninger has been with the bank for the last 25 years. He is also a graduate of Muncy High School and began his career at M&T Bank. When he started at Muncy Bank & Trust in 1987 there were 29 employees and 53 million in assets. "Now we have 327 million in assets," said Berninger. The people and the assets are growing which makes the bank competitive and profitable. "We do as much as we can to make it independent, which gets tougher and tougher with new regulations from Congress."

Currently Muncy Bank and Trust has offices located in Muncy, Hughesville, Montoursville, Dewart and Clarkstown. They have continued to attain the distinguished 5-Star superior rating from Bauer Financial, Inc., Coral Gables, Florida. The 5-Star rating is the highest rating possible, as less than 5% of the nation's banks can claim this highest distinction.

