

[21909001]

Fleet/Norstar Financial Group reported a 12 % increase in net income in the third quarter , led by a 43 % gain in its financial services group .

[21909002]

Fleet 's net was \$ 96.4 million , or 86 cents a primary share , compared with \$ 85.8 million , or 79 cents a share , a year earlier .

[21909003]

The Providence , R.I. , financial services group , which includes commercial-credit , leasing and mortgage-banking operations , contributed \$ 30.6 million to net , up from last year 's \$ 21.3 million .

[21909004]

Fleet also noted that , unlike other banking companies in the Northeast , it has been only marginally hurt by nonperforming loans that have resulted from the slumping regional real estate market .