

FIRSTBANK

Land Title chief starts new company after deal

Translate

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BusinessDen

PNC Bank wasn't the only company that struck a deal with FirstBank last year.

So did John E. Freyer Jr.

"With the PNC acquisition of FirstBank, the opportunity came in front of us to acquire their 1031 company," he said.

Freyer, who turns 50 this year, is president of Denver-based Land Title Guarantee Co., one of Colorado's largest title companies. It had its own subsidiary devoted to facilitating 1031 exchanges, a tool that allows real estate sellers to defer taxes by using their profits to purchase a new property.

Freyer formed a new company, which bought FirstBank's 1031 Corp. at the end of 2025 for seven figures, he said. He subsequently rolled Land Title's 1031 operation into the new company as well. *Note*

This month, the company began operating under its new name: Vaulted Escrow & Exchange. As the name indicates, Vaulted also handles corporate and real estate escrow.

"Historically, they've never been together," Freyer said of 1031 and escrow. "I don't know anyone else in this market that's focusing on this niche."

"1031 exchanges, complex real estate transactions and specialized corporate escrows require far more than basic processes — they demand customized knowledge, careful coordination, and trusted guidance," he added.

The new firm is headquartered in Longmont because FirstBank's operation was previously based there. Vaulted currently has six employees, and Freyer expects to add more in the coming months. *Note*

The company charges a flat fee of approximately \$1,000 for most 1031 exchanges. More complicated ones — like reverse 1031s, where an investor buys a replacement property before selling the original one — run upwards of \$2,000. Escrow fees vary.

It's a slower period for 1031 exchanges. Real estate transactions have dropped due to higher interest rates and other factors. But Freyer said there is still a steady amount. He expects Vaulted to do 1,000 1031 deals in its first year. "We haven't seen as dramatic a pullback as you might think," he said.

Vaulted is open to working on deals anywhere in the country, although "obviously the base is going to be in Colorado," Freyer said. People here are familiar with Land Title and FirstBank, even though the latter's name has been sunsetted.

"These are trusted brands," he said.

Starting a company isn't unusual for Freyer. While Land Title has been around since 1967 — Freyer's father took over as president in 1985 — Freyer started a separate tech company in 2021. Settlor produces software for title companies.

"When we identify those (opportunities), we try and take advantage of it," Freyer said.