

New bank aims for commercial trade

By LANE WALLACE
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The Pajaro Valley Bank office at Ford and Main streets doesn't look like most banks — instead of counters with tellers behind them, customers sit across a desk from a "customer service representative."

There's piped-in background music, and coffee and cookies available.

The differences from other

banks aren't just cosmetic. Pajaro Valley Bank, which formally opens next Monday, is not going after the small consumer accounts and loans, but is instead gearing its services for commercial accounts.

"The theory is that we can provide better service if we try not to be all things to all people. We're not equipped to do that. We're trying to pick a niche," said James Radich, president and chief executive officer of the bank.

The bank won't be turning away non-business customers, but there is a \$1,000 minimum to open a savings or checking account. (The bank will be more than happy, Radich said, to open the \$2,500 money-market rate checking accounts which other financial institutions have been offering since government deregulation in December and January.)

In aiming for business, professional and agriculture-related accounts, the bank will also

offer courier service for customers with non-cash transactions. (Many of the produce wholesale-houses and medical people deal primarily with checks, Radich noted.)

The idea of opening a bank aimed at the business community is not new in the Monterey Bay — two banks with similar goals have opened in the last 15 months. Coast Commercial Bank opened in Santa Cruz in February 1982 and Farmers and Merchants Bank opened in Salinas three months ago. Specialized banks are popping up all over the country to meet the needs of their communities, Radich said.

The idea to form the bank came from Wayne Hall, Sr., who has been in the insurance business in Watsonville for 34 years.

The chain banks in town, Hall said, do an "efficient job," but aren't able to offer the personal service that Hall believes a locally owned bank can.

Hall wasn't the only person in town who had that feeling — other businessmen expressed similar feelings. So a little more than two years ago, work began in earnest on the studies and red tape necessary to form a bank. A stock sale completed early this year was well-received and raised the bank's initial capital of \$4.3 million.

It was a lot of work, but Hall said he and the other directors are confident that there is room for an independent bank based in Watsonville — the first since the old Pajaro Valley Bank (opened in 1888) was purchased by Wells Fargo in 1961.

There's an agricultural bent to the bank's board of directors — seven of the 11 are in agriculture-related businesses.)

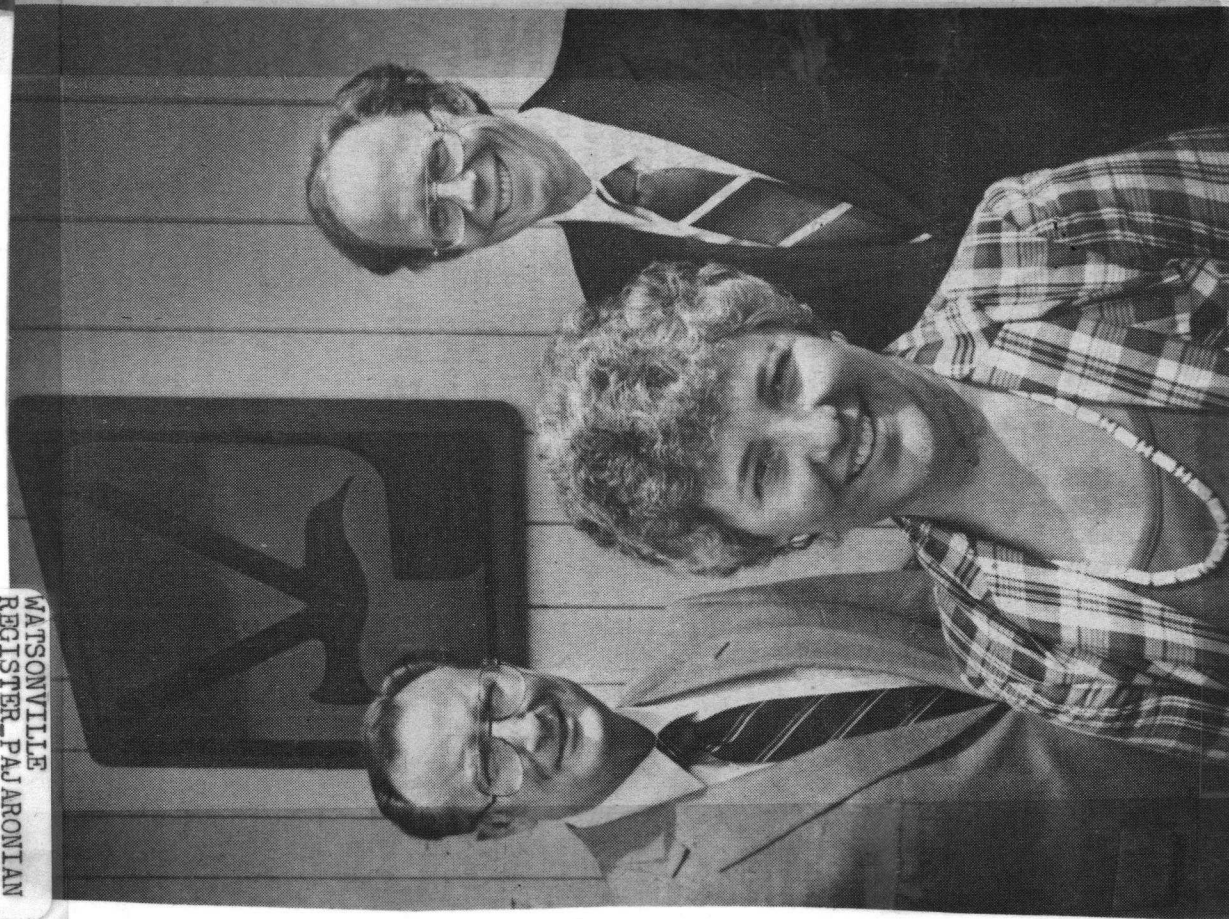
"Every one of the directors is a successful businessman," Hall said. "They're very much aware of (the need for) business and professional-rated financial services."

The directors are Hall, who

serves as board chairman; William Flory, who is involved in number of agriculture-related businesses in Salinas and member of the Driscoll Strawberry Associates Board of Directors; Frank Capurro, a vegetable grower, packer and shipper; Robert Manfre, a partner in Capurro's firm; Robert Nyberg of C&N Tractor; David Rose, an owner of Valley Harvest Distributors; William Sambrailo, owner of a paper company which makes produce packing supplies; strawberry farmer Clint Miller; real estate broker Alvin Hansen; Hubert Hudson, a partner in McSherry and Hudson Insurance; and Radich.

Radich proudly noted that all except Flory live in the Watsonville area.

Radich said the success the board members have had in their own businesses shows to him their confidence in the Pajaro Valley's economy and is a good sign for the bank.



Bank officers

Pajaro Valley Bank's officers, are President James Radich, left, Senior Vice President James Ramsey and Executive Vice President Carol Wix.