

## ***Press Release***

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### ***Growth creates opportunities at Pioneer Bank***

One of southern Minnesota's strongest community banks is growing. That growth is creating opportunities. David Krause, CEO of Pioneer Bank recently introduced the bank's St. James relationship team that includes some very familiar faces in enhanced roles.

"Traditionally banks tend to focus on providing loan products and services to their biggest and most important customers", said Krause. He said that focus even extends to the titles attached to the employees of the bank. "Nearly every bank has staff members they call 'loan officers'. We're changing that at Pioneer Bank". Krause said the change stems from a strategic planning process the bank began nearly a year ago. Instead of loan officers, the bank now has a team of "bankers" that will develop and manage relationships, not just make loans.

"Every customer of Pioneer Bank deserves to know who their banker is. We have restructured our organization to focus on providing the best possible experience for our customers. In addition to providing lending products and services, our bankers will provide deposit and electronic banking services and more – everything a customer should expect from their banker."

The team Krause announced includes the bank's St. James Market President Dean Olsen who along with bank Vice President Kevin Christenson will now serve as Ag and Business Bankers. Emily Boelke, who most recently managed the residential mortgage function in St. James will now serve as a Business Banker. Samantha Paris, who has more than seven years of experience in the bank's real estate department, will now serve as a Mortgage Banker. Jen Gilbertson and Karen Johnson will serve as Personal Bankers.

The bank has experienced significant growth recently, including adding \$38 million in loans and \$21 million in deposits in the past twelve months alone. "We've grown larger and become stronger than ever before. We're proud of that, but what we're most proud of is that our commitment to the growth and prosperity of the communities we serve is unwavering. We take our role as a leader in St. James very seriously."

Pioneer Bank has grown to nearly \$300 million in total assets and has offices in Mankato, North Mankato, St. James, Mapleton and Elmore. In 2010 the bank became the first in southern Minnesota to offer an innovative checking and savings account program called Kasasa. Kasasa Cash and Kasasa Saver reward customers with ATM fee refunds and high interest when they use their debit card, have direct deposit and receive bank statements online. The accounts have resulted in even more growth

for the bank. In 2011, the bank introduced Kasasa Tunes and in March unveiled Kasasa Giving and Kasasa Cash Back.

2011 also marked the introduction of mobile banking, joining other convenience products such as remote deposit capture and cash management. In February, the bank completed construction on a 3,100 square foot addition to their North Mankato bank - a direct result of the success they've had in the greater Mankato market.

The bank's website is [www.bankwithpioneer.com](http://www.bankwithpioneer.com).



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Front, left to right: Karen Johnson, Samantha Paris; back, left to right: Dean Olsen, Jen Gilbertson, Emily Boelke, Kevin Christenson