

# INDIE BANKER

*of the month*

**Bruce T. Jensen**  
Town & Country Bank

## White-Glove Service

Town & Country Bank offers concierge treatment for everyone

By Judith Sears

**Y**ou enter the lobby of Town & Country Bank in St. George, Utah, to the chiming of a grandfather clock and, depending on the season, the crackling of a roaring fire. You're just there for a quick transaction: to cash a check or make a deposit. Without waiting in line, you're escorted to a semi-private setting to meet with your concierge banker. This banker knows you and your accounts. The person has the breadth of knowledge to handle a variety of customer service requests and new account inquiries as well as transactions.

You're experiencing what Town & Country, one of ICBA's top-performing community banks in 2014, calls concierge banking. It's an approach that essentially delivers private banking to all customers and turns banking transactions into an experience in knowledgeable, personalized service.

"We're first and foremost in the service business," says Bruce T. Jensen, president and CEO of Town & Country Bank. "Banking is our expertise, but service is our business. We give a total experience, from the way things look, to the way the staff delivers, to the level of service."

Founded in 2008, the bank, operating a single retail office, has a total of five concierge bankers who perform the duties of teller, new account representative and customer service specialist. After meeting with customers, the concierge bankers frequently send handwritten notes and follow up with a phone call. "Concierge banking meets the innate desire of any bank customer to know that they have

