

F&M Bank banks on leaders

By Karen Robes Meeks, Staff Writer
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LONG BEACH - Farmers & Merchants Bank on Thursday will honor nearly a dozen Long Beach and South Bay community members in its inaugural People You Can Bank On breakfast at the Virginia Country Club in Long Beach.

This year's honorees selection pays tribute to those who have made a significant difference within their communities and in their professions.

The bank, which has been honoring Orange County women of courage, decided to also recognize both men and women in the Long Beach area, said Dan Walker, president of Farmers & Merchants Bank of Long Beach.

"We have such a strong historical piece here in Long Beach that it was important to honor some of the outstanding leaders here in Long Beach as well," Walker said. "We are focusing on guys and gals who live the dream of not only running a business but serving the purpose of community."

The event will honor:



Cindy Atkinson, owner of Coffee Cup Cafe and co-founder of Cranium Crusaders, dedicated to fighting brain cancer



Richard Blade, owner of six McDonald's franchises and a board of trustees member for Camp Ronald McDonald for Good Times, a program for cancer patients and their families.



Blair Cohn, executive director of the Bixby Knolls Business Improvement Association.



Dr. Myrvin Ellestad, former Long Beach Memorial Medical Center chief of cardiology, founder of MemorialCare's cardiology program and author of research papers and textbooks.



Kevin McDonald, CEO of The Arc, which provides support and services to those with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



George M. Murchison, former Port of Long Beach harbor commissioner and founder of two charitable foundations.



Peter D. Pettler, founding partner of Pettler & Miller LLP, a Torrance law firm. He also served as a judge advocate for the Army, retiring as a lieutenant colonel.



Wayne Piercy, former Lakewood mayor and City Councilman and former principal of Long Beach Poly High School.



Thomas J. Rhoads, a Cal State Long Beach professor who has helped Latino business students.



Mark Schneider, owner of longtime business Dave Schneider Jewelry.



Rod Wilson, owner of public relations agency PRSI and president of the East Anaheim Street Business Alliance.