Bank of Holland built on customer relationships

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THE BANK OF holland

HOLLAND, MI — Ten years ago, Rich Lievense took a risk.

Lievense, who held a secure executive position at Old Kent Bank, took his 22 years of banking experience and formed The Bank of Holland, 150 Central Ave., and its holding company, Lake Michigan Financial Corp.

The company that started out with 40 investors, $11.8 million and a staff of nine, now employs more than 90 people in two locations and has more than $525 million in assets.

"People often ask me why we started the company, and the answer is really quite simple," Lievense, president and CEO of Lake Michigan Financial Corp.

"We were tired of the impersonal manner in which many banks interacted with their customers." Garth Deur, president and chief executive officer of The Bank of Holland, said, "The bank was founded on the belief that we could take care of the person and their needs better than average."

Deur said the bank's success stems from its local appeal and the staff's focus on face-to-face customer service. The way the bank builds customer relationships sets it apart from the competition, he said.

Although the bank is growing, it intends on sticking to its roots and keeping its operations local. "We are a group of West Michigan people who are very interested in our area — exception of participating in the occasional Cubs game," Deur said.

Ashley Teffer/The Holland Sentinel
Established in autumn 1998, The Bank of Holland, located at 150 Central Ave. in Holland, is celebrating its 10th anniversary. The bank, which started out with 40 investors and $11.8 million, now boasts over $525 million in assets.