



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SOUTH BURLINGTON, VT —Thomas S. Leavitt, Senior Vice President, Retail Banking for Merchants Bank announced today the bank's sponsorship of Cris Michaud Racing for the 2006 season. The bank has supported Michaud for the prior two seasons at Barre's Thunder Road, and is stepping up to a comprehensive commitment for 2006. 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 recently honored in front of the Vermont motor sports community at the 2005 American-Canadian Tour "Banquet of Champions."

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 have given us a great association with some of the most dedicated teams that T-Road has known. Crew chief Jeff Laquerre came over from Tracie's program to support Cris after Tracie's retirement. Cris, Jeff, 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." Leavitt continued, "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 each and every week."

"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.

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."

2005 LATE MODEL CHAMPION
CRIS MICHAUD RECEIVING HIS
CHAMPIONSHIP TROPHY FROM
VICE PRESIDENT DARLA HARTT



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 Phone Banking. For more information about Merchants Bank, visit mbvt.com. Member FDIC. Equal Housing Lender.