

OC Banks See Assets Climb 10% to \$38.2B

Genesis, US Metro, Others See Strong Asset Growth

■ By PETER J. BRENNAN

Banks headquartered in Orange County reported a healthy 10% increase in their assets to \$38.2 billion.

This year's growth compares to 3% in 2021 and 31% in 2020. While their assets climbed for the period ended June 30, they are preparing for a possible recession in 2023 (see story, page 24).

Thirteen banks made the list, down from 15 on last year's list. A decade ago, 26 banks made the list but, with far fewer assets of \$10.6 billion.

The two largest banks on the list accounted for about 82% of the total assets.

Irvine-based **Pacific Premier Bancorp** (Nasdaq: PPBI) accounted for more than half of the assets, \$22 billion, a 7.1% jump from a year ago.

Santa Ana's **Banc of California Inc.** (NYSE: BANC) boosted its assets 18% to \$9.5 billion, aided by its acquisition a year ago of Pacific Mercantile Bank.

That acquisition also made Banc of California the largest gainer in employees on the list, reporting a 27% increase to 420.

Overall, the local banks increased their headcount 3.5% to 1,425.

The two largest banks also accounted for 19 branches, more than half of the total in Orange County. The number of OC branches on the list has steadily fallen from 33 this year from 41 last year and 56 in 2011. Most of the other banks have only one branch.

One bank that's done well by shedding its branches is No. 4 **CommerceWest Bank**—owned by parent **CW Bancorp** (OTC: CWBK), which reported assets climbed 4.6% to \$1.2 billion. A decade ago, the Irvine-based bank ranked No. 12 with \$328 million in assets.

The fourfold increase in assets can be attributed to closure of its bank branches to focus on a digital banking platform, said Chief Executive **Ivo Tjan**, who founded the bank in 2001.

"We consolidated all our locations seven years ago and took the savings from that to invest in technology," Tjan the Business Journal. "The environment of digital remote bodes really well. Most clients are comfortable banking online."



CommerceWest has emphasized tech, ditched branches

lists in recent years, either through acquisitions like Pacific Mercantile and Opus Bank, or moves out of state like **Sunwest Bank** and **First Foundation**.

Nano Problems

The biggest asset decline on the list was Irvine-based **Nano Banc**, which fell 20% to \$1 billion.

The online bank, which began in 2018, came under criticism for growing too fast from regulators, who forced the bank to make changes to its management and board of directors.

Nano Banc also saw the biggest decline in headcount, falling 22% to 47 workers.

Mission Viejo-based **Partners Bank of California** saw its assets rise 2.1% to \$414 million, a turnaround from a year ago when assets fell 10%. Assets accelerated in the third quarter to \$433 million.

Partners Bank CEO **Chris Walsh** said the past year has "been phenomenally good" as

borrowers rushed to refinance before higher interest rates kicked in.

"2021 was our best core loan origination ever and this year we're going to out do it," he said.

Irvine's **Commercial Bank of California** jumped one spot to No. 3 as its assets climbed 15% to \$1.9 billion.

The growth can be attributed to "good quality" deposits, a new payments system, and new relationships forged by getting government loans for small businesses during the pandemic, Chief Executive **Ash Patel** said. CBC's assets have steadily climbed from \$200 million in 2013 when Patel took the CEO position.

Another bank reporting high growth was Garden Grove-based **US Metro Bank**, which jumped 24% to \$1.1 billion; a year ago, its assets jumped 31%.

The bank, which caters to Korean Americans, is thinly traded on pink sheets (OTC Pink: USMT). ■

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Highest Grower

This year's fastest grower was Newport Beach's **Genesis Bank**, where assets more than doubled to \$120.7 million over the last three quarters.

Stephen Gordon, who successfully started and sold two prior banks, opened Genesis Bank in 2021.

Demand "has been like drinking from a fire hose," Gordon told the Business Journal. "We were having to turn away new business because as a new bank, we have limitations."

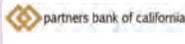
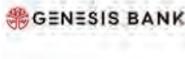
Hence, the company won approval from regulators for a larger bank than initially planned, he said.

The list of banks headquartered in Orange County has notably changed in the past couple of years.

