



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Contact**

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### **Merchants Bank Sponsors and Takes the Plunge for 2008 Penguin Plunge!**

**SOUTH BURLINGTON, VT**— Thomas S. Leavitt, Executive Vice President for Merchants Bank, announced that the company will sponsor and participate in, the 2008 Penguin Plunge. This will be the ninth year of sponsorship and the seventh year of staff participation for Merchants Bank. Approximately 19 employees, friends and family members are ready to brave the icy waters for Special Olympics Vermont.

“Our staff is more than willing to freeze for a reason, as the Special Olympics Vermont team says. The cause is what will keep us warm!” said Leavitt.

Now, in its thirteenth year, the Burlington Penguin Plunge is one of the major fundraisers for Special Olympics Vermont whose mission is: “To provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendships with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.”

The Burlington Penguin Plunge is part of the sixteenth Annual Burlington Winter Festival, which features the Penguin Plunge, held in Lake Champlain and on the shores of Burlington’s Waterfront Park, and other activities, including: concerts, snow carving, Church Street “Ice Walk”, Lake Champlain and Family Expo at the ECHO Lake Aquarium and Science Center Leahy Center, Kids Vermont Camp and School Fair at the Hilton Hotel and the annual “Hero’s Cup” Broomball tournament. Other Penguin Plunges in conjunction with Special Olympics Vermont are held in Bennington and Newport, Vermont (February 2 and 16, respectively). The Burlington Penguin Plunge is scheduled for Saturday, February 9 at 11:00am.

For more information, please call (802) 863-5222 or visit [www.vtso.org](http://www.vtso.org). You may also contact Burlington Parks and Recreation Department by calling (802) 864-0123 or visiting [www.enjoyburlington.com](http://www.enjoyburlington.com)

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 Checking and Savings with 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; 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](http://mbvt.com) for more information.** Merchants' stock is traded on the NASDAQ National Market system under the symbol MBVT. Member FDIC. Equal Housing Lender.

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