



NEWS RELEASE

The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis
St. Louis Little Rock Louisville Memphis

For release:
December 11, 1997

Contact: Charles B. Henderson
(314) 444-8311

ST. LOUIS — The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, acting pursuant to delegated authority for the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, today approved the notification of First Western Bancshares Employee Stock Ownership Trust, Booneville, Arkansas, to become a bank holding company through the acquisition of an additional 7.72 percent of the voting shares of First Western Bancshares, Inc., Booneville, Arkansas (Company), thereby increasing its aggregate ownership in Company to 30.4 percent.

* * *