



For Immediate Release

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Tenth-Annual Merchants Bank 150 Season-opener at Thunder Road Races into Town!

BARRE, VT —Thomas S. Leavitt, Executive Vice President of Merchants Bank, announced today that the company will roll into the tenth running of the “Merchants Bank 150” on Sunday, May 4, 2008. This is an American-Canadian Tour event and the season opener for Barre’s Thunder Road International Speedbowl. The program will get underway at 1:00 p.m., with qualifying heat action for all divisions starting at 1:30. The full race card will culminate with the Late Model 150 lap feature showcase.

“Tom Curley and his team at Thunder Road continue to bring us some of the best short-track racing anywhere in the country. ACT is innovating yet again this year with a new “best 10 of 12 races” scoring system that will keep the competition exciting right through the championship campaign. We are delighted to be building on our tradition of giving Vermont motor sports fans their first taste of action with a big season-opening event. Our Central Vermont team, led by Peggy Henry and Wendy Rea, plan to host another memorable day,” said Leavitt.

Merchants Bank looks forward to a continuing sponsorship of Cris Michaud Racing for the 2008 season. The Bank has supported Cris Michaud for the prior three seasons at Barre’s Thunder Road. Michaud (of Northfield, Vermont) earned “King of the Road” distinction as the Thunder Road Late Model division champion in 2001, 2004 and 2005. His consistency has garnered the respect and admiration of fans, fellow racers, and league officials. In 2006 and 2007, Cris raced well again finishing second in the track points championship after each 14-race season behind Chad Wheeler and Dave Pembroke, respectively. Michaud finished third in the 2008 ACT season opener at Lee, NH.

“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.

Leavitt commented on the Bank’s history at Thunder Road. “We have proudly sponsored some outstanding drivers and teams since 1996. We are now moving into our second decade with the Merchants Bank 150. We look forward to crowning the 2008 champion.”

Prior Merchants Bank 150 Winners

1999 – Phil Scott

2000 – Tracie Bellerose

2001 – Ken Dufour

2002 – Jean Paul Cyr

2003 – Scott Dragon

2004 – Jean Paul Cyr

2005 – Dave Pembroke

2006 – Jean Paul Cyr

2007 – Scott Payea

Vermont Matters! 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. Merchants Bank fulfills this commitment through a branch-based system that includes 36 community bank offices and 44 ATMs throughout Vermont, Personal Bankers dedicated to top-quality customer service and streamlined solutions, including: Personal Banking with *CashRewards* Checkingsm, Free Checking for Life[®], a low-cost Money Market Account, Free Online Banking and Bill Pay, Overdraft Coverage, Direct Deposit, Free Debit Card, and Free Automated Phone Banking; Business Banking with Business Online Banking and Bill Pay, Business Lines of Credit and Merchant Card Processing; Small Business Loans; Health Savings Accounts; Credit Cards; Flexible Certificates of Deposit; Vehicle Loans; Home Equity Credit; and Home Mortgages. Visit **mbvt.com** for more information. Merchants' stock is traded on the NASDAQ National Market system under the symbol MBVT. Member FDIC. Equal Housing Lender.

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

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