



For Immediate Release

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Merchants Bank 150 to Open Thunder Road's 47th Season

Barre, VT—Thunder Road International Speedbowl, Barre, VT, which has provided motor racing thrills and entertainment to generations of Vermonters, opens for its 47th year on Sunday, April 30 with the eighth running of the Merchants Bank 150 for the American-Canadian Tour (ACT) Late Models. The event is the first of 12 across the Northeast and Quebec for the traveling ACT series.

Since its inaugural running in 1999, the Merchants Bank 150 has quickly become one of the most prestigious events at the Barre, VT oval, and has also seen great side-by-side action from the regular NAPA Tiger Sportsman, Allen Lumber Street Stock, and PowerShift Junkyard Warrior divisions in recent memory. Thunder Road hosts ACT Late Model Tour and Tiger Sportsman Series special events, as well weekly competition in its 18-race schedule throughout the spring, summer and early fall. Weekly competition is provided by the Late Models, NAPA Tiger Sportsman, Allen Lumber Street Stocks and PowerShift Warrior divisions.

“Thunder Road provides some of the best, affordable family entertainment in the region,” commented co-owner and 2004 Auto Racing Promoter of the Year, Tom Curley.

Merchants Bank is the underwriter of the “Merchants Bank 150,” the season-opening ACT event at Thunder Road. This year, the program will again feature a full race card, culminating in the LMS 150 lap showcase. The 8th Annual Merchants Bank 150 will be held on Sunday, April 30, 2006. Cris Michaud will roll his Merchants Bank #6 Ford around the track in pre-race ceremonies and take his place as the reigning “King of the Road.” Sunday’s opener has a post time of 1:30 pm. Joining the ACT Tour will be weekly NAPA Tiger Sportsmen, Allen Lumber Street Stocks and PowerShift Warrior divisions. The annual “Class Day” celebration, including the “King of the Road” champion’s presentations starts at 1:00 pm. Spectator gates will open at 10:00 am.

“We have proudly sponsored some outstanding drivers and teams since 1996. Greg ‘Burger’ Blake, Tracie Bellerose, and Cris Michaud have provided us with a rewarding association with some of the most dedicated teams that T-Road has known. Cris, chief Jeff Laquerre, and the rest of the #6 crew make a formidable team. We are delighted to be giving them the full sponsorship support that they have earned. The action at Thunder Road is some of the best short-track racing anywhere in the country. The team at ACT is outstanding – they strive to continue with innovations that are good for the race teams and the fans. They set the pace in their field and pour themselves into giving Vermont race fans the best possible family entertainment value each and every week,” commented Leavitt.

Michaud earned “King of the Road” distinction as the Thunder Road Late Model Sportsman Series champion in both 2004 and 2005. Michaud (of Williamstown, VT) has won three weekly late model championships in four years. His consistency has garnered the respect and admiration of fans, fellow racers, and league officials. He was honored earlier this year in front of the

Vermont motor sports community at the 2005 American-Canadian Tour “Banquet of Champions.”

Former winners of the Merchants Bank 150 include Dave Pembroke of Middlesex, VT (2005), Milton’s Jean Paul Cyr (2004, 2002) and Scott Dragon (2003), Kenny Dufour of Bethlehem, NH (2001), Tracie Bellerose of Gorham, NH (2000), and Phil Scott of Middlesex in the inaugural 1999 showcase. “Our past champions have included some outstanding drivers,” Leavitt noted, “and we’re looking forward to an exciting racing day as several of these teams are joined by the stars of all of Thunder Road’s divisions. It is sure to be an action-packed, green flag afternoon.”

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