



First Reliance Bank Named Lender of the Year.

January 28, 2009- Florence, SC – First Reliance Bank was recently named Lender of the Year, Division II, by the South Carolina State Housing Authority. Each year over 200 lenders and brokers compete for these annual awards, but the South Carolina State Housing Authority recognizes only 5 outstanding lenders and brokers across the state. The awards are given based on criteria including overall production, underwriting quality, delinquency, foreclosure rates, and other pertinent information relating to the financial institutions.

“This is an achievement that reflects our commitment to first time homebuyers and the importance of homeownership,” commented Rick Saunders, President and CEO of First Reliance Bank. “We strive to provide quality loans for all South Carolinians seeking affordable housing, and despite the current state of the economy, we are already experiencing an 80% growth in consumer mortgage applications this year.”

In addition to the bank’s commitment to first time homebuyers and a wide variety of mortgage programs, the bank also remains committed to providing excellent service to all of its mortgage customers. To measure the quality of service that each customer receives, the bank has developed a Mortgage Guaranty which guarantees customers will receive excellent. Focusing on its ***Easy to Do Business With***[™] standard, the bank also has an easy to use online website mortgage application that customers can complete at their own convenience.

The bank will be presented with the Division II Lender of the Year Award on January 31, 2009 at the 2009 Palmetto Affordable Housing Forum held at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center.

For more information on other programs and activities of the State Housing Authority, call (803) 896-9001 or visit the Authority’s website – www.schousing.com .

The South Carolina State Housing Finance and Development Authority is a self-supporting agency of state government and operates at no cost to the taxpayers of South Carolina.

ABOUT FIRST RELIANCE BANK





*First Reliance Bank, founded in 1999, has assets of approximately \$605 million, and employs over 140 highly talented associates. The bank serves Columbia, Charleston, Greenville and Florence markets in South Carolina. The bank has been recognized for its success including being the only company ever to be named to The Top 25 Fastest Growing Companies™ in South Carolina four times including 2002, 2004, 2005, and 2006 (SC Chamber/Elliott Davis). In June 2007, the bank was added to the Palmetto 25, a list of S.C.'s largest publicly held companies. In 2006, 2007, and 2008 the bank was also recognized as One of the Best Places to Work in South Carolina by the SC Chamber of Commerce. **First Reliance Bank offers a unique Hometown Heroes package of benefits to serve those who are serving our communities, a Customer Service Guaranty, Totally FREE Checking, Totally FREE Business Checking, FREE Coin Machines, a Worldwide NO FEE ATM Network, and a 5 Way Mortgage Service Promise. It also offers 8-8 Extended Hours in all of their Florence, Mt. Pleasant, and Lexington locations and is open on most traditional bank holidays. Its Easy to Do Business With™ standard has earned the young bank a customer satisfaction rating of 98% (Lamothe & Associates, Inc., Research Firm). First Reliance Bank is traded as FSRL.OB.***