

Financial-services employment in Miami breaks record

BY RISA POLANSKY

Financial employment in Greater Miami hit an all-time high last year, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics. But don't count on more growth this year, experts say.

Growth in employment began in 2004, with 9,600 jobs added in two years to bring the workforce to 76,800 at the end of last year — a 7% increase from the year before, labor statistics show.

Intensified hiring to comply with heightened national regulation drove much of the sector's growth — affecting banks, brokerage firms and “anyone handling money and cross-border money,” said Dennis Nason, president of Nason and Nason, a financial-services executive search firm.

Some small firms, he said, expanded to tie up 20% of staff in compliance with required vigilance of financial activity, up from 5% in more relaxed times. But the time for hiring compliance-related staff is ending, he said, as banks and other federally regulated financial entities have adjusted.

“You're going to see a slowdown,” Mr. Nason said. “People hired to take care of the Patriot Act have been hired.”

An influx of smaller banks in the local market in recent years also contributed to the employment spike, he said.

“Consolidation has spawned a lot of community banks, and they tend to be people-intensive because what they're doing is giving service,” Mr. Nason said.

That has occurred statewide, said Alex Sanchez, president and CEO of the Florida Bankers Association. “More banks have opened, and as these banks open and get under way, they hire more people,” he said. “Florida's banking industry is one of the larger employers in the state.”

But “growth in community banks has slowed,” Mr. Nason said. “I think we'll see a leveling-off — a pretty flat year.”

One growth factor that may not slow this year is private wealth management — private equity capital is the fastest-growing area in the financial sector, Mr. Nason said.

“The business of wealth management has become a more legitimate and complicated business,” he said. “People are becoming wiser in managing their money and creating wealth, and you need people to help manage it.”

The increased federal regulation that led to hiring may become the cause of a decline in local and national investments. “US investors are investing money abroad,” he said. “And it's also that foreign investors who used to invest money in the US aren't

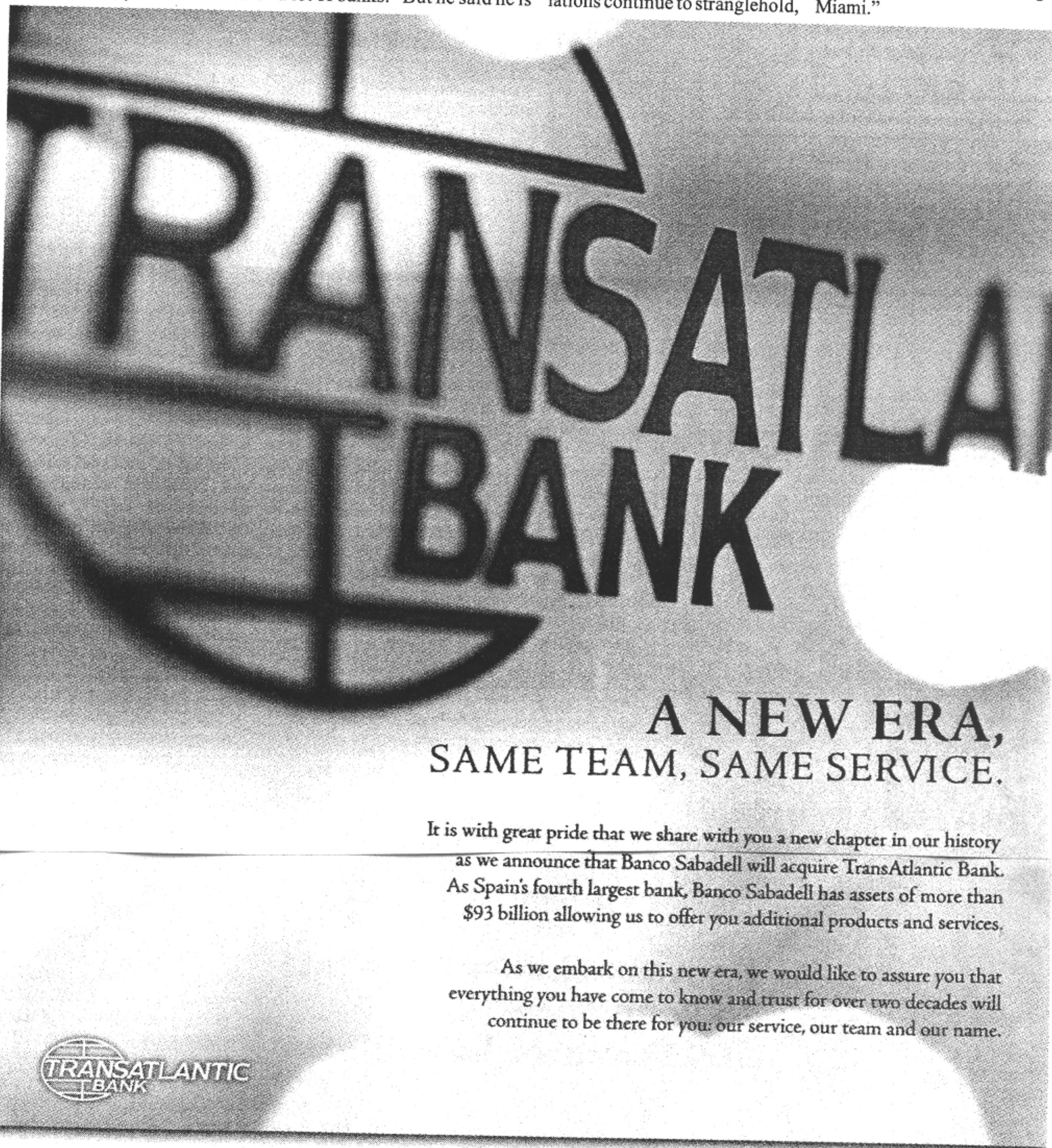
putting it here anymore.”

Mr. Sanchez said he thinks the statewide banking environment “will continue to do well” because “the economy is doing well. There's been a lot of activity. We have a lot of branches, a lot of banks.” But he said he is

concerned about federal control of the industry.

“I think we have to be careful. We're fighting a regulatory challenge in Washington,” he said. “We want to see some relief for our industry. If regulations continue to stranglehold,

it may hurt our industry, especially in South Florida. Regulation can't be to the point where we're freezing the customers out of our banks — they'd have to go elsewhere in the world, and that could hurt banking in Miami.”




TRANSATLANTIC BANK

**A NEW ERA,
SAME TEAM, SAME SERVICE.**

It is with great pride that we share with you a new chapter in our history as we announce that Banco Sabadell will acquire TransAtlantic Bank. As Spain's fourth largest bank, Banco Sabadell has assets of more than \$93 billion allowing us to offer you additional products and services.

As we embark on this new era, we would like to assure you that everything you have come to know and trust for over two decades will continue to be there for you: our service, our team and our name.



Conveniently located branches to serve your financial needs:

FLAGLER
48 East Flagler St
305.377.0200

CORAL GABLES
1500 San Remo Ave
305.666.0200

DOUGLAS
102 N.W. 37th Ave
305.643.0200

BIRD ROAD
11401 S.W. 40 St
305.229.0200

NORTH MIAMI
12700 Biscayne Blvd
305.891.0200

HIALEAH
1325 W. 49th St
305.231.0200

NORTH BAY VILLAGE
1686 Kennedy Cswy
305.385.0200



www.transatlanticbank.com