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Southern Bank Announces Branch Consolidations

Mount Olive, N.C. – Southern Bank and Trust Company, a wholly owned subsidiary of Southern BancShares (N.C.), Inc., has announced plans to consolidate its branch locations in Whitakers, Enfield and Nashville into other nearby offices. The announcement was made by J. Grey Morgan, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Southern Bank, and Drew Covert, President of Southern Bank.

The consolidation plan calls for the Whitakers branch to be consolidated into the Red Oak branch; the Enfield branch to be consolidated into the Roanoke Rapids branch; and the Nashville-Washington Street branch to be consolidated into the Nashville – Barnes Street location.

According to Morgan, the branch consolidations are part of a continuing effort of maintaining a stable, profitably sustainable branch network under the new regulatory, economic and operating environment confronting the industry. The consolidations are scheduled for completion in November of this year.

“Southern Bank remains committed to serving the rural and low-to-moderate income areas surrounding our communities as efficiently as possible,” said Morgan. “Making the decision to consolidate a branch is never easy and we don’t take these matters lightly. But this further enhances our ability to continue profitably serving these counties and surrounding communities in the long term, with minimal service disruption to our customers.”

According to Covert, the branch consolidations continue to be in response to customers’ ongoing migration to online and other self-service banking channels. “Our objective remains to maintain a profitably sustainable branch network for the future, without inhibiting our ability to serve the banking needs of our customers in rural counties. Southern Bank remains very strong and is among the safest, soundest banking institutions in the country.”

Covert added that customers in the affected branches will begin receiving mailed notices with details regarding the consolidation process by early August. Notices will also be posted prominently in the branch. The consolidation process will not affect any customer deposits or account numbers. Customers can continue to use their checks, credit, debit and ATM cards and will still have online and mobile access to their accounts.

Founded in 1901, Southern Bank has total assets approaching \$2.4 billion and provides a broad range of financial services to individuals, businesses, professionals and the medical community through a branch and ATM network spanning eastern North Carolina and southeastern Virginia. Southern Bank has received the five-star “Superior” ranking - the highest possible ranking - by independent bank rating firm Bauer Financial Inc. of Coral Gables, Fla. (Bauerfinancial.com). Member FDIC.

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