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LOS ANGELES ■ THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2010 ■ VARIETY.COM

MARTHA HENDERSON

In charge of beefing up City National Bank's entertainment portfolio

BY JILL GOLDSMITH

When Martha Henderson started in the biz, City National Bank's entertainment group was just over a dozen people who, she says, reported to the guy in charge of accounts receivable. That was 1983.

Now the division is 150 strong, spanning both coasts, banking for films, Broadway shows and private clients throughout the showbiz stratosphere. And Henderson runs it — \$3 billion in loans, \$3 billion in deposits.

With the economy rocky and film financing in a tough place, she's beefed up City National's theater team, hiring leading Broadway banker Stephanie Dalton from JP Morgan Chase a year ago. Since then, City National's role in the Broadway market has grown in terms of the number of productions and expanded to serving theater owners as well. In fact, the bank is branching out from its Park Avenue digs to open a second New York office in December, just off the Great White Way.

"That's a big deal," Henderson says. Henderson's division makes up about 20% of City National's total revenue, and she sits on the Executive Committee.

She called theater "a personal love of mine," a great business and a decent hedge to the movies.

Not that she's running scared. The ebb and flow of film financing is something Henderson's seen time and again. And City National's committed to Hollywood for the long haul. "There are probably only three or four banks that have stayed in there," she says.

In the latest dip, foreign banks have mostly bowed out. "Many of the local banks (including City National) are going to join and try to put together some of these slates," she says. "So you may not see as many large transactions."

But there are still some. Despite the tough market, City National was part of the \$350 million, multipicture syndicate deal just inked for David Ellison's Skydance Productions.

Recent pics the bank has co-financed include "Avatar," "The Kids Are All Right," "Just Wright" and "Cyrus."

