Section 1: S-8 (S-8)

QuickLinks -- Click here to rapidly navigate through this document

As Filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on March 19, 2004

Registration No. 333-

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM S-8
Registration Statement Under
The Securities Act of 1933

TCF FINANCIAL CORPORATION
(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Delaware 41-1591444
(State or other jurisdiction of incorporation or organization) (I.R.S. Employer Identification No.)

200 Lake Street East, Mail Code EX0-03-A, Wayzata, MN 55391-1693
(Address of principal executive offices, including Zip Code)

TCF Employees Stock Purchase Plan
Supplemental Employees Retirement Plan
(Full Title of Plans)

Diane O. Stockman
General Counsel for Corporate Affairs
TCF Financial Corporation
200 Lake Street East, MAILCODE EX0-03-A
Wayzata, MN 55391-1693
(952) 475-7054
(Name, address and telephone number of agent for service)
Calculation Of Registration Fee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of securities to be registered</th>
<th>Amount to be registered</th>
<th>Proposed maximum offering price per share</th>
<th>Proposed maximum aggregate offering price</th>
<th>Amount of registration fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common stock, $.01 par value(1)</td>
<td>1,000,000 shares(2)</td>
<td>$50.00(3)</td>
<td>$50,000,000(3)</td>
<td>$6,335.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) Includes Preferred Share Purchase Rights to purchase Series A Junior Participating Preferred Stock that currently are not separable from the common stock and are not exercisable.

(2) The number of shares registered represents the number of additional shares estimated to be used for the plans over the next three to five years. Pursuant to Rule 416 under the Securities Act of 1933 this statement also covers any additional securities that may be issued as a result of stock splits, stock dividends or similar transactions. In addition, pursuant to Rule 416(c) this statement also covers an indeterminate amount of interests to be offered or sold pursuant to the employee benefit plan(s) described herein.

(3) Pursuant to Rule 457(c), the per share price is estimated, solely for the purpose of determining the registration fee, based upon the average of the high and low prices for such TCF common stock, par value $.01, reported on the New York Stock Exchange on March 16, 2004.

This registration statement shall become effective immediately upon filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission in accordance with Section 8(a) of the Securities Act of 1933 and Rule 462 thereunder.

STATEMENT OF INCORPORATION

This statement relates to registration of additional securities of the same class for which a registration statement filed on Form S-8 relating to the Plans is effective. Accordingly, pursuant to Instruction E, the contents of the following registration statements are hereby incorporated by reference: Registration No. 333-72394 filed on October 29, 2001, Registration No. 33-57633, filed on February 8, 1995, Registration No. 33-43030 filed on September 30, 1991 and Registration No. 33-14203 filed on November 27, 1987, for the TCF Employees Stock Purchase Plan (f/k/a TCF Employees Stock Ownership Plan 401-(k)).

PART II
INFORMATION REQUIRED IN THE REGISTRATION STATEMENT

Item 5. Interests of Named Experts and Counsel.

Diane O. Stockman, General Counsel for Corporate Affairs of the Company, who has passed upon the legality of the securities offered hereby, is eligible for participation in both of the plans.

Item 8. Exhibits

EXHIBITS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exhibit Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sequentially Numbered Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Opinion of Diane O. Stockman, Vice President/General Counsel for Corporate Affairs of TCF Financial Corporation as to the legality of TCF Common Stock</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Consent of KPMG LLP</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Power of Attorney</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The TCF Employees Stock Purchase Plan has received a favorable determination letter from the Internal Revenue Service ("IRS") on its qualified plan status under Internal Revenue Code section 401(a). TCF Financial Corporation will submit or has submitted the TCF Employees Stock Purchase Plan and any amendment thereto to the IRS in a timely manner and has made or will make all changes required by the IRS in order for it to continue to qualify.
SIGNATURES

The Registrant. Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, the registrant certifies that it has reasonable grounds to believe that it meets all of the requirements for filing on Form S-8 and has duly caused this Registration Statement to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized, in the City of Wayzata, State of Minnesota on March 18, 2004.

TCF FINANCIAL CORPORATION

/s/ William A. Cooper

By: William A. Cooper
Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer

/s/ Neil W. Brown

By: Neil W. Brown
Chief Financial Officer, Treasurer and Executive Vice President
(Chief Financial Officer)

/s/ David M. Stautz

By: David M. Stautz
Senior Vice President, Controller and Assistant Treasurer

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, this registration statement has been signed by the following persons in the capacities and on the dates indicated.

William A. Cooper, Chairman, Chief Executive Officer and Director* Lynn A. Nagorske, President and Director *
Robert E. Evans, Director* George G. Johnson, Director*
Peter L. Scherer, Director* Gerald A. Schwalbach, Director*
Ralph Strangis, Director*

* /s/ Gregory J. Pulles


Date: March 18, 2004

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, the Company (which administers the plan) has duly caused this Registration Statement to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized, in the City of Wayzata, State of Minnesota on the 18th day of March, 2004.

TCF Employees Stock Purchase Plan,
TCF Financial Corporation as Plan Administrator

By: /s/ David M. Stautz

David M. Stautz,
Senior Vice President, Controller and Assistant Treasurer

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, the Company (which administers the plan) has duly caused this Registration Statement to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized, in the City of Wayzata, State of Minnesota on the 18th day of March, 2004.

