

ANB gives back — you can bank on it



Vance Wagner

American National Bank's Vance Wagner can't help but be excited about his job.

Wagner is the regional president of a locally owned, successful group of banks that has become an important part of this area, particularly the arts community.

There are hundreds of nonprofit organizations in the area that have benefited from American National Bank and its owners,

Donald and Susan Sturm.

Although it's become *passé* for businesses to boast about giving back to the community, the Sturms' track record is impressive.

Wagner said the bank got started in 1954 and there are 37 banks now with \$2.2 billion in assets in Colorado and neighboring states. In 2004 the Sturm Financial Group, Inc. consolidated its banks in Colorado and Wyoming: Mesa National Bank on the West Slope; The Bank of Cherry Creek in Denver; American National Bank in Wyoming; and Western National Bank in Colorado Springs. "The unification improves

Firms eliminate trips to the bank

American National Bank launched e-Deposit in 2005 as a convenience to some larger customers. Since then, the idea has caught on and evolved. Commercial clients make check deposits electronically without leaving their offices.

"When American National Bank first rolled out e-Deposit, it believed that the product would be attractive to large companies depositing large volumes of checks or high-dollar-amount checks because electronic transmission gives them faster access to funds," according to the bank's web site.

"But, the customer base keeps widening in ways the bank didn't anticipate. Professional offices, insurance companies and lots of small businesses that don't necessarily have high-volume check deposits are enjoying the many benefits of e-Deposit. For example, some small business owners, like landscapers, rarely have time to go to the bank except on rainy days, literally. e-Deposit allows them to make hay while the sun shines and take advantage of the convenience of making deposits from home at the end of the day."

operational efficiencies and response times, gives the bank customers multiple locations to choose from, provides an expanded asset base for large loan requests, and enhances the product and service offerings,” according to the bank web site.

“Ownership and management take an active role in the community,” Wagner said, noting that it’s a prudent approach to banking that creates strong, loyal customers. “It’s something our customers recognize and one of the reasons people do business with us. We feel that supporting the arts is such an important aspect, not only because our customers believe in it but we believe in it as well.”

The list of organizations that receive money each year through the bank or the Sturm Family Foundation is too long to print (nearly 500) but run the gamut. The “I Have a Dream” Foundation of Denver, Bonfils Foundations, Boulder Philharmonic Orchestra and Rocky Mountain PBS are among the groups that received funds.

During 2007 the bank gave more than \$800,000 through community sponsorships



American National Bank in Cherry Creek.

and donations, according to its web site. It also connected employees with volunteer efforts, totaling 3,900 hours. The Sturm Family Foundation, in 2007, gave more than \$3 million to a variety of efforts.

American National Bank sponsors events, such as Saturday Night Alive, which is The Denver Center for the Performing Arts major fundraiser. Proceeds help out thousands of youth through the Arts in Education programs.

“A great arts community makes a stronger community overall,” Wagner concludes, with excitement ringing in his voice.

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