



Oconee State Bank Hires Athens Market Leaders

Talented Team Will Lead Loan Production Office in Athens Area



Pictured left to right: Phillip Edwards, Chad Thomason

WATKINSVILLE, January 9, 2018 – Oconee State Bank, a \$329 million asset community bank based in Oconee County, has hired a team of experienced lenders to help build its loan portfolio in the Athens – area market. Phillip Edwards and Chad Thomason have joined Oconee State as Athens-Clarke County Market Leaders.

“Oconee State Bank has served an established customer base from the Athens –Clarke County community for many years, so to have Phillip and Chad join our team and lead our new expansion efforts in this market is a phenomenal benefit to us,” said Oconee State Bank Executive Vice President and CLO

Philip Bernardi. “We are excited about the opportunity to bring our special brand of remarkable service and accelerated decision making to the entrepreneurs, dentists, doctors, manufacturers, business owners and developers who drive the Athens-area economy.”

Phillip Edwards joins Oconee State Bank from a larger regional bank based out of Atlanta GA. He has more than 15 years of experience in the local market with medical, dental, commercial real estate, commercial development, residential construction, as well as Small Business Administration 504 and 7(a) programs. He is active in the Athens community and is passionate about helping small and mid-size businesses achieve their growth goals and objectives. Originally from Gainesville GA, he is a graduate of North Georgia College & State University with a BBA Degree in Business Administration. Phillip is an active member of Athens Church and he has lived in the Athens area for the last 14 years. He is happily married to Jodie Meeks Edwards and they have two children, Emerson Grace and Pierce Allen Edwards.

Chad Thomason joins Oconee State Bank from a regional bank based out of Athens GA. He has more than 15 years of experience in the local market with medical, dental, commercial real estate, commercial development, residential construction, as well as Small Business Administration programs. Chad is active in the Athens community and has served on the board of many non-profit organizations such as LEAD Athens, United Way, and Champions Foundation. He is the co-founder of the Athens Jaycees, and served as State President of the Georgia Jaycees. Originally from Cleveland GA, he is a graduate of North Georgia College & State University with a Bachelor’s in Finance. Chad is happily married to Jill Thomason and they have three children, Cohen, Hudson and Camden Thomason.

“Oconee County and Watkinsville will always remain our headquarters,” said Oconee State Bank President & CEO Neil Stevens. “We are grounded here, we were founded here, and we see tremendous opportunities in Oconee and surrounding counties in the years ahead. Our bankers are always searching for opportunities to safely enhance shareholder value and ultimately deliver value back to Oconee County.”

Since being named Oconee State Bank’s President and CEO in 2016, Stevens and his leadership team have hired new lenders and credit officers, expanded current offerings, updated the bank’s logo, and have been working to establish a “remarkable” culture inside the organization.

About Oconee State Bank

Oconee State Bank is a leading financial institution with a vision to be essential to the lives, businesses, and communities we serve. With more than 57 years of service in the banking industry, we continuously strive to create remarkable experiences that significantly mark the lives of others. We are proud to provide an unparalleled commitment to personalized service, innovative products and solutions, and bringing exceptional value to our customers through local ownership, involvement, and decision-making.