Supplemental Employees Retirement Plan,
TCF Financial Corporation as Plan Administrator

By: /s/ David M. Stautz

David M. Stautz,
TCF FINANCIAL CORPORATION AND SUBSIDIARIES
INDEX TO EXHIBITS
FOR FORM S-8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exhibit Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sequentially Numbered Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Opinion of Diane O. Stockman, Vice President/General Counsel for Corporate Affairs of TCF Financial Corporation as to the legality of TCF Common Stock</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Consent of KPMG LLP</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Power of Attorney</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QuickLinks

STATEMENT OF INCORPORATION
PART II INFORMATION REQUIRED IN THE REGISTRATION STATEMENT
SIGNATURES
TCF FINANCIAL CORPORATION AND SUBSIDIARIES INDEX TO EXHIBITS FOR FORM S-8
(Back To Top)

Section 2: EX-5 (EXHIBIT 5)

QuickLinks -- Click here to rapidly navigate through this document

EXHIBIT 5

TCF FINANCIAL CORPORATION
200 Lake Street East
Wayzata, MN 55391

Vice President and
General Counsel for Corporate Affairs

March 18, 2004

Securities and Exchange Commission
Judiciary Plaza
450 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20549

RE: TCF Employees Stock Purchase Plan and Supplemental Employees Retirement Plan

Ladies and Gentlemen:

This opinion is furnished in connection with the Registration Statement on Form S-8 (the "Registration Statement") filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission by TCF Financial Corporation (the "Company") covering an additional 1,000,000 shares of common stock par value $.01 (the "Common Stock"), to be allocated to accounts of participants in the TCF Employees Stock Purchase Plan and the Supplemental Employees Retirement Plan (hereinafter jointly referred to as the "Plans"). These shares are in addition to the shares previously registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission for these Plans.

I am the Vice President/General Counsel for Corporate Affairs for the Company. As such, I have examined the Company's Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws and such other corporate records and documents as I have considered relevant and necessary for the purpose of this opinion. I have participated in the preparation and filing of the Registration Statement. I am familiar with the proceedings taken by the Company
with respect to the authorization and proposed issuance of shares of Common Stock pursuant to the Plan as contemplated by the Registration Statement.

Based on the foregoing, I am of the opinion that: the Company has been duly incorporated and is validly existing and in good standing under the laws of the State of Delaware; the Company has corporate authority to issue the shares of Common Stock covered by the Registration Statement; the 1,000,000 shares of Common Stock proposed to be allocated to accounts under the Plans described in the Registration Statement will, when issued pursuant to the terms of the Plans, be duly and validly issued, fully paid and non-assessable.

I hereby consent to the filing of my opinion as Exhibit 5 to the Form S-8 Registration Statement filed by the Company to effect registration of the shares under the Securities Act of 1933 and to the reference to this opinion under the caption "Legal Matters" in the Prospectus comprising a part of such Registration Statement.

Sincerely,

By: /s/ DIANE O. STOCKMAN

1

QuickLinks

Opinion of Diane O. Stockman, Vice President/General Counsel for Corporate Affairs of TCF Financial Corporation as to the legality of TCF Common Stock
(Back To Top)

Section 3: EX-23 (EXHIBIT 23)

QuickLinks -- Click here to rapidly navigate through this document

EXHIBIT 23

Independent Auditor's Consent

The Board of Directors
TCF Financial Corporation:

We consent to the use of our report dated February 23, 2004, with respect to the consolidated statements of financial condition of TCF Financial Corporation as of December 31, 2003 and 2002, and the related consolidated statements of income, stockholders' equity, and cash flows for each of the years in the three-year period ended December 31, 2003, incorporated herein by reference.

/s/ KPMG LLP

Minneapolis, Minnesota
March 19, 2004

2

QuickLinks

Independent Auditor's Consent
(Back To Top)
POWER OF ATTORNEY

I, the undersigned Director/Officer of TCF Financial Corporation, a Delaware corporation, do hereby name, constitute and appoint Neil W. Brown and Gregory J. Pulles, and each of them, my agent and attorney-in-fact, for me and in my behalf as a Director/Officer of TCF Financial Corporation to sign and execute a Registration Statement on Form S-8, any pre-effective amendments thereto and any post-effective amendments thereto, relating to the registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission of 1,000,000 shares of Common Stock, par value $.01 per share, of TCF Financial Corporation (and related plan interests) in connection with the TCF Employees Stock Purchase Plan and its related Supplemental Employees Retirement Plan ("SERP").

Executed this 23rd day of February, 2004.

/s/ William A. Cooper

William A. Cooper, Chairman of the Board, Chief Executive Officer and Director

/s/ Lynn A. Nagorske

Lynn A. Nagorske, President and Director

/s/ William F. Bieber

William F. Bieber, Director

Rodney P. Burwell, Director

/s/ Thomas A. Cusick

Thomas A. Cusick, Director

John M. Eggemeyer, III, Director

/s/ Robert E. Evans

Robert E. Evans, Director

Luella G. Goldberg, Director

/s/ George G. Johnson

George G. Johnson, Director

Thomas J. McGough, Director

/s/ Peter L. Scherer

Peter L. Scherer, Director

/s/ Gerald A. Schwalbach

Gerald A. Schwalbach, Director

/s/ Ralph Strangis

Ralph Strangis, Director