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**April 24, 2007**

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**Merchants Bank Underwrites Season-Opener at Thunder Road 2007!**

*SOUTH BURLINGTON, VT* —Thomas S. Leavitt, Senior Vice President, Retail Banking for Merchants Bank announced today that the company will continue to underwrite the “Merchants Bank 150,” the season-opening ACT event at Thunder Road. The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Merchants Bank 150 will be held on Sunday, May 6, 2007 kicking off the track’s 48<sup>th</sup> season. The program will feature a full race card, culminating in the Late Model Series 150 lap showcase race.

“The action at Thunder Road is some of the best short-track racing anywhere in the country. The team at ACT is outstanding. They pour themselves into giving Vermont race fans the best possible family entertainment value every week,” said Leavitt.

Merchants looks forward to a continuing sponsorship of Cris Michaud Racing for the 2007 season. Merchants has supported Michaud for the prior three seasons at Barre’s Thunder Road. Michaud earned “King of the Road” distinction as the Thunder Road Late Model Sportsman Series champion in 2004 and 2005. Michaud, of Williamstown, VT, has won three late model championships in four years. His consistency has garnered the respect and admiration of fans, fellow racers, and league officials. In 2006 Cris raced well again coming in second after the 14-race season behind Chad Wheeler.

Leavitt commented on the Bank’s history at Thunder Road and its support of Michaud. “We have proudly sponsored some outstanding drivers and teams since 1996. Greg ‘Burger’ Blake, Tracie Bellerose, and Cris Michaud give us a great association with some of the most dedicated teams that T-Road has known. Cris and the entire #6 crew make a formidable team. We are thrilled to give them the full sponsorship support that they have earned.”

“We are proud to be associated with Merchants Bank,” stated Michaud. “We appreciate both their support and all they have done to promote racing in Vermont,” he continued.

The continuing mission of Merchants Bank is to provide Vermonters with a state-wide community bank that blends a strong technology platform with a genuine appreciation for local markets. It fulfills this commitment through a branch-based system that includes 36 community bank offices and 43 ATMs throughout Vermont, Personal Bankers dedicated to top-quality customer service, and streamlined

products: FreedomLYNX<sup>®</sup> Banking, which consists of Free Checking for Life<sup>®</sup>, a low cost Money Market Account, Free Online Banking and Bill Pay, Overdraft Coverage, Direct Deposit, Free Debit Card and Free Automated Phone Banking; TimeLYNX<sup>®</sup> Flexible Certificates of Deposit; AutoLYNX Vehicle Loans; HomeLYNX<sup>®</sup> Home Equity Loans and Lines of Credit; RealLYNX<sup>®</sup> Residential Mortgages; CommerceLYNX<sup>®</sup> Business Banking; and Q-LYNX Quick Decision Business Loans. Merchants' stock is traded on the NASDAQ National Market system under the symbol MBVT. Member FDIC. Equal Housing Lender. For more information about Merchants Bank, visit **mbvt.com**.

For more information about Thunder Road, please visit <http://www.acttour.com/tr> or call (802) 244-6963 or 6964.

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