

Silicon Valley Bank opening Tempe center

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Phoenix Business Journal

Silicon Valley Bank plans to open an information technology and operations center in Tempe this summer, adding its name to the growing mix of financial services companies moving data, trading, training and IT services to the Phoenix area.

SVB, the commercial banking division of SVB Financial Corp., based in Santa Clara, Calif., plans to have 100 workers at its new Tempe location by the end of 2012. About 50 of those will be local hires and the other 50 will be transferred from other offices,



LaSorte

according to bank spokeswoman Carrie Merritt.

The bank plans to hire an additional 120 people over the next three years, she said.

"The Valley has a great reputation for information technology," said Mike LaSorte, an account manager for Signa-

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FROM PAGE 3

ture Consultants LLC, a staffing company that specializes in the IT industry. "The cost of living here is good compared to other technology hubs. It's not just the cost of living for employees, it's also for office space. Overall, it's just a good value."

Wells Fargo & Co., Bank of America Corp., American Express Co., USAA, Desert Schools Federal Credit Union and Edward Jones are just a few of the financial services companies that have significant operations and IT centers in the Valley.

Chris Cain, who handles branch and client services for Signature Consultants, said the Valley has become an IT hub for banking operations.

"There is a lot of talent," he said. "We never have a problem getting people to move to Phoenix."

With its sunny climate, Cain also said the Valley is less prone to snowstorms and other natural disasters that delay or shut down operations, a huge plus for the 24/7 nature of the IT industry.

SVB, which has 26 offices in the U.S. and others around the world, specializes in providing capital and financing to entrepreneurial companies that range from startups to multibillion-dollar corporations. It's also well-known for providing

financing to the premium wine industry.

Arizona officials at a Jan. 3 press conference announcing the new operations center touted SVB's background in providing venture capital to startups, calling the new center a huge win for Valley entrepreneurs and companies.

Merritt said SVB has about 40 clients in Arizona, including GlobalMed Inc., a Scottsdale-based maker of telemedicine products, and Infusionsoft, a Gilbert company that designs software for small businesses.

"Tempe has a history of technology entrepreneurship, with companies including ... Ticketmaster and Limelight Networks getting their start here," said Tempe Mayor Hugh Hallman. "While the SVB facility is an IT and operations facility, we hope to create a partnership with this great company that will lead to opportunities for more startups."

SVB has had a team of three commercial bankers in Tempe since 1997.

"Right now, our focus is on the information technology and operations side of the business; but to the extent that there is any increased demand in our book of services,



Williamson

we would be open and willing to expand our commercial banking presence," said Dax Williamson, SVB's deal team leader in Phoenix.

Williamson said SVB is getting very close to signing a lease in Tempe.

"One of the things that attracted us was the ability to draw a workforce from a broad swath of the Valley. Tempe quickly became the leading candidate," he said. "Beyond that, we wanted a convenient place where we could build a campus-like environment that would allow for future growth."

Merritt said SVB did extensive research and analysis before choosing Tempe. Dallas also was a front-runner, she said.

Keith Lammersen, a vice president at Jones Lang LaSalle in Phoenix, a real estate brokerage hired to advise SVB, said the bank is placing a strong emphasis on employee needs in choosing its new space.

"They are one of the best clients I have ever seen that really cares about their company culture," he said. "They are looking for a lot of amenities and proximity to the labor force."

He said the skilled labor force in Arizona, affordable cost of living and proximity to

California all were big draws for SVB.

"It's refreshing," said Jason Moore, also a vice president at Jones Lang LaSalle. "This is one of the coolest companies we have worked with from a culture standpoint."

SVB is the second company to receive tax incentives from the Arizona Commerce Authority via the \$25 million Arizona Competes Fund, also known as the Deal Closing Fund.

Clear Energy Systems, a Tempe-based maker of portable energy generation systems, received the first package of tax credits, incentives and potential job-training grants in October.

Don Cardon, president and CEO of the ACA, said the final details will be released after the deal closes. To qualify, companies have to achieve certain performance measures, such as having an average employee wage above the county's average.

Greg Becker, president and CEO of SVB, said the incentives package offered by the Commerce Authority was just a small factor in the bank's decision to move operations to Tempe.



Moore



Lammersen

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