

County Bank joins broker in unusual deal

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By TOM LONG

Sentinel Staff Writer

SANTA CRUZ — Santa Cruz County's two oldest financial institutions announced they will join in offering services under one roof in early February.

County Bank and Trust, which has operated in Santa Cruz for 117 years, will begin leasing space in three of its branches to Baikie & Alcantara Inc. Securities and Financial Services, a brokerage firm established in 1935.

"What we are trying to do is have two separate organizations come under one roof to offer complete financial services," Enrico S. Trincherro, president of Baikie & Alcantara, said Thursday.

The arrangement is a highly unusual one in that the businesses will remain separate entities. Savings and Loan institutions often offer brokerage services,

and banks that have their own brokerages often offer discount brokerage services where orders may be placed through the bank.

The difference in the County Bank-Baikie & Alcantara arrangement is that the brokerage firm will offer full broker services with a broker on the bank premises while having no financial tie to the bank.

According to County Bank executive vice president George Gallucci, pushing the unique arrangement through was no easy matter. "It took about a year and a half to put it all together, including the approval process from all the regulatory agencies," Gallucci said.

"Even though there are several variations of this kind of thing in existence, this exact structure is actually one of a kind, a first," said Gallucci.



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Enrico Trincherro, left, and George Gallucci.

"Traditionally we would have been characterized as competitors, but now we see under the new concept of whole financial services the compatibility," Gallucci said. "We expect to mutually benefit by a person finding under one roof the opportunity to do their banking and investing."

The brokers will begin work in

three branches of County Bank — Pacific and Cooper in Santa Cruz, the Aptos branch in the Rancho del Mar Shopping Center, and the bank's Carmel branch — Feb. 2.

"We see this as only the beginning of full financial services," said Gallucci. "The next thing you may see is a travel agency in the bank or an insurance agency."