



**IBAT 2025
Best of Community Banking Awards
Bank Culture Submission**

Uniting Our Team for the Future



FAMILY FIRST AT TEXAS FIRST

Texas First's new Consolidated Operations Center (COC) is the culmination of over 50 years of growth along the Texas Gulf Coast. The new 44,000 square foot building brings together over seven departments and 50 team members under one roof with room to grow.

It has massively transformed the bank's culture for the better and turned interactions that were once often purely work-related and surface-level into those of togetherness, belonging, and creativity. Since its opening in 2024, employees have a renewed sense of family, and meaningful cross-departmental connections have exponentially grown. The COC provides a space where employees feel valued and that their work matters – because it does.

VIDEO: <https://vimeo.com/1084723572/4b5feaf5c2>

NARRATIVE

We've always known that what makes us different is our people. Where other workplaces might shy away from using the term "family" when referring to their organization, at Texas First Bank, we embrace it. Because that's where we came from, and it's truly how we feel.

Not long after our founding in 1973 we started to grow, and in less than 27 years, a TFB banking center could be found in all thirteen incorporated cities of Galveston County. Flash forward to today, we operate 26 banking centers in seven counties in Southeast Texas and serve a broad market.

As our footprint grows, we are able to easily meet the retail and lender needs within each location, but operational growth was always addressed in a more responsive, needs-based manner. Attempts were made to be more proactive, but it felt like as soon as we would move into a dedicated space, we were already outgrowing it. So, as new team members would join and departments grew, employees would end up being placed wherever there was space, sometimes leaving even new hires in locations with no one on their team nearby. Internal pulse surveys confirmed that this was less than ideal. Employees felt like they didn't know what was going on, they missed conversations and recognition, and they didn't necessarily feel a connection to the Bank or each other.

We had business units spread all over the counties that we serve, and it was time to bring them back together. -Matt Doyle

It was clearly time to change our approach.

GOALS

Across multiple strategic plans attracting, retaining, and developing talent has always been a top priority of the bank, and fostering a collaborative workplace in which culture plays a key role. With that in mind, we set out to establish an Operations Center that would bring people together in a way we hadn't done before.

Our goals were to find a location that would:

- ★ Keep us **connected** to our roots in Galveston County, be easily accessible for staff, and be highly visible as a place people look to work and are proud to work
- ★ Be big enough to allow for **future growth**
- ★ **Enhance collaboration and creativity** between departments to allow us to serve our communities in the best, most innovative way possible
- ★ **Unite our team** by creating a space they can feel valued, heard, and appreciated on an on-going basis

HOW WE GOT THERE

After years of searching, our building at 600 Gulf Freeway turned out to be the perfect answer. Right off of I-45 and with over 44,000 square feet, it would allow us to bring IT, Consumer Loans, Loan Ops, Deposit Ops, Card Services, Training, Marketing, Facilities, and Security all under one roof, with plenty of room to grow.

We just needed to make sure that the workspace would also lend itself to that, and a complete remodel was in order. We engaged a firm to help us design for collaboration and togetherness in every detail. The firm consulted with all of the teams we knew would be officing in the building so they could have a say in where

they worked. They designed a building with multiple huddle rooms, low cubicle walls with raising desks, adjustable overhead white noise, a 40-person training room, a wellness room, a mother's room, and an extra-large break room. Glass office walls and matte black finishes give the sense of modern openness and transparency, while the wooden accents bring in that sense of warmth.

OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Opening in summer of 2024, the culture shift at Texas First was immediate and real. People were boasting about where they work! More than a place where people clock in and sit at a desk, the location became a dynamic center for collaboration, conversation, creativity, and the open exchange of ideas and solutions. Executives from Retail, Lending, and other departments were asking to (and did) move their offices there, leading to even more collaboration than initially planned.

The building is a place where people know they belong and are welcomed. You see team huddle rooms being used constantly. Flexible workspaces give freedom to employees from other locations to visit and work for the day, and they often do. Images of our banking centers hang on the walls help employees connect to our communities despite the distance, and in the future, we will have a "Wall of Fame" to recognize those around the company, so more than the operations team knows it belongs to them.

With over seven departments and 50 employees currently officing in the building and plans to bring in our Texas First Insurance team upstairs in the near future, the place has become our Texas First home. It's not only a place where board meetings, departmental meetings, and trainings are held, but employees and management host social gatherings, birthdays, retirement parties, baby showers, barbecues, and potlucks there too. There's a wellness room and a mother's room to accommodate healthy living, as well as a walking group that gets outside each day to get their steps in for our Wellness Challenges. Our large kitchen and breakroom break down barriers between departments and employees that may have otherwise never crossed paths. And recently, the team created their own COC Employee of the Quarter award to recognize each other.

The connections have led us to work better together: cutting the back and forth and coming up with innovative ideas to operate better and serve our customers more efficiently.

It's truly a vibrant place!

At Texas First, we don't just deal with money. We're a community bank that cares about relationships, and that starts from the inside out. The opening of our Consolidated Operations Center marked a pivotal moment in our history. It was the establishment of a facility that is a living commitment to our positive, welcoming, and open culture and visibly puts our family first. It's a place where we remember our roots and look forward to the future, and a testament to how investing in people can have a direct impact on production, engagement, retention, and excitement for where you work.



Helping Texans Build Texas®