

Encore Bank establishes branch-light presence in DFW

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An Arkansas-based bank is building a branch-light presence in Dallas-Fort Worth, utilizing technology and local bankers to execute its strategy.

Encore Bank, founded in 2019, entered the North Texas market last fall and brought on [Marc Massad](#) as executive vice president and regional president of the Dallas market. The bank works with fintechs to stay on top of technology trends.

“There's a client base that needs a rebirth through relationship banking,” Massad said. “That's the niche we want to fill. And do it in a very technology-forward approach here in North Texas and Dallas.”

Massad said as consolidation in the banking industry increases, the need for smaller regional banks has risen. He added Encore is seeking to utilize relationship-driven banking to serve customers. Encore's Dallas-Fort Worth presence currently has 27 employees across equipment finance, mortgage and credit administration, Small Business Administration lending and treasury management, among others.

Massad added Encore prides itself in its use of technology to deliver products and services. The bank partners with fintechs and makes that sector a priority to its offering.

“There are community banks, there are regional banks, and there are tech only banks, and we're trying to intersect all three of those and deliver that here in Dallas,” Massad said.

Chief Marketing Officer Barry Jackson said the plan from the start was to keep branch and office locations limited. He added that the COVID-19 pandemic, which shut down many branches temporarily and permanently, benefited the company's thesis of supplementing locations with talent.

While Encore has limited locations by design, [many other major banks had to close](#) branches across North Texas due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As of April 1, seven banks had closed 39 branches permanently across the region, 15 of which were closed by Wells Fargo. The bank's Dallas office is currently operating out of temporary space in the Galleria Dallas, but is slated to soon move to Preston Center, Massad said.

“We were very deliberate in the fact of having a very small number of offices,” Jackson said. “For example, in Dallas today, we have one office, and our plan is to have one office. But what we didn't know, in 2019, is that we would have COVID happen at the beginning of 2020, and it's proven our model.”

Jackson said for those locations, the bank doesn't have specific markets it seeks to enter, but rather looks for strong bankers who could lead the teams. The local market teams serve clients in their regions, and Little Rock-headquartered Encore has other locations through Arkansas and Texas.

Massad said Encore keeps up in the competitive banking environment in North Texas by knowing its customer, hiring strong bankers and filling a niche as a community bank.

"We certainly don't want to be all things to all people, we just can't, but there's definitely a broad enough demand," Massad said.

Encore is currently raising \$90 million in equity in a fund called "Encore Bancshares, Inc.," according to a public filing. Jackson and Massad said they couldn't share details about the raise due to SEC disclosure regulations.



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