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## Origin Bank scores profitable first day on Nasdaq

Origin Bank began trading as a public company on Nasdaq Wednesday and shot up the charts.

The Ruston-based bank opened at \$34 per share and closed at \$37.50, up more than 10 percent.

Origin, trading under the symbol OBNK, is initially offering about 3.6 million shares of stock to the public.

"We are extremely excited about this next phase for our company," Drake Mills, Origin Bank's president and chief executive, told USA Today Network. "Origin Bank has had a long history of being committed to our customers, communities, employees and shareholders and we will continue that effort as we move forward."

Origin Bancorp, the bank's parent company, filed paperwork in April with the Securities and Exchange Commission to raise up to \$90 million in an initial public offering.

The bank has about 700 employees and more than 40 branches in Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas.

Origin Bank has about \$4.2 billion in assets. It was founded in 1912 in Choudrant.

The bank changed its name from Community Trust Bank in 2015 to elevate its brand among competitors as the company continued to expand beyond its founding borders with an eye toward becoming a public company.

"As we moved into Texas and Mississippi, it became clear that we had to distinguish our brand from the more than 200 competitor branches in those markets with either community or trust in their name," Mills said at the time.

"We had to ask ourselves if we wanted to continue to invest in a brand that created confusion or develop a new brand that would stand out among those competitors," he said.

It wasn't the first name change for the bank, which was founded as the Bank of Choudrant more than a century ago. After the Bank of Choudrant bought the Bank of Bernice in 1986, it chose Community Trust as its new brand.

Mills joined the bank in 1983 and rose to become its top executive.

In 2016 the bank was named one of the best in the nation for employees, thanks to programs like "dream manager" that help workers achieve personal and professional goals.

It was the fourth time the bank, which has extensive operations in the Monroe-West Monroe and Shreveport-Bossier City markets, made the "Best Banks to Work For" list compiled by American Banker and Best Companies Group.