

Media Relations

Optima Executive Discusses Launching Business During Financial Crisis At UNH Nov. 18

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DURHAM, N.H. – Daniel Morrison, chairman, president, and CEO of Optima Bank and Trust Co., will discuss the bank’s start-up in January 2008 during the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression at the next University of New Hampshire CEO Forum Thursday, Nov. 18, 2010.

The program, “Defying the Odds: Starting up in a Tough Economy -- The Financial Crisis and its Impact on New Hampshire” begins at 8 a.m. in Huddleston Hall.

Morrison will discuss the creation and success of Optima Bank and Trust, and his view of the financial crisis and its impact on New Hampshire, as well as his outlook for the future of the financial industry.

Optima Bank gained national recognition in 2008 for generating the second-fastest asset growth out of 90 new banks that started up that year. The bank reached breakeven profitability in 18 months, and by the end of 2009 was one of the most profitable new banks in the United States.

Morrison and his wife, Pam, both longtime bankers, developed the idea for Optima Bank as they watched a wave of consolidations in the industry put most of the banks in the area under the control of a few large banks from out of state. By 2008 they had written a business plan, assembled a team, raised the necessary capital, and obtained regulatory approvals to open the new bank. Morrison became CEO and his wife was named chief operating officer.

Morrison has more than 25 years of experience in the banking industry. Prior to founding Optima Bank and Trust Co., he held positions with First Signature Bank, Golden West Financial Corp., and Bank of America. He holds a degree in business administration from San Francisco State University.

Initiated in 1997, the UNH CEO Forum is an outreach program of the UNH Whittemore School of Business and Economics and the UNH Graduate School serving CEOs, presidents, and senior managers of companies in northern New England. The forum provides its members with opportunities to meet and exchange ideas with their peers in business and industry in an informal setting. The UNH CEO Forum is sponsored by the law firm of Pierce Atwood, People’s United Bank, Sprague Energy, Crystalvision, and Berry, Dunn, McNeil and Parker. For more information about the CEO Forum, visit <http://www.unh-ceoforum.org/>.

The deadline to register for the forum is Wednesday, Nov. 10, 2010. To register or become a member of the UNH CEO Forum, call Barbara Draper at 603-862-1107, or e-mail her at barbara.draper@unh.edu. The event is free to members and \$49 for first-time attendees.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling more than 12,200 undergraduate and 2,200 graduate students.

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