

Naperville bank exec in it for long haul

By Anna Marie Kukec

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J. Patrick Benton knows what it's like to stay for the long haul. He's been a lifelong Naperville resident. He's been married to retired District 203 teacher, Polly Benton, for 40 years. And he's been a banker for most of that time, including nearly 30 years at [Harris Bank](#) in Naperville and then as market president of the [First Community Bank — Naperville](#).

Perhaps many would wonder why anyone would stay in the banking field so long, especially during the recent recession, the foreclosure crisis, the ensuing robo-signing controversy among lenders, and ongoing consolidation as some banks close or were acquired.

Perhaps because Benton kept his entire banking career in Naperville, where he grew up and knows various community leaders, neighbors and fellow business people on a first-name basis.

"It's been quite a ride," Benton said of the banking industry.

Benton said his First Community Bank — Naperville held its ground during that roller coaster ride of the industry and after four years has broken ground on a new facility with a drive-through at the Naperville Plaza, not far from its small storefront on 75th Street that opened about 4 years ago. He aims to have the new facility open early next year and hire more workers, he said.

The Naperville bank, considered an FDIC-insured branch of the First Community Bank of Joliet, also aims to be in business for the long haul. It's backed by several local business owners, so they have a vested interest in keeping the local bank thriving and serving in the community, Benton said.

"When I started in banking, Naperville was just on the cusp of becoming a very dynamic community and it's come to pass," Benton said.

As the Bentons enjoy their fly-fishing vacation this week in Colorado, they'll likely think about what it's been like living, working and raising their two children in Naperville as well. That's why they stayed for the long haul.



J. Patrick Benton, Market President of First Community Bank — Naperville, from left, Doug Krause, Naperville councilman; Naperville Mayor A. George Pradel; Steve Chirico, Naperville councilman; and Scott Wehrli, member of the bank's board, break ground on the new site.