

FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM

Formations of, Acquisitions by, and Mergers of Bank Holding Companies

The companies listed in this notice have applied to the Board for approval, pursuant to the Bank Holding Company Act of 1956 (12 U.S.C. 1841 *et seq.*) (BHC Act), Regulation Y (12 CFR Part 225), and all other applicable statutes and regulations to become a bank holding company and/or to acquire the assets or the ownership of, control of, or the power to vote shares of a bank or bank holding company and all of the banks and nonbanking companies owned by the bank holding company, including the companies listed below.

The applications listed below, as well as other related filings required by the Board, are available for immediate inspection at the Federal Reserve Bank indicated. The application also will be available for inspection at the offices of the Board of Governors. Interested persons may express their views in writing on the standards enumerated in the BHC Act (12 U.S.C. 1842(c)). If the proposal also involves the acquisition of a nonbanking company, the review also includes whether the acquisition of the nonbanking company complies with the standards in section 4 of the BHC Act. Unless otherwise noted, nonbanking activities will be conducted throughout the United States.

Unless otherwise noted, comments regarding each of these applications must be received at the Reserve Bank indicated or the offices of the Board of Governors not later than December 28, 1998.

A. Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta
(Lois Berthaume, Vice President) 104 Marietta Street, N.W., Atlanta, Georgia 30303-2713:

1. *Synergy Bancshares, Inc.*, Houma, Louisiana; to become a bank holding company by acquiring 100 percent of the voting shares of Synergy Bank, Houma, Louisiana (in organization).

B. Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago
(Philip Jackson, Applications Officer) 230 South LaSalle Street, Chicago, Illinois 60690-1413:

1. *Bancorp of Rantoul, Inc.*, Rantoul, Illinois; to merge with Rossville Bancorp, Inc., Rossville, Illinois, and thereby indirectly acquire The First National Bank of Rossville, Rossville, Illinois.

Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, November 30, 1998.

Robert deV. Frierson,

Associate Secretary of the Board.

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FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM

Federal Open Market Committee; Domestic Policy Directive of September 29, 1998.

In accordance with § 271.5 of its rules regarding availability of information (12 CFR part 271), there is set forth below the domestic policy directive issued by the Federal Open Market Committee at its meeting held on September 29, 1998.¹ The directive was issued to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York as follows:

The information reviewed at this meeting suggests that the economy has been growing at a moderate rate, paced by brisk, albeit slowing, increases in spending by businesses and households, while expansion in overall economic activity has continued to be restrained by developments abroad. Nonfarm payroll employment grew somewhat more slowly over July and August, mostly reflecting job losses in the manufacturing sector; the civilian unemployment rate was unchanged at 4.5 percent in August. Industrial production has changed little on balance over recent months. Total retail sales over July and August were held down by a sharp contraction in spending for motor vehicles. Residential sales and construction have remained quite strong in recent months. Available indicators point to continued growth in business capital spending, but at a more moderate pace than in the first half of the year. Business inventory accumulation slowed further in July. The nominal deficit on U.S. trade in goods and services narrowed slightly in July from its second-quarter average. Trends in wages and prices have remained stable in recent months.

Most interest rates have fallen appreciably since the meeting on August 18, though yields on the bonds of lower-rated firms have increased and the number of large banks have tightened terms and standards for making business loans. Broadly similar developments have occurred in major foreign markets. Share prices in U.S. and global equity markets have remained volatile and major indexes have declined considerably further on balance over the intermeeting period. In foreign exchange markets, the trade-weighted value of the dollar declined substantially over the intermeeting

period in relation to other major currencies; it was up slightly in terms of an index of the currencies of the developing countries of Latin America and Asia that are important trading partners of the United States.

Growth of M2 and M3 strengthened considerably in August and appeared to have picked up further in September, partly reflecting shifts of funds by households out of investments in equities and lower-rated corporate debt. For the year through September, both aggregates rose at rates well above the Committee's ranges for the year. Expansion of total domestic nonfinancial debt has moderated somewhat in recent months after a pickup earlier in the year.

The Federal Open Market Committee seeks monetary and financial conditions that will foster price stability and promote sustainable growth in output. In furtherance of these objectives, the Committee reaffirmed at its meeting on June 30-July 1 the ranges it had established in February for growth of M2 and M3 of 1 to 5 percent and 2 to 6 percent respectively, measured from the fourth quarter of 1997 to the fourth quarter of 1998. The range for growth of total domestic nonfinancial debt was maintained at 3 to 7 percent for the year. For 1999, the Committee agreed on a tentative basis to set the same ranges for growth of the monetary aggregates and debt, measured from the fourth quarter of 1998 to the fourth quarter of 1999. The behavior of the monetary aggregates will continue to be evaluated in the light of progress toward price level stability, movements in their velocities, and developments in the economy and financial markets.

In the implementation of policy for the immediate future, the Committee seeks conditions in reserve markets consistent with decreasing the federal funds rate to an average of around 5-1/4 percent. In the context of the Committee's long-run objectives for price stability and sustainable economic growth, and giving careful consideration to economic, financial, and monetary developments, a slightly higher federal funds rate might or a somewhat lower federal funds rate would be acceptable in the intermeeting period. The contemplated reserve conditions are expected to be consistent with some moderation in the growth in M2 and M3 over coming months.

By order of the Federal Open Market Committee, November 24, 1998.

Donald L. Kohn,

Secretary, Federal Open Market Committee.

[FR Doc. 98-32152 Filed 12-2-98; 8:45 am]

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¹ Copies of the Minutes of the Federal Open Market Committee meeting of September 29, 1998, which include the domestic policy directive issued at that meeting, are available upon request to the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, Washington, D.C. 20551. The minutes are published in the Federal Reserve Bulletin and in the Board's annual report.