

100 Years of Service

(1912 - 2012)

On January 25, 1912 the doors opened for the first bank in the new town of Ralls under the name of W.E. McLaughlin, Banker, Unincorporated, with a capitalization of \$11,000. It was an unincorporated private bank.

In 1914 McLaughlin opened another bank with the same name in Lorenzo. McLaughlin put up the capital, but his sons ran the banks under his supervision. They installed cutting-edge technology - a private telephone connection between the banks. When World War I broke out and one son went off to war McLaughlin sold the Lorenzo bank.

In 1918, there was a banking panic in the United States. W.E. McLaughlin, Banker was especially vulnerable as an unincorporated private bank. To prevent a run on his bank, McLaughlin obtained a state bank charter and joined the newly created Texas Guaranty Fund (a precursor to the FDIC) and thus W.E. McLaughlin, Banker, became Guaranty State Bank in Ralls and irrevocably subject to government regulation and examination.

By 1921 the onerous assessments of the Guaranty Fund had become a drain on the bank's resources so McLaughlin took the bank out of the fund and changed the name to Security State Bank & Trust Co. In 1933 another bank panic occurred. President Roosevelt ordered all banks in the United States to be closed and examined. After 100 days the banks which were found to be solvent were allowed to re-open - with new FDIC deposit insurance to calm public fears. McLaughlin's bank was one of the few in West Texas that was allowed to re-open. The rest were either reorganized by new owners with new capital or closed and liquidated.

In 1984 the McLaughlin family formed McLaughlin Bancshares and purchased the Idalou State Bank from the Gerald Ford Group. In 1987, immediately after the legalization of branch banking in Texas, the Ralls bank opened a branch in Lorenzo. In 1992 the Ralls bank opened a branch in Crosbyton and the Idalou bank opened a branch in Abernathy. At this same time the names of both banks were changed to Security Bank to allow for joint marketing through a common brand.

In 1998 the First State Bank in Petersburg was purchased and merged into the Ralls bank. In 2000, the Idalou and Ralls banks merged into one bank with six locations. In 2002 FNB West Texas, with locations in Hale Center and Plainview, was purchased and merged into Security Bank.

In 2008 the McLaughlin family decided to expand the bank outside of agricultural lending, and to begin with two new branches in Lubbock. A new name, Vista Bank, was chosen to facilitate marketing a new and appropriate brand and image. In 2009 two new branches in Lubbock were opened, resulting in a total of 10 branches.

Vista Bank turns 100 years old on January 25, 2012, one of only a handful of 100 year old Texas banks still operated by the founding family. The bank doubled in size from 2008 to 2011 and will continue to grow and serve new customers with integrity.