



## SPARAK<sup>®</sup> System Enables Bank of Madison to Regionalize Product Offerings, Quickly Respond to Market Demand and Maintain Operating Costs

### s n a p s h o t

#### Bank Profile

**Name:** Bank of Madison

**Location:** Madison, Georgia

**Assets:** \$232 million

- 56 employees
- 3 branches
- The Bank of Madison was originally chartered in 1890 with a commitment to support and give back to the communities it serves. In 19 years, it has grown from \$25 million to \$232 million in assets by sticking with its root values and using the power of technology to increase efficiencies, improve service levels and speed time to market.

#### Solutions

 Sparak<sup>®</sup> System

 SOUTHERN FINANCIAL SYSTEMS



#### Executive Summary

The Bank of Madison needed a core system that provided operational efficiencies, easy integration with best-of-breed solutions and the flexibility to regionalize product offerings. The SPARAK<sup>®</sup> System,

expertly supported by Southern Financial Systems, delivered it all – and enabled the bank to grow dramatically without increasing the size of its operational team.

**We needed local support that we could rely on. Not only is Southern Financial Systems Georgia-based, but their knowledge, service and integrity is second to none. When they recommended the SPARAK System, we made the transition. It's given us the agility to respond to our market and our competitors.**

Clifton Hanes  
Chief Financial Officer  
Bank of Madison



The Bank of Madison is an original – and it prefers to keep it that way. Although you may not have heard of this three-branch, Georgia-based institution, the people of Madison, Georgia and the surrounding areas know it well. “Unlike the big banks who are ‘controlled’ by corporate, we have the flexibility to do our own thing – to run our bank the best way we know how,” explained Clifton Hanes, chief financial officer for the Bank of Madison. “We’re very heavily involved and embedded in our community.”

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Although the personality of the bank has hometown flair, being “local” isn’t enough to secure market share. “We compete with the big guys, so technology is very important to us. We need the agility to compete product-to-product, service-to-service,” Hanes said. “The combination of Harland Financial Solutions’ SPARAK System and the

outstanding support of Southern Financial Systems gives us those capabilities.”

The Bank of Madison has been a Southern Financial Systems customer since 1989, when the bank brought its NCR data processing system in-house. “We needed local support that we could rely on,” Hanes said. “Not only is Southern Financial Systems Georgia-based, but their knowledge, service and integrity is second to none. When they recommended the SPARAK System, we made the transition. The solution has given us the agility to respond to our market and our competitors.”

One significant example occurred a few years back, when a larger institution made a bold move to recruit Bank of Madison customers. “This particular bank started calling our customers and said that they were coming out with a new type of tiered money market account. Our customers started calling us to see if we were going to have a similar product,” Hanes said. “Once we found out about what was going on, we got our hands on an ad the bank was running to see how the money market was structured. We were able to lay out a competing product in a half of a day, and roll it out the next day. Then we advertised it in our own weekly paper – at the same time they launched their product. That’s the kind of flexibility we get from the SPARAK System.”

This flexibility also enables the Bank of Madison to adjust its products from branch-to-branch. “We have a branch in

## Solution Summary



The SPARAK System is Harland Financial Solutions' flagship core solution, specially designed to help small-to mid-sized community banks succeed. This innovative system combines proven core technology with the flexibility to integrate all the technologies necessary to run today's community banks.

Whether clients choose one of Harland Financial Solutions' specialized applications for risk management, lending & compliance, business intelligence & marketing, self service, branch automation, payments, enterprise

contact management, or financial accounting – or want to use another vendor's product – the SPARAK System will easily integrate all technologies together. That means that institutions can use their existing technology investments and add new capabilities as the market demands.

With the SPARAK System, banks get a truly open solution that works with virtually all of today's most advanced platforms – giving community banks the freedom to build the processing environment around their own unique needs.

downtown Madison, one located on the outskirts of Madison and the Social Circle branch in a town 20 minutes away," Hanes said. "If you go half a mile, CD rates can fluctuate a half of a percent. The reason banks have branches is that the cost of funds can differ from one location to another. What I call commercial checking at one branch may have different pricing or feature sets than the same product at other branches. The SPARAK System gives us the ability to regionalize our product offerings for different markets – which means we can successfully compete in different markets."

In addition to using technology to gain market share, the Bank of Madison also uses technology – and the skill of Southern Financial Systems – to increase operational

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efficiencies. "The Southern Financial Systems team works with us to integrate everything with the SPARAK System. That means we can choose the best-of-breed systems for Internet banking, our teller platform, deposits – everything – and know that these will work with our core," Hanes said. "If you want proof that this integration has had a positive impact on our productivity, consider this: 19 years ago, when we were a \$25 million bank, I had nine people in operations, including myself. Today, we are a \$232 million institution and I still have nine people in operations. We can grow the bank and maintain our current staffing because of the efficiencies we gain from operating the SPARAK System and the support of Southern Financial Systems."

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The SPARAK System also streamlines the reporting process for the institution. “SPARAK System’s Executive Information System integrates the loan and deposit interface to the general ledger and lets you apply and overlay this information into an access database, so you can generate your own reports,” Hanes said. “I can put together the majority of my board package using this feature. Before, it would take us two days to key in the information. Now, I can download what I need – in less than five minutes – into Excel.”

This same feature also enables Hanes to do ad hoc reporting on the fly. “If our CEO wanted to know how many accounts with more than \$100,000 we opened in our Social Circle branch in the last 15 days, I can pull that information in about 15 minutes,” he said. “Or, if we wanted to run a program for our seniors, I can pull a report listing customers who are over 65 years of age in that same amount of time.”

For Hanes, it’s the combination of the SPARAK System and the reliable support of Southern Financial Systems that makes the difference. “The SPARAK System is a great tool for us, and the support we get from Southern Financial Systems is outstanding. I don’t know of another group with as strong of an understanding of the products they support. They are committed to doing things right,” Hanes said. “And, after all these years, they are friends as well. That’s the kind of partnership we have. They’ve been a big part of our success.”

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