

## Gulf Coast banking consolidates

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Four Gulf Coast banks were acquired by larger and more financially sound competitors over the past quarter, reducing the number of institutions on Bauer Financial's list of banks with "considerable challenges" in Southwest Florida.

Last June, Bauer, an independent bank-rating agency, gave 15 Gulf Coast banks a zero- or one-star rating. Now, in its most recent ratings updated, Bauer identified just 11 institutions with such low ratings.

All four of the banks no longer on Bauer's troubled list — Southshore Community Bank, First Commercial Bank of Tampa Bay, First Community Bank of America, and LandMark Bank of Florida — were acquired by competitors over the past several months.

Fourteen banks received four- or five-star ratings from Bauer, the same count from its last ratings update. Jefferson Bank of Florida, an Oldsmar-based institution, is a new addition to the four-star list, while Bradenton-based First America Bank was given a lower rating of 3.5 stars this month.

Sarasota-based Gateway Bank of Southwest Florida saw its ranking improve from four to five stars this month, while Heritage Bank of Florida in Lutz had its ranking reduced from one star to zero.

Each of the institutions rated as a five-, four-, one-, or zero-star bank is listed below.

### FIVE STARS:

- FineMark National Bank & Trust (Fort Myers)
- Florida Shores Bank — Southwest (Venice)
- Florida Traditions Bank (Dade City)
- Gateway Bank of Southwest Florida (Sarasota)
- NorthStar Bank (Tampa)
- TCM Bank NA (Tampa)

### FOUR STARS:

- Edison National Bank (Fort Myers)
- Florida Gulf Bank (Fort Myers)
- Hillsboro Bank (Plant City)
- Jefferson Bank of Florida (Oldsmar)
- Members Trust Co. (Tampa)
- Raymond James Bank FSB (St. Petersburg)
- Sunshine State Federal Savings and Loan Assoc. (Plant City)
- USAmeriBank (Largo)

### ONE STAR:

- Freedom Bank of America (St. Petersburg)
- Southern Commerce Bank NA (Tampa)

### ZERO STARS:

- Bank of Naples (Naples)

- First Community Bank of Southwest Florida (Fort Myers)
- First Home Bank (Seminole)
- Florida Bank (Tampa)
- Heritage Bank of Florida (Lutz)
- Old Harbor Bank (Clearwater)
- Reliance Bank FSB (Fort Myers)
- The Bank of Commerce (Sarasota)
- The Royal Palm Bank of Florida (Naples)