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Meridian Bank Launches Innovative Grant Program that Proves Time *is* Money

PHOENIX, AZ – **May 15, 2009** –Arizona’s own Meridian Bank is giving local charities its most important asset – its staff – through an innovative grant program that pays its employees to volunteer for worthy causes.

Together with its parent and sister companies, the locally-based Meridian Bank is pioneering a new grant program called **Volunteer – On Us**, where charities apply not for cash, but for the time of Meridian employees to tackle important projects. This creative charitable endeavor expands the bank’s 31-year dedication to supporting the communities in which it does business.

In addition to the Volunteer –On Us program, Meridian is releasing its grant application for monetary gifts. 2009 is the fourth year of Meridian’s formalized monetary grant program. Last year, the program gave more than \$250,000 in cash gifts to 22 non profits across the valley.

“Meridian Bank employees have long been admired for their passion, knowledge and service,” said Doug Hile, CEO of Meridian Bank, N.A. “We are thrilled to share our most valuable asset with our community, and donate both money and time to causes in need.”

Volunteer- ON US provides employees up to 24 hours of additional Paid Time Off to volunteer for projects at nonprofits that work in the communities Meridian Bank serves. This program is in addition to the 5% of pretax profits Meridian Bank donates in cash annually to charitable organizations providing services in local communities.

This new program is particularly poignant in a year where many financial institutions are facing a challenging economy. Eligibility and guidelines are defined below. Applications are due June 19.

Eligible Organizations

501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations providing services in the Maricopa County area are invited to apply. Faith-based organizations that serve the entire community are also eligible.

Eligible Projects

Well-defined projects that produce a measurable economic benefit to the nonprofit (e.g. professional banking services, assistance with moving, painting offices). Projects should occur between July 1 and December 15, 2009.

Other Considerations

Meridian Bank plans to select projects located in its banking market areas as well as projects for which its employees have special skills or expertise.

Applying for support

Applications for both the Volunteer- On Us, and the Grant program are available at www.meridianbank.com under Press/Media. Complete and submit Applications by June 19, 2009:

For questions about the Volunteer – ON US or monetary grant applications, call Terry Egge, 612.661-3922

Meridian Bank is owned by Marquette Financial Companies (MFC), a privately-owned financial services company headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Meridian Bank has nine offices in and around the Phoenix area. They include Central Phoenix, Fountain Hills, Gilbert, Southwest Valley, Glendale, McDowell Mountain, Peoria, Scottsdale Promenade, and Wickenburg.

For more information regarding Meridian Bank, please visit www.meridianbank.com.

To arrange interviews with Meridian Bank or grant recipients, please contact Stacy Pearson at 602 577 6888 or spearson@roseandallynpr.com.