



FirstBank and CollegeInvest Partner to Help Colorado Families Save for Higher Education

Introducing a New CollegeInvest Smart Choice 529 College Savings Plan that Combines FDIC Insurance and Tax Benefits

Nov. 10, 2009 – FirstBank Holding Company, the Lakewood-based holding company for the largest locally owned banking organization in Colorado, and CollegeInvest, Colorado’s not-for-profit higher education financing resource, announced today the launch of the [CollegeInvest Smart Choice College Savings Plan](#). The new 529 savings plan provides tax benefits, stability and security for Colorado families saving for higher education.

The Smart Choice College Savings Plan becomes the only FDIC-insured [529 savings plan](#) in Colorado. It combines federal tax advantages with a Colorado state income tax deduction available only through plans offered by CollegeInvest, a division of the Colorado Department of Higher Education.

The new plan carries no service charges and includes two options with no minimum contribution and no minimum balance requirement, making it an attractive option especially in these challenging economic times. Families do not need to have an existing relationship with FirstBank to open a Smart Choice College Savings Plan.

“I know first-hand how important a college education can be and how it can open doors for a brighter future,” said Colorado Governor Bill Ritter. “I want to thank CollegeInvest and FirstBank for helping families to overcome the financial barriers of higher education by offering this new plan. Education is the best investment in our future and for our children.”

“A college education provides a strong return on investment, and FirstBank is proud to introduce the Smart Choice College Savings Plan to help make higher education a reality for families in Colorado,” said Dave Baker, Chief Operating Officer. “FirstBank appreciates its partnership with CollegeInvest, an organization that has helped more than half a million families break down the financial barriers to college.”

“We continually look to serve the needs of Colorado families and the introduction of the Smart Choice College Savings Plan adds an attractive new option to CollegeInvest’s existing strong lineup of 529 college savings plans,” said [CollegeInvest](#) Director Debra DeMuth. “It’s exciting to have Colorado’s

largest locally owned bank as a partner. By making these accounts available at all FirstBank locations in Colorado, more families now have access to a plan that allows them to start saving for college early.”

Savings from state-sponsored 529 accounts can be used nationwide to meet the costs of qualified expenses, including tuition, fees, room and board and required supplies, at any eligible public or private college, university or vocational school

The Smart Choice College Savings Plan offers consumers two options:

- The One-Year Time Savings Plan allows plan participants to make deposits at any time and earn interest at the current rate with no minimum balance.
- The Money Market Savings Plan is a liquid account, with no minimum balance requirement, that allows participants to deposit and withdraw at any time and earn premium rates on balances over \$20,000.

To open an account, apply online at www.efirstbank.com or in person at one of more than 130 FirstBank locations.

For more information about CollegeInvest 529 plans as well as other higher education financing tools, visit www.collegeinvest.org

About FirstBank

FirstBank is the largest locally owned banking organization in Colorado, serving more than 600,000 customers in Colorado, California and Arizona. The company is unique in that a majority of its stock is owned by management and employees. For more information, go to www.efirstbank.com.

About CollegeInvest

For three decades, CollegeInvest has served as Colorado’s not-for-profit higher education financing resource, helping families across the state pay for college by providing planning tools, college savings plans, scholarships, matching grants, and community outreach programs. Families can access valuable information on planning and paying for higher education at www.collegeinvest.org.

Important Considerations

To learn about the CollegeInvest Smart Choice College Savings Plan, its objectives, risks, charges, limitations, restrictions and qualifications regarding the Plan’s benefits and potential tax advantages, please read the Program Disclosure Statement (PDS) available at www.efirstbank.com or www.collegeinvest.org. Also, check with your home state to learn if offers tax or other benefits for investing in its own plan.

Capacity of Dealer and Other Parties

CollegeInvest is the issuer of plan securities and is the trustee of the plan in accordance with Colorado laws. CollegeInvest also oversees the Managers' activities and provides certain administrative services such as marketing, audit, and financial statements in connection with the plan.

FirstBank Holding Company

The FirstBank holding company serves as the Plan Manager for the CollegeInvest Smart Choice College Savings Plan and has overall responsibility for the day-to-day operations, including effecting transactions. The FirstBank Holding Company also assists CollegeInvest with marketing and distributing the CollegeInvest Smart Choice College Savings Plan.

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FirstBank Holding Company: Member FDIC