Several well-known banks have disappeared from the Business Journal's annual

THE LIST OC-BASED COMMERCIAL BANKS | ► NEXT WEEK'S LIST *Shopping Centers*

RANKED BY ASSETS

Rank	Bank	Company logo	Assets as of June 30, 2022 *yearly % change	Return on assets (%) as of June 30, 2022	Core capital ratio (%) as of June 30, 2022	Loans/deposits (%) as of June 30, 2022	Net income (loss) for six months ended: -June 30, 2022 -June 30, 2021	OC branches OC employees *yearly % change	Parent company *Headquarters	Top local official(s) *Title *Phone/fax	
1 (1)	Pacific Premier Bank 17901 Von Karman Ave., Ste. 1200 Irvine 92614-5248 Website: ppbi.com		\$22 billion 7.1%	1.36%	11.41%	81.95%	\$146.6 million \$175 million	9 539 -6.8%	Pacific Premier Bancorp Inc. Irvine	Steven R. Gardner chairman/CEO (949) 864-8000	
2 (2)	Banc of California 3 MacArthur Place Santa Ana 92707-6067 Website: bancocal.com		\$9.5 billion 18.5%	1.72%	12.27%	97.13%	\$81.7 million \$39.5 million	10 420 27.3%	Banc of California Inc. Santa Ana	Jared Wolff CEO/president (714) 850-6440/(714) 800-1950	
3 (4)	Commercial Bank of California 19752 MacArthur Blvd., Ste. 100 Irvine 92612-2409 Website: cbcac.com Email: apatel@cbcac.com		\$1.9 billion 14.7%	0.79%	8.5%	72.03%	\$7.9 million \$7.6 million	3 110 11.1%	CBC Bancorp Irvine	Ash Patel CEO/president (714) 431-7000/(714) 825-0982	
4 (7)	CommerceWest Bank 2445 McCabe Way, Ste. 300 Irvine 92614-4293 Website: cwbc.com Email: itjan@cwbc.com		\$1.2 billion 4.6%	1.41%	9.81%	72.97%	\$9.1 million \$7 million	1 75 0%	CW Bancorp Irvine	Ivo A. Tjan chairman/CEO/president (949) 251-6959/(949) 251-6957	
5 (8)	US Metro Bank 9866 Garden Grove Blvd. Garden Grove 92844-1643 Website: usmetrobank.com Email: ralphwiita@usmetrobank.com		\$1.1 billion 24%	1.7%	10.24%	88.89%	\$8.8 million \$7.1 million	3 60 0%	US Metro Bancorp Inc. Garden Grove	Dong I. Kim CEO/president (714) 620-8888/(714) 620-8889	
6 (6)	Nano Banc 7755 Irvine Center Drive, Ste. 300 Irvine 92618-2904 Website: nanobanc.com		\$1 billion -20.5%	0.43%	11.62%	92.76%	\$2.4 million (\$828,000)	1 47 -21.7%	Nano Financial Holdings Inc. Irvine	Scott Racusin president (844) 626-0262	
7 (10)	Partners Bank of California 27201 Puerta Real, Ste. 160 Mission Viejo 92691-8556 Website: pbofca.com Email: information@pbofca.com		\$414.4 million 2.1%	0.71%	11.65%	110.36%	\$1.4 million \$1.7 million	1 49 19.5%	Partners Bank of California Mission Viejo	Chris Walsh CEO (949) 732-4000/(949) 348-0180	
8 (12)	California First National Bank⁽¹⁾		\$338.2 million 134.7%	-3.72%	20.32%	98.74%	(\$5.1 million) (\$1.9 million)	0 0 NA	DMG Bancshares Inc. Irvine	Don M. Griffith CEO/chairman	
9 (11)	Infinity Bank 6 Hutton Centre Drive, Ste. 100 Santa Ana 92707-8729 Website: goinfinitybank.com Email: info@goinfinitybank.com		\$315.1 million 54.3%	0.59%	9.63%	53.68%	\$902,000 \$553,000	1 31 24%	Infinity Bank Santa Ana	Bala Balkrishna/Victor Guerrero/ Allison Duncan/Patty Staples CEO/president, COO/CFO/chief credit officer (657) 223-1000/(714) 619-7456	
10 (NR)	Genesis Bank 4675 MacArthur Court, Ste. 1600 Newport Beach 92660-1852 Website: mygenesisbank.com Email: info@mygenesisbank.com		\$120.7 million 111%	-13.38%	56.78%	168.27%	(\$6.7 million) (\$7.5 million) ⁽²⁾	1 42 20%	Newport Beach	Stephen H. Gordon founding chairman/CEO (949) 273-1226/(949) 273-1227	
11 (13)	California Business Bank 3200 El Camino Real, Ste. 220 Irvine 92602-1381 Website: californiabusinessbank.com Email: crosas@californiabusinessbank.com		\$113.6 million 17%	0.7%	11.21%	87.2%	\$437,000 \$46,000	1 14 0%	California Business Bank Irvine	Cesar Rosas executive VP/head of commercial & business banking (714) 389-0163/(714) 619-8864	
12 (14)	Tustin Community Bank 13891 Newport Ave., Ste. 100 Tustin 92780-7801 Website: tustin.bank Email: genemicco@tustincmtybank.com		\$91.8 million 7.1%	0.65%	12.39%	61.71%	\$299,000 \$606,000	1 23 -8%	Saddleback Bancorp Tustin	Gene Micco CEO/president (714) 730-5662/(714) 731-2794	
13 (15)	California International Bank N.A. 15606 Brookhurst St., Ste. C-D Westminster 92683-7581 Website: calibankna.com Email: thanh.pham@calibankna.com		\$76 million -8.2%	-0.14%	14.29%	55.88%	(\$59,000) (\$527,000)	1 15 0%	California International Bank N.A. Westminster	Thanh Pham president (714) 338-8700/(714) 338-8730	

Sources: Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. and the banks **Abbreviations:** NA: not applicable; NR: not ranked
 Note: To the best of our knowledge, this information is accurate as of press time. While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy and thoroughness of the list, omissions and typographical errors sometimes occur. Unless otherwise noted, the information on this list was provided by the companies themselves. List may not be reprinted without permission of the editor. Photos show the first top official listed.

⁽¹⁾ Parent company DMG Bancshares Inc. acquired San Francisco-based Liberty Bancorp in August and closed the CalFirst branch
⁽²⁾ As of 9-30-2021