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First Independent Announces Branch Merger

Continuing to fine tune its services to meet changing customer habits, area growth and traffic patterns, First Independent today announced it will merge its Sifton and Orchards branch offices, effective May 21, 2010.

“All banks are seeing that clients want a variety of options to handle their finances. First Independent has for several years been realigning our branch network and introducing new banking channels to meet changing customer demand,” said Renee Newman, Senior Vice President and Director of Retail Banking.

Newman said the network of more than two dozen SW Washington branches that 100-year-old First Independent operated in previous decades no longer matches today’s consumer and business banking patterns. Online and mobile banking have grown increasingly popular with all types of clients, and many business clients use remote deposit and other technology-driven cash management services rather than visiting a local branch office.

“We are evolving our service delivery channels as technology is changing banking habits, and we’re always looking to provide the best possible service in the most efficient manner,” said Newman. She noted that in recent years, First Independent opened new branches in fast-growing Salmon Creek and in several retirement centers, reflecting changing demographics. The bank has also remodeled some branches and merged some branches, introduced online and mobile banking, and enhanced its “invisible branch,” the telephone and Internet-based Customer Service Center.

Client accounts at the Sifton branch, located at 14605 NE 4th Plain Rd. in Vancouver, will automatically be moved to the Orchards branch, located at 10705 NE 4th Plain Rd. First Independent began mailing letters to affected clients this week.

A full service community bank with assets of nearly \$1 billion, First Independent is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year. The bank serves SW Washington and Portland residents and businesses from 20 branches and offices in the region and a variety of online and mobile banking services. Headquartered in Vancouver, WA, with a long tradition of supporting local community organizations, First Independent is committed to enhancing the economic vitality and quality of life in the Pacific Northwest.