

# Business Spotlight

## Town & Country: The 'Bed-and-Breakfast' Bank

BY CAMI COX

A new financial institution in town is aiming to eradicate hassles, streamline services and add a personal touch to personal finances with its "bed-and-breakfast" approach to banking.

"You can almost equate big banks and little banks to big hotels and little hotels," Bruce Jensen said. "We want to be a little hotel with all this character and ambiance, and that's what we're trying to create."

Jensen is the president and CEO of Town & Country Bank, a new home-grown bank getting ready to open its doors in Southern Utah. When it comes to banking, he and his associates have a unique take on providing services and accommodating customers.

"We've been in banking a long time, and we want to bring to this community something that's really special and really respond to the needs of the customers," Jensen said. "We're trying to be the bank of ideas. We want to be the innovators in town."

Flanked by Executive Vice Presidents West Martin and Brad Hales and Senior Vice President Don Boshard – each with decades of banking business experience to their credit – Jensen and his associates have big plans and creative ideas to make Town & Country a friendly and unique place to bank.

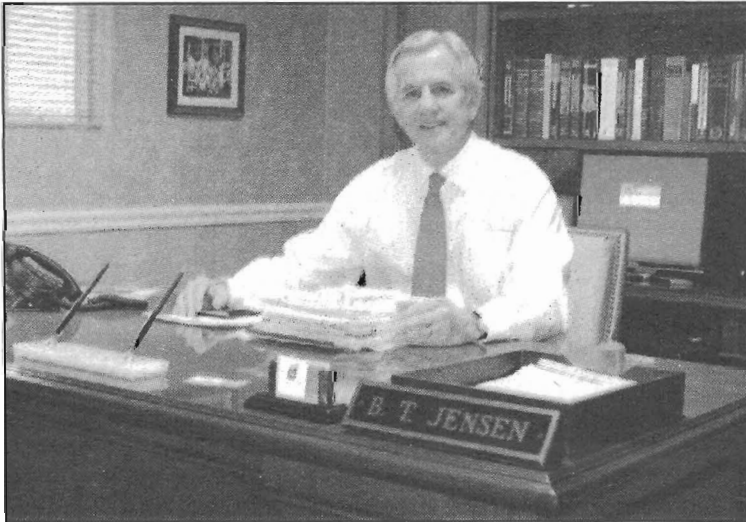
When he and his partners began formulating plans for a new bank two years ago, they surveyed local residents to find out what they liked, didn't like and wanted to see changed in their banking experiences. In talking with people, they found some consistent complaints. Businesspeople, for example, commonly said that they didn't have time to go to the bank, and they wanted more efficient technology to manage their accounts and do off-site banking. When it came to personal banking, many residents lamented long teller lines and being routed and rerouted by automated phone systems when trying to ask a question or make a financial transaction.

"We decided that we would listen to these folks and say, 'Okay, you don't like standing in teller lines? Let's take away the tellers. Let's make it very intimate,'" Jensen said. "We will walk people to and from their car with an umbrella when it's raining. We want people to feel like, 'These folks treat us like no other bank or other business that we know of.'"

This "bed-and-breakfast" approach to banking came to Jensen as he reflected on his traveling

experiences over the years. When on a business trip, he said, he likes to patronize large chain hotels, because he knows exactly what to expect from them and that his fundamental business needs will be met. When on a personal trip, however, the atmosphere, character and personalized service of a bed-and-breakfast or smaller, privately owned hotel are what fits the bill to make his trip memorable and enjoyable.

"It just feels good and the people are nice and they tell you all the interesting things about



Photos by CAMI COX

President and CEO Bruce Jensen prepares for the February opening of Town & Country Bank at his in-bank office, Jan. 2.

the area," he said. "It's kind of like you get this personal, concierge service."

When it came to running a bank, Jensen concluded that the personal attention and welcoming ambiance that make a bed-and-breakfast experience unique and pleasant would similarly infuse character and pleasantness into the banking experience. He wanted Town & Country Bank to provide the fundamentals of banking but to also go above and beyond the norm to accommodate customers and make their banking experiences positive.

"If we can follow in the footsteps of the other banks, we'll do well. But we wanted to layer on some innovation over and above what they're doing, and that's our model," Jensen said.

Utilizing the feedback they received from local residents, Jensen and others at Town & Country Bank will implement some innovative features when the bank opens. There will be no tellers at Town & Country, Jensen said, with the exception of the bank's drive-up window. Instead, patrons will be invited to the desk of a "concierge banker" – a seasoned professional who is something like a consultant – for friendly, personalized assistance and one-on-one help.

"Our customers will get a handwritten note from their concierge banker when the account is opened that says, 'Thanks for coming in. I enjoyed meeting you. I hope your daughter does well on the spelling bee next Tuesday. Here is my phone

See **Town & Country**  
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number, and here is my cell phone number," Jensen said. "Every time (customers) call, they should get a live voice."

Town & Country will similarly provide personalized service to accommodate business customers and to streamline transactions for them, he said. Implementing the St. George area's first bank-operated courier service, Town & Country will deliver loan documents, cashier's checks and traveler's checks right to customers' business offices. The bank will also be

able to notarize documents on-site and take non-cash deposits, so busy businesspeople can get their banking done without ever leaving the office.

Town & Country's bed-and-breakfast approach to service will permeate the bank, right down to the décor inside the facility, Jensen said. With lamp-light-type fixtures, large paintings and comfortable furnishings, everything at Town & Country is designed to be warm and welcoming for each customer who passes through the doors.

"We want people from every walk of life to feel just as welcome in this bank as the president of a large company would," Jensen said.

Town & Country Bank is nearing completion in its capital-raising process and will open for business in February.

The bank's board of directors boasts a "who's who" of St. George area residents, Jensen said, including Lon Henderson, Mike Kraupp, Kerry Hepworth, Daren Barney, Jim McArthur, Kent Heideman, Justin Heideman, Stan MacKay, Patricia Robichaux and David Senior.

*For more information about Town & Country Bank, call 673-1150 or visit them at 1464 S. 1490 E. Circle in St. George, next to the Summit Athletic Club.*