



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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SOUTH BURLINGTON, VT –Thomas S. Leavitt, Senior Vice President of Retail Banking for Merchants Bank announced the appointment of Barbara J. Fortini to the position of Branch President of the Bennington branch. Fortini has also earned the officer title of Assistant Vice President. Fortini joins the team of Nicole Comar, Annette Dixon, Kim Bassett, and Bonnie Barnes.

Fortini began her employ with the Merchants Bank in 1989 as a mortgage originator in the Bennington office. In 1999 she assumed the role of Customer Representative, continuing to be involved in all aspects of branch business, including real estate lending. Fortini was a primary contributor to the branch’s awards in the mortgage and home equity categories over several years. She continued to expand her lending expertise into the small business market and in 2001 was promoted to Lender/Customer Representative. Prior to Merchants Bank, Fortini was a branch manager with First Service Bank and a Teller/Treasurer with Winchendon Savings Bank both in Massachusetts.

“We are very pleased that Barbara has agreed to lead the team in Bennington. She has been a steady force in customer service, sales and branch operations, and is highly regarded by both our customers and our staff,” said Leavitt.

Fortini is the Treasurer of the Bennington chapter of the Business and Professional Women/Vermont organization. The organization’s objective is to elevate standards for women in business and in the professions; to promote the interest of business and professional women; to bring about a spirit of cooperation among business and professional women; and to extend opportunities to business and professional women through education along the lines of industrial, scientific and vocational activities.

“I couldn’t be happier about my new position. I’ve been able to grow in my career at this office and feel ready to take on the responsibilities of being a leader in this community,” said Fortini about her promotion.



Visit <http://www.mbv.com> for more information.

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<sup>®</sup>, MoneyLYNX<sup>®</sup> Money Market Account, TimeLYNX<sup>®</sup> Certificate of Deposit, HomeLYNX<sup>®</sup> Home Equity Line of Credit, RealLYNX<sup>®</sup> Residential Mortgages, CommerceLYNX<sup>®</sup> Business Banking Services, eLYNX<sup>®</sup> Online Banking and PhoneLYNX<sup>SM</sup> Automated Phone Banking. For more information about Merchants Bank visit the website at [www.mbv.com](http://www.mbv.com). Member FDIC. Equal Housing Lender.