Dime Launches Equipment & Franchise Finance Group

May 4, 2026

HAUPPAUGE, N.Y., May 04, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Dime today announced the formation of its Equipment & Franchise Finance Group, a new vertical focused on delivering customized financing solutions to middle market companies and experienced franchise operators.

The launch of the Equipment & Franchise Finance Group is part of Dime's growth plan to expand specialized commercial banking verticals and drive organic growth through targeted talent acquisition and market expansion.

The group will be led by Keith Smith, who joins Dime as Senior Vice President, Head of Equipment and Franchise Finance. Mr. Smith brings decades of industry experience, most recently serving as President and Partner of Star Hill Financial, where he led a platform specializing in originating bank-eligible assets.

Dime's Equipment & Franchise Finance Group will focus on:

- Middle market and large ticket equipment financing, particularly for essential-use assets across industries such as waste management, construction, medical, commercial and specialty vehicles, and material handling
- Franchise finance, with an emphasis on established, multi-unit operators in the quick-service restaurant sector
- Structuring flexible capital solutions tailored to asset-based lending

"Launching this new specialty reflects our continued commitment to disciplined and diversified growth," said Stuart H. Lubow, President and Chief Executive Officer of Dime. "We see a significant opportunity to support clients with essential equipment needs and to partner with high-quality franchise operators. Keith's track record of building and scaling platforms and his familiarity with our existing team and operations makes him the ideal leader for this new vertical."

Prior to Star Hill, Mr. Smith worked alongside Thomas X. Geisel (Chief Commercial Officer of Dime) at Sterling National Bank, where he was President of Equipment and Franchise Finance and helped build a platform exceeding $2 billion in assets.

"I am excited to join Dime and build a differentiated platform focused on essential-use equipment and top-tier franchise operators," said Mr. Smith. "There is strong demand in the middle market for commercial banks who can combine structuring expertise with speed and certainty of execution. Dime's relationship-oriented and client-first culture resembles that of Star Hill, and Sterling National Bank. I look forward to working with Tom and the rest of the team to advance Dime's mission of growing the best commercial bank in Metro NY."

Joining Keith Smith will be the following individuals:

- Chris Wellbrock, Vice President, Portfolio Manager & Senior Underwriter
- Zerka Gul, Vice President, Operations & Closing Manager
- Lori Rainbolt, Vice President, Senior Underwriter
- Emily Moreno, Senior Closer

ABOUT DIME

Dime is a New York State-charted trust company with approximately $15 billion in assets and the number one deposit market share on Greater Long Island [(1)].

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[1] Aggregate deposit market share for Kings, Queens, Nassau & Suffolk counties for commercial banks with less than $20 billion in assets.

FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

Statements contained in this news release that are not historical facts are forward-looking statements as that term is defined in the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Such forward-looking statements are subject to risks and uncertainties which could cause actual results to differ

materially from those currently anticipated.