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**Contact**

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

**Merchants Bank Underwrites SEABA's 2005 Art Hop,  
Encourages Vermont Businesses to Follow Their Lead**

*SOUTH BURLINGTON, VT* – As Merchants Bank announces their lead underwriting sponsorship of the SEABA (South End Arts and Business Association) 2005 Art Hop, they are encouraging other Greater Burlington businesses to take note of this unique cultural happening in our community.

“The Art Hop has an incredible ability to inspire the visiting public, while offering unrivaled support to local artists. This event brings our community together for a very unique two-day extravaganza, and we are proud to sponsor it. The management of our bank is very supportive of branch-initiated involvement in these types of opportunities. Everyone here truly wants to make a difference,” says Merchants Bank College Street Branch President, Heather Cruickshank.

Cruickshank says Merchants Bank staff will be greeting folks at *Opus* on St. Paul Street this year. “It’s such a treat to view the array of exciting work that is displayed, and it’s wonderful to know that all art sales proceeds benefit the artists. As a sponsor, it makes all the difference to see the tangible results of your support. That is why we do this—to encourage our community of artists, to keep Burlington’s special creative spirit vital.”

Dubbed “Lucky #13” this is the 13<sup>th</sup> year for the Art Hop, which promises to be the biggest and best yet. This year’s festivities commenced with outdoor sculpture installations in August, and the main events will occur Friday and Saturday, September 9 and 10. The event has seen growth in attendance and venues, and has been recognized by the Vermont Chamber of Commerce as one of *Vermont’s Top Ten Events* for the three years in a row. SEABA’s Annual Art Hop is also the largest visual arts event in Vermont. Over 30,000 arts enthusiasts from across the New England Region and from a variety of ages and backgrounds participate in the event. Every year there are more venues, participating artists, art sales booths and outdoor sculpture exhibits planned at 80 sites featuring over 500 artists. Additionally, there are plans for musical venues, free transportation, public sculpture, a juried art show, demonstrations and educational programs, as well as expanded activities for children.

Please visit [www.seaba.com](http://www.seaba.com) for more information about this year's Art Hop.

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 [mbvt.com](http://mbvt.com). Member FDIC. Equal Housing Lender.