

# Project may spark Main Street retail



Drawing shows the \$100 million One development that could bring jobs and shoppers to Main Street. Mayor Knox White said it will bring "destination retail to downtown."

## Bank, boutique among first tenants in One

By Rudolph Bell

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The headquarters of a bank intent on growing and a fashion boutique usually found in larger markets are among the firms that will take space in a \$100 million Main Street development unveiled Wednesday.

CertusBank said it expects to have more than 350 employees in the headquarters over time, while Greenville officials hope the Anthropologie store will draw more shopping, meeting their goal of diversifying downtown's retail mix beyond its many restaurants and bars.

Gov. Nikki Haley joined developer Bob Hughes for the announcement



HEIDI HEILBRUNN / Staff

County Council Chairman Butch Kirven, from left, Bob Hughes, CertusBank Vice Chairman Walter Davis, Mayor Knox White and Gov. Nikki Haley attend the unveiling of One, a new development on Main Street.

## CertusBank could employ 350 downtown

By David Dyles

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CertusBank initially will bring about 200 people to downtown Greenville with its corporate headquarters, and employment should increase to 350 as the bank grows, a top company official said Wednesday.

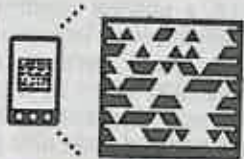
CertusBank, a nationally chartered bank that is a subsidiary of Blue Ridge Holdings Inc., said it will establish the company's headquarters in the first phase of the 375,000-square-foot mixed-use project by Hughes Development Corp.

"We chose South Carolina because we think that the trajectory for economic growth is fairly steep over the

next couple of decades," said CertusBank Vice Chairman Walter Davis, a Greenville native. "We chose the Upstate of South Carolina because we think that it's the economic engine that will help drive that growth."

The move is a corporate boon to Greenville, which in recent years has lost four high-profile company headquarters with offices downtown.

Headquarters are considered big prizes among business recruiters not only because of the white-collar jobs attached to them but also because of the vendors that often follow, such as advertising agencies and information technology firms.



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View photos and renderings from the One announcement and scan this code with your mobile phone to view video from Wednesday's press conference.

# BANK

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There also is the corporate philanthropy that comes with headquarters, as companies tend to be more generous to their hometowns, supporting charitable causes and the arts.

"I assure you — we will be a great corporate citizen," Davis told several hundred at Wednesday's announcement. Davis is a 1982 graduate of J.L. Mann High School.

CertusBank, which operates 32 branches in South Carolina, Georgia and Florida, is claiming 26,000 square feet in the first phase of the Hughes project, a 175,000-square-foot, nine-story building that will be home to other office and retail tenants when it is completed by the end of 2012.

The bank conducts business from the Atlanta and Charlotte offices of its parent, Atlanta-based Blue Ridge, and its operations center in Easley, where it acquired six-branch Com-

munitySouth Bank and Trust in January.

Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. officials entered an agreement for CertusBank to assume CommunitySouth Bank and Trust deposits to protect consumers. CommunitySouth was closed by the state Board of Financial Institutions, which appointed the FDIC as receiver. The six branches of CommunitySouth reopened as branches of CertusBank.

In an interview, Davis told GreenvilleOnline.com that CertusBank would keep its offices in Easley.

With more than \$1.8 billion in assets and backed by \$500 million in investment capital, CertusBank has become a new, strong player in the Southeastern banking market.

The company, formed by former Bank of America and Wachovia executives, has acquired three troubled financial institutions in the past five months, including two Georgia banks it bought last week.

CertusBank officials say they intend to continue to pursue "prudent, strategic opportunities" to expand

by buying additional banks in other markets.

That will mean additional growth for the headquarters operation, said Davis, who projects the downtown Greenville location could ultimately employ more than 350 workers.

The bank's target area includes South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia and northern Florida and "we want to continue to expand ourselves in that footprint," he said.

"We will be looking for acquisition targets, and especially in South Carolina."

With more than 100 foreign companies represented in the Upstate, CertusBank officials believe there is "a lot of great business opportunity" in the region, Davis said.

The company's business won't focus on commercial real estate, instead concentrating on retail and small business customers, he said.

He said the company plans to open a full-service CertusBank branch on the ground floor of the Hughes project.

The Upstate is home to a handful of high-profile

headquarters and main-office operations.

In Greenville County, those include the headquarters of Michelin North America, Hubbell Lighting, Bi-Lo and ScanSource, as well as a major campus of Fluor Corp. and the engineering headquarters for General Electric's energy unit.

Companies that call Spartanburg home include Denny's, the restaurant chain, and Milliken & Co., the textiles and chemicals maker.

In recent years, with acquisitions and mergers, Greenville has lost the corporate headquarters of Liberty Corp., Bowater Inc., Nuvox and South Financial Group.

The loss of those companies raised questions about just how much more city and county officials could do to bring — and keep — corporate headquarters in Greenville.

Local officials said the Upstate's hopes got a big boost when Southwest Airlines earlier this year began flying to Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport.