

UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM 8-K
CURRENT REPORT
PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE
SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

Date of report (Date of earliest event reported): December 11, 2012

CENTER BANCORP, INC.

(Exact Name of Registrant as Specified in its Charter)

New Jersey
(State or Other Jurisdiction
of Incorporation)

2-81353
(Commission File Number)

52-1273725
(IRS Employer
Identification No.)

2455 Morris Avenue, Union, New Jersey
(Address of principal executive offices)

07083
(Zip Code)

Registrant's telephone number, including area code (800) 862-3683

Check the appropriate box below if the Form 8-K filing is intended to simultaneously satisfy the filing obligation of the registrant under any of the following provisions (see General Instruction A.2. below):

- Written communications pursuant to Rule 425 under the Securities Act (17 CFR 230.425)
- Soliciting material pursuant to Rule 14a-12 under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.14a-12)
- Pre-commencement communications pursuant to Rule 14d-2(b) under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.14d-2(b))
- Pre-commencement communications pursuant to Rule 13e-4(c) under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.13e-4(c))

Item 5.02. Departure of Directors or Certain Officers; Election of Directors; Appointment of Certain Officers; Compensation Arrangements of Certain Officers.

John Lukens, the Registrant's Chief Credit Officer, a Vice President of the Registrant and a Senior Vice President of the Registrant's Union Center National Bank ("UCNB") subsidiary, will retire effective as of December 31, 2012.

The Registrant announced that John J. Bailey has been hired to succeed Mr. Lukens as the Senior Vice President Credit Administration of UCNB. In that role, Mr. Bailey will oversee UCNB's Credit Administration Department. Prior to joining UCNB, Mr. Bailey was the owner and managing member of a consulting firm and held management positions within the financial services industry.

SIGNATURE

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, the Registrant has duly caused this report to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned hereunto duly authorized.

CENTER BANCORP, INC.

By: s/ Joseph D. Gangemi
Name: Joseph D. Gangemi
Title: Vice President & Corporate Secretary

Dated: December 12, 2012

EXHIBIT INDEX

Exhibit 99.1 – Press release, dated December 11, 2012 of Center Bancorp, Inc.

PRESS RELEASE

For additional details or information please contact:

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**Center Bancorp, Inc. Reports Retirement of Senior Officer and Hiring of
Credit Administrator**

UNION, N.J., December 11, 2012 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) – **Center Bancorp, Inc. (Nasdaq:CNBC)**, parent company of Union Center National Bank (“UCNB” or the “Bank”), announced today the retirement of John J. Lukens, Vice President & Senior Credit Administrator of Center Bancorp, Inc. and Senior Vice President of the Bank effective December 31, 2012. Mr. Lukens, a resident of Lincroft, N.J., has served Center Bancorp and the Bank for eight years. “John has served our organization with utmost integrity and is held in the highest regards by his colleagues and peers,” said Anthony C. Weagley, President and Chief Executive Officer of UCNB. “We are grateful for his service and wish him all the best in his retirement,” added Mr. Weagley.

Also announced today, Union Center National Bank has hired John J. Bailey as Senior Vice President Credit Administration. Mr. Bailey will oversee the Bank Credit Administration Departments. Prior to joining UCNB, John Bailey was the owner and managing member of Bailey Financial Consulting LLC in Lincroft, N.J. Previously, Mr. Bailey held management positions in several banks and corporations in the financial services industry. “We are thrilled to have John join the UCNB team,” said Anthony C. Weagley. “John’s strong credit background and reputation will be tremendous assets to our organization,” added Mr. Weagley. John Bailey earned a B.S. from Fordham University’s College of Business Administration and is a graduate of the Stonier Graduate School of Banking at Rutgers University.

About Center Bancorp, Inc.

Center Bancorp, Inc. is a bank holding company which operates Union Center National Bank, its main subsidiary. Chartered in 1923, Union Center National Bank is one of the oldest national banks headquartered in the state of New Jersey and now ranks as the third largest national bank headquartered in the state. Union Center National Bank is currently the largest commercial bank headquartered in Union County. Its primary market niche is its commercial banking business. The Bank focuses its lending activities on commercial lending to small and medium-sized businesses, real estate developers and high net worth individuals.

The Bank, through its Private Banking and Wealth Management Division, which includes its wholly-owned subsidiary, Center Financial Group LLC, provides personalized wealth management and advisory services to high net worth individuals and families. Our services include banking, liquidity management, investment services, custody, tailored lending, wealth planning, trust and fiduciary services, insurance, family wealth and philanthropic advisory services.

Center also, through a strategic partnership with Compass Financial Management, LLC and ING, offers pension/401(k) planning services. Compass is an Investment Advisory Company with five decades of cumulative experience providing investment services in a personal, professional and attentive manner. They provide discretionary private investment management for individuals and corporate accounts as well as 401(k) advisory services.

The Bank currently operates 14 banking locations in Bergen, Morris and Union Counties in New Jersey. Banking centers are located in Union Township (five locations), Berkeley Heights, Boonton/Mountain Lakes, Madison, Millburn/Vauxhall, Morristown, Oakland, Saddle River, Springfield, and Summit. Also, the Bank's opening of its new Englewood banking center located in downtown Englewood, NJ is expected in the 4th quarter, 2012. The Bank's primary market area is comprised of Bergen, Morris, and Union Counties, New Jersey.

For further information regarding Center Bancorp, Inc., please visit our website at <http://www.centerbancorp.com> or call 800.862.3683. For information regarding Union Center National Bank, please visit www.ucnb.com.

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