

CNB CEO Reflects on the Bank's 75-Year History, Looks Ahead to the Next 75

The coronavirus pandemic shut down much of the South Florida economy, but Jorge Gonzalez, Vice Chairman and CEO of City National Bank of Florida, says not even the global pandemic can derail the city and region's economic growth engine.

"The next five to 10 to 15 years are going to be monumental for our community," says Gonzalez. "The incredible momentum that we're seeing in terms of capital and people flowing into our region is giving the City of Miami global visibility, and I am extremely bullish on the short- and long-term future."

Along with real estate, tourism and healthcare that have long been pillars of the local economy, he's excited about the steady growth of the newer entrants to the community, particularly the financial services and technology sectors.

In just the last several months, Thoma Bravo, a leading private equity investment firm that focuses on growing software and technology companies, and the Silicon Valley-based Founders Fund announced they are establishing local offices with the goal of investing in Miami's technology scene. Financial giant Blackstone purchased a downtown building where it will create hundreds of technology jobs, and SoftBank created a \$100 million investment fund for Miami companies.

"Miami Mayor Francis Suarez has been doing an outstanding job of raising the city's profile among tech sector leaders across the country and around the world," he says. "The momentum the mayor is generating with his proactive marketing campaigns will allow us to build an industry that hasn't really existed here. Our region is becoming a technology innovation hub for the entire U.S. and Latin America, in particular."

Gonzalez's more than 30 years of experience working in the South Florida banking industry informs his confidence and opti-

the second-largest Florida-based financial institution and among the Top 100 in the nation by asset size. CNB has more than 900 employees and 32 banking centers from South to Central Florida.

The growth has come mainly organically, and CNB has positioned itself between the large banks which cannot deliver a personalized experience or access to decision-makers and the smaller banks that don't have the scale to deliver the solutions, technology, and talent that clients need.

Gonzalez is committed to maintaining CNB's position and reputation first and foremost as a community-centric bank that is also focused on people – its employees and clients.

City National has long supported groups ranging from United Way to the Children's Home Society, and during the COVID pandemic, the bank stepped up to process more than 12,000 Paycheck Protection Program loans and helped save more than 300,000 jobs in Florida. In addition, CNB established a \$1 million relief fund primarily focused on supporting community hospitals on the front lines of battling the pandemic and helping address the rise in food insecurity.

"We have built the organization based on key pillars: relationships, providing outstanding service, providing access to decision-makers and supporting our community," he adds. "Whether we're working with clients for their personal or business needs, we want them to feel that the execution and the client experience we provide to them is unique to the banking business, and we



Jorge Gonzalez

operate under the principle that it's our duty to give back and support the community that makes our success possible."

As City National Bank celebrates its 75th anniversary, Gonzalez says the bank's guiding principles that were the foundation of the bank when it was created in 1946 remain the guideposts today when working with business leaders who increasingly see the City of Miami and South Florida region as one of the world's most important growth markets.

"Now these folks are actually moving their firms and employees to South Florida and really starting to reshape the economic landscape of this community," he adds. "It's still early-stage, but I feel like there's a lot of momentum and significant tailwind."

As more executives decide to relocate to Miami and South Florida, his focus is on positioning CNB as a trusted partner for their businesses and their employees.

"For individuals who move to Miami and



The Miami Tower is one of four headquarter locations for CNB, including Coral Gables, Cypress Creek and Orlando.

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mism. He says City National Bank's (CNB) growth since its founding 75 years ago mirrors the region's economic expansion.

Since taking the reins of CNB in 2009, he has grown the bank from \$3 billion in assets to more than \$20 billion, making it

South Florida or want to stay in our region for employment reasons, having a local bank really helps in a lot of respects," Gonzalez says. "We have a very hands-on approach with our clients, and we recently launched a concierge service to help individuals and

businesses with navigating the challenges that come with relocation. Whether it's finding a new family home or corporate headquarters, enrolling the kids in schools, or securing healthcare, we want to do anything we can do to help."