



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 31, 2005

Contact

Tara Perkins, Director of Public Relations, PostScript, Inc.
444 South Union Street, Burlington, VT 05401
802.863.2568, ext. 13 / tara@postscriptinc.com

JOHNSON, VT—Thomas S. Leavitt, Senior Vice President, Retail Banking for Merchants Bank announced that the Johnson branch of Merchants Bank was declared the Bank's *2004 Branch of the Year* for its outstanding overall contribution to the company. This honor was designated by the Bank's senior management.

Leavitt commented, "Branch President Jodi Tallman and her team have earned this distinction in a talented finalist pool, including Hardwick and Jericho. The Johnson branch was among the leading performers in many sales programs and the staff has dedicated itself to cross-training to assure the strongest customer service. The entire staff has demonstrated an unsurpassed work ethic and a commitment to the community, including volunteering in various community programs, including the Johnson Downtown project. In addition, Jodi has been active on the Board of Directors of the Lamoille Valley Chamber of Commerce."

"The entire staff is honored to be chosen Merchants Bank's Branch of the Year," stated Branch President Jodi Tallman. "Thank you to the entire team of Sarah Bradshaw, Christine Bradley, Marie Fadden, Marlene Merriam and the Johnson community for their loyal, dedicated support." Tallman continued, "We invite our customers and the entire community to share and to be proud of this recognition!"

Jodi and her husband, Thad, will be recognized with an all-expenses-paid trip to Hawaii, and her staff members will each receive an award of \$1,000. Leavitt and Merchants Bank President, Joseph Boutin, will present the honors at the 2004 Awards Program on February 17, 2005, at the Burlington Country Club in Burlington, Vermont.

The continuing mission of Merchants Bank is to provide Vermonters with a true community bank. It fulfills this commitment through a branch-based system that includes 35 bank offices throughout Vermont, employees dedicated to quality customer service and the LYNX family of products: Free Checking for Life[®], MoneyLYNX[®] Money Market Account, TimeLYNX[®] Certificate of Deposit, HomeLYNX[®] Home Equity Line of Credit, RealLYNX[®] Residential Mortgages, CommerceLYNX[®] Business Banking Services, eLYNX[®] Online Banking and PhoneLYNXSM Automated Phone Banking. For more information about Merchants Bank visit our website at www.mbv.com. Member FDIC. Equal Housing Lender.