

**M&T Bank to Outsource Jobs to Amherst Firm**

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News Business Reporter

11/12/2004

M&T Bank Corp. is outsourcing its internal help-desk to an Amherst technology firm as the Buffalo-based bank continues efforts to cut costs, streamline operations, and focus on its core business.

The decision to transfer the work to Western New York Computing (a Synergy company) in 60 days will affect 21 employees in Amherst, but the computer firm expects to hire about two-thirds of the employees. The bank also has several other technology jobs open, so "we expect that nearly all of those employees will be absorbed elsewhere," said spokesman C. Michael Zabel.

Those who don't get another position will get severance pay, extended benefits and job placement assistance, he added.

M&T has been using Western New York Computing for almost 20 years to provide the bank with on-site computer service, fixing problems at employee workstations and maintaining the bank's local area networks. The new contract means the firm will also handle calls from employees who have a software or hardware problem.

Western New York Computing can do the same job as M&T for 20 percent less, Zabel said. "They are a technology company so they specialize in servicing computers and networks," he said. "They have the right expertise and infrastructure."

Separately, the bank also consolidated some of its check-processing and "lockbox" processing earlier in the summer, shifting some work to Baltimore where there was more capacity. M&T still has lockbox and check-processing units in Buffalo, but the change meant the loss of four jobs locally.

Still, Zabel said the bank is in a growth mode, having created 566 new jobs in Western New York since buying Allfirst in April 2003. There are currently 48 jobs open now in the region, he said, and "we expect to continue to create new jobs in Buffalo as we continue our growth across the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions."