

From The Top: Pat Benton, First Community Bank, Naperville

By David Sharos

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Local bankers are known for adopting a more personal touch when working with clients as well as knowing people throughout the community. No one epitomizes that description better than Naperville's Pat Benton.

"These days, one of the things I enjoy the most is greeting people at the bank and getting to know them on a personal basis," Benton said. "Personally meeting and greeting people makes them feel good as a customer of your bank, and it also lets them know you appreciate their business."

The market president for First Community Bank, Naperville, Benton, 63, is a homegrown man who was raised in a house near North Central College. He attended local schools, including Ellsworth Elementary, Washington Junior High, and Naperville Community High School, which now is Naperville Central. After graduating from Illinois State University, Benton returned home to start in management training at Harris Bank in Chicago.



*Pat Benton of Naperville is the market president for First Community Bank – Naperville.
Submitted photo.*

"I entered into a training program based on a relationship I had with a longterm resident," Benton said. "I wound up working in downtown Chicago for many years before I came back to the area, but I always wanted to be involved here in this community. My wife and I made the decision after college we were going to stay in Naperville, and I felt, if we were staying, it was better to participate in the community or not be a part of it at all."

Peggy Frank, president and CEO of Naper Settlement, said Benton "has always been community oriented and recognizes the importance of preserving our heritage."

"Pat is actually a second generation volunteer here as his parents were involved before him," Frank said. "I have known him for three decades, and he was very involved years ago in our

antique show, which used to be the single largest fundraiser we had here. His leadership and guidance were invaluable during our developing years.”

Benton said his personal touch toward banking is even more important today, given the unsettled economy and the need to keep customers informed.

“In this tough economic environment, it’s important that we, as bankers, are able to explain what the issues are and communicate them plainly and not in ‘banker’s speak,” Benton said. “People like to be handled on a personal level, not from an institutional perspective. I’ll even give people a call ahead of time before they receive a letter in the mail from us.”

Benton said he has logged 37 years in the banking business, and despite the many changes in the economy, interest rates and shifting markets, the thing that continues to drive him is his personal contact with customers. His work with charitable and service organizations, with a resume that includes the Naperville Area Chamber of Commerce, the Naperville United Way, Naperville CARES and the Naperville Heritage Society, has been equally important.

“The two things that stand out for me are the Heritage Society, since that was a role my parents played, and the business affiliations I had here locally once I left Harris Bank in downtown Chicago and came back to work in Naperville,” Benton said. “Working with the chamber here gave me an understanding of the vibrant business community there is here, and it gave me a better local feel.”

Benton and his wife, Polly, have two adult children, a daughter who lives in Madison, Wis., and a son who lives in Naperville. The couple continues to live just outside the downtown area, which Benton says has made for a rather idyllic lifestyle.

“For me, the ‘core’ of Naperville is what still stands out — the downtown area that we can still walk to with all the shops and amenities — and yet we can still walk back to this quiet suburban street that isn’t Sheridan Road near downtown Chicago,” Benton said. “Between the downtown and having the college right here, the core of Naperville is something people that even live here south of 75th Street still envy.”