



**BAYFIRST OPENS AS FULL-SERVICE BANKING CENTER AND
EXPANDS FINANCIAL SERVICES OFFERED IN NEWTOWN**
Community Bank Celebrates Opening of 11th Full-Service Banking Center

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (Jan. 11, 2024) – BayFirst National Bank has opened its 11th full-service banking center, becoming a permanent fixture in the Newtown community of North Sarasota, where it has operated a loan production office (LPO) and financial resource center since 2022. The opening comes six months after the St. Petersburg-based community bank purchased the building it has rented at 1782 Dr. Martin Luther King Way since 2022.

As a full-service location, the banking center will expand its suite of offerings, adding personal and business banking products and services – including deposit accounts – to those previously offered by the LPO, which included commercial, residential and consumer loans, financial education programs, and a no-fee ATM. The banking center will operate under the continued direction of Assistant Banking Center Manager Joe McKenzie and Business Development Specialist Carlos Yancy, both North Sarasota natives.

“As we continue to build the most enviable branch network in the Tampa Bay area, we are thrilled to expand our footprint and increase our impact in Newtown,” said BayFirst Market President and Chief Lending Officer Tom Quale. “As the first full-service bank to operate out of the heart of Newtown, BayFirst is now positioned to better assist residents and business owners and further ingrain itself in the community through increased partnerships and support.”

Since opening the LPO in Newtown’s business corridor, BayFirst has supported more than a dozen nonprofits through free meeting space, volunteer hours, financial literacy courses, and financial counseling. It has also provided more than \$6.6 million in loans to local business owners and residents, including more than \$1 million in construction loans for affordable housing in Newtown.

“We are proud and excited to cement our roots in Newtown and better serve the financial needs of this historically underserved community, ensuring residents and businesses have access to every financial resource and tool they need to succeed,” added BayFirst CEO Tom Zernick. “We look forward to playing an even larger role in this community’s ongoing development in the years to come.”

News of the North Sarasota banking center opening is just the latest in a series of announcements related to BayFirst’s efforts to expand south of the Skyway Bridge throughout Sarasota and Manatee Counties. The bank opened its second Sarasota location on Bee Ridge Road in July 2023 (it also operates a full-service location at 2033 Main Street, Suite 101) and plans to open another on S. Tamiami Trail in Spring 2024.

To celebrate the opening, the North Sarasota banking center will host a food truck event for the community on January 26 from 2 - 5:30 p.m., and a free, family-friendly “Cash Bash” from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. on January 27, hosted by its Kids Club Mascot, Cash, and featuring a bounce house, face painting, video game truck, entertainment, food and more. If you are interested in attending these events, or speaking to a bank representative, please email Megan.Brewster@BayFirstFinancial.com.



Photos of the Grand Opening at the new location are available [here](#).

About BayFirst National Bank

Headquartered in St. Petersburg, BayFirst National Bank, the principal subsidiary of BayFirst Financial Corp. (NASDAQ: BAFN), operates eleven banking centers in the Tampa Bay area. In addition, BayFirst offers a broad range of retail and business banking services, including small business loans through its government-guaranteed lending division, and is one of the top-producing SBA lenders in the country. Since it opened in 1999, BayFirst has grown exponentially without losing sight of its commitment to making an impact in the community and being Here for What's Next® in the lives of its customers. For more information, visit: www.BayFirstFinancial.com.