### **Town & Country Bank**

**St. George, Utah**

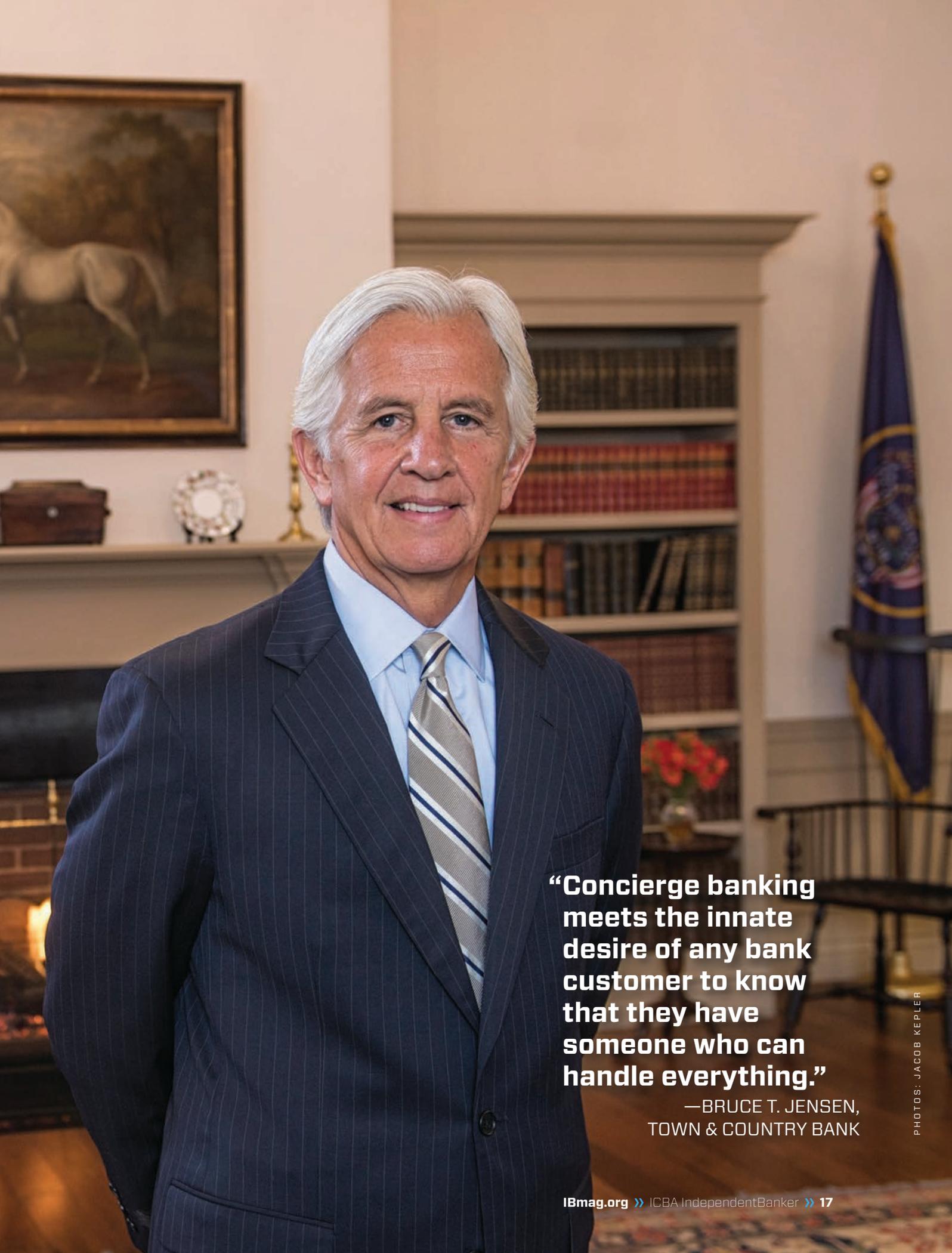
**Assets: \$90 million**

**Retail offices: One**

**Employees: 25**

**Chartered: 2008**

**Website: [www.tcbankutah.com](http://www.tcbankutah.com)**



**“Concierge banking meets the innate desire of any bank customer to know that they have someone who can handle everything.”**

—BRUCE T. JENSEN,  
TOWN & COUNTRY BANK

PHOTOS: JACOB KEPLER



**White Glove Service**—Town & Country Bank's Bruce T. Jensen says staff execution of the bank's premium concierge service model is central to its success. For that reason, careful selection and training of staff is "everything," he says.

someone who can handle everything," Jensen explains. "Our bankers provide their cellphone numbers to customers and offer 'white glove' service not heretofore available to everyone."

In such a retail service model, sometimes called a "universal banker" concept, execution is everything and that means getting the staffing right. Jensen looks for four qualities when hiring: ethics, customer-service skills, a commitment to the community of St. George and self-discipline. He prioritizes these qualities over banking experience. Of the five concierge bankers that Town & Country initially hired, two had no banking experience at all and none had experience beyond that of a teller.

#### **Training issues**

Forty-year banking veteran Don Boshard, who was Town & Country's chief operating officer at its founding,

oversaw a rigorous two-week introductory training course for the new concierge staff. During the first few weeks the bank was open, Lisa Johnson, the operations supervisor and an experienced retail banker, sat with the staff members as backup and

#### **The concierge bankers continue to get ongoing weekly training from trade association sources, including ICBA's educational programs.**

continued to provide support until they became fully proficient at all of the variety of tasks they perform.

The concierge bankers continue to get weekly training from trade association sources, including ICBA's

educational programs.

Town & Country also employs two drive-up tellers who have received the same training as its concierge bankers and can pinch-hit for them when necessary. Besides handling some "back office" functions such as scanning and filing, the drive-up tellers handle most phone calls to Town & Country. This ensures that calls are answered by a "live voice," further reinforcing the bank's branding of personal service.

Town & Country pays the concierge bankers somewhat more than a typical teller position, and that dampens the bank's efficiency rating. Jensen notes, however, that the bank has not lost a single concierge banker or drive-up teller since opening seven years ago. Zero employee turnover has some big advantages: It reduces costs and helps to cement relationships with the bank's customers.

For that reason, Town & Country

aims to be the bank in its community that employees aspire to work for, Jensen says. “We want every team member to feel that they get to work for Town & Country,” he offers. “We feel we’ve created a culture that employees buy into. We hire good people and get out of their way.”

The bank’s frontline concierge bankers are trained to cross-sell loans but hand off loans to a lending specialist. Jensen expects to continue this division of responsibilities and plans to add wealth management specialists when the bank provides retail money management services. “When you get into areas like that, customers want to feel that the professional has a level of expertise that they can rely on,” Jensen says.

### Asking customers

Customer satisfaction and a unique service model have produced results. “We’re rock stars in our community,” Jensen reports. “We’ve had no problem attracting depositors, and we’ve got more loans than we know what to do with.”

A 2014 Town & Country internal customer satisfaction survey among a randomly selected 5 percent sample found that 90 percent of the respondents gave Town & Country a top rating of “very satisfied,” with the remaining 10 percent giving the second rating of “pretty satisfied.” No respondents gave a “somewhat satisfied” or “dissatisfied” response.

Jensen believes that while technology will play an increasing role in the delivery of financial services, exceptional personal service will be what truly differentiates community banks. And in his delivery model, concierge bankers become the linchpin between high-tech and high-touch services.

“We’ve tried to develop a really high-touch approach to customer service,” he says. “If you can do that, despite all the very high-tech banking solutions, people will gravitate your way because they sense something special.” ■

---

**Judith Sears** is a freelance writer in Colorado.